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Children on the Rims of a Rich City
Growing Up in a Marginalised Neighbourhood of Munich

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Für Oma und Opa

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Abstract

Whereas childhood poverty was a very visible part of the German post-war period, the issue soon decreased in obviousness and lost attention as the nation's economy started to prosper again. Yet, it is an inconvenient but persisting affair that also today children can be found on the margins, even in the richest regions of Germany. This thesis takes the reader to Munich, a city whose wealth shows a flip side to some of its residents: high living expenses and an out-of-control housing market press children beneath poverty lines, to the societal and spatial rims of the town. Responding to research gaps in this context, the work at hand is a qualitative study with children as participants and a theoretical foundation in the field of Childhood Studies. Children's experiences, the resources available to them, as well as the challenges they encounter in everyday life are thereby of special interest. The author spent five weeks as a guest in a day care centre located in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Munich, researching actively together with girls and boys in first and second grade. Participant observation, interactive drawing and discussing, as well as interviews with children and adults are applied to investigate this life world. Children's own interpretations find special recognition, but also the impact of political and economic processes is kept in mind. The study illuminates rich social and cultural capacities held by the boys and girls in the field. Children initiate varied peer cultures, possess multicultural competences, and have wide social networks available. At the same time, they meet constraints by being located outside the dominant cultures of the German mainstream. Bourdieu's theory of practice as well as the concept of agency help to see beyond a one-dimensional understanding of childhood poverty as financial distress resulting in deprivation. Eventually, the reader is supposed to win an understanding on how missing consideration for children's own notions, foreignness between different social classes, as well as structural influences play a role in reaffirming children's marginalised position in Munich.

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List of abbreviations

AWO	Bundesverband der Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Worker's Welfare Association)
DJI	Deutsches Jugendinstitut (German Youth Institute)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FN	Field Notes
ISS	Institut für Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik (Institute for Social Work and Social Pedagogy)
NSD	Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (Norwegian Social Science Data Service)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SGB	Sozialgesetzbuch (Social Law Book)
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WVC study	World Vision Children's study (World Vision Kinderstudie)

1 Introduction and background

1.1 Rich Munich, poor Munich: Contradicting realities in the Bavarian capital

"*A booming region: Everybody wants to come to Munich*." Die Abendzeitung reports imposing numbers in recent demographic studies: a strong economy makes the southern German city of Munich a pulsating influx area. The population is expected to grow nearly 12% until 2030 (Bock, 2012). "*Not new but newly confirmed*.", comments Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung (SZ, 2015). Impressive are also incomes and profits generated in the town. Munich is the richest of Germany's major cities. Residents have high average spending power, companies are creating a record number of employment opportunities, and the city treasury profits from rising tax intake (Riedel, 2013).

Bearing this context in mind, Der Spiegel covers a differing story. 14-year-old Samar and his younger siblings are not benefiting from the city's wealth. Instead, sky-rocketing rents and a crowded housing market are forcing them to move to a homeless shelter with their parents. The article is revealing a difficult situation: About hundred people a month become homeless in Munich, among them many children. Also in this terms, the city holds the German record (Lill, 2015).

How can these highly contradicting realities exist alongside in the Bavarian capital? Some of Munich's populations are excluded from the city's wealth, first and foremost families. The poverty of children is reality even though it is preferred to be considered as an affair of the past, or something happening far away from Germany. A manifested social inequality cannot be overlooked in Munich and evokes a specific research interest: what is the experience of children who are pushed to the margins of the rich city? How do they handle the challenges they meet here? Are they able to benefit from the wealth of the municipality they live in? The questions seem to be essential, as there is still a research gap regarding the experience of poor children in the city of Munich (Landeshauptstadt München, 2012).

The thesis wants to shed light on the lives, experiencing and activity of disadvantaged children in Munich. To find out about this interest, I have been a guest in a school and day care centre in a marginalised neighbourhood for five weeks, researching actively together with primary school children in first and second grade.

The thesis will be opened by introducing background knowledge on childhood and social inequality. Firstly, the phenomenon of childhood poverty in rich nations and its characteristics in the state of Germany will be explored. A particular focus on Munich helps to understand the special conditions children meet in this city. Subsequently, the research interest of the thesis is going to be introduced. The chapter concludes with an outlook on the complete work, consisting out of four additional parts: Methodology, theory, analysis and discussion.

1.2 The background: Childhood poverty

1.2.1 Childhood poverty in rich nations

Childhood poverty in wealthy nations is an uncomfortable but persisting phenomenon. To understand more about the topic, this section gives an introduction. UNICEF's "new league tables of childhood poverty in the world's rich countries" are providing information on the issue's magnitude.

Poverty has an absolute and a relative dimension. Absolute poverty is a shortage in life essential goods like food, water, shelter or medicine. In terms of rich nations, the main focus has to be set on relative poverty. Being relatively poor means to be significantly less wealthy than the average in a country. Affected children do not necessarily lack vital resources, but they have less in comparison and could thereby be excluded from many of societies' opportunities. Regarding the definition of the OECD, households with an income less than 60% of the national median are relatively poor. However, poverty is not only a monetary issue. Moreover, economic shortcomings are likely to build the basis for a whole range of further disadvantages to children, for example in terms of health, education or housing (Reichwein, 2011). In order to make this component of social inequality more visible, UNICEF defined a child deprivation index and established "*14 items considered normal and necessary for a child in an economically advanced country"* (UNICEF, 2012, p. 3). Included are healthy nutrition, proper clothing, leisure time possibilities as well as educational, social and recreational needs. If children miss two or more items because of their household's economic situation, they are considered to be deprived (UNICEF, 2012). It becomes visible that relative poverty is more than financial distress, it can affect many dimensions of a child's life. Throughout the thesis, the terms "poverty" and "poor" will describe this very state of being relatively less wealthy, linked to a potential disadvantaging in various areas.

An estimation of the actual magnitude of childhood poverty remains difficult, due to a lack of data, common definitions, and national monitoring. UNICEF gives an appraisal by applying its child deprivation index as well as the old OECD poverty line of 50% of a nation's median income. In European comparison of child deprivation, Germany is ranking in the middle with 8.8% of all children being deprived. The Scandinavian states lead this table with very low percentages, whereas some Eastern European countries can be found on the bottom with grave numbers of over 30%. When relative poverty is compared in 35 rich nations worldwide, Germany takes again an average place with 8.5% of its children living below the poverty line (UNICEF, 2012). Although the measuring bears difficulties, an overall comparison of UNICEF's numbers shows that relative poverty and deprivation of children are not an exception in the world's rich nations. The figures become especially concerning when one starts to think about potential consequences of poverty on children's well-being and societies' advance.

"*The heaviest cost of all is borne by the children themselves. But their nations must also pay a very significant price – in reduced skills and productivity, in higher likelihood of unemployment and welfare dependence, in the higher costs of judicial and social protection systems, and in the loss of social cohesion.*" (UNICEF, 2012, p. 1)

To find out more about the features of childhood poverty, a closer look on its occurrence in the state of Germany will be taken.

1.2.2 Childhood poverty in Germany

Childhood poverty attracted the attention of research in Germany only two decades ago. The number of studies and reports has been growing ever since, but common definitions and measuring systems are still missing (Reichwein, 2011). Subsequently, it is not without difficulty to provide a holistic overview on the issue.

The German Youth Institute (DJI) sketches characteristics of childhood poverty in Germany and shows that it is multisided: Children at poverty risk can be found where the income of a household is low or has to be shared among many household members. Young people in single-parent households, with many siblings, with unemployed parents or parents who work in the low-income sector are at greater risk. Also, children from a migration background are more above-average affected by poverty, likely due to language barriers, institutional discrimination, less educational opportunities or lacking social networks. Childhood poverty is furthermore a regional phenomenon. 25 years after the German reunion, the infrastructure of the former

German Democratic Republic could not be updated to West German standards. Relative poverty rates are doubled in the federal states of the East. Research findings imply that the longer poverty endures, the smaller are the chances for families to effectively leave it (Hübenthal, 2009). Behind all of this lies a political system which fails to redistribute society's resources equally. Consequences of poverty for children vary widely. Many are protected from direct effects because of a short duration or parents' tendency to shield their sons and daughters as long as possible from financial distress. For others, severe economic shortage has a strong impact. (Bertram, 2013; Hübenthal, 2009; Reichwein, 2011). In German research, similar understandings of poverty as with UNICEF's deprivation index can be found. The AWO[1] ISS[2] study, a longitudinal, qualitative and quantitative project exploring effects of poverty on children in primary school, draws from a multidimensional life circumstances concept, (developed amongst other by Gerhard Weisser and Ingeborg Nahnsen (Voges, Jürgens, Mauer, & Meyer, 2003)) to provide a definition for childhood poverty. A low income at or below the old OECD poverty line[3] is root cause of effects on four defined dimensions: Material as well as cultural provision, social situation and physical and psychological well-being. Questionnaires for children, parents and pedagogues help to win quantitative insight in these areas of life. According to the extent of constraints children meet, they are grouped into the categories "well-being", "disadvantage" or "multiple deprivation". A further important feature is that children need to be limited in their development and future perspectives by those effects. The study finds significant differences between poor and non-poor children. Every second poor child compared to every twentieth non-poor child can be considered as disadvantaged or deprived (Holz, 2006, 2010). Also when children's own definitions are taken into account, a negative impact of economic distress becomes visible. For instance, the World Vision Children's studies point out a correlation between household income and children's perception of their well-being (Hurrelmann, Andresen, & Schneekloth, 2011).

1.2.3 The Munich context

Munich provides special circumstances in terms of childhood poverty. A booming job market, low poverty rates, growing economy, and influx of citizens make the city to one of the richest in Germany. Yet, this does not mean that childhood poverty is less problematic here. The city's

[1] Worker's Welfare Association
[2] Institute for Social Work and Social Pedagogy
[3] 50% of German median income

wealth has undeniably a flip side: High living expenses, a crowded and competitive housing market, and precarious job sectors for the less qualified pose obstacles. Families with fewer assets find themselves pushed to the margins of the town. This happens in terms of participation, but also has to be taken literally: the residence structure of Munich is beginning to split up into a wealthy centre and impoverished outskirts. The gap between rich and poor is measurably growing and social inequality becomes a noticeable matter in the city. (Landeshauptstadt München, 2012).

Accordingly, living in Munich bears specific disadvantages for poor children. They fall sooner under the poverty line and a visible social disparity might cause the feeling of being exclusion. An out-of-control housing market could push them into disadvantaged quarters, their parents might find themselves in unfavourable or unstable employment. At the same time, one has to ask the questions which opportunities the wealthy municipality can offer. The city invests for instance in day care centres and a broad variety of social work projects as well as it introduced a row of additional benefit payments for families, for example in terms of school enrolment or lunch in day care (Landeshauptstadt München, Sozialreferat 2010). The tension in Munich opens up various questions. How is one like Samar feeling, in a homeless shelter next to a middle-class neighbourhood? How do gentrification processes impact children? But also: how do boys and girls get along anyway and tackle difficulties? So far, the issue of childhood poverty in Munich has been neglected by research, which is a further reason to find out about disadvantaged children in the city. In the following, the research field, interest and design will be introduced.

1.3 The research: Growing up in a marginalised neighbourhood of Munich

1.3.1 Research gaps and significance of the study

German research on childhood poverty was initiated in the beginning of the 1990 with the discovery of childhood as an own entity. Whereas magnitude, characteristics and consequences of childhood poverty interested the researchers early, experiencing and well-being of poor children entered the focus more recently (Bertram, 2013; Reichwein, 2011). Accordingly, more material needs to be gathered here. It is necessary to explore children's adaptation and activity (Zander, 2010a). Additionally, despite the peculiarities of the city, research on poverty in Munich is difficult to find. While regions with high poverty rates attract the attention of scholars more easily, rich environments seem to remain overlooked. The Poverty Report of the City of

Munich clearly constitutes that poverty itself as well as the experience and coping of poor children in Munich are under-researched (Landeshauptstadt München, 2012).

Thinking about the serious effects poverty can have on both children and society, it seems important to win more knowledge about disadvantaged children in Munich. Knowing more about their experience and how they become active can help to find to a more informed decisions-making, for instance in planning offers for young people according to their own understandings. It is furthermore children's right to be properly researched as their voices have to be taken into account. Therefore, a central goal must be to research together with children instead of researching about them (Ennew et al., 2009a). More detailed elaborations on this argument can be found in the methodology chapter. The study wants to draw attention to boys and girls as active and deliberating beings, who hold own opinions and beliefs. Ultimately, this shall also contribute to young people being taken more seriously by teachers, pedagogues and in political decision-making.

1.3.2 Research questions

In accordance to the previous deliberations, the following research questions have been formulated to win an understanding of poor children's life in the context of a disadvantaged quarter in the wealthy city of Munich:

What are children's experiences of everyday life (school, leisure time, social relationships)?

What are their perceptions of living in a marginalised neighbourhood?

Which challenges do they meet in their everyday environment?

What kind of capacities and resources are available to them?

In what ways do children become active and strive for advantages?

In order to make those questions "researchable", they have been translated into five areas of interest, namely challenges in daily life, networks, leisure time, perceptions of happiness, and the city of Munich. Exploring these topics together with the children aims at winning a broad understanding of how they perceive central stages of life and how they become active in them.

1.3.3 Outlook on the field and the participants

The fieldwork was conducted in a school connected to a day care centre, located in one of Munich's most deprived city parts. About 20 children in first and second grade participated in the research. The majority of these boys and girls has a migration background. Due to their living place, it can be assumed that most of them live close to or below the poverty line. Yet, this instance does not allow a conclusion on their well-being or deprivation. The research took place in the last five weeks of the school year, from the end of June until the beginning of August. I was a daily guest in the day care group as well as I was able to join schooling. The time period made it possible for a mutual sympathy and acquaintanceship to emerge, which was highly beneficial when planning and applying the research methods. Participant observation, individual drawings, group drawings and focus group discussions have been carried out with the boys and girls. Additionally, the researcher conducted interviews with children and adults working in the field.

1.3.4 Limitations of the study

It is important to keep in mind that this study is subject to certain limitations. First of all, only a glimpse of the field could be witnessed, as I was only present for a certain time of the day and the year, and fixed to the setting of school and day care. This circumstance will find consideration in the analysis chapters. Furthermore, due to access and time limitations, only a certain age group of children has been worked with. Also, just a selection of research methods could be applied as well as the number of young and adult participants needed to be limited. Considering the scope of the thesis, I would argue that the amount of methods and participants is sufficient, yet, including for instance parents or other age groups could have enhanced triangulation. The research cannot speak universally for all children affected by poverty in Munich, it just gives an impression of the visited neighbourhood. It was also a wish to include children into the designing process of the research methods, but limitations in time, access and a high work load made this unrealisable.

1.4 Organisation of the thesis

The reader will find the thesis organised into five subsequent parts, namely theory, methodology, two analysis chapters and a concluding reflection. In the following theory chapter, the study will be located within the field of Childhood Studies as well as the theoretical

basis necessary to analyse the data will be build. Here, children's agency, Bourdieu's thinking tools habitus, capital and field as well as previous research helpful for the thesis are going to be introduced. The theoretical elaborations will reappear during analysis, where they are applied to connect findings, interpretations and ideas to an existing context of knowledge. Subsequently, the methodology chapter presents the fieldwork conducted for this study. Methods of data collection and analysis, challenges in the field, as well as ethical strategies will be explored in depth. Each of the analysis chapters will review the data from an own angle. The findings are presented from a perspective of challenges as well as resources to be found with the children in the researched field. Throughout, the young informants' own notions find special consideration. The thesis will be rounded by summarising reflections, containing a final, conclusive discussion of the findings, an appraisal of the research questions, questions and research interests evoked during the working process as well as own thoughts towards the researched field.

2 Theory

2.1 Introduction

After finding an entry to the topic of childhood poverty in a wealthy city in the introduction chapter, the theory chapter builds the basis to understand the later on presented findings from a theoretical standpoint. In order to interpret the data in a scientific manner and connect the research to a larger framework of knowledge, theoretical concepts are applied as tools of explanation. Those concepts will be introduced in the following. The thesis is located inside Childhood Studies and is therefore essentially characterised by this academic field on all stages of the project. Accordingly, the reader will be first of all introduced to Childhood Studies. Other concepts are chosen in correspondence to the collected data. When it comes to the interpretation of the research findings, children's agency and Bourdieu's habitus, field and capital give the main theoretical guidance. The chapter is concluded by an overview on previous research relevant for the study. Here, the Young Lives Project, the World Vision Children's study 2007 as well as a research project from Munich exploring life worlds of disadvantaged young women do find special consideration. The reader will also gain an overview on articles and studies applied on single occasions in the analysis.

2.2 Childhood Studies

It is important to note that this thesis is located in the context of Childhood Studies. Choosing the research objective, developing and executing fieldwork, analysing data as well as writing the final report have been carried out from a perspective of Childhood Studies. Therefore, it is first and foremost necessary to provide the reader with a good understanding of this academic field and the connection of the thesis to its concepts and discourses.

2.2.1 A new paradigm

With the emerging of Childhood Studies in the beginning of the 1990, changes in attitudes towards childhood and children's traditional role in research were made. James and Prout (1997) describe this as a paradigm shift and explain six key features of the new perspective: Childhood Studies break with the understanding of childhood as a biological and universal stage

of immaturity, as it was often argued to be in the academic world. Moreover, childhood is seen as *socially constructed*. Scholars recognized that societies tend to load it with own interpretations and values. How one understands childhood is influenced by societal context and beliefs. Being a child *differs furthermore along space, time and social variables*. Besides age, a variety of categories, for example gender, class, or ethnicity alter children's life. Formerly, researchers tended to study the child from an adult point of view. The research focused primarily on the future development of the young generation. Thus, childhoods were merely interesting in terms of the adults that emerge from it. Childhood Studies emphasises that childhood and its cultures need to be *studied for their own value*, free from adult-centric orientations. Furthermore, the *agency* of children is acknowledged. Though traditionally often viewed as passive recipients of nurture and structural influences, children take an active part in influencing their fellow men and constructing their surroundings. Researchers are responsible to provide channels for children to speak for themselves. James and Prout recommend *ethnography* (participant observation) as one valuable method to study young people. Girls and boys are supposed to be participants in research and no longer objects of social and psychological experimenting. Additionally, the *double hermeneutic* of the social sciences is stressed. James and Prout refer to Anthony Giddens (1993), who argues that social sciences and societies are connected in a double hermeneutic (a double understanding) and take mutual influence on each other. Simply phrased, while it is impacted by society what and how researchers study, they can also alter societies thinking and practicing with their research findings. James and Prout deduce a responsibility of scholars to contribute to a reconstruction of societies' understanding of childhood. "*That is so to say, to proclaim a new paradigm of childhood sociology is also to engage in and respond to the process of reconstructing childhood in society.*" (Prout & James, 1997, p. 8)

2.2.2 Discourses and strands inside the field of Childhood Studies

Meanwhile, the Childhood Studies is more than a new paradigm, it is a field of complex discourses revolving around the topic of children and childhood. Leena Alanen (2001) identifies three main strands inside this academic thinking: The deconstructive sociology of childhood, the actor-oriented sociologies of children and the structural sociology of childhood. The *deconstructive sociology of childhood* looks especially on how ideas and practices around childhood are a result of societal attributions to it, which need to be identified and deconstructed by scholars (Alanen, 2001). It is easily noticeable that childhood is connected to various

connotations which have wide influence on children's lives. For example, in Western societies childhood is amongst other linked to innocence and protection. As a result, boys and girls are supervised in child-specific spaces and excluded from spheres of the adult life, such as work (Montgomery, 2003). A deconstructive sociologist, for example Chris Jenks (2005), will examine and question this very correlation by deconstructing taken-for-granted pictures and practices of childhood. *Sociologies of children* are actor-oriented and view children as an active part in their social worlds. This strand is interested in making children's contributions, relations, activities and experience visible, as they are assumed to have a crucial influence on their environment and own lives (Alanen, 2001). For instance, the work of Allison James (James, 2009; Prout & James, 1997) and William Corsaro (1997) focuses on the actor, while at the same time, scholars are careful not to disconnect the child from its context. The thesis can mainly be seen as a part of the strand of sociologies of children, as it takes a qualitative orientation and pays great attention to children's cultures and activities. Nevertheless, structural circumstances will find recognition as well: The *structural sociology of childhood* recognizes childhood as a generational element in the societal context. A single individual enters and leaves the stage of childhood, but children are a permanent category in every society, which is influenced by, or also influencing, overriding processes (Alanen, 2001). For instance, children are significantly affected by political decision-making, while at the same time politics frequently fail to recognize this correlation (Prout & James, 1997). The connection between the generational category childhood and the structural context is of interest for Jens Qvortrup and Leena Alanen, major representatives of the structural sociology of childhood. The scholars criticise that the structural sociology finds comparably less consideration inside the field of Childhood Studies (Alanen, 2001; Qvortrup, 2002).

Allison James, Chris Jenks and Alan Prout (1998) furthermore clarify different standpoints inside Childhood Studies by presenting four perspectives on childhood: The tribal child, the socially constructed child, the minority group child and the social-structural child. *The tribal child* perspective stresses that children do possess unique cultures and act in an original way. "*This model sets out from a commitment to children's social worlds as real places and provinces of meaning in their own right and not as fantasies, games, poor imitations or inadequate precursors of the adult state of being.*" (Jenks, 2009, p. 91). This perspective puts forward the need for a focus on children as social agents as well as on their understanding and competences. In the analysis chapter, the tribal child is of special interest when focusing on children's activity and cultures. Meanwhile, *the socially constructed child* draws the attention to how the phenomenon of childhood is shaped by society, brought together from certain

features, understandings and practices ascribed to it. "*Such knowledge of the child and its life worlds depends upon the predispositions of a consciousness constituted in relation to our social, political, historical and moral context.*" (Jenks, 2009, p. 89). Approaching childhood in research has to be connected to a critical evaluation of those dispositions by scholars. By referring to the child as a *minority group child*, researchers stress that children hold a less powerful position in society compared to adults. This perspective seeks to challenge present power relations and guides attention to children's own interpretations as well as the need to take them into consideration (James & James, 2012). Childhood Studies also acknowledge childhood as a universal phenomenon, the *social-structural child*. It is argued that childhood is a persistent entity in all societies, a generational group which interacts with societal contexts and structural processes (Jenks, 2009; Qvortrup, 2008). Of special interest is the connection of childhood with societal institutions as well as social organisation, for example social variables like class or gender (James & James, 2012). During analysis, the young informants are set into connection with their wider environment, the local, communal and also societal processes that shape their every-day circumstances. The social-structural child finds consideration as the thesis concentrates on the location of Munich and societal correlations which affect the participants.

2.2.3 Childhood Studies as a multi-layered field

Different strands and perspectives inside the field of Childhood Studies do not contradict each other or are strictly separated. Moreover, it is recognized that one has to see the phenomenon of childhood from various angles in order to gain an encompassing understanding of it. Childhood Studies is accordingly an interdisciplinary and multi-layered field, including amongst other psychological, anthropological, sociological and historical contributions. Scholars continue to find a balance between agency and structure. (James & James, 2012). Also this thesis includes other academic fields besides Childhood Studies, for instance sociology and social work. Children need to be seen as social actors, at the same time a certain degree of determination by an institutional level cannot be ignored. "*There must be theoretical space for both the construction of childhood as an institution and the activity of children within and upon the constraints and possibilities that the institutional level creates.*" (Prout & James, 1997, p. 27). Agency and structure appear to be incomplete concepts without each other. Integrating both of them prevents the contribution and culture of children from being unconnected to, and therefore unimportant to the adult world. Additionally, research which considers both agency and structure gains a more profound theoretical substance and is able to show a more authentic

picture of childhood worlds (Prout & James, 1997). The issue of agency and structure will reappear in the subchapter on Bourdieu's thinking tools, as well as it gives guidance for the structuring of the analysis chapters, where both local and overriding processes as well as children's agency do find consideration.

2.3 Children's agency

The research interest draws attention to the activities of children in the researched neighbourhood. How do boys and girls become active, also in disadvantaging circumstances? Here, the concept of agency will help to understand children's role as actors in greater depth. Agency is a central term in Childhood Studies. Children are social actors, who take influence on their own lives, their social relationships and societal processes (Mayall, 2002). This is connected to a claim of studying childhood and children at their own right, not in regards to their future adulthood. At the same time, agency is always connected to power relations and control. Where one is not able to find structure, one will not find opportunities to agency either (James, 2009). Children are "*doers*" and "*thinkers*", and by starting to view them as such, we have to rethink their position in society (Robson, Bell, & Klocker, 2007, p. 135). How does agency in terms of childhood unfold? There are various conceptualisations of agency. Here, it will be theorised within the frame of Childhood Studies. Traditionally, children's agency did not receive sufficient attention in childhood research. Often, childhood was considered to be a phase of transition into adulthood. Thereby, the child was viewed as a faulty subject to external influences, which gradually shape it into an adult, a proper person. There have been scholars, who attributed a striking passivity to children. For instance, in some sociological accounts, the process of socialisation was assumed to be performed mainly by adults, who mould the child into a member of society. From the 70s onward, disagreement with these perspectives emerged and children's activities gradually became more and more acknowledged in research (James, 2009). Agency is a key feature of the paradigm shift announced by James and Prout (1997) and it takes a central place in Childhood Studies. "*Children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live. Children are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes.*" (Prout & James, 1997, p. 7). It shall not be denied that children learn and grow-up, but when agency is taken into consideration, this happens in a different way than earlier assumed. Inside the field of Childhood Studies, agency is described from multiple perspectives.

On a micro-level, children are assumed to be active participants in relations, may it be in a family, with peers or other connections, for example pedagogues. William Corsaro (1997) points out how these interactions are not one-sided. Children might possess less powerful roles compared to adults, but they actively participate in cultural routines, for example verbal and non-verbal communication. "*It is clear enough* […], *that children are social actors; that is, they take part in family relations from the word go; they express their wishes, demonstrate strong attachments, jealousy and delight, seek justice.*" (Mayall, 2002, p. 21). Furthermore, children are not merely actors, but agents, as their participation clearly has an influence on the relations and systems they are participating in. Corsaro argues moreover that children perform an interpretive reproduction. "*According to this reproductive view, children do not simply imitate or internalize the world around them. They strive to interpret or make sense of their culture and to participate in it.*" (Corsaro, 1997, p. 24). Thus, children contribute new interpretations to the relations and systems they encounter. Especially in interaction with peers, they develop and perform own childhood cultures, which are to a high degree autonomous, but inspired by adult society. "*We defined peer culture as a stable set of activities or routines, artefacts, values or concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers*." (Corsaro, 1997, p. 114). Before the paradigm shift, childhood cultures were regarded to be a preparation to adult life or a faulty imitation of it. On the contrary, Childhood Studies argue that those cultures are rich and need to be studied at their own right. Its functions can be diverse, for example entertainment or understanding adults, seeking autonomy from them or reinterpreting their perceptions. Important to note is that children's cultures are central and unique platforms for the performance of agency and interpretive reproduction (Corsaro, 1997).

Besides social interactions, the activity of children is highly relevant for the structural level. In a historical perspective, children had to take over working tasks from an early age. Jens Qvortrup (2002) stresses how today their contribution has not become less, but less visible. As many societies have changed profoundly from agricultural to highly technological, there is a demand for a well-educated workforce. The argument is, that children perform a large quantity of work by participating in schooling. This venture is system-immanent, as it is essential to keep up and further develop modern societies. But as undergoing an education does not create an immediate value or profit, children's contribution is seen as worthless, certainly a discrepancy in Western societies. The family carries all costs for raising the newest generation and young people are, despite their participation, widely excluded from redistribution. Furthermore, schooling is not a process children undergo passively. They do not merely copy what is presented to them or uncritically internalize knowledge. Similar to Corsaro's argument

of interpretive reproduction, Qvortrup describes education as an extended production, which means that children apply adult understanding, process it and add new things to it. Schooling is a joint project and children "…*effectively influence and are influenced by parents, teachers and other persons they are in immediate contact with.*" (Qvortrup, 2002, p. 58). It is accordingly difficult to deny the active membership of children in society, as they essentially contribute to economic production systems, with schooling as part of a diachronic labour-division between generations, and the input of their own interpretations and understandings to it.

Agency has to be seen in connection to structure and power relations. Where the opportunity for acting can be found, there is also something that regulates it. From a matter of age and experience, adults tend to deduce the right and the need to dominate, supervise and control children (Qvortrup, 2002). Accordingly, the agency of children is regulated by adult care takers, institutions and also by a political-economical level. Robson et al. (2007) provide interesting thoughts on the opportunities and limitations of children's agency, drawing from studies with rural young people in minority and majority worlds. According to them, agency is a fluctuating phenomenon. How much agency young people actually are able to perform varies a long time and space, with the situational context, social variables, and individual perceptions and choices. Children have highly different possibilities to become agents and a great number of factors is playing a role in the process. Robson et al. furthermore point out creative ways in which young people negotiate agency, such as conforming or resisting adult expectations. How agency finally unfolds is highly individualistic. Yet, it is a universal phenomenon. Its quality might vary, but all children do possess it. Individuals are hardly ever fully independent or merely passive victims of their circumstances. Agency is thereby a continuum and can be described as "thick" or "thin".

2.4 Bourdieu's thinking tools: Habitus, field, and capital

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu offers valuable and applicable theoretical concepts for those who want to understand social worlds better. These concepts, also called "thinking tools" by Bourdieu, are field (the social space between actors), habitus (one's predisposed ways of experiencing and acting), and capital (possessions of value in a certain field). Bourdieu's work is popular and has been applied often in social studies, lately also more frequently in research with children (Alanen, Brooker, & Mayall, 2015). For this thesis, the objective is to make processes of disadvantaging and activity between actors in the research field and also on

overriding levels visible with help of the thinking tools. It is a challenge to compress Bourdieu's extensive work into the scope of this chapter. Accordingly, the following elaborations have to be understood as simplified compared to the original opus. Nevertheless, the reader is supposed to win a good understanding of habitus, capital, and field and as well as the interaction between them.

2.3.1 Bourdieu's theory of practice

Bourdieu's theoretical work is dedicated to the application on real social worlds. It is stressed that theory is not valuable, if not used for practice. The concepts developed by Bourdieu took origin from practice and he provided them as theoretical tools to analyse and find understandings of greater depth (Grenfell, 2008a). *"His own relation to concepts is a pragmatic one: he treats them as "tool kits"* […]*, designed to help him solve problems.*" (Wacquant, 1992, p. 31). It is important to note that Bourdieu refused the, at his time polarising, separation between the objective and the subjective. In order to find to an encompassing understanding of the social world, one has to incorporate individual and structural perspectives. Just as in the discussion on agency and structure, an individual will always stand in mutual interaction with the material and social world (Robbins, 2008; Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu is asking questions about individuals' acting. Why do we act and experience in a certain way? What is the fundament which conditions our ways of behaving and perceiving (Robbins, 2008)? He offers habitus, capital, and field as tools for theoretical analysis. The concepts are separate, yet they have to be seen in connection to each other (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Both the applicability as well as the intersection between agency and structure make habitus, field, and capital especially valuable for this thesis. The thinking tools allow a theoretical view on individual, local as well as structural levels as well as a broad range of context.

2.3.2 Habitus

Every social actor has an internalized *habitus*. We evolve habitus under influence of the "*conditions of* [our] *existence"* (Maton, 2008, p. 51). This can be for example experiences, social background, history, education or societal circumstances. The habitus is structured

according to these predisposition. From this point, it becomes a structuring instance to the social world one meets: Habitus generates a way of perceiving and acting, preferences or aversions. In this way, the habitus becomes the intersection point of agency and structure. Bourdieu describes habitus as a "*strategy-generating principle*" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). If we see, simplified from Bourdieu's elaborations, the daily life of actors as a game, then structure would be the rules and regulation, agency the personal strategy of the actor and habitus his or her "*sense of the game*" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 129; referring to Plato's Meno). Habitus is furthermore termed as durable and transposable, meaning it is permanent and the actor will transfer it to all kinds of social circumstances. Yet, the habitus is not fixed, it can evolve over time (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Maton, 2008).

2.3.3 Field

Bourdieu stresses that actors have to be seen in the relation to their environment, and this is where the *field* gets into focus. Habitus cannot be explored disconnected from the field, a social space. Acting and experiencing is not only a result of one's habitus, but of the exposure of a certain habitus to a certain field. How can a field be described? We can see it as a social space (e.g. the educational sector or a university) between agents (persons or institutions), who stand in different positions, have different relations to each other and possess a different habitus. Each field has furthermore a logic of practice, rules so to say, a structure or a purpose. Various forces come into operation. What the actors are able to do is limited by their position, their abilities, the rules, as well as the very quality of the field. Furthermore, there is not just one, but numerous, intersecting, interacting, and hierarchically ordered fields in the Bourdieusian theory. Processes of power, reproduction, and change do not just take place inside of fields, but also between them. An agent is likely to be part of more than one field, for example a school class, a neighbourhood or a family. In a way, the field term brings agency and structure to intersection again. A social space is under constant construction by both dominant fields and the actors within it (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Thomson, 2008).

2.3.4 Capital

Connected to each field is a certain capital, things that are of value in the social space and determine an actor's position in it. Regarding the amount and quality of the owned capital, an

actor takes a place in the field. Capital is not just materialistic in Bourdieu's theory, he introduces a symbolic dimension to it. This gets clearer when looking on to the three forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. Economic capital is capital in the conventional sense, goods that enable us to ownership or exchange. Cultural capital is in contrast more an ability of a person. It can be incorporated, for example as education or skills, institutionalised, meaning a degree or title from official side, such as a PhD, or also objectified, for instance the possession of cultural goods such as modern art works and the ability to understand and enjoy them. A person's status rises if these are valued moments in the field. The same thing happens if he or she has a social capital of a high value, a network of relations, such as friends, acquaintanceship, or professional contacts. Cultural and social capital cannot be directly bought with economic capital, but it gives a clear advantage in acquiring it. The habitus, with certain beliefs, taste, and lifestyle is involved and attributes a person with a distinct social membership that can be beneficial or disadvantageous in acquiring cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Moore, 2008; Wilken, 2011). The interplay of habitus, field, and capital is the point of focus: "*Practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), with the current state of play of that social arena (field).*" (Maton, 2008, p. 51)

When applying Bourdieu's work, one has to be aware of certain challenges. Habitus, capital, and field are a "*model of the reality"* and must not be mistaken for *"the reality of the model*" (Maton, 2008, p. 55). The concepts remain complex as well as they are fluid and cannot be limited to a distinct definition. Bourdieu warns from drawing simple conclusions and disconnecting instances from their context. (Grenfell, 2008b). For example, while structure, habitus and practice certainly are connected to each other, Bourdieu stresses that this relation is not singular or simplistic, as countless factors take influence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). It is furthermore important to note that it is not the objective of the research to give a detailed analysis of fields or individuals regarding their habitus and capital. This is whether possible nor beneficial. The thinking tools are applied to visualise and describe selected strands of activity, taking place between actors in the field and as well through overriding processes.

2.3.5 Bourdieu on social inequality

As this thesis focuses on childhood poverty, this section takes a look on how Bourdieu used his thinking tools to explore social inequality. While he has researched a magnitude of issues, social

inequality is a reoccurring topic in his opus, often connected to the term of symbolic violence, a disguised mechanism allowing one group to exercise control over another (Bourdieu, 1977). "*Gentle, hidden exploitation is the form taken by a man's exploitation of man whenever overt, brutal exploitation is impossible.*" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 192) How does this mechanism work? Actors in the field of society are by no means equal. According to their economic, cultural and social capital, they take a position in the matrix of the field, a status so to say. The more "valued and volumed" one's capital is, the higher her or his status will be. Thereby, "*…the value of any form of capital depends, in part, upon social recognition*." (Crossley, 2008, p. 88) Individuals who occupy a similar position in the social space form a social class. As members of a certain class take similar positions in society, they are likely to occupy the same spatial locations, to work together, live, and interact together. According to this and the circumstances individuals meet (e.g. privilege or exclusion), a class-related habitus, a sense of belonging, emerges. A social class is connected to a certain lifestyle. Higher classes tend to distance themselves from lower classes and thereby from their preferences and customs. Also, "high" and "low" status is a matter of definition, as dominant groups determine which social and cultural capital is of value and thereby secure their advantageous position (Crossley, 2008). Reinforcement of inequality can be grasped well when taking a look at contemporary schooling. Here, knowledge and skills as well as habits of the higher classes are defined as important and normal, as a "currency" so to say. Pupils who bring different abilities, for instance use a different language or have variant habits or knowledge, face obstacles in participating in the educational exchange and are classified as deficient. School is defined to be an impartial distributor of cultural capital. Yet, in a disguised and probably also subconscious way, it requires the capital of the dominant classes already from the first day. Whoever possesses it, has good chances to be recognized as "talented", while others are likely to be labelled as under-achievers, feel unappreciated, and as a consequence, might even distance themselves from school. Thereby, pupils from low social classes have significantly less chances to acquire the appreciated cultural capital and are therefore again inhibited from leaving their disadvantageous status. Power relations are reinforced (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Crossley, 2008; Kuhlmann, 2008).

His understanding of social inequality, which as I would argue can be transferred well to German contexts, was an important reason for choosing Bourdieu's habitus, capital, and field for a theoretical view on the findings. The thinking tools help to avoid limited perspectives, like attributing the root cause for inequality to single actors or even to those people with low social status. Bourdieu gives an encompassing understanding and shows a whole system of processes

driving inequality. At the same time, individual and local acting as well as structural logic become visible.

2.5 Previous research

This subchapter wants to give an overview on previous research on childhood poverty. In order to present own research findings in a theoretical light and to enhance the logic of interpretations, it is essential to compare found material to the outcomes of earlier studies. Therefore, general research tendencies as well as, for the context of this thesis, outstanding projects are going to be introduced in the following. Like in the introduction chapter, this review starts from childhood poverty in general and continues over Western circumstances into the local contexts of Germany and Munich. The presented material will eventually help to link and contrast the findings of the thesis with existing material. It is important to note that merely a simplified summary of previous research can be given. The studies explored in detail are chosen from a wide range of noteworthy and important research projects as their features make them especially interesting in terms of the thesis.

2.5.1 The Young Lives Project

In the context of research on childhood poverty it is certainly necessary to mention the Young Lives project, an extensive, longitudinal research, following up about 12.000 children in 4 countries (Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam) for more than 15 years. The study is focusing on three main areas. The dynamics of childhood poverty are of interest, meaning for instance how familial, local and overriding events effect children's lives. Young Lives also investigates children's experience of poverty, which includes boys' and girls' own perceiving and reasoning as well as objective parameters such as health or schooling outcomes. The third area of focus is called "learning, time-use and life transitions" and looks upon everyday life of children affected by poverty and the wider structures in which they are embedded, such as family, school, work or local community. To find out about the life conditions children encounter, but also about their and their communities' perceptions and experience, Young Lives conducts repeated household surveys as well as in-depth interviews, group methods and case studies are applied with a subsample of the participants. One main objective is to provide a profound understanding between childhood poverty and the factors that influence it. In this way, the study aims to contribute to a policy which is able to tackle childhood poverty, and thereby poverty as

such, effectively (Oxford Department of International Development & University of Oxford, 2010).

The project is coordinated by researchers located at the University of Oxford and cooperates with international research teams in the particular countries, from governmental, academic or independent side. In over 15 years of research work, the Young Lives project accumulated a great amount of data, which is openly available (Young Lives, 2015b). The study continues to produce a row publications, amongst other policy recommendations. Thereby, it continuously provides essential information to policy makers (Young Lives, 2015a). Young Lives is an exceptional study not just because of its wide coverage and duration. It also takes a distinct focus in terms childhood poverty, the intersection of children's own experiencing, local circumstances and the impact of structural forces. Thereby, the project is able to uncover vital connections. As Young Lives is researching in the Global South, it seems to be little beneficial to compare its findings directly with the life worlds of the girls and boys met in Munich. Yet, it shall not be argued that the project and this thesis are incomparable. Moreover, Young Lives provides central guidance when it comes to researching childhood poverty: it is not enough to investigate merely the experience of poor girls and boys. One also has to consider local conditions and overriding processes in order to find to an encompassing understanding. Of course, the thesis is only able to do this in a limited way. Because of its scope, there is no possibility to acquire longitudinal or extensive structural data. Yet, processes of exclusion and the social circumstances children find themselves in will be considered in order to understand the issue of childhood poverty better.

2.5.2 Previous research in Germany

As the topic of childhood poverty is broad, certain limitations had to be made while looking for data the research findings could be directly contrasted to. Therefore, the decision was made to concentrate on childhood poverty in rich nations, preferably Europe. UNICEF is addressing a lack of data on the magnitude of childhood poverty in rich nations as well as the need for shared definition and measurement tools (UNICEF, 2012). Great Britain is one of the European states which seem to have dealt with the issue in an extensive manner. The country has a long research tradition in the context of childhood poverty (Reichwein, 2011). While reviewing research material, British studies were often found to be helpful and have therefore been applied to clarify findings in the analysis chapter. In order to enhance comparability furthermore, there was special focus on research from German contexts while reviewing previous studies. As

discussed in the introduction chapter, childhood poverty is a young research topic in Germany. There is still no shared way of defining or measuring the issue. Previously, especially statistics, extent and consequences were of interest for researchers. Poor children's experiences have entered the focus more recently. Childhood poverty has found a permanent entrance into the academic and political world and the number of publications is rising (Bertram, 2013; Reichwein, 2011). The German Youth Institute (DJI) provides an overview on common empirical findings, according to which certain factors (for instance unemployment, migration or single parenthood), which increase the likelihood of being poor, as well as likely effects (such as lower health and schooling success) are well documented (Hübenthal, 2009). Reporting from the side of the German state is subject to critique. The latest governmental Poverty and Wealth Reports show a tendency of euphemising the issue of childhood poverty. On a public level, the deprivation of girls and boys seems to be a highly uncomfortable topic (Reichwein, 2011). On the contrary, Munich's own official poverty report does not to downplay the matter. Childhood poverty is addressed in a straightforward manner and presented as a shortcoming (Landeshauptstadt München, 2012).

Two studies from the German context have been chosen for more detailed consideration, the World Vision Children Study of 2007, and a Munich research project on girls and young women in conflicting realities by Constance Engelfried and colleagues. The works and their significance to the thesis will be introduced in the following.

World Vision Children's Study 2007

The World Vision Children's Study 2007 is a qualitative and quantitative research project on children's lives in Germany. The study has been repeated in 2010 and 2013 (World Vision Deutschland e. V., 2013), yet the initial project from 2007 is highly interesting in terms of the thesis, as it takes a special focus on social disparities in childhoods. The focus is not set directly on childhood poverty, but the research from 2007 is pointing out inequalities in children's everyday lives and is therefore often referred to in the context of poverty research. The study is important not only because it is considerably big and way-leading. It is a quantitative work with an emphasis on children's perceptions and matters of daily lives. Thereby, topics also addressed by my informants are covered, such as family, schooling or friendship. With help of the WVC study, it is possible to compare the accounts of the Munich participants to children's lives in Germany in general. At the same time, social backgrounds are surveyed and therefore

tendencies among disadvantaged children as well as inequalities between them and children from better earning households can be revealed (World Vision Deutschland e.V., 2007). As a theoretical orientation, the study refers in detail to Childhood Studies and thereby shares central basic perceptions with the thesis. The authors stress that they take children's expertise and agency seriously. Boys and girls are the main informants. At the same time, societal realities and overriding influences are recognized and complement children's accounts. Thereby, two of the earlier described strands of Childhood Studies, the structural sociology of childhood as well as sociologies of children do find special consideration in the WVC study (Andresen & Hurrelmann, 2007). In terms of methodological proceeding, 1592 children between eight and eleven years were interrogated with help of an extensive, standardised questionnaire. Also parents filled a questionnaire, in order to gather information on familial backgrounds. The study contains a qualitative part, as well. Case studies have been conducted, together with twelve participants between six and eleven years. The account of each child is presented in individually in the final report (Schneekloth & Leven, 2007b). On over 400 pages, the World Vision Children's Study gives an appraisal of the current situation in the major areas of children's lives, for instance family, school, leisure time, peer group, politics, personality and participation. It is of essential importance for this thesis that the study emphasises how unequal life opportunities are distributed among German children regarding their social background (World Vision Deutschland e.V., 2007). One has to consider that the study is already nine years old at the time this thesis is edited. As this research is widely received in the context of childhood poverty and because there has been no significant change in German childhood politics or societal constellation since 2007, it can be assumed that the revealed tendencies are still valid. Statistical details come not into focus, but the broad trends the study points to.

A Munich study: Girls and young women in Blumenau

"Girls and young women dealing with discrepancies. Life circumstances, fields of tension and coping in a city part with special developmental needs.[4]" This research project edited by Constance Engelfried, Nicole Lormes and Birgit Schweimler investigates life realities of young females in a disadvantaged neighbourhood in Munich and thereby takes a special focus on their needs and the indications of this for social practice. The research interest is based on the observation that teenaged females frequently withdraw from public life in Munich (Engelfried,

[4] Translated from German by the author

Lormes, & Schweimler, 2012b). This study takes again a different research focus than the thesis. Yet, it is highly relevant as it investigates a marginalised context in Munich, where qualitative data on disadvantaged children is rarely to be found. The neighbourhood explored by the project, Blumenau, shares similar characteristics with the own research field, such as poverty, a high number of residents with migration background, social housing, a rather deficient economical and traffic infrastructure as well as a negative reputation. The authors describe Blumenau as an island in Munich, as it seems to be cut off of the city. But also green spaces and a broad offers of social work are available (Engelfried & Golling, 2012). It can be assumed that the Blumenau is highly comparable to the neighbourhood this thesis explores. The study finds it theoretical basis in gender studies and points out how women and girls take in many ways a disadvantaged position in comparison to men. Females find themselves in a field of tensions between expectations towards them, anticipated opportunities and societal realities. Gender is assumed to be one of many social categories which assort an individual to a standpoint in society and thereby, though it happens from a different angle, the study bears witness to processes of social inequality. (Engelfried, Lormes, & Schweimler, 2012a). The research took place as a cooperation of Munich College, the municipality and representatives from practice. Data was gathered by individual and group interviews of girls between 12 and 20 years, interviews with professionals as well as participative tools such as a film and photo project and a project day called “future workshop” (Engelfried, 2012b).

2.5.3 Additional material

Besides those two bigger projects, a whole row of articles and studies on distinct topics have been used to compare and theorise the own research findings. Here, usage is too singular to give an extensive portray, yet the applied material shall be introduced briefly. Work from Germany, Great Britain, India, the United States, and Finland finds consideration. A variety of topics is covered, amongst other multiculturalism, children’s perceptions of poverty, language, childhood in urban spaces, communication pattern in schools as well as alienation and prejudice. Research and scientific articles from the fields of sociology, education and social work frequently found their way into the thesis.

The field of Childhood Studies, Pierre Bourdieu’s thinking tools habitus, capital, and field, children’s agency and a variety of previous research projects are now established as a theoretical basis for the thesis. Before the concepts are applied to work with the findings of this study, the

following methodology chapter will provide the reader with extensive elaborations regarding fieldwork and data collection.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter builds a bridge between methodological theory and field work practicalities. It informs about the research context and methods used to explore the field. The main objective is to convey how epistemological standpoints, the research focus, as well as the field itself shape the research methods used to investigate childhood poverty in Munich.

In the following, the reader will be introduced to epistemological perspectives and the concrete focus of the research. Subsequently, the context of the study will be explained: the field, a disadvantaged area in Munich, as well as the participants, elementary school children and adult professionals. Research methods, namely participatory observation, interviews and various participatory tools will be described in detail, followed by a portrait of the ethical considerations made throughout the research process. All deliberations will be illustrated with examples from the fieldwork. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the analysing techniques used to interpret the gathered data.

3.2 Epistemological placement: A qualitative research with children as participants

The research questions ask for experience and activity of poor children in the context of a marginalised area in Munich. As a first essential decision on the planning stage, the choice for a qualitative research approach has been made. It appears to be natural to research this individual matters in an extensive and relational way.

It is certainly a simplified way of portraying the methodological landscape of social research, but one main discussion among scholars revolves around whether quantitative or qualitative methods are more appropriate to explore social reality. It shall not be argued that qualitative methods are superior to quantitative ones. Both approaches are equally valuable, but for this very research context qualitative methods are to prefer. Quantitative tools deliver knowledge on a large number of participants and can provide statistically relevant material. Yet, this data can only illuminate in regard to single correlations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As explained in the introduction section, the phenomenon of childhood poverty is complex and multi-layered. Therefore, tools are needed that enable the researcher to go deep into the issue and see it from

various perspectives. Quantitative methods are less suitable for this purpose. Instead, a combination of several qualitative methods, a triangulation, is helpful in acquiring profound and manifold knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Experience and activity in the context of childhood poverty are furthermore highly personal matters. Quantitative methods, such as a questionnaire, are unlikely to provide the platform needed for communicating rich individual information. Applied tools need to be relational and give space for reflection and conversation. It is assumed, that knowledge emerges in a process of interaction and shared meaning-making (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Quantitative approaches are often chosen from positivistic standpoints. A positivistic researcher assumes that an objective truth readily exists and can be caught with the right tools. He or she is on the outlook for objectivity and generalisation. In contrast, this thesis takes a post-positivistic position. Reality is understood to be something which can only be described by looking at it from many perspectives, but never captured objectively (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Accordingly, the goal of the thesis is not to convey universal, empirical statements on childhood poverty in Munich, but to describe and represent the children and their environment in an authentic way. Many scholars tend to be sceptical towards qualitative methodology and frequently utter concern about the reliability and validity of the produced data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Is this study reliable, meaning would the methods produce the same outcome if applied another time (Ennew et al., 2009f)? Reliability is pursued by describing the research process as detailed as possible. All undertakings shall be comprehensible, so that the tools could be repeated if wished. Yet, each data collection necessarily remains unique as the exact same circumstances in a research field cannot be found a second time. Validity also poses a challenge in qualitative research. Does the data represent the truth (Ennew et al., 2009f)? Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 5) phrase the qualitative researcher's standpoint in a pragmatic way: "*Objective reality can never be captured.*". By applying a triangulation, exploring childhood poverty with different research methods and from different angles, the thesis looks for an approximating to an objective understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As already mentioned, it is not the aim to deliver empirically true statements, but to give a deep and authentic representation and understanding of the researched interest. With qualitative methods, one can gain a deep insight, acknowledging the informants' context, voice, and meaning-making and in the end – share a nuanced picture of the field (Tracy, 2013). As it will be explored later, settling for qualitative methods caused some challenges along the way. Poverty is a highly sensible issue in Germany as well as children tend to be shielded from strangers. Accordingly, the plan

to conduct relational research on children affected by poverty met constraints and the refusal of gatekeepers.

Another decision made on an early stage at the planning process is to work with children as informants. The research interest, the experiencing and activity of children, leaves no alternative than to directly engage with boys and girls. Here, the researcher's perception of childhood substantially influences the methodological approach. I am convinced that it is fruitful to recognise children as competent actors and take their contributions seriously. Their perspectives highly matter and that is why field work is done together with them as informed and active participants (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). It is assumed that children are not essentially different from adults. Therefore I chose ways to directly communicate with children, for example interviews, and engaged in conversation with them. However, while not being essentially different, children are still different from adults: they are regarded to be less competent and thus are controlled and treated unlike to people of older age. There is a power imbalance between children and adults, the young generation is used to this and at the same time well aware of it (Punch, 2002). These unequal power relations can constrain a research process, making extensive reflections on the own adult appearance of the researcher necessary (see section 3.4.1). Additionally, actual differences between children and adults have to be taken into account. Young people might have other means of communicating and a different set of skills. So, one cannot expect them to embrace methods that do not make concessions to them at all (Morrow, 2008). While acknowledging them as competent actors and research participants, one also has to make advances towards children in terms of the research approach. In order to enhance children's capabilities of reflecting and expressing as well as to temper power imbalances, participatory tools have been applied, namely drawing, mapping, and focus group discussion. Furthermore, an argumentation by Ennew et al. (2009a) plays a strong role in the study: Children have a right to be properly researched. According to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), four vital matters have to be considered when doing research with children. First of all, studies have to adhere to the highest possible scientific standards. Also, children's perspectives must and will be a critical part of the theses. Methods need to be suitable to enable children to reflect and to communicate their perspectives. For this purpose, a range of participatory tools was utilised. Additionally, children must not be harmed or exploited by research. Extensive ethical considerations have been undertaken before and during research (3.6). Those standards are essential for studies, which strive to be useful to science and beneficial to children. Besides ensuring that a research is necessary and worth doing (1.3.1), it is substantial to also pursue this notions of "proper research" in the actual field work.

Having deliberated on the epistemology of the study, the chapter will continue with exploring how also the research interest influenced the methodological design.

3.3 The research interest

Alongside the epistemological standpoints, the research interest is path-breaking when it comes to the choice and design of methods. The thesis seeks to find answers to the following questions: What are children's experiences of everyday life (school, leisure time, social relationships)? What are their perceptions of living in a marginalised neighbourhood? Which challenges do they meet in their everyday environment? What kind of capacities and resources are available to them? And: in what ways do children become active and strive for advantages?

Those research questions are formulated in a broad manner, too broad to present them in a unprocessed manner to participants. Ennew et al. (2009c) suggest to break the research question down into a row of detailed questions. In the context of this study, it seemed necessary to explore the life realities of children in a broad and qualitative way and therefore subtopics were formed. As described earlier, childhood poverty is a multi-layered phenomenon. It can interplay with many dimensions of a child's life. Accordingly, the study is taking a look into several aspects together with the participants.

A central focus is set on *children's daily life and the challenges connected to it*: How is the children's daily and weekly structure? What do they perceive as challenging and how do they face these challenges? This is supposed to give an insight on what the children find difficult and the strategies they have developed to cope with everyday life. I hope for basic information on the children's experiencing and coping. Important are furthermore *networks*: How are children's networks in town? How are family and peer relations, and which institutions are they connected to? The quality of networks has been identified as a central protective factor when it comes to the effects of poverty (Holz, 2010; Zander, 2010b). Furthermore, taking a look on children's *leisure time* shall provide essential insight: How do children become active in their leisure time? How do they use the city space for that and who is involved in leisure time activities? A positive use of leisure time and control over own activities is besides good networks a central advantage when it comes to a child's perceived well-being (Holz, 2010; Hurrelmann et al., 2011). Also *happiness* plays a role in the research: Do the children consider themselves as happy? What makes them happy and unhappy? Insight in the perceived well-being of the children and also on their sense of being effective in regards to their own happiness

is needed (Holz, 2010). Last but not least, the city of *Munich* is a topic. What do children like and not like about their city? What does life in Munich constitute for them and what is their perspective on the wealth in the city? The study has the aim to research childhood poverty in the specific context of Munich. It is therefore important to discuss the city together with the participants. Their living environment is furthermore a central factor, possibly posing both advantages and disadvantages (Bruhns & Mack, 2001).

Exploring these subcategories will eventually lead to a conclusion on the research question, but how exactly do they inform the research methods? First of all, having several thematically foci makes it inevitably to apply more than one method. Only a combination of tools enables to investigate a multi-layered research interest. The subcategories give furthermore important orientation for the data collection. In terms of more extensive methods, like interviews and participatory observation, all the subcategories build key areas of interest. For each participatory tool, one thematic focus has been chosen. This matter is explored further in section 3.5, the research methods, after the research context has been introduced in greater detail.

3.4 The research context

The following elaborations are going to explore the access process and the characteristics of the field. A portrait of the participants and the researcher's own adult role will be given. The reader is supposed to win insight into the circumstances the research encountered.

3.4.1 The field: A marginalised neighbourhood in Munich

Choosing the field and negotiating access

During developing of the study, it was planned to enter the field through an institution of social work, such as day care centre, youth club or street work offer. This entrance should be placed either in a disadvantaged city part of Munich, or have a high number of young clients from low income households. This approach should make a separation between poor and non-poor children unnecessary, as this was considered as ethically challenging and impractical. Also, the participants should be met in an environment of their daily life. Throughout the spring semester, many gatekeepers and institutions have been contacted. Negotiating access posed a major challenge. The strategy was to operate in a broad manner, I wrote to several organisations, public organs, scholars as well as offers of social work. Many of those gatekeepers were positive

and helpful and supplied me with information or further useful contacts. However, the chains of communication mostly came to an end, as I did not receive further response or the request was refused. One scholar rejected the research very harshly, describing it as unethical and denunciating. A certain silence and refusal from the field might be a hint on how delicate the topic of childhood poverty in Germany is. Being poor is certainly linked to stigmatization and shame (Beyer, 2013). Furthermore, the child takes a protected and separated position in the German society. Seeking to access children for researching a sensitive topic in a qualitative way is accordingly not a simple task. Finally, it turned out to be fruitful to be in Munich personally and talk face-to-face to professionals in the field. A counselling offer in one of Munich's disadvantaged city parts was extraordinarily interested in the research. After a conversation and a presentation of the study design, the professionals contacted a day care centre, connected to a school. The staff there was as well very open, agreed to welcome me as an intern and offered the possibility to conduct the research. Suddenly, I found myself with full access to a day care environment. This was exactly the field aspired for during the planning stage and even better, also the possibility to witness schooling opened up. Building contact to the field in a broad manner combined with a little luck ultimately led to success. Encountering especially open and committed gatekeepers granted me access at last.

Characteristics of the field

The field is a disadvantaged city part of Munich with a high poverty rate. The district is characterised by a lack in infrastructure, high poverty- and migration rate and social housing. At the same time, it is important to mention that the city of Munich is paying attention to the quarter. Outside areas are green and well-groomed, as well as many public services are located in the field. The children reside mostly in serial houses with several apartments, they have a short way to their school and also live close by each other. Despite of being part of a big city, the area is a smaller neighbourhood, with many of the residents knowing each other and possibilities for children to move about, like parks and play grounds. The boarders of the living area are clear cut by forest and fields as well as two major roads. It thereby has urban characteristics, but also offers commonalities of smaller towns to the children. The district has a bad reputation, as it has been impoverished for several decades. Nevertheless, conditions improved considerably in the last years, so that the area is certainly less deprived than assumed by the Munich people. First conversations with professionals in the field showed that the

residents are at unease with their low income and material shortages. Poverty means stigma for them.

Entering the field

The field was visited every day for nearly five weeks. I was present from the last school hours to the late afternoon, when the children went home. Entering the field caused as well challenges. I assumed it as valid for children as well as for the staff, that establishing contact is facilitated if the researcher has a legitimacy, a purpose so to say, in the field. (Solberg, 1996). Therefore, the decision was made to take the role of an intern. The day care offered the opportunity to find participants and conduct the research. In return, I supported the pedagogues in their daily tasks. Also the children found it easy to accept a new intern, as those are quite common in the German social sector. Taking this role seemed furthermore wise, as an intern has considerably less authority compared to other staff members. I introduced myself as "*an intern, who wants to learn from and about the children who live here*".

Adult role

This opens up questions regarding the adult role of the researcher. It is assumed that children are well aware about differences between adults and them. Power imbalances create a distance between the researcher and children, which is hindering the research process and biasing data (Punch, 2002). Therefore researchers have to pay close attention to their appearance. Different approaches are suggested in the discourse on this issue. From my point of view, power imbalances cannot be denied. An adult who tries to become child-like seems little credible and irritates children as well as professionals. Taking children seriously contains to acknowledge their awareness of age differences. Yet, a researcher who remains fully in his academic role and does not make concessions to children at all will find communication with boys and girls inhibited by power imbalances. The golden mean can be found in an authentic and pleasant adult, who appreciates children's contributions. Inspiring at this point was Tatek Abebe's (2009) "friendly adult": Being a friendly adult means to build up a positive and trusting connection to the participants as a starting point. Authority and adult specific appearance should be avoided, so I tried to appear and dress in an authentic and unintimidating manner. Attention to the children was paid and I joined into their activities when it was wished and appropriate. Exercising authority was left to the staff. This approach went well. The girls and boys were

including and welcomed me to join into their day care life. They indeed distinguished between me and other adults. One example illustrates this quite vividly: I was frequently included into games. On a very hot afternoon, the children were allowed to put on their swimwear and play with water guns on the schoolyard. It would have been not appropriate to participate, so I stayed with the staff, who supervised the game. Some children seemed confused about this and asked why I am not joining them today. The "friendly adult" approach worked well and made a connection to the children possible. It turned out to be highly beneficial to know and to be able to appraise the participants when it came to finalising the design of the tools and applying them. Maintaining a friendly role also caused some challenges.

The children are using the last names of staff and the German respectful address "Sie" when speaking to adults. The original planning envisioned that I will be addressed by my first name, but this was seen as inappropriate by the professionals, so a compromise had to be found. We agreed that the children address me with "Miss Bösch", but are allowed to use the equal second person "Du". Even though I was a different adult, I was still considered to be grown-up by the participants. Children sought the help of the staff to resolve conflicts. A girl came to tell me about a unpleasant encounter with a classmate. She wanted a punishment of the girl, whom she had been arguing with and was disappointed, when I refused to do so. Furthermore, some boys decided to put me to test after a while in the field and encountered me with disregard. In those cases, I decided to insist on mutual respect. Allowing them to push me around would not have been very authentic either. Being the "intern" also bore disadvantages. In exchange for access, the staff of course also expected support in authority conflicts. This was navigated by refraining from disciplining or rebuking children. At the same time, anti-social behaviour was not approved of as well as I stood up for myself when being disregarded.

3.4.2 The participants

Both adults and children participated in the research. Children were the main informants, while adult participants were supposed to give me an understanding of professional, structural and long-term circumstances in the field (Qvortrup, 2008).

The young participants are to equal parts boys and girls in first and second grade, seven and eight years old. Most of the children have a migration background, originating from a great variety of countries. A big percentage of them are Muslim. Yet, this did not cause division in the microcosms of the day care group. Because of the structural characteristics of the children's

living environment, it can be assumed that nearly all of them come from a household with an income below or at the poverty line.

The children are divided into several groups (containing about 20 pupils) in the day care centre, each being in the responsibility of one pedagogue. The decision was made to be a guest in only one group, in order to be able to get to know the children well and plan the design of the methods thoroughly. The time in the field would have been too little to establish rapport with two groups of children and additionally designing and applying research tools twice. Choosing to work with only one group assured a careful planning and sufficient depth of the research. The group of the first and second graders was selected because they were assumed to be reflected and experienced but not transitioning into adolescence yet. It can be problematized that the children had no chance to object my presence in their group. Short time and control by gatekeepers did not allow a planning of the research together with the children. However, it was the decision of the children themselves how much they wanted to contribute to the research. Every research method had an opt-in approach and children were as well free to refrain from communication with me.

In addition to research with children, interviews with seven adults from various professions, namely social work, schooling, pedagogic and health care, took place. Different professional perspectives provide insight on the research topics from different ankles. Contact with the adult participants was established during the field work. The professionals were about one third male and two third female. They have been interviewed as experts, as they have profound education and practical experience.

3.5 The research methods

Now the very tools applied to find out about the research interest will be introduced. Thereby, the terms “tool” and “methods” will be used synonymously, as the different methods of research felt indeed like tools of data collection. Participant observation, individual drawing, mapping, focus group discussion and interviews with children and adults have been applied. Each tool sheds light on the research interest from a different angle. This triangulation helps to gain deeper insight in the life realities in the field in order to be eventually able to give answers to the research questions. A combination of several methods is furthermore including and enhances children’s abilities to communicate and reflect (Clark, 2005; Morrow, 2008). This became visible in the field, as some children particularly enjoyed and contributed much during the

participatory data collection, but appeared more inhibited when they had to speak directly, for example in interviews. The exact design of the tools has been developed during fieldwork, after establishing rapport with the participants. Some methods turned out to be very fruitful, while others caused challenges. The subtopics of the research interest (challenges in daily life, networks, leisure time, happiness and the city of Munich) set the central thematic focus.

3.5.1 Participant observation

Participant observation was conducted throughout the fieldwork. It builds the basis of all understanding. From participating in the children's activities, while observing, learning and taking notes, I hoped to gain a basic understanding of the circumstances in the field as well as to achieve a friendly relationship to the girls and boys (Ennew et al., 2009d). As explained earlier, a good rapport is crucial, as it tempers power imbalances and enhances children's ability and readiness to communicate and reflect (Clark, 2005; Punch, 2002).

As a participant observer, I was present in the field and joined in the children's activities, like playing, sports, conversations and meals. During the day, or mostly in the evening, I took an hour or two to reflect on the happenings and noted everything in a detailed manner. At first, this approach was held very broad, the usual time-structure and how the children acted was written down. After being familiar with the usual flow in the day care, the observations became more focused. Now, I noted occurrences that fitted to one of the five subcategories of the research interest or events that seemed extraordinary or especially interesting to me (Ennew et al., 2009d). Participant observation was experienced to be a fruitful tool. It was not difficult to find occasions to join the children. I could learn a lot from them and was able to observe in a broad as well as a specific manner. Rich field notes resulted from this tool and also a good relationship with the children was established.

Nevertheless, certain issues appeared to be problematic. First of all, when is participation suitable and when not? By taking the friendly adult role, I am in the position to certainly play with children and engage with them openly. But I am still an adult, so attending is not appropriate all the time. Some activities definitely seemed more suitable than others. I played football, painted or joined board games, while refraining from more imaginative playing or games that were dedicated solely to children, such as water fights or the bouncy castle. Also, it was important to sense if the children want me to participate or not. It is furthermore to question if participatory observation is a method which is undertaken with full consent of the

participants. Though being informed about the research and its tools, it is likely that the children were not constantly aware of the fact that I am doing observations. The boys and girls of course had the possibility to engage with me or to avoid me, and some certainly clearly decided for one or the other. Also, permanently pointing out that I am observing the children would have caused a feeling of awkwardness and not contributed to a good research experience for the children either.

3.5.2 Participatory methods

Participatory methods found their way into the research design in accordance to the way the thesis perceives social research and childhood. This approach is not merely about excerpting knowledge, but recognises children as partners in research and gives them a platform to share their perspectives. A flexible set of tools with different kinds of stimuli supports girls and boys to reflect and communicate. In that way, the strengths of single participants can be played out. The combination of various tools ensures furthermore a more stable triangulation (Clark, 2005; Darbyshire, MacDougall, & Schiller, 2005). Thereby, participatory methods help to acknowledge children's right of being properly researched. At the same time, they are flexible and I was able to modulate them according to the peculiarities of the participants and the field, making research more enjoyable and fruitful for the boys and girls. Two visual methods, an individual drawing and a mapping, helped to think about topics in a non-verbal way and subsequently gave a starting point for conversations. Using a focus group discussion, I applied a verbal tool to recognise the young informants' need to talk and tell (Ennew et al., 2009d). Furthermore, each method had a different thematic focus and thereby enabled us to explore the research interest from different viewpoints. The circumstances and occurrences during participatory data collection were recorded with a standard observation sheet, as proposed by Ennew et al (2009e, 6.7). Communication was obviously facilitated in several cases. Especially the example of one boy is striking. He painted a vivid picture during the first round of data collection, where the children individually drew a picture to the topic: "What makes me happy?" When the very same question was asked to him in the interview, he answered after a short time of silence: "*No idea!*"

Individual Drawing: What makes me happy?

As a first participatory tool, I decided to apply an individual drawing on the just mentioned topic: "What makes me happy?" It was recognised that nearly all of the children enjoy drawing and frequently do so in the day care. It appeared to be a natural way of expression to the boys and girls. The task was rather simple and consumed little time, well suitable as a first warming-up for both the children and the researcher. Furthermore, the focus was set on the interest category of happiness. As this is a very individual matter, a less interactive approach seemed to be beneficial here. I hoped to get an authentic insight on what the children consider as important and positive for themselves. The finished pictures were subject to a short conversation with each participant (Ennew et al., 2009d).

The girls and boys were informed after the daily story reading. I told them that I want to learn about what makes them happy from a picture drawn by them. It was clearly stated that participation is optional and I explained that everybody should paint the picture individually, because every child has a very own perception of what makes him or her happy. As some children were missing that day, I offered the tool a second time on the next day. The children had a chance to ask questions and some time to considerate their participation (Morrow, 2008). Then, pens and paper were fetched and children began to draw. The pictures were opening up a little talk later, the participating children explained me what they have painted and why. Additionally, they were asked for their consent on publishing the picture. All of them agreed. I was also able to keep most of the pictures, two girls allowed me to copy their drawings. The pictures and the filled standard observation sheet were put in an envelope, which was sealed subsequently. Two days after the data collection, I gave a little token to the participants. They were allowed to take a drop from the group's candy box.

The children seemed to enjoy drawing, most of them took quite long time and put effort into the picture. Eleven of them attended. I was surprised that the girls and boys did not feel inhibited in drawing, they were able and not reluctant to depict all kinds of things. The results are vivid, most of the pictures proof an ability to great reflection. Even though the children worked independently to a large extent, there has been some influencing and copying (Punch, 2002). Some pictures share common topics and particularly one boy tried to supervise his neighbour. The subsequent conversations went well, the children told about their pictures in a detailed manner. They chose mostly joys in everyday life as motives.

It can be criticised that an individual drawing is not very interactive and therefore more designed to extract knowledge than to construct it together with the participants. Is it a participatory tool?

I would argue that the conversations on the pictures make it indeed participatory. The way of express something by drawing was very natural to the children, so it facilitated communication for them. Furthermore, the topic "What makes me happy?" is something unique for every participant. Therefore, data collection nearly must start out with an individual reflection. It also introduced the children to the research process in an unintimidating way, before going on with more interactive and complicated methods, for instance the mapping of the city part.

Group Mapping: Our city part

A tool needed be designed in order to find out about the children's perception and use of the city part they live in. What do they enjoy there and what do they experience as unpleasant? This tool should also give an outlook on their networks and movements in the area. Also the subtopic "Munich" was in focus. In order to explore this issue of space, a mapping seemed interesting. However, two shortcomings of this method needed to be overcome: first of all, I could not leave the day care environment with the participants in order to map parts of the area. Furthermore, an actual charting would have been fairly complicated and thereby distracting from the things that really were of interest: Children's experience and activity in the neighbourhood. Therefore, it was decided to design a more open and interactive mapping. Elements of a group drawing were added, in order to enhance the creativity and spontaneity of the mapping tool. A large paper, having added some simple, empty roads as a stimulus was the starting point. This paper should be filled with drawings of places from the field, regardless of actual size, look or position. In order to make the participants reflect and to gain deeper understanding, a conversation should emerge during and after the drawing. The children were therefore able to evaluate the places in regards to how much they like them. From this point a communication should arise (Ennew et al., 2009d).

The children were presented a huge sheet (about 2 m^2), with nothing on it except for a pattern of roads. I asked the children to find a spot on the paper and to draw whatever they can think of being in the city part, things they like or they do not like. It was also explained that this should be not an actual map but that things can be wherever they happen to be drawn. The participants were able to work in groups or alone, just how they wished. After finishing the drawing, I gave out red and yellow stickers to the girls and boys. Now they could evaluate the different places on the map, giving a yellow sticker for "good", or a red one for "not good". It was clearly stated that this assessment should take place in regards to the actual places, not the quality of the drawings. While the children set those marks in the map, I went around and asked

them about their evaluation. I noted their statements next to the dots into the map. Participation was again optional. Children who did not want to participate or lost interest in the tool, were able to go into the school yard. After about one hour, the most of the informants lost interest and the tool was concluded. A standard observation sheet was filled and sealed together with the map in an envelope.

The tool was a successful, nearly all the children participated. Everyone contributed places and details from the neighbourhood to the paper. Though the design was map like, the girls and boys did not mind that it was not depicting the area accurately. Adults taking a glimpse on the tool were more concerned about the missing scale preservation. Children eagerly put different dots to the paper. I went around and asked them about their evaluation. They were able to give vivid and reflected statements on how they felt about a place. Discussions emerged. I won the impression that they know their quarter very well. A colourful and lively "map" evolved, with many places described as exciting or enjoyable by the children. The children gave an overwhelming feedback that the tool was fun. They asked me to provide them with more large sheets and some of them did similar drawings in the weeks to come.

While working with the dots to evaluate the places worked fine for most of the children, one girl was troubled by this. She was keen on participating, but did not want to draw on the big sheet. Instead, she worked on a smaller paper. After reassuring her, that the evaluation is not about the quality of the drawings but about the popularity of the depicted places, she agreed on her paper being attached to the big sheet with tape. The tool might have caused some discomfort with her, which maybe could have been avoided with a more careful explanation. Two boys did not follow the instruction, and painted something which is not related to the city part, the emblems of their favourite football clubs. I decided to not interrupt them, as I valued their participation and hoped that they eventually would go over to paint something else. They lost interest soon and went outside. The drawing caused a bit of a distraction of the children towards the matter of football clubs. When I started asking the children for the reasons of their evaluation ("Why have you given a yellow dot here?"), some immediately thought that they made a mistake and tried to remove their dots. After another explanation, the children understood that it is solely about their own opinion and did not refrain from talking openly. The initial confusion shows that they are probably not used to be asked for their beliefs. Adults might tend to ask questions to control knowledge or hint towards mistakes. It also pinpoints that despite of taking a friendly adult role, I was still associated with authority to some degree. Furthermore, I might have formulated my questions in a too straightforward or intimidating way. One group of girls

still worked on the paper as most of the children already had left to play outside. One member of the group got bored, but stayed because her friends wanted to continue. I reassured her that she is free to leave, but she rather stayed with the other girls. This opens up issues regarding voluntariness, as she did not want to continue drawing but still did.

Focus Group Discussion: Radio programme on school and holidays

As last participatory tool, a focus group discussion was applied. As the participants were experienced as well as reflected and able to express themselves, it seemed fruitful to apply a tool that builds up on conversation and language (Ennew et al., 2009d). After working with two visual tools earlier, I wanted to give room for the children to evolve a longer discussion. Thereby, the subcategories "challenges in daily life" and "use of leisure time" set the thematic focus. As a perspective on the research interest, two dimensions of everyday life were chosen: School and summer holidays. It was looked out for statements and thoughts on as well the leisure time and the working time the children spent in school. The discussion should thereby be very open, guiding was avoided. Inspired by a discussion approached experienced in a lecture on children's rights (BARN3102, spring term 2015), I prepared five keywords, namely "school", "summer holidays", "fun", "boredom", and "homework". The words were printed in large and colourful letters, each on one sheet, which I presented to the children to give orientation in the discussion. Otherwise, I refrained from leading the conversation. The tool caused one big challenge: From child's point of view, a focus group discussion by itself might not be very appealing. First of all, young pupils might not be used to discussing, as the German elementary school has generally little room for participation (Leven & Schneekloth, 2007b). Furthermore, a plain discussion is a very adult way of communicating. In order to make the tool attractive to opt-in, and ensure concentration, I connected the discussion with the recording of a little radio programme, the "school and summer holiday programme". This gave the discussion a purpose in the first place and enhanced attractiveness. It also put a result to the children's contribution. A discussion might have had no real purpose and visible (or audible) outcome, and therefore could have appeared meaningless and unsatisfying to the children. It shall not be argued that this is child-specific, also adult participants might feel this way. Therefore, it was decided to give the discussion a radio theme. First, a conversation of the experts (children are indeed experts on the matter of school and summer holidays) should take place. After the discussion, and hopefully a meaning-making process, each expert was asked to

give a statement to the radio. These statements were recorded and later put together to a radio programme by the researcher.

As usual, the children were informed about the tool in the afternoon. I told them that we are going to hold an expert discussion to a topic highly familiar to them, school and holidays, and record a little radio play afterward. The exact procedure was explained as well as that this is helpful for me to learn about what they think and do. Many children wished to join, so two focus group discussions were held with 5, respectively 6 participants. We found an undisturbed room and the conversation was recorded with the children's consent. The two focus group discussions were held in the same manner, but with different outcome.

The children understood the approach well and were not shy to speak. It became highly visible that their way of holding a discussion is differing from what adults, or academics, are used to. The boys and girls tended to speak in a row, they gave room for everybody to make a statement, and usually follow the statements that have been made before (I also hate school, because…). It was important for them to be heard by the others and me. In the course of a conversation, they found positive and negative arguments to every key point, but were seldom expressing both at the same time. Sometimes they fell in to telling about themselves or joking, which again is, as I would argue, not child-specific. Their discussion does not resemble an argument, as scholars might define it. It is more a chain of statements, which are mostly connected and build up on each other. I would disagree with Ennew et al. (2009d), who consider the method as failed in this case. We have to recognize that young people have different ways of communicating verbally, also because they are not able to participate in adult style discussions. Nevertheless, the participants showed a high degree of reflection and thought on the keywords presented to them.

The data collection did not take place as frictionless as with previous tools. The informants were often distracted, especially in the second group. The point of time might have been unfortunate. It was one school week left until the summer holidays and the weather already had been extraordinarily hot for a long period of time. Some of the children clearly wanted to move and play. I felt empathetic with them, the unpleasant temperatures were tiresome to me as well. The boys and girls had the possibility to leave, but wished to stay. In this unsettled state, a lots of things became a distraction, for example the audio recorder or the room itself as playing space. While the first group was calmer, the second group became very excited, so that I had to ask the children for concentration and finally decided to abbreviate the data collection by one keyword. Keeping the focus group discussion short and diverting definitely enhanced the

children's concentration on the method, but distractions and restlessness due to understandable reasons could not be avoided. This surely influenced quality and quantity of the data, the first focus group discussion was longer and more in depth, as the participants focused better than the boys and girls in the second round.

3.5.3 Interviews

Besides participatory tools, interviews take an essential part in the research design. First of all, interviews with adult experts have been conducted throughout the fieldwork in order to gain a structural, professional and long-term overview on the conditions in the neighbourhood. Children are, because of their societal position and young age, usually not able to gain profound understanding of these matters (Qvortrup, 2008). Also interviews with children were a natural part of the research design, as they are assumed to be not essentially different from adults. I experienced that children can be highly reflective and communicate their opinions well. This convinced me that interviews are not only possible, but also able to provide information other tools might not deliver in the same depth. As an interviewer, I set a thematic focus with questions, but otherwise the participants chose what to tell about. Thereby I might whether be "the traveller" (letting the conversation develop freely) nor "the miner" (searching target-oriented for specific information), two interviewer types introduced by Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), but a balance between both. By giving thematic impulses and otherwise free hand to the participants, I would consider myself as a "guide" during the conversation. All interviews can be classified as "semi-structured" (Ennew et al., 2009d).

Interviews with children

The interviews took place in the last week of the field work, in order to ensure a good rapport and familiarity with the research process from side of the young informants. Written consent of the parents was collected, and the children had again the opportunity to opt-in after being informed about the tool. The subcategories of the research interest set the thematic focus: The participating boys and girls were asked about each topic, with around three questions that invite to talk about positive and negative aspects as well as their activity. Otherwise I asked follow up questions, in order to prolong interesting parts of the conversations. All questions were designed to be open and non-leading (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). It was furthermore paid attention to an appropriate language, as most of the children have another mother tongue than German. To

ensure the children's emotional comfort, each interview was opened and ended with a feel-good question, about own good qualities and joy (Ennew et al., 2009b). They received furthermore a little token and an ethical tool, described more detail in the ethics section of this chapter. Interviews might be more problematic tools in regards to power relations. Being alone and questioned with a researcher can easily cause a feeling of awkwardness for boys and girls. Therefore, good rapport was crucial and children were able to choose the interview venue themselves, drawing back from an experience of Martin Woodhead, who found his data collection constrained by choosing a room his child participants felt highly uncomfortable with (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). To make entering in the interview more pleasant, I proposed a role change, where the children would be the interviewer first and ask questions to me (Ennew et al., 2009d). I ensured anonymity and confidentiality and the children were told that they can share whatever they like, but do not have to answer questions if they do not want to. They also had the chance to end an interview. The conversations have been recorded with their agreement.

In the course of the last week, 9 children volunteered to be interviewed. They showed quite different behaviour in the interviews. While some seemed rather overwhelmed by being asked questions, others were obviously pleased to be able to tell about themselves. The first group remained rather silent and did not share much. Some children used the interview as a communication platform and told even more than necessary to answer the questions. Accordingly, the child interviews lasted from 5 to over 30 minutes. Most embraced the role change and enjoyed being the interviewer, others seemed bewildered about this suggestion. The participants chose different venues, some chose a room which they liked, apparently unminding of being alone with me. Others decided for a separate corner in the play room or the school yard. After the first afternoon with three interviews, I changed the questioning slightly. A couple of phrasings turned out to be difficult, also two questions were to complex and did not deliver good answers. I broke those questions down into two and made better experience the next day.

Also interviewing caused some challenges. German custom requires to inform parents and collect their signatures before questioning children. One boy lacked this consent, but eagerly wanted to be interviewed. To his great disappointment, I had to refuse to interview him several times. In the end, he managed to convince his parents and brought the signed information sheet. This process was obviously frustrating for him. Also giving a token after the interviews caused some doubt along the way. While having good reasons to show appreciation and reward the participants' contribution with stickers, I had the suspicion that this reward was the main

motivation for a few children to join the interview. There is nothing wrong with the children striving for advantages, but I hope that the token was small enough that the participation of children who are highly uncomfortable with this tool could be avoided. Furthermore, the interviews could not deliver good information in any case, about 3 of them remained rather superficial. Also those girls and boys delivered valuable statements, but it is to question if the interviewing was pleasant to them and beneficial enough to the research to put up with their effort.

Interviews with adults

Six expert interviews took place during the field work, one of them involving two interviewees. The adult interviews should give insight in professional and more structural issues. Children cannot be expect to overview structural layers, therefore, adult experts had to be found as informants. To win understanding from different perspectives, I chose to interview experts from different professions, namely pedagogics, early pedagogics, teaching, medicine, and social work. Professionals were contacted via e-mail or asked personally for an interview. All of them were encountered in the field or during negotiating access. The questions revolved around the subtopics of the research interest, but also contained general questions on the field, questions to get a glimpse on how the adults perceive children and questions especially for the respective field of profession. Furthermore, I encouraged to tell more when necessary. Matters that appeared especially interesting during the conversation were also explored further. With consent of the interviewees, the conversations were recorded. They were also enlightened about confidentiality, anonymity and the nature of the research interview.

I considered interviews with adults to be a grateful task. The professionals were pleased to be able to share their experience. Accordingly, a great amount of material could be gathered. Yet, it also has to be kept in mind that also experts are hold personal opinions and beliefs as well as they do come from other environments than the researched neighbourhood. This matter will be to be taken into account during the analysis of the data.

3.6 Ethical considerations and challenges

As explored earlier, the thesis wants to take children's right to be properly researched seriously (Ennew et al., 2009). This also entails an extensive reflection on ethical matters. High scientific

standards are infusible intertwined with research ethics. The study design was evaluated and approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD). A wide range of ethical considerations has been made before going into the field. In some cases, I felt well prepared, in others unexpected challenges occurred and dilemmas had to be navigated. It turned out to be helpful to be somewhat familiar with the field before applying the first tools. Also the pedagogical professionals supported me with an appraisal of situations in which I was not quite sure about the appropriate way to go. Though a section for ethics is reserved here, ethical challenges will be described throughout the thesis, as they are often inseparably intertwined with the research process (Morrow, 2008). In the following, an overview on ethical procedures during the data collection is given. This includes information, consent, anonymity and confidentiality as well as an efforts to control further effects on children: providing benefits and avoiding harm.

3.6.1 Information

First and foremost, children as well as adults needed to be informed about the research to be able to decide about their participation (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). During the first days in the field, a leaflet was given out as information for parents, but also for children. I took the chance to hand over the copies personally, in order to introduce myself to parents and answer their questions. The leaflet contained information on the researcher, the research interest and purpose, the methods, ethical standards and contact details. It was written in a comprehensible manner, bearing in mind that many families speak German as a second language and might encounter social research for the first time. An example by Alderson and Morrow (2011, pp. 91-94) served as model for the leaflet. Furthermore, a respectful word choice was central. Poverty is a highly uncomfortable in the area, people are ashamed of struggling financially. This might be connected to a general notion of poverty as self-inflicted in Germany (Beyer, 2013). People are likely to construct a poor person as someone who is absolutely poor, for example a homeless person, which they of course do not want to be regarded as. Using the words “poor” or “poverty” would have been disrespectful and could have caused rejections towards the research. Therefore, “life in the city part” and “actively coping with disadvantages” described the state of owning relatively less. The positive perspective on children should also be conveyed in this first information. Before interviews with children took place, parents were informed once more through an information paper, clarifying the purpose and content of the interviews and the freedom of parents and children to decide about the participation.

As most children had only started to learn reading and writing, it seemed most appropriate to inform them orally. After the daily story reading, I gathered their attention and explained my intention to learn something about the experience and activities of the girls and boys in the neighbourhood by listening to them as experts. Moreover, I told about the tools, voluntariness, confidentiality and a report being written for adults to understand the point of view of children better. The children were excited about a researcher taking interest in them and took the opportunity to ask questions. Especially the thought about a report being written, "*a book*", seemed exciting to them. When it came to the research tools, boys and girls were informed in the same way about design and purpose before they had the chance to opt in or refrain.

Ensuring full information involves furthermore to make the final reporting available to participants and people in the field (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Reading a Master's thesis in English might pose a challenge for some adults and certainly for children, who have not started learning the language yet. Therefore, it is planned to provide a comprehensible summary of the thesis in German to the field in the summer of 2016.

3.6.2 Consent

To ensure children's consent, it was intended to create an atmosphere of voluntariness in order to make them feel free to join any research activity, but never feel pressured to do so. An opt-in approach appeared to be fruitful in so far, as it is low-threshold and gives the freedom to children to participate as much, or as less, as they wish (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). "*Consent should be also seen as ongoing, rather than as an on-off event.*" (Morrow, 2008, p. 54). The setting in the day care was quite unconstrained. Children joined activities as they liked and had the possibility to choose their own occupation. Therefore, having an optional access also to every research tool seemed suitable and I won the impression that this was successful.

Seeking the consent of parents posed a number of challenges. Written consent could have generated various problems, as some parents might not be reachable or occupied by the hectic of the everyday life. Collecting signatures is time consuming and laborious, also for the children. Furthermore, signing a document is usually connected to obligations. Parents could have refrained from giving consent, in order to avoid efforts and duties. Excluding participants on the basis of a missing signature was considered to be highly problematical. It is assumed that children in first and second grade are competent to make informed decisions about joining a research activity or not. Furthermore, it their right to participate and utter their opinions,

independently from care-takers (Ennew et al., 2009a). The issue was navigated by giving parents the possibility to wish for an omission of their children in the study. None of the parents objected, reactions were widely positive. For the child interviews, written consent of the parents was inevitable in terms of German custom. A further information sheet was handed out and most parents gave their consent. Two children let me know that their parents are not giving consent as it is their wish to not be interviewed. I took it as a positive sign that they felt free to openly tell me that they do not want to be interviewed. The intended atmosphere of voluntariness seems to have emerged.

3.6.3. Anonymity and confidentiality

Absolute anonymity was promised to the participants and was ensured by the following provisions: Whether names and places are mentioned in the thesis. The field remains "a disadvantaged area in Munich", as naming the city part will make the identification of the exact location and thereby the participants likely. Furthermore, I took measurements to keep data from unauthorized access. Recordings are whether stored on a computer, nor online but on a USB stick in an inaccessible place. According to the requirements of the NSD, all audio files were deleted after transcription. Transcripts, in which names and places are already anonymised, are kept on a password secured computer. Pseudonyms shall reflect the diversity among the children, yet they are chosen randomly and do not necessary correlate with the cultural background of the informants. Printouts made for analysis are stored in an inaccessible room as well as field notes and drawings by the children. Consent forms, containing the names of the participants and signed by parents, did not leave the field and are archived in the day care centre. Furthermore, no photos of the children have been taken. Pictures with recognizable places will not be published (Alderson & Morrow, 2011).

The participants' accounts have to be treated confidentially, thus they were not actively disseminated (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). But confidentiality proofed itself to be a far more complicated affair than expected in the lively setting of the day care centre. Professionals in the field were naturally interested in the performance of research methods. Their presence during data collection could not always be avoided. Furthermore, children chose interview locations, which were not fully private, for example a quiet corner in the playroom. There was no separate room available during the drawing methods. A balance had to be found between ensuring confidentiality and providing the tools in an uncomplicated and easily accessible manner. The latter had to be prioritised on several occasions. The bottom line is, that no essential information

of the children went viral. Yet, it can be considered as weakness which needs to be embraced as an opportunity to learn for future research: Confidentiality can be a tricky affair and has to be considered in-depth for every single research tool.

3.6.4 Avoiding harms and providing benefits

A rights based research furthermore has to avoid harms and be beneficial in outcome to the children. It is thereby not enough that advantages merely outweigh disadvantages. The results have to be positive (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Ennew et al., 2009a). Full control over this cannot be reached. Additionally, every research harms to a certain degree, as it is an intervention into the usual live of children. To take as much control as possible, wide deliberations have been made on potential benefits and harms and on how to ensure them or respectively avoid them. In the following, measurements taken to achieve positive research effect as well as challenges emerging in the field are going to be explored.

As argued in the introduction chapter, the study is worth doing and important. This builds the necessary base for a research with favourable effects. Furthermore, an interest in positive entities helped to make the process more pleasant for the children. The central focus was not set on problems and distress but on resources and activity. Every tool concluded with an invitation to reflect about pleasant matters and interviews were rounded up with an ethical tool to help the children to balance themselves if they had to deal with a disturbing issue (Ennew et al., 2009b, 2.29). It was paid attention to use a language which is not stigmatizing or hurtful. Painful topics did occur, but I had the impression that children could be caught up quite well by attracting their thoughts on something positive before leaving the research situation. However, the ethical tool missed its target widely as it was considered to be school-like by many children. It depicted an umbrella which they could colour and fill with the names of dear persons, places or experiences.[5] One boy thought it was an additionally homework and was relieved when I told him that he does not have to do it. Entering and leaving the field took place in a careful and respectful manner. Establishing familiarity as a friendly adult enabled me to deliberately plan the methods and to appraise situations as well as it enhanced sensitivity and reflexivity. The children were taken seriously and their wishes were considered during data collection. Being consulted and treated as experts was recognisably enjoyed by them. The children's feedback was frequently that the tools were fun. Appreciation and compensation also

[5] The ethical tool can be found in the appendixes.

played a central role (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). The children were rewarded for the time and efforts they paid into the field work. This usually involved a little token after the data collection. Before I left the field, I arranged a little fare-well party with cake and music for the group, in order to mark my departure and to thank them for their contribution. Throughout my time in the day care, I stressed that my stay is only temporary. It was tried to reward the children sufficiently, while not making the reward the major motivation for participating in the tools. Compensation was not always an uncomplicated issue. I deliberated long on what is appropriate and also took the advice of professionals. The matter caused a bit of excitement and flurry among the children as they were all keen on earning a reward. I was furthermore honest regarding the report not being likely to have immediate or visible effects. The children's fantasies about the research were quite elaborate. They asked me whether they will be on TV or published in a book and played with the thought of becoming famous. I explained immediately and clearly that this is not the case but had the impression that this thought was very attractive to them. Besides the research being enjoyable and advantageous for children, it also has to contribute to a betterment of their circumstances. First of all, their voice has been heard and it will be reported. By proceeding so, the study intends to contribute to a better understanding of the children's situation and a change of attitude towards them. Yet, it can only be a small step in a long process (Alderson & Morrow, 2011).

The reflection on ethical considerations during field work is by no means concluded, as an extensive discussion would go beyond the scope of the thesis. In the following, an outlook on the methodology of the analysis process will be given

3.7 Analysing the data

The methodology chapter gave an impression on how methodological theory, field work practicalities and ethics played together in forming a research design. The application and forming of tools was guided by extensive theoretical elaborations, but finalised and brought to life only by input of the young participants.

Plenty of data could be gathered in the field. A vast volume of textual material from field notes, interviews, and focus group discussions as well as visual data in form of individual drawings and an elaborate group mapping were collected. The analysis chapters take a look on the content of this data and what it can tell. A traditional coding approach has been used to analyse the material. Initially, all recordings were transcribed to prepare them for analysis. As this process

tends to abstract and thin out data, it was tried to document the context as well as the tone and manner of speaking as far as possible. At the same time, the readability of the transcripts needed to be ensured. A transcriber's manual was defined in order to ensure a consistent transcription style. Yet, transcribing remains a highly subjective and interpretive process (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Having the data prepared for analysis, coding in several rounds followed in order to segment the material into topics of key importance and reassemble it in a way that allows an extensive understanding and an examination from multiple perspectives. With about 150 pages of transcriptions and additional visual data, this was a challenge indeed. An approach suggested by Hennie Boeije (2010) helped to undertake analysis in a systematic way. It was thereby attempted to keep relevant theory and the research interest in mind, while at the same time approaching the data with openness in order to discover unexpected issues. In a first round of open coding, all material was reviewed on the outlook for similar topics or content. Accordingly, categories were formed and labelled with a code, for example "leisure time". The data was newly sorted and all pieces fitting in the categories were placed in an own document under the new headings. Thereby, a computer programme (MAXQDA) helped to assort pieces of text in an efficient manner. Visual material was labelled with codes just as written data. Here, the noted conversations led with children during and after the drawing process turned out to be essential in order to correctly understand the content of pictures (Bland, 2012). Having completed the first (or any) round of coding, the newly segmented material was printed out, re-read and treated with highlighters. Thoughts, questions, and emerging ideas were noted on the side of the paper. While reviewing this first round of sorting, new categories, more specific codes, analytical questions and ideas towards the material kept emerging. This thinking-process is difficult to describe, but can be pictured as a constant asking of interpretive questions towards the data, for example after context, voices, tensions, links with other statements, or connections to theory (Boeije, 2010).

How does interpretation happen more concretely? Steinar Kvale (1998) delivers thoughts for a structured procedure. When reviewing the material, the researcher is entering a hermeneutic circle, meaning that she or he asks questions to the data, just as the material is evoking questions with her or him. Depending the questions asked, a certain perspective on the material is taken and an according interpretation emerges. One can review a transcript from many angles. Kvale suggests a combination of several types of interpretational questions: experienced-based (What is the understanding of the interview partner?), veridical (a critical appraisal of the interview

partner's statement), symptomatic (Why is the interview partner making a certain statement?) and consequence-based (What effect does the interview partner's understanding have?). These question types are applied to give structure to the own analysis. It was seen as central to recognize the informants experience, critically appraise it as well as to give a theoretical interpretation, later in the process and carefully. Yet, due to the great amount of transcript text, some passages are subject to a more detailed questioning than others. Nevertheless, all the material is covered with a review from several angles, while it was also pursued to keep the context of the data pieces in mind and to stay open for the questions the text or pictures pose. Links and contrasts between data originating from different participants or different methods aided in building up a stable argumentation in favour of the presented interpretations. Steinar Kvale argues for a legitimate diversity of interpretations: As discussed earlier, there is no "truth" as such. Different perspectives on the data will give different interpretations of it, and this construction of meaning is taking place in interaction between the researcher and the researched. This not just a matter of data collection, the dialogue finds a continuation in the analysis of data (Kvale, 1998).

All of the fresh thoughts emerging during the first round of coding were concluded in new or changed categories. Thus, the result was a more detailed and analytical list of codes for a second review of the data. For example, the category "leisure time" was specified into "acting independently" and "peer cultures" as well as it became visible that using outside spaces is of central importance to many children. So the categories "inside" and "outside" were scheduled for exploration. What appears to be a structured and tidy undertaking here, was indeed a very challenging thinking process at times.

Having completed the open coding, another round of more focused data review was initiated. Boeije calls this the "axial coding". Here, the newly found categories were applied to the whole corpus of material. While segmenting and thereby mentally processing the data again, more questions, relations and topics emerged from the material. The list of codes was repeatedly updated and the data was reviewed several times in this round, until links between categories and topics of central importance started to concretise. A last round of coding, the so called selective coding, allowed to be sure about the chosen key categories and the relation between them. Here, the codes and their content were reassembled, on paper as well as digitally, until a convincing structure was found to present the findings as well as the tensions and links between them in connection to the ground theory of the thesis. This process transitioned into writing, which can be seen as an interpretive undertaking as well (Boeije, 2010). Eventually, two

chapters of analysis emerged, which will take a look on the life world of children affected by poverty, on the resources they possess and the challenges they meet.

4 Cultural and social resources in a colourful neighbourhood

4.1 Organisation of the analysis chapters

The thesis contains two analysis chapters, each exploring the data from one central angle. Following tendencies emerging during the analysis process as well as the focus set by the research questions, the findings will be presented in terms of resources as well as challenges encountered by the young informants.

What might at first sight appear vague to the reader, is a way of looking at life worlds originating from the discipline of social work, the author's academic background. A resource is thereby a "*productive potential*" (Herriger, 2007, p. 779) an individual has available to cope with the circumstances he or she meets. Those potentials can be personal (e.g. beneficial attitudes and skills), social (e.g. embedding in a network), structural, (e.g. profiting from over-riding systems) and physical, of which the first three types will find consideration in the thesis. This perspective is part of a paradigm change in social work, leading practitioners' attitudes away from a "deficit-orientation", towards seeing potentials in the contexts they encounter (Herriger, 2007). However, it is not the intention to negate difficult aspects in people's lives. The existence of constraints is already predetermined by viewing resources as measures of coping. The social work counterpart to "resources" is "deficits", though this term is more and more avoided as it can result a limited, negative perspective on individuals and ascribe the fault of problems to affected people themselves. In order to avoid this, but at the same time address disadvantages, it was chosen to use a perspective of "challenges" when talking about constrains girls and boys meet. Constraints can be found in the social and structural surroundings of the informants. It seemed beneficial to approach the findings from these two angles, to view matters which enable children and such that might pose obstacles for them. Thereby, it is important to note that resources and challenges are by no means a strictly divided dichotomy. Both are perspectives chosen to look at the same field, they are two moments of one life world (Bohmeyer, 2011).

As for the organisation of the chapters, the first focus is set on the resources held by the girls and boys or found by them in their neighbourhood. Here, assets are going to be examined, which enable children to develop unique skills and also have the potential to temper effects of poverty. The second perspective will explore challenges and obstacles met by the children. Material shortage is thereby just one possible hurdle in the researched field. Each part of the analysis contains four subchapters, which examine children's individual talents, peer cultures,

schooling, relations between adults and children, the researched neighbourhood, and as well issues related to financial poverty. Children's own understanding will play a central role. A more detailed overview on contents can be found at the beginning of each chapter, right before the actual discussion is entered.

Findings are going to be explained by presenting pieces of data, interpreting and connecting them to a larger context of theory. Here, Childhood Studies, children's agency as well as Bourdieu's thinking tools come into play. Along the way, previous research and articles support the presentation of findings in a theoretical light.

The reader will notice that a wide angle was taken to investigate the field. In order to understand a broad matter such as childhood poverty, a broad focus had to be taken as well. This translates into the analysis chapter, which also reviews a wide range of matters. Nevertheless, the findings presented are the ones that emerged to be most essential during the analysis process. It is also important to note, that the elaborations are by no means the "truth" for all children in the field. Moreover, what is discussed has to be seen as broad tendencies or characteristics shared by many of the young informants, to which always exceptions exist. This is as well the case for the interviewed professionals. Frequently, they argue in similar ways, but all of them have a unique perspective on the field.

4.2 Children's everyday lives in the researched neighbourhood

Before presenting the field work's findings in the two following chapters, I would like to give an insight in the participants' everyday lives. What do the children in the neighbourhood do, where do they spend their time and in whose company? In order to understand the following, more complex and detailed discussions, it will be helpful to have a picture of the daily life of girls and boys. The reader can imagine the quarter as an environment with similar housing blocks, loosened up by green areas and smaller, calm roads. In the middle, a school building with a wide, green school yard, shielded from insight, can be found. On week day mornings, the children arrive at the school and start their lessons at 8 o'clock. They encounter peers, friends and teachers in the classroom. Different subjects are taught and only one teacher is responsible for the major subjects. School is a place for learning, reading, writing, and calculating, but also creative activities and sports take place. Breaks are held on the big schoolyard, which gives the children possibility for free play. When school ends around noon, the boys and girls meet with their day care group and eat lunch. The day care is located in the

school and the children spend their time in the group's own playroom, hallways or the school yard, together with peers, friends and pedagogues. Opportunities for all sorts of activity are provided, such as playing board games or with toys, crafting and painting, sports, and free play, but there is also an hour reserved for homework and educational practicing. As the afternoon proceeds, boys and girls are fetched by their parents or allowed to go home on their own. Their leisure time starts, which has not been observed personally but, following the accounts of children, contains various activities, such as going outside, meeting friends, football, eating, singing and dancing, watching TV, or playing computer games. The young informants mention home apartments, friend's apartments, outside areas, playgrounds or football fields as typical places as well as the company of parents, friends, or siblings. But also finishing homework and practicing for school during free time have been thematised. Weekends give room for extended activities. Girls and boys tell about smaller family outings, for example visitations and swimming trips to lakes not far from the neighbourhood. Probably as an effect of the nice summer weather, spending time outside with peers played a big role in children's accounts. They eagerly anticipated the summer holidays, in connection to which they frequently reported about togetherness with parents, siblings, and wider family as well as travelling to countries of origin, to visit grandparents or other relatives. Some children also spent parts of the holidays in the day care centre, which is partly opened to make it possible for parents to work in the summer months. This was the context entered as a researcher, being guest for five weeks in the children's school and day care.

Now, the first part of analysis, "*cultural and social resources in a colourful neighbourhood*", is going to be entered. The chapter will take a focus on resources. Structuring the chapter according to informants' accounts, the findings will give insight on different levels, from individualistic matters to the child in the peer group, children in relation to adults as well as them being part of a neighbourhood and city. On all these stages, one can find a variety of resources available to children, such as unique social and cultural skills, peer and family networks as well as beneficial structural features.

4.3 Being curious and talented

In the course of a five week field work it was not to miss that the young informants hold many talents. The girls and boys invited me to see their enthusiasm, spontaneity, genuine interests and well-practiced hobbies. Through their migration background, many of them furthermore possess special cultural and linguistic knowledge as well as international connections. This

subsection wants to pay attention to the resources commonly held by the informants themselves. It considers mainly their accounts and concludes by reviewing their competences in the light of children's agency and capital.

4.3.1 Interests and talents

It was exciting to discover that the boys and girls in the quarter have a variety of interests and talents, which they also could be experts in. They exercised their hobbies, which appear to be a great source of joy, and developed a stable skillset in them. The two most prominent examples are football and dancing. This was practiced frequently and on a high level of mastery. In individual drawings to the topic "what makes me happy?", some participants depict football or dancing as a hobby and reason for joy. The scenes are very elaborate and report of enthusiasm.

2 Individual drawing: Football in the rain

1 Individual drawing: On a stage together with my cousin. "Violetta" and "Francesca" are not the girls actual names, but were explained to be "star names".

Also observations and interview quotes can give insight.

> Later, the girls dance with their umbrellas. They have a technique: One girl is the lead dancer, standing in front. The others imitate. It looks very nice, synchronous. They sing well and got good dance moves. They seem to practice together and have developed skills, like the boys have with football. (fn[6])

> Yasin: "*It is really great when you jump with the bicycle and go with the skateboard,* […] *because you have to work with your body and I love that!*"[7]

> A girl borrowed a horse book from the library bus. It is very well done and contains a lot of graphic material on horses. She explains to me the tools and how to clean a horse. There seems to be a huge interest here. (fn)

[6] Field notes
[7] If no further specifications are made, like here, the statement originates from an interview.

There is certainly a pool of talents and capabilities to be found among the children in the field, as well as the potential to develop expert knowledge and sophisticated skills in an area of interest, clearly a cultural capital (Moore, 2008). Children furthermore expose their agency. Aspects of the social world, like dancing, football or riding, are taken up, appropriated and used for own expression (Corsaro, 1997). Taking the perspective of Childhood Studies, it shall be argued that the informants interests, talents and skills deserve attention and promotion at their own right (Prout & James, 1997).

4.3.2 Creativity and openness

The children encountered in terms of this study can be portrayed as open and creative. They are spontaneous at making new experiences and meeting people. This was a great advantage when entering the field. The boys and girls took contact immediately and gladly participated in the offered research methods. The process of fieldwork was eased significantly.

> The children are happy about most things to do, they find a lot of things exciting and it is quite easy to amaze them or win them for activities. (fn)

Reporting of the school's employees matches this impression. In their daily work, they take a lot of joy from the pupils' enthusiasm and contrast the children in the neighbourhood to their peers from backgrounds with higher income, who are in their words not as easy to amaze. A common statement made is that children "*do not get it from home*".

> Mr Dietrich[8]: "*Therefore, the children are very grateful here, yes. If you offer something, they take up, they soak up everything.*"

> Ms Seidel: "… *I see it as a great gift, that they are very curious and enthusiastic, yes. You can amaze them for a lot of things and they are interested in many things as well, yes.*"

Also children's creative ways of thinking became visible.

> We make paper planes. Elias exchanges mine and his plane halfway through the process. Mine was folded more accurately than his. As the planes are done, I get scolded by the pedagogue for not having folded accurately. (fn)

This example from the field notes shows how a boy is making use of my paper plane, as his was not folded well enough. Maybe Elias wants to avoid being put on the spot by the pedagogue, which I had to endure eventually. It is also thinkable that he assumes that a paper plane is not

[8] All names are changed

as important for me as an adult and therefore changes to the "better model". Whatever his motive might be, Elias exposes a spontaneous and unconventional behaviour. Also Irina shows a creative way of problem-solving.

> Irina: "*I wish for a robot-Irina!* […] *Yes, I never have to go to school again. It is doing everything for me, what it knows, I know as well!*"

By pointing out "*what it knows, I know as well*", the girl shows that she has thought around a corner. The robot is not just supposed to do the work, it must also generate knowledge for Irina.

Creativity and openness are experienced to be highly beneficial, both by the employees of the school and in terms of the research project. One can think of the skill to creative thinking as a cultural capital, while being open and spontaneous is a feature of the habitus many children hold: many of them seem to approach the world with curiosity and eagerness for new experience (Bourdieu, 1977; Maton, 2008). A row of potential advantages for children with these competences is thinkable.

4.3.3 Multicultural competences

The young participants grow up in a culturally diverse quarter, most of them have a migration background. From the start, they experience a variety of cultures, religions, and ethnicities. The impression was won that they encounter this diversity as norma in everyday life.

> Ms Baumann: "*Yes, multi-cultural! You are not scared of things that you know!*"

According to observations in the day care, children do not split regarding cultural backgrounds, they form variated friendships. Religion is a topic they talk about openly. It appears as if they are aware of differences, but approach them with little reservation. The World Vision Children's study points out similar tendencies for Germany as such. Children seem to connect with little regard to cultural origin (Schneekloth & Leven, 2007a). Also, the neighbourhood's school creates a tolerant environment by, for example, offering pork-free lunches, different religion classes and the possibility to have a free day on important religious occasions, such as Bayram[9], which took place during the stay in the field. In a very recent research, Humera Iqbal and colleagues explore the friendship-forming of pupils in highly diverse elementary schools of London. They conclude that boys and girls have complex and positive thoughts around difference in ethnicity and religion. For establishing friendship, those instances play a

[9] Turkish: Şeker Bayrami, fast breaking at the end of Ramadan (Raudvere, 2015), children referred to "Bayram"

subordinate role compared to markers like shared interest, peer cultures, or social class. Data from Munich suggests a similar situation in the own field. The authors compare their findings to a study by Paul Connolly (1998), who describes manifested racist discourses among primary school children. It is assumed that the extraordinary diverse nature (also to be found in the Munich school) of the London schools normalises difference instead of constructing a minority-majority relation (Iqbal, Neal, & Vincent, 2016).

Besides experiencing variety, a large number of children grows up bilingually and biculturally. Additional to German, many encounter another language, may it be Turkish, Russian or Arabic. In this way, they can win authentic insights in both the German culture and their own background. Furthermore, international connections exist.

> Kathrin: "*What do you look forward to in the summer holidays?*"
>
> Matej: „*That I go to my country and see my family! I am going to stay there and have fun!*"

As it is the case for many of the informants, Matej's networks cross national borders. The boy stresses that the country the family is going to is his own. Thereby, he refers to an additional home in the country of origin besides Munich. He seems to belong into two cultures. Some professionals point out how multiculturalism can be a door-opener.

> Ms Bauman: "*I know a paediatrician, actually a common practitioner, who comes from Poland.*[10] *All the Polish go there, yes. Whether she is a paediatrician or not, she speaks the language and knows the culture. She has a totally different access.*"

By belonging to two cultures, children are able to acquire unique social and cultural capital, in the form of networks, language or original understandings of a certain culture. This capital can have a symbolic dimension, as belonging to a certain ethnic or national group could function as a door-opener for them (Bourdieu, 1977). Also encountering people from various backgrounds can provide opportunities. Experiencing diversity as normal and positive in everyday life could give children the chance to form a habitus of tolerance, reduced reservations, and empathy (Maton, 2008). This argument has to remain hypothetical though, as other factors, for instance influence of adults' ways of thinking are likely to have an impact on children's view on multiculturalism (Iqbal et al., 2016).

[10] Nationality changed

4.3.4 Summarising

To give a brief summary, there are resources and potentials to be found with the girls and boys in the field, like well-practiced hobbies, language, creativity and openness. The abilities can be classified as capital as well as moments of children's habitus to be observed in the school environment. It shall be argued that these individual resources need to be appreciated and promoted at their own right. Especially the described multicultural competences have to be valued by a society like the German, which is becoming increasingly diverse.

4.4 Developing peer cultures and initiating an own leisure time

While being a guest in the field, it was especially pleasant to explore the children's peer cultures. Only during analysis, when the material was reviewed and the pieces were set together, the actual complexity and richness of these peer cultures came into view. The participants do not merely "play". They construct unique occupations and apply sophisticated social and communicational skills in the course of this. This subchapter focuses on the child in the peer group and presents peer cultures as well as it takes a look on how children take initiative and create their own leisure time.

4.4.1 Peer cultures

Rich and creative peer cultures could be observed in the field, containing various sorts of activities such as fantasy and role play, humour, board games, toys, relaxing and eating together, sports, word- and clapping-games, excitements, re-enacting of TV, roughhousing, dancing, eating, teasing each other, videogames, and singing. Children take up predefined games and often modify them as well as they develop completely new things.

> The girls invent a game called "*april, april*". They tell about rather normal instances and as soon as you make any sign of believing it, they shout "*april, april!*" and are happy that they have fooled you. (fn)

This example involves for instance a language game, teasing and a big portion of humour. Peer activities are a great source of fun and joy for the children. As thematised earlier, many of the individual drawings show activities like play, dancing and football. Here, the informants express directly, that engaging with peers makes them happy. The World Vision Children's study is able to strengthen this impression: A peer group is of high importance for children in

Germany, as well as their subjective well-being is raising with a variated leisure time (Leven & Schneekloth, 2007a; Schneekloth & Leven, 2007a). An important moment in peer culture seems to be togetherness. In interviews, children stress that somebody to play with is important for them. At the same time, being cut off from peers is highly disliked:

Yasin: "*I find it dull when my friends are sick, then I cannot play with them.*"

Having and making friends is expressed to be essential, and especially those few children, who seem to be less skilled in this matter, struggle in the day care environment.

As on probably every school yard, there are also conflicts among peers. Usually, they revolve around friendship constellations or the abidance by rules in games and sports. Seriously violent conflicts have not been observed among the young informants. Moreover, they show many techniques to solve conflicts and establish fairness, such as applying controlling instances or games, which impartially decide who gets an advantage:

> The boys play hide and seek. One boy seeks, the others hide. Another boy is the "controller" to check if the seeker counts long enough and has his eyes closed. Fairness is of great importance to them. They got techniques to establish it, for example the "Pi-ka-chu" clapping-game, which is a variation of "Paper, Scissors, Stone". Or they do "tip-top"[11] to find out which team leader is allowed to vote the first child into his/her team. (fn)

Also diplomacy has been observed, as the example of a boy shows, who attempts to stop his friends from fighting by prompting them to behave appropriately: "like men", in his words.

> Maxi and Nico fight playfully in the building corner. Nico pushes Maxi to the heater, he starts crying. A third boy goes in and tries to mediate: "Are you little Zicken[12]?" "Don't behave like Zicken, you are men!" (fn)

While arguing and struggling with each other, children are also supporting each other, for example secretly during homework time. The observed peer cultures in the quarter are definitely rich and shows that the children have many different skills. Together with their peers, they train and develop social and communicational abilities. They solve problems and conflicts, make friends, create and modify play, seek justice, argue and discuss, and compete and cooperate.

While adult interview partners frequently point out that children have low social and communicational skills, this section witnesses a high level of social and communicational abilities. With their friends group and competences to complex interactions, girls and boys do possess social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977). Agency in the form of peer cultures

[11] Game: Two team leaders take accurate, foot-long steps towards each other. The one who is able to do the last step before the leaders feet meet each other gets to vote the first team member.
[12] German term for grumpy females

described by William Corsaro (1997, p. 114) "…*as a stable set of activities* (e.g. playing football) *or routines* (e.g. voting teams with tip-top), *artefacts* (e.g. coming with football-fit shoes to school)*, values or concerns* (e.g. fairness in the game) *that children produce and share in interaction with peers*", can be observed directly.

4.4.2 Initiating an own leisure time

These peer cultures can amongst other unfold on the base of a certain autonomy children seem to enjoy in their free time. The young informants mention nearby playgrounds as well as sports and green areas as spaces of leisure, but most commonly the merely use the expression "outside". Professionals portray parents in the neighbourhood as enabling their children to move outside without supervision. Also their ability to develop activities independent from the input of adults is stressed.

> Mr Dietrich: "*They do have some kind of independence, which is also allowed by parents. They meet each other, ring each other's door bells and fetch each other for playing and the like. You do not find this in other city parts, or less. Maybe it is also because of the green space here. The danger to get hit by a car is lower than for example in Schwabing*[13] *or Sendling.*"
>
> Ms Beck: "*They are organising their free time mostly on their own. If you take them to the school yard and tell them: "go ahead!", they will go ahead. They will find something to do*."

Observations as well as children's accounts give substance to these appraisals.

> When it is four o'clock, some of them are free to go home alone. They don't hurry though. Maxi and Nico play table-top football for at least 30 minutes after the bell rung. (fn)

The boys are not in a hurry to get home and use their free time by continuing to play in the day care centre. It might be interpreted in a way that parents are laid-back and do not wait at home, anticipating their sons' arrival to an accurate point of time.

It is furthermore likely that the green and calm outside area of the neighbourhood enhances children's possibility to move independently. The area offers plenty of green space and rather calm traffic conditions. This point is not revolving around "proper" or "improper" places for children. But empty space creates room for play and parents' willingness to let children go outside is likely linked to traffic conditions. The nice summer weather during the weeks of fieldwork might also take influence. Participants' opportunities to play outside were presumably at a peak at the time the data collection took place. This can be contrasted to the

[13] Schwabing, Sendling: Wealthier city parts in the Munich centre

findings of the WVC[14] study, which states a tendency that children from low social background are more often unhappy with freedom granted by parents and are more likely experience a dreary leisure time (Leven & Schneekloth, 2007a; Schneekloth & Leven, 2007c). The data from Munich gives a different picture. The informants engage in rich activities and seem to enjoy autonomy when it comes to their free time.

Sometimes, there could also be a necessity for children to initiate own activities. Professionals indicate that parents might not have the possibility to supervise their sons and daughters at all times. Cultural attitudes like appreciating children's independence or giving them a share of responsibility are also thinkable.

> Ms Baumann: "*I think that many of the children are more independent here. Just because they get left alone earlier and not brought to and fetched from everywhere. I think they are independent at an earlier age. There are many children that have to take care a bit for their siblings, they have to take responsibility for others*."

4.4.3 Summarising

It became visible during the fieldwork, how many children have the possibility to move and play freely in the neighbourhood. Their agency can be described as "thick" in this context (Robson et al., 2007). Opportunities emerge from this autonomy, for example a rich and unique peer culture can evolve, as well as children can learn creative ways of interaction and organising themselves. Here lays a resource in the form of social and cultural capital, for instance friendship networks or competences of communication (Bourdieu, 1977). However, it would be naive to ignore possible negative sides of being unattended and unsupported at times.

4.5 Showing social competence in relations with adults

Also in contact with teachers or pedagogues, boys and girls expose many sophisticated social skills and understandings of the adult world. This subchapter wants to explore how the informants become active in relation to adults and how they respond to power imbalances between them and the grown-ups. Professionals frequently attest pupils a low level of social and communicational skills. On the contrary, the next sections will show many examples of sophisticated abilities and understandings. The informants communicate, negotiate and take influence, establish friendships, seek attention and approval. They are aware of power issues

[14] World Vision Children's study

and found ways to navigate them. Given structures are not always plausible to them, girls and boys point out unfairness and also find compromises.

4.5.1 Communicating with adults

The young informants tend to approach adults very openly and straightforward. Relations with the day care pedagogues are friendly and appear to be carried by mutual interest. Also here, spontaneity and openness is enabling children to come into contact with adults quickly and establish a good relationship to them, in which they take an active part. This is exemplified by notes made about the first encounter with the boys and girls participating in this study:

> We get the children from the classroom. They are immediately very interested, ask my name and what I am doing. One girl even links arms with me. The children are outgoing and connect very fast with me as a stranger. Some kids are a bit shy but all of them seem to be curious. (fn)

Many ways of influencing and negotiating with adults have been observed. Children make their way through daily interactions by amongst other discussing and presenting issues to adults, begging, inventing creative stories or excuses, asking for help or interrupting. All this is useful for example to draw attention to an issue, change unfavourable circumstances, to avoid consequences or unpopular tasks as well as to gain something or establish fairness.

> When I gave out drops for the children today, some of them have techniques to request another one. Alina tells me that her sister has stolen the drop, which she had in her lunchbox. A girl pretends for a short time not to have got one. A boy asks if he could have another one, when he drew another picture. A girl complains loudly with a nagging voice. (fn)

This excerpt exemplifies very well the informants' ability to take influence on adults. The children are allowed to take one drop from the candy box, as an appreciation for their participation in the individual drawing a couple of days earlier. Some girls and boys would like to have a second go and try to convince me in different ways. One girls tells a story for me, if true or not cannot be appraised, another one pretends to have forgotten that she already took a drop. A boy wants to trade a second drawing for a second candy, yet another girl complains loud and straightforward to convince me. In order to stay fair, nobody got a second drop, but what becomes visible here are children's talents to enter negotiations with adults. They are not reluctant to address issues and bring in their own standpoint.

It seems also important for the informants to receive attention as well as approval from the grown-ups and they have strategies to acquire it.

Matej seeks for attention, he wants to show a football trick to the pedagogue. He keeps on repeating the pedagogues name endlessly… "*Mr S., Mr S., Mr S. …*" (fn)

Irina has a certain way of posing questions to me: "*This is ugly, right?*"[15] "*I am bad at chess, right?*" "*The drawing is really ugly, right?*" (fn)

Both Matej and Irina request adult attention in an outright way. Matej is addressing the pedagogue loudly and repeatedly by his name, until he has his attention. Irina on the other hand asks rhetorical questions, postulating that she has done something badly, while aiming for an answer that will tell her otherwise. It seems likely that she wishes for a compliment from me. The two accounts illustrate how children like adults' attention and praise, and show that they are able to actively pursue it. Vuorisalo and Alanen (2015) closely examine a similar phenomenon in a Finnish preschool. A straightforward conversation behaviour is an important cultural capital among the children in this field. It helps them to influence the construction of daily life and gain an advantageous position in the peer group. The authors describe a game where boys and girls take turns and imitate animals. In this example, children who are outright clearly have an advantage over those, who abide by the rules of the game and the preschool conversation order.

In their straightforward ways, the young informants seem to unintendedly annoy and exhaust adults at times, who feel overwhelmed by many requests storming in on them simultaneously. Employees in school and day care also frequently classify the young informants as badly behaved.

Mr Dietrich: "*They come from school and twenty children talk to you at once, from all sides. He has to tell something, she has to tell something, and this just occurred.*"

Adults refer to the children as exhausting, badly behaved. The bad behaviour referred to seems to be being loud and excited. "*They are sweet, but they are special*". (fn)

Though there is a tendency to view it as problematic, straightforwardness might be necessary for the boys and girls in order to get the attention and approval they wish for. There are also children that do not seek attention as straightforwardly as others do. They are in danger to be overlooked and so the calm and adapted behaviour appreciated by adults is not always advantageous in the day care environment.

[15] Referring to her handwriting

4.5.2 Navigating power imbalances

The relation between children and adults is characterised by a power imbalance, as the child is part of a minority group compared to grown-ups (James & James, 2012). Teachers and pedagogues supervise pupils and act out control and authority over them. After reviewing observations and statements, it can be assumed that the young informants are highly aware of power-related issues in the school and day care environment.

> Sarah: "*In school, you have to do what the teacher says, for example if she says: get me a chair!*"
> Irina: "*And a coffee!*"
> Sarah: "*And a coffee! What does the teacher do? Relaxing! And we have to study!* Mocking the teacher: *oh, I am so pretty!*" (fgd[16])

Sarah picks up the issue of power relations in the classroom. She is clear over the fact that children have to do what adults tell them and points out how this is unjust. The teacher's work appears to be less hard then studying to her, and it is furthermore explained to be unfair that children have to aid the teacher with a coffee and a chair, just because they have less power. The teacher in Sarah's account also reveals that she thinks very high of herself, by pointing out her own prettiness. A teacher might ask children to bring them a chair, but rather not for a coffee as well as it is most likely exaggerated that she speaks of her own beauty in the class room. Central in Sarah's argument is that adults are in the position to tell children what to do, merely on the basis of them having a powerful occupation, like being a teacher. By mocking the teacher, Sarah might stress a certain arrogance which she sees connected to adults' authority.

Furthermore, children seem to recognise hierarchies among adults. As intern, I experienced several times that boys and girls were clear over the fact that I hold little responsibility and therefore rather approached employees with important issues. On the other hand, I was sometimes asked for help with minor problems, which could have involved scolding from the side of employees.

The children face a variety of expectations from the sides of adults, such as doing school work, behaving appropriately and abiding by the rules. As it has been observed, those requirements and children's needs are sometimes at a mismatch. The informants have developed strategies to temper this pressure. Girls and boys are able to rebel against expectations or also avoid them. Open protest mainly occurred when something is obviously unfair to the children.

[16] Focus group discussion

Irina gets sent to another table while doing homework. She protests loudly, because she was not the only one being wild, just the one being seen and punished. She nags a while, accepting the consequence though. (fn)

The boys and girls reveal a distinct sense of justice at times. It is indeed not fair that only Irina gets grounded, while many other children did behave in the same manner. She openly objects the decision of the pedagogue to place her away from her friends. At the same time, she is doing what she is told, probably because she knows that the consequence cannot be changed. However, it seems to be important for her to point out the situation's injustice.

Protesting openly rarely has the anticipated effect. Accordingly, girls and boys are also able to avoid adults' demands. For instance, they have been observed or have told about doing things in secret, asking other adults for help, pretending not to hear, procrastinating, or even hiding. The field notes document ways in which children bypass adults' requests.

A cafeteria employee forbids the children to get food a third time, as two times is the rule. The boys complain about this being unfair, because they are still hungry. The pedagogue agrees, so they go for food when the lady is out of sight. (fn)

During lunch time, the boys are very hungry, but not permitted to get more food from the counter. This restriction seems unjust to them, so they bring their cause to the pedagogue. Having his support, they take food in the absence of the cafeteria employee. In this way, they apply two techniques, asking a different adult for help as well as doing something in secret. The second example gives an impression of children's strategies in a tiresome homework session.

Procrastination during homework time: Getting eraser, erasing very long, sharpening pencils. (fn)

For an attentive observer, it was quite obvious that some children "wasted" homework time with spare actions, like sharpening already sharp pencils or searching for things. It appears that they are exhausted and try to procrastinate in a way that does not draw the attention of supervisors. In a row of studies in the United States and Italy, Corsaro (2009) documented similar strategies of avoidance and delay in preschool environments. For example, children would procrastinate in clean-up rounds, which made no sense to them. Here, to bypass adult rules was observed to be an important part in children's shared cultures.

However, also avoidance remains an exception in the researched environment. For the greater part of the time, children do take the requests of adults seriously and try to implement them.

Lina: „*School is always, always good! Reading is good, always, we have to come to school! Because we also have to practice, calculate, read and something else, and also write and do cursive writing.*"

For instance, there is a row of statements and observations, revealing children's will to measure up to parents' and teachers' educational expectations. If one reads Lina's quote closely, it nearly sounds as she would speak with an adult voice. It shall not be argued that it is not Lina's actual opinion but it might for instance also be the words Lina's mother is using to encourage her daughter. It seems as though the girl is motivated to see school as something beneficial and work hard in class. Largely, children also abide by the rules of the school and the day care, as well as they watch out that all of them follow the regulations. Hence, also the informants' great ability to cooperate becomes visible.

> Alina shows me how to do everything in the swimming hall. "*Hang your towel there, next to mine. You need your shower gel. We need to shower, but it's not allowed to wash your hair.*" (fn)

When I participated in the swimming lesson for the first time, Alina is explaining me the rules accurately. She knows and follows them, and it is important for her that I also do so. Drawing from a volume of studies on agency of rural youth, Robson and colleagues discuss two main approaches in which young people negotiate freedom for themselves. Besides resistance and avoidance, one essential way to thicken agency is to fulfill adults' expectations, termed as "*conforming agency*" (Robson et al., 2007, p. 140). Also the informants in the Munich school might have experienced that abiding by rules is an effective way to win adults' trust and be less disturbed by their interventions.

4.5.3 Summarising

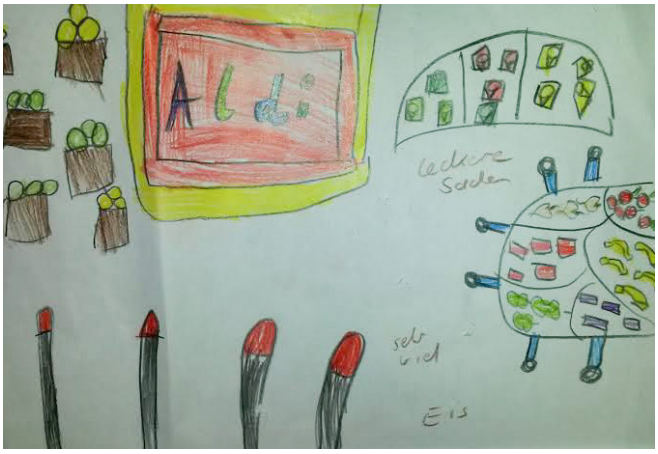
The young participants are agents and show competence not just among their peers but also in relation to grown-ups. They actively and successfully influence adults and take a significant part in the construction of the daily life in the school and day care centre. They expose good understanding of the adult world and also question its ways of functioning (Corsaro, 1997). Though their agency is comparably constrained in the day care and the especially in the school context, they are not merely passive objects to control and supervision, but find ways to negotiate, influence, protest, avoid, and cooperate in order to thicken their agency (Robson et al., 2007). Adults think of this as annoying and inappropriate behaviour at times. However, children put sophisticated social and communicational skills to play. These abilities are an important cultural capital, likely linked to an eased acquiring of social capital (Bourdieu, 1977).

4.6 Living in a colourful neighbourhood

4.6.1 Children's perspectives on their quarter

One of the most interesting piece of data collected in the field is surely the big, elaborate mapping of the city part, simultaneously drawn by nearly all the child participants. They paint a colourful quarter with scenes of daily life, open space (playgrounds, sport opportunities, and parks) and many localities to shop and purchase street food. The wider neighbourhood is presented as rich in possibilities and life. The young informants share a positive picture of their quarter and reveal an attachment to it. However, adult interview partners described the area as "*dull*", "*bleeding*" or "*the corner nobody wants to talk about*"[17], referring to a poor infrastructure, reputation and mono-structured housing. Chawla and Driskell (2006) describe a similar phenomenon discovered when researching in terms of the "Growing Up in Cities Project", together with young people in Sathyanagar, a marginalised district of the Indian city Bangalore. In public and municipal discourses, this area is held for a slum, a place where one hardly can find something good. However, the children of Sathyanagar tell a different story and attribute their neighbourhood with happiness, safety, strong social bonds and rich activity. While circumstances in the Munich and the Bangalore neighbourhood are probably little comparable, in both contexts there is a striking gap between the understanding of outsiders, e.g. professionals, and insiders, namely the children residing in the researched quarters. Chawla and Driskell point out the importance of learning about young people's interpretations together with them, before taking any further action. It shall be argued that this is important for the Munich context as well. Accordingly, the subchapter points out the perspective of the young informants on the neighbourhood first. Excerpts from the group drawing will give the reader a more vivid picture of this.

[17] Attributions made in by adults in interviews



3 Supermarket offering ice-cream and fruit

4 Playground with sand, slide and climbing opportunity

5 Street scene, with car, apple tree and girl eating ice-cream

6 Costumer being served at kebab stand. The costumer says: “One kebab, please!” The street food seller comments: “Kebab makes you beautiful!” More costumers are sitting at the stand’s tables.

4.6.2 Family and neighbourhood networks

Significant networks are located in the quarter. As discussed earlier, family has a high importance to many of the informants. Not just parents and siblings seems to play a role, but also extended networks of cousins, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Wider family appears to reside frequently in the neighborhood, as well. The research data strongly suggests that being together with family is essential for the boys and girls. For instance, joint family activities are

repeatedly the main content of conversations with children and their individual drawings on the topic of happiness.

7 At the beach with dad

8 Camping with my family in nature

Also professionals mention familial support and togetherness. Many of them picture the extended family as an important, relieving resource of loyalty and support.

> Ms Vogt: "*I think many have an additional resource. This is not valid for everyone, but there are social solidarity and supportive familial structures, for example grandparents, who supervise the children or aunts, who take the children with them to Turkey when the parents have to work. There is a supportive system. Not for everyone, but for many it is a strong resource.*"

It is also stressed repeatedly how neighbourhood networks are constructed outside families. Some professionals see a great resource and functionality in this connections. For instance, supervising children could be more of a shared task then in other city parts.

> Ms Seidel: "*One watches out for the other. You know who is on the playground. The adults look down from the windows and shout if something were to happen.*"

They also hint to friendships and personal support.

> Frau Vogt: "*I have the feeling that there are many good neighbourhood relations here! I have to think about a women, who is a single mother now since her divorce and I have the feeling that she has a lot of contact to neighbours and to parents of her daughter's classmates. There is a great openness. Also inside the community, you are not so separated than elsewhere.*"

According to adult interview partners, exchange of material and practical support is common in the quarter as well. The next quote refers to a project from official side, which tried to implement a platform for trading used goods in the neighbourhood. The attempt went not very well, amongst other because inhabitants already had installed own networks for exchange.

Mr Roth: "*They have gigantic networks! They may not have the monetary supply, not at all. But what helps them surviving? It is the networks they have!*"

Sporadically, children report about connections to churches and mosques, which as well have the potential to add substance to their networks. While churches can be found in the immediate environment, visiting the mosque might involve a trip to surrounding quarters.

9 Individual drawing: Playtime at the church

4.6.3 Structural resources and contributions by the municipality of Munich

While the neighbourhood seems to be a resourceful community itself, there is also a row of structural features which the girls and boys could be profiting from.

Here, the school and the day care centre have to be mentioned. A big part of the children spends the afternoon in the centre. By implementing a day care in connection to the school, the municipality offers a special type of service, as being in school all day is still uncommon in Germany (Leven & Schneekloth, 2007b). Professionals see this as something positive.

Ms Beck: "*We are a fully-time school.* […] *The children eat lunch her, do homework and have free time in between, which they spend in the day care centre. I think this is the right way especially for this area. The children are in a German speaking environment, where they have many possibilities. Just think: They have a huge school yard where they can play* […]*, they have many materials and are engaged in something meaningful in the day care, may it be board games or crafting. On the other hand, we take the responsibility partly from the parents.* […] *When they fetch their child from school in the late afternoon, homework is usually done.* […] *We can go on outings, small things, we do not have to do something extraordinary. We can go in the forest together, we have so many possibilities.* […] *Because if a mother has to fetch her first-grader from school at half past 11, what can she accomplish in the time between 8 and half past 11?*"

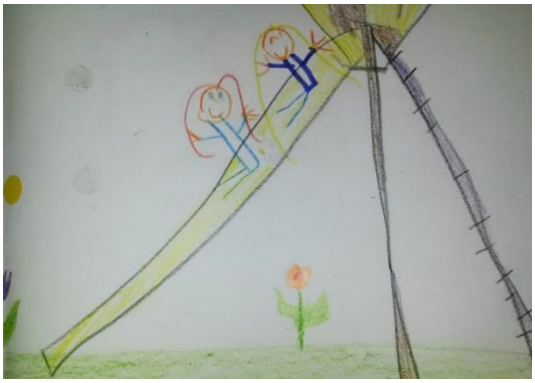
The quote captures what is stressed often by adult informants. It cannot be ignored that Ms Beck portrays the school and day care as a "proper place with proper activities" for children. I do not want to argument in the same line, yet possible benefits have to be pointed out. The full-

time school gives children indeed possibilities to participate in a lot of enjoyable activities. They are provided with time and support for their homework, though observations show that the available time and help is often not sufficient. Furthermore, parents are relived as their children are cared for, and have amongst other the opportunity to work. Also employees have the necessary time to offer trips, enhancing children's treasure trove of experience. Adults keep on referring to this as a compensation for something that is in their view lacking from the parental side.

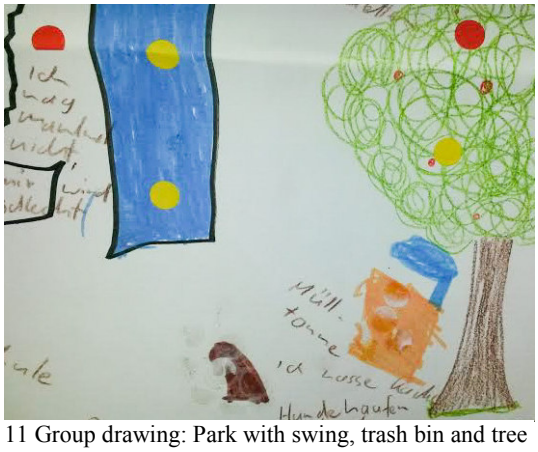
> Ms Vogt: "*We talked about participation earlier. I also see it as a resource that many things go on in school, as many children are in school the whole day. Much compensation takes place there, they promoted a lot as well as they go on outings in the holidays.* […] *The children we meet say: Yes, I have been there, I visited that museum and I got to know this already. I have been there with the day care!*"

However, one has to be careful in appraising benefits of full-time school concepts in Germany. Recent research criticises great variations in quality and the absence of the anticipated educational opportunities (Himmelrath, 2016a, 2016b).

Necessary to mention are also green spaces and a low level of traffic in the neighbourhood. The city of Munich takes care of the outside areas in the quarter, public areas are clean, vegetation is well-groomed and many facades are newly renovated. Again, it shall not be argued that nature or calm traffic create "a proper place" for boys and girls. But possibilities to find unoccupied space to fill with own activity and adults' willingness to allow children's own initiative are likely to be enhanced by it. The young informants picture and frequently mention playgrounds and park space in their mapping of the city part. They seem to be of significance to them.



10 Group drawing: Girls on slide



11 Group drawing: Park with swing, trash bin and tree

Providing natural and open areas to the Munich citizens is stressed as highly important by the municipality, with regards to the urban climate and recreation and leisure function. An

according paragraph can be found in the municipal law (Münchner Stadtrat, 2012). Also on its communal webpages, the city stresses the importance of parks, playgrounds, avenues and recreation areas (Portal München Betriebs-GmbH & Co. KG, 2016).

> Ms Vogt: "*In principle the city part is very green. There is a lot of open area between the houses. If the children go outside, they have a lot of space.*"

This clean, calm and open environment has the potential to become a space of opportunities for children. Their possibility to move, be independent and explore is enhanced, lastly also by Munich's politics on public space.

Furthermore, professionals frequently stress the many support offers available for children and families in the city part.

> Mr Roth: "*The full programme of social work, indeed! I think smallest children up to youth are supported on a broad basis in their life situations. From early education, let us say help for mothers with cry-babies, to professional education and support in looking for trainee positions. Nearly everything is included.*"

Mr Roth is describing the big variety of social work offers to be found in the wider neighbourhood. There is indeed a broad supply and it can be assumed that the city of Munich plays a central role in financing here. In conversations, professionals hint that many families in the quarter do appreciate the assistance. While it can be a great source of support, one interview partner also problematizes that all offers for the residents are characterized as "social services". Social work cannot substitute the participation in the cultural life of Munich.

4.6.4 Summarising

The living quarter of the boys and girls has a lot to offer to them. Adult informants might portray the neighbourhood as structurally disadvantaged, but the area also possesses strong social connections, opportunity to unfold peer cultures and beneficial structural features. In the field of the neighbourhood, children can find rich social capital, which can be used to their advantage. They show a habitus of positive attitudes and attachment towards their quarter (Bourdieu, 1977; Maton, 2008). This might not be fully visible for outsiders. Yet, living in the area shall not be romanticised, the section "the neighbourhood as an island" will review the researched quarter once more from the perspective of professional interview partners and argue that the children also encounter challenges in terms of residing there.

5 Challenges: Growing up outside the mainstream

The second analysis chapter gives a perspective on the challenges children in the researched neighbourhood encounter. While having discussed many resources and rich experiences of the young informants, one cannot ignore a row of concrete as well as potential difficulties faced by them. Some of those obstacles can be tracked back directly to economic shortages. Yet, most of the emerging topics are subtle and seem to be connected out more complex correlations than the one between spending power and participation. This chapter wants to point to how boys and girls "grow up outside the mainstream". The children do reside in a marginalised neighbourhood, many of them are from a non-German culture and a big part presumably lives in a critical financial situation. Thereby, they are located outside of what is constructed as optimal conditions by dominant discourses on childhood (James et al., 1998). This does not determine that they enjoy a different well-being than peers growing up closer to this ideal do. Yet, being members of a less dominant group can have effects on the way children are viewed and how they are able to put their skills to play inside systems established by the majority (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). The term "mainstream" has been adopted from Stanton-Salazar (1997), who uses it in a slightly different way: In the reviewed article, the mainstream stands for settings and structures encountered by everyone, but significantly defined by dominant groups. In this thesis, the word "mainstream" shall be synonym for dominant groups in Germany, their cultures and perspectives. The term evokes as well the associations "established" and "majority" and appears therefore very suitable to the Munich context.

In this part of the analysis, challenges pointed out by children as well as professionals' perspectives on problematic circumstances are going to be evaluated. As brought forward by the informants, hurdles will be reviewed in connection to certain contexts, namely parental economy, the family, the neighbourhood and the school. The topics emerging as potential obstacles in each of these aspects of life are variated. Amongst other, language barriers, financial distress, alienation between majority and minority cultures, prejudice, thresholds in accessing dominant cultural capital and structural factors are going to be explored. Regarding the research focus of the thesis, economic poverty and issues closely linked to it will be reviewed first.

5.1 Meeting poverty

Already at an early stage of this thesis project, while negotiating access to participants and during the first days in the field, it became sensible that the matter of poverty is highly delicate. The topic had to be addressed carefully with children and parents and a central reason that access to the field finally could be achieved, was that the research did not intend to openly "dig" into the issue of having little. Still, together with young and adult informants, an impression could be won of how financial shortages and directly linked consequences pose a challenge for children. As earlier explained, features of the neighbourhood allow the conclusion that a great number of families lives at, or below the poverty line. This section is going to look into the financial aspect of poverty as well as prejudice and shame connected to it. Though they do not mention this issue often, girls and boys are most likely aware of material lack and its outcomes.

5.1.1 Children's perspectives on poverty

During the fieldwork, the children seldom addressed the issue of poverty itself. When they did, they referred to absolute poverty and also distanced themselves in a way from the issue.

> At lunch break, one of the second grade girls starts talking about poor people: "*In Africa, the people are poor.*" Other girl: "*Yes, most of them are poor in Africa.*" Vesna tells about "*people that are so poor, they have to drink water from the ocean with their hands.*" (fn)

If asked about Munich in interviews, some of children also report that the city is a good place for children, because they have enough to eat and drink and can be healthy. Turned around, a poor person seems to be somebody for them, who has not enough food and water, gets no help with sickness, and does not even possess a glass or a cup to drink from. Poverty is furthermore far away, in Africa or at a place with an ocean. Taking their definition into account, I do not think that the young informants consider themselves as poor. This corresponds to what Engelfried (2012a) reports on the girls of the Blumenau: The young women notice poverty, but do not identify themselves with it and attribute it to other residents of the area. In a British study on children's identities linked to their economic status by Liz Sutton and colleagues, the participating children conceptualise poverty as absolute. Labels like "poor" and "rich" are disliked, girls and boys do whether want to be pitied nor considered to be spoilt and are keen on presenting themselves as average (Sutton, 2009). Of course, there is considerable less data on this issue from the Munich context. However, regarding the young informants' definition and a certain distancing, it is likely that poverty is unattractive to them and that they do not identify themselves with it. Further sections will show that children seem to be clear about

financial and material lack as well as some of them report unpleasant experience in connection to this.

5.1.2 Material shortages

Observations, adult interviews and also statements of children highlighted that a part of the families is indeed struggling financially. For some, this seems to result directly in material shortages. Professionals also see unfavourable housing and a lack of cultural participation for the children.

Excerpts from the field notes and focus group discussion report about material shortcomings among the boys and girls, for example in schooling equipment, clothing, or sports-gear.

> Some of the children's slippers are way too small, so that they got holes where the big toes are and they peek out. Irina complains, others seem not to mind. (fn)

The high amount of broken or unfitting house-shoes (which the children wore in the day care environment) was eye-catching and therefore documented in the field notes. Financial struggles could be one reason for not replacing the shoes. Maybe parents prioritise outdoor clothing, considering the unsteady Bavarian weather conditions? On the contrary, the state of shoes could merely go unrecognised as they are only worn in school and day care. Boys and girls hardly complain, maybe because many of them have slippers in a bad shape. In other contexts, children express dissatisfaction:

> Yasin: "*It is boring when your friends have bicycles and you have to run after them all the time. It is boring, it is stupid, if you run behind them all the time, without a bicycle!*" (fgd)

Yasin's statement reveals frustration about not having a bicycle available. Without it, he is excluded from the peer group's activities. Considering the importance informants attribute to activities with friends, this issue must be much more irritating than wearing worn-down slippers. Yasin points out that he experiences a major disadvantage here. Material lack appears to be visible for the informants, ranging from an inconvenience to a deep frustration:

> Irina: "*Yes, on my birthday, my mum did not buy anything for me. That did not make me happy.* […] *She did not have enough money, because she bought too much.*"

Statements by professionals suggest that many children in the neighbourhood make similar experiences.

> Ms Baumann: "*Many children do not have a bicycle, because one can actually not afford a bicycle. Or when it is broken, than it is broken and it takes weeks until somebody has the money to repair it."*

The adult informants problematize also that money shortage is directly diminishing children's participation possibilities. For example, transportation fees, learning an instrument, participating in a dance class, visiting a tutor, or going to the cinema are pointed out as difficult to afford and therefore not accessible for all.

> Frau Baumann: "*If I do not have money to send my child to the sport club, then it simply does not go to the sports club. If I do not have money for a swimming course, then it simply does not learn how to swim there. Less participation is also one of the effects.*"

In the group mapping, one girl painted a music school, explaining how she likes music and would like to learn there. It did not become clear from the conversation whether this was a question of money, but it shows that the girl is aware of the fact that there is an offer of music classes she wishes to take. Considering the high prices in Munich, having access here might not be an implicitness in the neighbourhood.

The World Vision Children's study addresses this issue as well. Children from backgrounds with low income are half as likely to be member in a sports association and five times less likely to participate in cultural-artistic offers (such as learning an instrument) than wealthy peers. The authors mention finances, but also logistics (like transportation) or families' attitudes as reason. Overall, it is very usual for children in Germany to participate in the described offers. (Leven & Schneekloth, 2007a).

Adults report as well that, as a direct consequence of low income, housing conditions can be unfavourable. It will be discussed in greater detail later (5.3.3), how little salaries and high rents force families to live in social housing, and how problems like over-crowding, disrepair or mould could be an issue in those estates. The young informants do at times utter problems with having little space at home, but otherwise they talk not negatively about the family flats.

> Sarah: "*What I find difficult is that my brother always has to wail when I want to sleep. […] I say to him: Be quiet! Then he is quiet for ten seconds and then he starts to be noisy again. My mother says: Lay down in my bed! I think it is way more comfortable, you can read in peace there. But then my brother comes and says: I also lay down here*!"

Sarah describes the downsides of sharing space with siblings. She expresses that she experiences a disadvantage, as she cannot read and rest. Maybe the family's apartment cannot offer her an own room. The AWO ISS study states that over half of the children from low income backgrounds do not have an own room (Holz, 2006). Considering the local housing situation, this percentage is likely to be higher in Munich. Statistics from official side report that two thirds of the city's poor families live in overcrowded apartments (Landeshauptstadt München, 2012).

5.1.3 Prejudice and shame

Having low spending power as well as living in the researched area exposes people to prejudice. In Munich discourses, the neighbourhood has a reputation of being a bad quarter. It is linked to unemployment, poverty and migration. Professionals report a row of problems connected to this: Those "with the wrong address" are at risk of being discriminated when seeking a job or an apartment. Fluctuation is said to be low, people do not tend to move out of or into the neighbourhood. The school has tried repeatedly to enrol students from other quarters. Efforts remained unsuccessful as families from other neighbourhoods appear to be reluctant to bring their children into "this quarter". As later sections will argue, this has effects on children's possibilities to learn German from peers. Even though the problems of the city part decreased a lot, its reputation seems to persist. The discourse is said to be present in the neighbourhood, even resident portray the city part of being a bad area and utter the wish to move elsewhere.

> Ms Baumann: "*Nobody would send a child voluntarily to school here.*"
>
> Mr Roth: "*It is a structural problem. A young person is introducing him or herself for a training position – eased in the meantime, because we got a lack.*[18] *But to get a training position with certain streets* [mentions street names]*, to get an apartment: No, thanks!*"
>
> Ms Seidel: "*The earlier principal tried repeatedly to dissolve the Sprengel*,[19] *so that we get children from other areas. Both the reputation of the city part is hindering, yes.*"

Furthermore, a certain alienation, also between professionals and families, cannot be missed. Parents' consuming behaviour is questioned, often without further reflection on their reasoning.

> Ms Baumann: "*A few status symbols are necessary.* […] *High expenses for school bags are made. School bags are extremely important, it is important to come with the right bag to school.*"
>
> Mr Roth: "*I say: A school bag costs easily 90 Euro! Answer: How about you go to Kaufland*[20]*, there it costs 15 to 20 Euro! I say: With the knowledge that this bag is harming the child's back and is worn-down and broken after three months!*[21] […] *It is a health issue for children and teenagers. Also, I am ashamed with what kind of bag I have to walk around. It gets obvious where I am from, but I do not have the possibility to get something qualitative.*"

These two quotes contradict each other. Ms Baumann argues how expensive school bags are a status symbol, meaning something that gets bought to keep up appearance, while other things would be far more important to buy. Mr Roth gives a more balanced picture: A high quality

[18] The demand for trainees in South Germany has increased a lot in the last years.
[19] German term without English equivalent: Area, the school takes pupils up from. In Germany, children have to go to the elementary school their place of residents is distributed to.
[20] German shop chain
[21] Mr Roth is referring to a conversation with an employee of the municipality.

school bag is crucial for children's spinal health. Additionally, it holds a lot longer than a cheap bag, and the expense might therefore even be more cost-efficient. The example shows that, while there certainly is empathy for families' financial troubles, their spending behaviour gets observed and judged. Having little is stigmatising for parents and children.

A few employees of the school revealed very stereotypical and negative images of the children in personal conversations with me. I am convinced that the greatest part of adults (and surely the interview partners) are not reasoning in such ways, but the girls and boys seem to be exposed to a certain prejudice in their school environment.

All adult interview partners express repeatedly and clearly, that having low spending power is aggravating for the neighbourhood's families. As it will be discussed in later sections (5.2.2), many parents appear to work hard in order to make ends meet or avoid seeking support from the public side. Donations seem to be refused or accepted only with reluctance.

> Ms Vogt: "*We do have clothes donations, often very, very good clothes.* […] *There are parents, of whom I know that they are really do not have anything, they still say: No, it has not come so far that we have to take used clothes. This is the absolute border.*"

Such strong, uncomfortable feelings could surely be sensible for children. As the example of Erkan shows, the young informants are likely aware and at unease with financial issues:

> Kathrin: "*What is nice in your home country? Do you want to tell?*"
>
> Erkan: "*Yes, because everything is not so expensive there. There are very many thing, which do not cost that much!*"

Erkan expresses that he is ill at ease with prices in Munich, at the same time he distances himself from the addressed issue in a way, as he is attributing the problem to high prices, not to low spending power. In this example, the financial shortage is recognised and as well experienced as something unpleasant.

Shame and prejudice can be understood in terms of still existing discourses of the "self-inflicted poor". Though processes of symbolic violence can be found behind social inequality, in practice, the fault for being poor is mostly ascribed to affected people themselves. For instance, labels like "low educated", "unintegrated" or "passive" get distributed. Also agencies and institutions construct a power-imbalance between "experts" and "supplicants" (Becher, 2008). Accordingly, it can be awkward to seek support and embarrassing to have little.

5.1.4 Summarising

Material shortage, prejudice and shame linked to having little economic capital could be found in the researched neighbourhood. It is likely that children are aware of and ill at ease with these issues, while at the same time they probably do not identify themselves as poor. This subchapter cannot be viewed one-dimensional. Surely not all families are at equal financial distress. Nearly all of the children mention beloved property, like toys or electronic devices. Most of them tell about going on a holiday and getting presents on special occasions. In the appraisal of the professionals, parents are eager to provide their children with certain possessions.

Frau Seidel: "*I think the parents are saving up a lot for a video game console and abstain.*[22]"

This is in accordance with what research can tell: Reviewing studies on childhood poverty, the German Youth Institute states that the greater part of parents abstains first and foremost from own needs in order to provide for children (Hübenthal, 2009).

5.2 *"…because they don't get it from home"* [23]

In interviews with adults, the conversation often revolved around and came back to notions, on what children should do, learn and have available and on the other hand, what their familial context offers to them in terms of doing, learning and provision. This pattern of argumentation could summarised with an interview quote bringing the common expression of professionals to the point: "…*because they don't get it from home*". To live apart from the mainstream family means that children in the neighbourhood do encounter different circumstances as the average German child would, or rather, as the average German child *should* according to dominant constructions of childhood (James et al., 1998). For instance, many of them grow up in a foreign culture, have little economic capital or low educated parents and therefore their daily experience may differ. But is this also a challenge for the boys and girls or merely evaluated as such by professional interview partners? In the following, a look will be taken into commonly addressed issues, like cultural differences, parenting opportunities and issues of knowledge and information.

[22] From other expenditures
[23] Quote from interview with professional

5.2.1 A cultural alienation?

First of all, the children's families are from different cultural backgrounds. Professionals frequently spoke about "cultural differences". Yet, it remained rather vague what this actually entails. Topics often addressed are family networks, activities, gender roles, parenting styles, and different expectations towards schooling.

Adult as well as young participants repeatedly stress the high importance of family networks in the different cultures. For instance, Sarah expresses confidently, that family members enjoy the highest priority for her and family is linked to a great pleasure.

> Sarah: „*For example, we visit my cousin or we fly to our grandparents. This is a surprise I like a lot more than playing!*"

Professionals recognise the strong family connection as a resource, at the same time, some of them tend to categorise family time as inferior compared to German middle class activities.

> Frau Seidel: „*Travelling, they do travel, but to Turkey.*"

Especially this quote exemplifies the issue well. Why is a trip to Turkey in terms of kinship visitations valued less than a mere holiday leisure? Is a child, who is visiting family in Turkey not experience a lot more in terms of culture and local knowledge than a child, who is staying in a hotel and plays on the beach?

Adults furthermore problematize gender roles.

> Ms Baumann: "*In many families from other cultures, the mother is classically in charge of the child.*"

As the German society struggles for more gender equality, they see traditional role allocation critical and some argue that gender is cause for distinction in parental education:

> Mr Dietrich: "*Culturally caused, the boys, the pashas, are allowed to do everything. The girls are not allowed to do anything. They have to establish themselves, also here.*"

Differences in parenting styles are pointed out, mainly from a sceptical viewpoint. The topic was not explored in depth, but it became visible how perspectives on parenting that differ with German perceptions, meet the critique of adult interviewees. More often, the discussion revolved around appropriate activities or important things to teach children.

Also cultural attitudes toward schooling can create tensions. In many societies, school seems to play a different role, causing parents to have expectations towards the German school, which it cannot fulfil.

Mr Dietrich: "*There is a high expectation from side of Ali's parents. He should go to chess, he has to participate in everything.* […] *But it is always expected, the parents pass it on to the pedagogues, to the school, yes.*"

In summary, the professionals frequently point out cultural differences regarding family activities, parenting, attitudes or also gender roles, which are argued to be disadvantageous for the children. It cannot be appraised where actual challenges lie here for the informants, but to some degree, adult interview partners seem to show signs of alienation adverse the cultural diversity. By seeing cultural differences as problems, professionals also view children in a deficient light and might miss giving consideration to their abilities. For example, instead of recognizing a girl's or boy's authentic insight in Turkish life, Ms Seidel might pity her or him for not going on a "real" holiday. Closely linked are notions of what childhood should entail, shaped by a societal discourse on features and practices of childhood: The "socially constructed child" as discussed in the terms of Childhood Studies (James et al., 1998). A study on migrants in elementary schools in Bielefeld concluded that perspectives of cultural deficiency influenced teachers' appraisal of individual students in a negative way. Cultural differences, such as bilingualism, certain mentalities or the kind of promotion parents gave at home were directly mentioned reasons for setting children back to kindergarten or giving them a recommendation for a special-needs school or low-level secondary school (Gomolla, 2010). The example shows that negative perceptions (likely subconscious) of cultural variations can cause disadvantageous outcomes for boys and girls. Before concluding this section, it has to be noted that professionals do not go unaware of resources such as cultural and social capital to be found in a cultural variety. Also, as mentioned previously, the school provides an including environment for children in all their variety, so the argument of a cultural alienation has to remain contested.

5.2.2 Burdened parents

Professionals portray parents in the neighbourhood as burdened and name employment conditions, single parenthood, financial pressure, and little opportunities for recreation as frequent load factors.

Mr Roth: "*On the one side, Munich booms, Munich attracts people, because there are job opportunities here. On the other side, there is a danger to create precarious working sectors for not qualified people.* […] *Those are two dimensions which just do not fit together, to work for free. I know families, who are working in two or three jobs and I wonder: How do you manage? Are you even sleeping at some point?*"

Low qualification is reported to lead to employment in sectors with low salary and often unfavourable working conditions, like shift work or physically demanding labour. Additionally, many parents are said to work a lot in order to make ends meet. Also children point to the issue of bad working conditions.

> At lunchtime, I sit with the boys. They tell about their parents jobs. "*My mom has 3 jobs*". "*I once did not see my dad for five weeks because he works from 4 until midnight.*" (fn)

Official reporting gives substance to this appraisal. Especially in Bavaria, a precarious job market is about to evolve. Steady full-time employment becomes more exceptional, while the share of labour leasing, terminable employment and short hour work is raising rapidly (Beyer, 2013). The Munich poverty report problematizes the local job-market. The number of people working in the low salary sector has increased significantly in the measured period (2005-2011). A comparably high number of the city's citizens has to, additional to their regular occupation, take up a second job or apply for welfare money to cope with Munich's high living costs and rents. All this happens in the context of high average salaries and low unemployment, a gap between high and low income, between high and low qualified opens up at the job-market (Landeshauptstadt München, 2012).

Professionals working with a wider clientele in the city part also point out single parenthood as an extraordinary difficult situation.

> Ms Baumann: "*Single mothers are usually poor mothers. It means, either I work, than I cannot take care of the children, or I do not work, can take care of the children but have to turn every penny around.*[15] *I think that single parents are incredibly burdened.* […] *They cannot take a break, they carry the responsibility alone.* […] *I know a row of single mothers and I have to say: Respect! How they are coping!*"

On some occasions, the young informants express dissatisfaction about not having parents available.

> Yasin: "*I do not like when I am getting cared for at home and it is not my family. Sometimes I do not know these people and my mother says: Stay with him! I hate that!*"

For instance, Yasin makes quite clear that he dislikes being cared for by somebody unfamiliar to him. His mother on the other hand might have no other choice than engaging a babysitter, because of work or other important obligations.

There are hints that a part of the neighbourhood's parents find themselves in unfavourable working conditions, which consume time and energy from them. The reader has probably

noticed that professionals' appraisals are evaluated less critical here. The accounts, which also find support in children's statements and official reporting, were interpreted to be a result of shared meaning making between the professionals and the parents encountered by them, rather than an outsider's evaluation of families' abilities. A row of possible challenges for girls and boys is thinkable, they might have tired mothers and fathers with less opportunity for enjoyed activities and parental support. The intersection of overriding processes and children's lives (the social structural child) becomes visible here (James et al., 1998): an unfavourable job market has the potential to constraint children's parents, to make the generation of income harder and to impede families everyday lives.

5.2.3 An informational gap?

A further topic regularly finding its way into the interview conversation with adults was a lack of knowledge and skills in the neighbourhood. A part of the residents is said to have insufficient access to information amongst other about health, cultural participation and parenting skills. Accordingly, this frequently addressed issue has been called the "informational gap".

Understanding of health and nutrition are criticised. Professionals see a raising number of obese children in the neighbourhood and link it to parent's knowledge about this topic.

> Frau Baumann: "*More and more, children's teas*[24] *and the like get bought. Always with the idea to do something good for the child, but in reality not doing anything good for the child. We see a lot of obese children here.*"

In this account, parents' ability to judge between healthy and non-healthy food is criticised. Often, child obesity is also linked to insufficient physical activity and an excessive use of electronic media. On other occasions though, children are portrayed as exceptionally sporty.

It is furthermore stressed that certain channels of information are difficult to access for some parents, with the effect that they and their children are less likely to participate in offers such as associations, leisure time programmes our supporting services.

> Ms Vogt: "*You have to know, where and how! I am, as a middle class parent, reading about what is available and where the great offers are. It is written very small in tiny booklets. I do not think that the access here is so good.*"

[24] The professional refers to a product designed for children, advertised as healthy, but actually containing a big amount of sugar.

The threshold to access information could be high, as described here with a booklet, printed in small letters and most likely in a confusing layout.

Several adult informants estimate parenting skills of some of the parents low and report deficiencies in terms of recognizing needs and giving attention. Also this point is difficult to evaluate, as the interviewees might be alienated by foreign customs of education or not always have the insight to understand a certain prioritising of parents in challenging situations.

So, do mothers and fathers have need to learn about parenting skills? Is information on offers or services difficult to obtain? Is there a lack of health knowledge with children and parents? The assessment of professionals is not stable enough evidence to make these statements about the neighbourhood's residents. It cannot be claimed that this is common in the researched field, but neither shall it be argued that adult informants do not see the phenomenon of the informational gap. Thinkable are tendencies whereas knowledge usual for the German middle class is not as readily available to families with lower social status. For instance, studies on media use and competence point out digital disparities in Germany and conclude that users from low social and educational background face a higher threshold in obtaining information through new technologies (Henke, Mogge-Grotjahn, & Huster, 2008). This seems to be an issue of importance, bearing in mind that the internet has become a major source of knowledge in our time. Also intercultural barriers are possible. Summarising his research on intercultural access of social work, Stefan Gaitanides (2004), criticises how information about informal offers (for example youth work or family leisure) is not reaching migrants, because of amongst other linguistic reasons. Here, the example of the tiny, hardly readable programme booklet mentioned by Ms Vogt comes into mind again. There are hints for a risen threshold of accessing information and some of the city part's children might be disadvantaged in terms of lacking knowledge on topics like health or cultural participation. To phrase this possible issue in Bourdieu's language, many residents of the researched neighbourhood occupy a different social class than the one that is dominant in Munich. They are likely to possess a different habitus and different cultural capital, therefore there might be a threshold for them in accessing and decoding the language use as well as communicational channels of "the mainstream" (Crossley, 2008).

5.2.4 Summarising

The subchapter has taken a look on how living apart from the mainstream family could have effects on children's lives. Here, topics brought forward by the professionals have been reviewed. While a burdening of parents supposedly has substance, effects of cultural differences and the existence of an informational gap are difficult to assess. In accordance to their backgrounds, the children of the neighbourhood are likely to meet other circumstances and thereby learn different abilities and have to put other skills to play than a child growing up closer to what is defined as optimal by majorities. The quote "…*because they don't get it from home*" contains therefore a limited perspective, as it conveys in a way that children get "nothing", while they actually merely get "something else". Also, this does not mean that childhoods are worse or better, but different and this could be a challenge in a society of growing gaps: as dominant classes define what is a valuable capital, the abilities of children in the researched neighbourhood might be running the risk of remaining underrated (Crossley, 2008)

5.3 The neighbourhood as an island

In their research on Blumenau, another disadvantaged quarter in Munich, Constance Engelfried and her colleagues describe this neighbourhood as "an island", separated from the city and with a rather deficient economic and traffic infrastructure (Engelfried & Golling, 2012). The Blumenau becomes thereby comparable to the neighbourhood in this study, which shares the features of an island. The area is disconnected from Munich's centre, has little economic infrastructure and is characterised by social housing. Many residents have a similar background of migration as well as modest educational qualification and low incomes are usual. In terms of the neighbourhood, children's and professionals' voices nearly contradict each other. While plenty of resources in this living environment have been explored in the first part of the analysis, a marginalisation in comparison to other parts of Munich cannot be ignored. Adults argue that living in the quarter can involve a lack of stimulation, structural and economical disadvantages as well as the persistence of language barriers. In the following, possible challenges for children connected to residency in the researched neighbourhood will be discussed.

5.3.1 Are residents immobile?

Clearly and often, professionals express worries that, out of various reasons (lack of financial means, time or information), the spatial outreach of parents, and thereby children, appears to be limited, causing girls and boys to miss out on vital common-sense knowledge and skills.

> Mr Dietrich: "*The children are in the quarter and they stay in the quarter. Mainly. This is the problem. They do not get impulsions, the parents do not go on trips in Munich, around Munich. Or scarcely.* […] *What is the Isar?*[25] *They do not know it, because they just do not leave this quarter here. They do not know how a goat looks, and so forth. The do not get offered much by the parents in terms of general knowledge or interest.*"

Again, it is difficult to appraise this common impression of professionals. Children themselves gave hints that they are mainly oriented towards their quarter. When asked about Munich in interviews, over half of the young participants made confused or even incorrect statements.

> Kathrin: "*If I say now "Munich", what do you have to think about*?
>
> Nina: "*Bad Tölz*[26]*! Bad Tölz is also in Munich. We have been there in the holidays and it is very beautiful there. And I already started to think about it all the time, if we go there again or not.*"

Nina even referrers to a different city, saying it is also "*in Munich*". On the one hand, she reveals an unrealistic imagination of Munich's geography, on the other, she tells (also repeatedly in regular conversation) that she is eager to go to Bad Tölz again, which is not far from Munich, and well reachable by car as well as train. The account tells that it would be something very special and important for Nina to go there in the summer holidays. As this is a rather small trip, it might be taken as a hint that outing days are more unusual for Nina's family. Furthermore, it was striking how children were frequently assuming that I am residing in the neighbourhood as well. This might also indicate that the children are focused on their quarter.

> Yasin asks me which church I visit and which street I live in, referring clearly to the field. He assumes I live here. (fn)

It is difficult to appraise the immobility put forward by the professionals, nevertheless, it seems as though they experience a certain phenomenon of children missing essential knowledge about their wider environment.

> Ms Vogt: "*They did a very nice trip, rafting on the Isar. And it has been told to me afterwards that there have been children that asked if there are crocodiles in the Isar. This is not a joke!* […] *It breaks your heart and you think, yes, what other children experience as a matter of course with their parents is sort of missing here.*"

[25] Munich's big river
[26] Popular tourist city in the Alps, about an hour long car-ride from Munich.

Is there a tendency of being immobile in the city part, depriving children of stimulation opportunities? According hints could be found, but on the other hand, professionals also report about families, who are highly mobile, locally and internationally. As explored in the first part of the analysis, children very much appreciate activities with their families, and, as I would argue, they do so despite outreach or learning opportunities.

5.3.2 Remaining language barriers

As families in the neighbourhood come from many different countries, the informants do encounter manifold cultures and languages. At the same time, native German seems not as readily available to them.

As discussed earlier, language could be a barrier for children in terms of education. Adult interviewees argue how the composition of the city part is translating into the school, with the consequence that children rarely encounter peers with German as a mother-tongue. This would also mean less opportunity to learn in terms of language from them.

> Ms Seidel: "*We would need children, about a half, who speak German well. This would already have an effect.*"

> Ms Vogt: "*There is this Turkish mother, very education-oriented, who is wondering: How is my child supposed to learn good German here? It is not learning well in the kindergarten! She is very worried about the linguistic development and reasons: Wouldn't it be better if my child would be more with German children?*"

Professionals as well as parents point out benefits of learning language from peers. Research in support of their argument can be found. A study on Turkish and German kindergarten children concludes that Turkish girls and boys noticeably profit from daily interaction with German peers as well as a high quality of the kindergarten (Becker, 2010). Employees of the school feel that an encompassing language promotion is difficult, because of a high demand, and that special tools (teachers, curriculum) for this promotion are desirable.

> Ms Seidel: "*First of all, the state has to do something. We need another curriculum here. We need teachers that promote language and not only in the kindergarten. They do have linguistic promotion there, yes, but… The children should be on the same stand as other six year olds.*"

The severity of this topic is stressed, professionals wish for an intermixture of the school and city part, so that German and non-German children could encounter each other more. And although, as it will be discussed later, there is stable evidence for a connection of language skills and schooling success in Germany, research is insufficient and can deliver no substantial

explanations for this (Merkens, 2010). It is not possible to appraise the young informant's actual language skills, but considering that they have only a few German classmates, it becomes likely that girls and boys from non-German origin miss an opportunity in terms of acquiring language.

The German language is a cultural capital of high importance in the field of schooling and also in many other contexts of the city (Bourdieu, 1977; Moore, 2008). By residing in the city part, children with migration background seem to have diminished access to the possibility of learning German from peers, which is giving them a disadvantage.

5.3.3 Structural disadvantages

The researched neighbourhood is furthermore characterised by a row of structural disadvantages, such as unfavourable housing, little economic and cultural opportunities as well as it is exposed to a certain prejudice. It can be stated that many families do not actively decide to live in the area, but a competitive housing market is likely to leave them little choice. They are required to reside where they can afford it, or where they get provided with social housing.

> Mr Roth: "*They do not live in this city part for fun, but because the housing structure dictates that the people find apartments here. For the provision, one has to fulfil certain criteria, such as endangered housing, homelessness or low income.*"

Professionals hint to apartments, which are old, crowded, or in need of renovation. The social housing seems not always to be in favourable state.

> Ms Vogt: "*There is bad building fabric here, indeed. One has to say this.* […] *I think it is mostly not the people's fault. They do live in an area, where the apartments are old and decayed. It is moulding when the apartments are crowded.*"

On few occasions, also children mention disadvantages of their homes to me.

> Nadja is really tired today. She has shades under her eyes. "*I am an aunt and my nephew cried in the night.*" (fn)

The excerpt indicates that Nadja is living in an apartment with members of the extended family. She cannot be shielded from her nephews crying, which gives also a hint that the apartment might be small or crowded. However, Nadja reveals a pride, by pointing out that she is an aunt and it is important to note that she does not complain or speak negatively about her home. Some of the young women from Blumenau address serious constraints in terms of their housing situation, such as a lack of privacy, space, and crowdedness (Altmann & Engelfried, 2012). As

the Blumenau and the researched quarter are highly comparable, it is likely that some of the young informants face similar challenges.

Additionally, a lack of economic opportunities, such as work and purchase is pointed out as well as observed. This makes commuting for work and shopping necessary.

> Mr Dietrich: "*I think what the people need in the area is a discount supermarket or two. This is just missing.* […] *Just think, you are 70 or 80 years old and always have to go to the mall to do shopping, 2 or 3 kilometre!* [...] *This is missing, the basic thing*s. […] *Everything you normally have within 5 minutes of walking.*"

This situation is alike to the findings in Blumenau, were a lack of job opportunities for young people is problematized (Engelfried, 2012a). Adult interview partners report furthermore how cultural offers and leisure time opportunities, for instance coffee places, theatres or association activity can hardly be found in the neighbourhood. Interviewed professionals problematize this and point out how social work is the only substitute for cultural experience.

> Mr Roth: "*It is boring. Exactly, it is different. Growing up is different and you do not have youth culture in terms of infrastructural offers.* […] *This is not existing. Everything you can find here is social pedagogical substitute for something that would be missing otherwise.*"

Certain associations are reported to leave a gap in youth work and commercial offers do not find their way into the city part because of the low spending power of its inhabitants. These type of offers, also a source of cultural and social capital, are common in Munich, yet it seems as though residents' access is diminished here due to money and distance. In this context, the close link of economic capital and the access to cultural and social resources becomes visible once more (Bourdieu, 1977). It also needs to be stressed that social work cannot be a substitute for participation in a city's cultural life. The girls interviewed in Blumenau report a similar situation and stress their wish for more cultural opportunities such as sport offers or meeting points and a better traffic connection to the city. They are in their teenage years and green spaces are no longer enough for them. Yet, just like the children participating in this study, the young women express that they are nevertheless fond of their quarter (Engelfried, 2012a).

The young informants give a different appraisal of the neighbourhood than adults do, so it is again arguable in how far the obstacles discussed in terms of the city part are also experienced as disadvantages by them. The children's mapping reveals how many opportunities they see there, both in leisure time and economic possibilities. When it comes to the latter, they mostly refer to a nearby mall, reachable in about 20 walking minutes. They picture this shopping centre to be very accessible and central to the neighbourhood, though it lays a bit apart from it.

5.3.4 Summarising

While the young informants portray their quarter as rich in resources, there are hints that living in the disconnected and disadvantaged neighbourhood has the potential to pose certain obstacles to children in terms of immobility and stimulation, acquiring German skills, and a lack of cultural and economic opportunities. The quarter can stand as example for Bourdieu's argument that taking a similar status in the social space also can lead to the occupation of the same spatial locations (Crossley, 2008). Tendencies of local segregation according to wealth are well-observed in Munich (Landeshauptstadt München, 2012). In the academic and political discussion, the term of a "double disadvantaging" has emerged: the quarters of populations ascribed with a low social status often tend to be lacking in terms of infrastructures and housing conditions (Alisch, 2010). Thinking of Munich's highly competitive housing market, it is not unusual that similar processes seem to be at play in the researched area. A prejudice linked to the city part has to be mentioned as well. As discussed earlier, the area the informants reside in is associated with unemployment and poverty. Yet, it is questionable in how far the young informants can be viewed as "double disadvantaged", considering the many resources they attribute to their quarter.

However, one also could consider that a disconnection from the Munich centre might be an advantage for children. Possibly they avoid having to compare themselves to much wealthier peers or meeting prejudgment in a blatant way? Of course, a lack of access to the opportunities of Munich cannot be approved, but at some points, to be shielded might also mean being spared unpleasant experience.

5.4 Being challenged by and coping with school

As the young informants referred to school mostly from a perspective of being challenged, it appears to be most suitable to review the issues of schooling and education in the second part of analysis.

In the following, children's and adults' voices on school are going to be heard. Before entering the discussion, a short presentation of the German elementary school will help to understand the addressed issues better. Germany is a federal republic and educational planning is task of the federal governments. Accordingly, the given information is valid for the province of Bavaria. However, education varies only slightly throughout Germany. Enrolment in the four-year elementary school takes place around the age of six or seven. Children have to visit the

public primary school assorted to their place of residence. A typical school day last from eight until about noon, with lessons divided in a 45 minute rhythm. Afternoon care is not usual, but pupils are required to do homework for an estimated average time of one hour. Class sizes vary. In the researched school, around twenty children visited one class. Each class shall ideally have an own teacher for at least two years in a row. The curriculum has a clear focus on numeracy, literacy and basic common-sense knowledge. Creative subjects, sports and religion build a second, slightly less weighted column. Lessons take place in German. Pupils' performance is evaluated in a text-based manner in grade one and two. From the third grade, they receive marks from 1-6, with 1 indicating "very good". There is furthermore a high need for parental support in the years of elementary school. Care takers are required to give supervision and tutoring during homework, as well as they have to communicate with the class teacher. Schooling itself as well as school books are free, all other materials need to be provided by parents. After four years, the pupils get assorted into three school types according to their performance (Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Bildung und Kultus, 2015). Though there is the possibility for individuals to improve their education, pupils are basically divided and prepared for either university or a vocational career from the age of ten or eleven.

The reader could surely win an impression of how this system has clear demands towards children. There have been challenges found connected to schooling in the researched field. Some of them might be experienced of children from all kinds of backgrounds, such as a high work load or organisational requirements. Other hurdles could be special to children, who occupy a disadvantaged standpoint, such as material demands, language barriers or the attainment of extended parental support. This subchapter is of importance, as there is a significant correlation between the schooling performance of children and their social status in Germany. Low parental education and income diminish pupils educational success and advancement noticeable (Holz, 2006; Leven & Schneekloth, 2007b). It is not possible for the thesis to uncover exact reasons for this. However, the following analysis gives pin-points on how certain pupils can be disadvantaged in school.

5.4.1 Children's voices on school: Frustration and motivation

First of all, the reader shall be presented with children's perspectives on school. In interviews, conversations and focus-group-discussions, the informants frequently mentioned frustration, especially in terms of homework. They address high workloads, exhaustion and boredom, but also being scolded and compelled to a certain behaviour in school meets their dissension.

Sarah: "*I hate homework, because you always have to go there, stand up, do the dull homework, give it to the teacher and say: I am done with homework! And what happens next? Take the math sheet!*" (fgd)

As one of many, this quote tells about exhaustion and frustration. Sarah completes her tasks, which she is expressing to be tiresome at the moment. As a consequence of having accomplished the homework, the teacher is requesting her to take another sheet with exercises. School work is also often linked to boredom by the participants. One girl highlights that having to work alone is especially challenging:

Lina: "*I don't like when I always have to do my green map all alone, because nobody has… Just I am supposed to do all the things in my green map. I just don't like it, it is just so boring.*"

Furthermore, the children meet behavioural expectations:

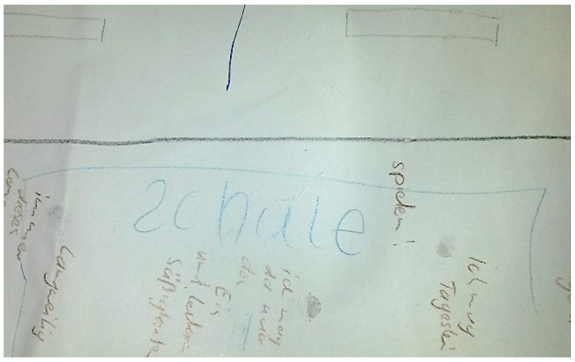
Irina: "*I hate school, because you always, because you cannot sleep there. You are not allowed to run in the school building and you are also not allowed to shout! That's why!*"

A certain behaviour has to be showed in school, which is not always fitting to immediate needs and peer activities. If one reviews Irina's quote in this light, she stresses how she can feel tired in school and how she wants to move and play loudly with her friends. If they do not show appropriate schooling behaviour or are not able to keep up with working expectations, the children run the risk of meeting teachers' disapproval.

Yasin sits down at the teachers table. "*Do you want to see how our teacher yells*?" He hits the table hard with his flat hands. "*What have I told you? Stop now, be quiet!*" He shouts loud and angrily. "*She always yells at us. It is annoying!*" (fn)

In this piece of field notes, Yasin hints that he feels disregarded by the teacher and classifies her reaction as inappropriate. There is most likely a feeling of being treated unfairly when the teacher harshly enforces control.

In an otherwise elaborate city part mapping, the children address the school merely with a tiny and simple drawing, despite the fact that they are spending a great part of their day here. Can this be a hint for exhaustion and more enthusiasm for other places?



12 Just a few, thin lines build a box-shaped drawing of the school, with no other features than a small, hardly visible door at the bottom. The heading says "Schule", meaning school. The researcher's notes nearly cover up the building.

It is argued that the informants most likely do find school challenging in various ways. They hint to a mismatch of adult expectations with their needs of recreation, respect, interaction and sense of achievement. They express a dissatisfaction with high work demands on the one hand and determination by adults on the other. The World Vision Children's study confirms a great amount of school work in the afternoon. Only a minority of children in Germany spends less than an hour on homework each day. The authors judge this to be a significant share of pupils' free time. Additionally, the greater part of elementary school children consulted felt that they have very little opportunities to officially contribute to the creation of school life (Schneekloth & Leven, 2007b). The informants seem to be exposed to high demands and are at the same time controlled by adult employees. However, it has to stay contested if a frustration is extraordinary for the informants or shared by pupils from all kinds of backgrounds. It shall be argued that the experience is rather "universal" than "unique", as probably everyone can relate to feelings of tiredness in an actually appreciated occupation. An exhaustion of children might as well originate from the late point of time in the school year. Yet, negative feelings connected to schooling were stressed by the young informants and are therefore important to consider. As the next section will show, the girls and boys express as well motivation and fun in terms of school and learning.

School is not something children are unable to enjoy or to cope with. Girls and boys expose educational skills and constructive attitudes. In interviews, conversation and focus group discussions, the young informants report about joy, motivation and persistence in learning, subject preferences, organisational strategies, and in their appraisal, school and learning are important for children.

> Elif: "*School is good for the brain, the brain gets activated. For example, math is good and German. And school is also good, you can learn well there. And, hmm, you can also do other things there, sports and the like, also arts. You can learn well!*" (fgd)

Elif is expressing how she likes learning and how school is offering many possibilities, first of all learning. In their discussions about schooling, children mention joy and fun. In connection to that, they often express preferences for certain subjects.

> Irina: "*Learning is fun, actually, but I do just love math, not German, because German is dull. I'm not good at it, I am just good at math. I love math!*"

The data furthermore suggests that the boys and girls can be persistent and are able to take up challenges in terms of schooling. Observations showed how some pupils are working steadily on individual challenges. Children also expressed themselves in a way that reveals motivation and the willingness to practice with difficult tasks.

Matej: "*You can be smart, you have to read a lot. You mustn't give up, always carry on, ok?!*" (fgd)

As it will be discussed in a later section, professionals frequently problematize that children are not able to provide organisational skills to sufficient degree. Yet, in interviews, girls and boys tell me about schooling strategies, for example listening, practicing or following the teacher's advice. When asked about it, Nina explains for instance how she is able to simplify a math tasks, by applying the teacher's solution method:

Nina: "*I find math difficult and I am very good in German.*"

Kathrin: "*How are you accomplishing math anyway?*"

Nina: "*I am calculating in two steps in my head.*" She continues to explain the method in detail.

Nina has listened to the explanation in class, is able to apply it and also to explain it to me. Thereby, the girls certainly possesses an organisational strategy.

Children do furthermore express that school is of importance to them. Some link it to the expectation that children have to learn or even to future possibilities, as Irina does:

Irina[27]: "*If you are in third class and you do not know anything, then you are not getting smart either! You won't be able to work!* […] *Learning is important!*" (fgd)

The capacities children do possess in terms of schooling need to be noted. They show organisational strategies, which is an important skill, a form of capital, in the field of the school. On the other hand, girls and boys expose attitudes, interpreted here as moments of their habitus, that tend to be beneficial in terms of schooling, such as persistency, motivation and an attitude of a greater usefulness of education in terms of knowledge and future opportunities (Bourdieu, 1977; Maton, 2008). Active pursuits in terms of learning can be seen as children's agency, boys and girls are both "*doers*" and "*thinkers*" in education (Robson et al., 2007, p. 135). Though there might be challenges, it can be assumed that the participants possess means to persist in school. By keeping up with the high work demand, they are participating in society's system-immanent division of labour (Qvortrup, 2002). However, adult informants frequently appraise children's contributions and skills in a pessimistic way.

5.4.2 Is school ill-fitted to children's abilities?

Professionals involved in education evaluated children's schooling abilities from a critical point of view. In their perspective, a lack of organisational and language skills cause problems for

[27] Irina is referring to children, who do not learn in school.

many of the pupils. The accounts have to be approached carefully, as no objective testing of the mentioned abilities took place. In the following, adults' voices on schooling challenges will be presented. Previous research helps to appraise the conveyed understandings.

Lessons and homework time require sophisticated organisational skills, which, as discussed earlier, also have been observed. Yet, teachers and pedagogues frequently point out that this can be a challenge for many children.

> Ms Lehmann: "*So, for some it is really about working alone quietly for a longer period. For some, this is just not doable.* […] *Then, it is also much about language. So it is for example important for me, if there are problems, that one asks, and if I explain something, that one listens. If I cannot do either of it, because I either do not understand what the teacher in the front explains, or because I cannot listen, because I never learned how to listen, everything just goes past me.*"

The abilities described here, listening, concentrating, posing questions, being calm, self-focused, and persistent, are highly important for navigating the everyday life of a German elementary school. Teachers and pedagogues stress that these working skills are often not the way in which the girls and boys operate. Observations from a lesson tell about challenges met by educators and pupils.

Teachers follow a tight pattern in lessons and are strict about the pupils' behaviour. Children are exposed to a harsh tone, but are rather calm and strive to participate. The lesson is teacher-centred, but loosened up with interactive elements. It is demanding for the pupils to sit and restrain from interaction with each other, while the teacher struggles to keep the attention of all children, making the lesson entertaining, instructive and interactive. What is expected from the curriculum has to be passed on and learning progress for all pupils needs to be ensured. It is hardly possible for the teacher to pay special attention to extraordinary weak or strong children. The boys and girls on the other hand have to spend a lot of energy on keeping up with the lesson, or on the contrary, not spacing out when there is need for repetition. They are expected to give answers and concentrate on the tasks while at the same time they have to sustain being collectively scolded and still keep up the motivation to participate in the lesson. Learning happens under a certain compulsion here.

The field notes suggest that it is challenging for the teacher as well as the pupils to shape a lesson together. As explored earlier, a stressed interaction between educators and children has also been addressed by the young informants. Is there a danger for teacher-student relations to become strained? Girls in the Blumenau thematise a strong feeling of being controlled and degraded by teachers, which for some is eventually connected to low motivation and refusing of school (Engelfried, 2012a). This could be a major issue, considering the high significance

good contacts to educational gate-keepers have for children's advancement in school, as argued for instance by Ricardo Stanton-Salazar (1997). It needs to be noted that those young women are already secondary school students. Yet, it has to be asked if such a negative relationship between pupils and teachers could find a start in feeling regularly compelled and scolded from a young age?

Language is furthermore an important issue. The greater part of the children has a migration background. That means that German is only a second language for them. Even though all children are able to understand and speak it, professionals argue that German skills are often not high enough to master schooling tasks.

> Ms Beck: "*One thing is definitely the language. Nearly nobody speaks a really good German here.* […] *This is noticeable in terms of understanding in lessons.* […] *It is also noticeable in terms of reading of tasks and understanding of texts.* […] *And if I do not understand what I am supposed to do, I do have a problem. If I do not know how to express myself, I do have a problem. The German language stands over everything."*

The lessons, the curriculum and all interaction between employees and children take place in German. So, if children do not have a high mastery of the language, they encounter a disadvantage. Professionals see the language as a central obstacle in terms of education as it grants access to understanding, reading and communicating.

> Ms Seidel: "*Catching up with language development, I see that, is not possible here. It is not possible with our curriculum, because it is solely oriented towards children from a German background, yes.*"

Employees do stress the need to adjust schooling more to children's abilities. Yet, pupils tend to be portrayed as deficient if they do not have the requested organisational and language skills.

A look into previous research will help to evaluate professionals' appraisal here. For Germany, there is stable evidence that poor children do worse in school than their peers. An important factor is also parents' educational background, which is often modest in the researched neighbourhood (Holz, 2006). Also migration plays a role. Children from non-German origin tend to be disadvantaged furthermore in terms of education. Mastery of the German language has been identified as a key qualification in order to persist in school (Schulz, 2012). Conveyed to the researched field, the young informants are likely to experience comparable educational disadvantages. For the professionals, the lack of organisational and linguistic mastery, an important cultural capital in the field of school, is a central reason for schooling problems. Certain instances, here the German language and organisational skills, are defined as the currency in educational exchange by those occupying majority positions in society (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). To come back to Bourdieu's language, professionals hint to a noticeable gap

between the manner the school is operating and the ability of children to participate in these patterns (Brooker, 2015; Kuhlmann, 2008; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). How wide this gap actually is has to remain unanswered, but one has to question why school is working in a way that is difficult to assess for children? Why should just children be fit for school, and not the school be fit for children? At the same time, it has to be considered that professionals could be biased and underestimate children's skills. There are hints that coming from a low social background has the potential to effect teachers' evaluation negatively (Leven & Schneekloth, 2007b). For illustration, a Master's thesis researching on teacher's name preferences received great attention in 2009. After consulting about 2000 teachers, the study concluded that the educators have a strong and un-reflected aversion against names associated with a low social status, such as Kevin and Chantal. Statements on the names where so strong that impartialness of teachers seemed to be in doubt (Trenkamp, 2009). Here, the reader is likely to be reminded about Bourdieu's argumentation on class-related taste and the striving of individuals from higher status to distance themselves from lower classes (Crossley, 2008). It might be possible that similar, unconscious, processes of alienation play a role in the researched field.

Furthermore, the transition into secondary school shall be problematized. To postmark children as high or low-performers during fourth grade is criticised by some of the professionals and seems especially early for challenged girls and boys.

> Ms Beck: "*The four-year elementary school is absolutely right for some children, but for most of them not, because many children are still unfolding their skills.*"

There is evidence from previous research that primary school pupils are highly aware and feel pressured in terms of this sorting process (Picot & Schroeder, 2007). For the girls in Blumenau, attending a low social secondary school is connected to serious worries regarding future prospects (Altmann & Engelfried, 2012). On single occasions, some of the young informants mentioned the wish to visit a good secondary school to me. The social background of children and the type of secondary school they are allowed to visit are strongly linked in Germany. According to the AWO ISS study, the chances of poor children to visit the highest school type are, in connection with parental education, two to four times lower compared to peers with average wealth (Holz, 2006). This sorting process might cause disadvantages for the young informants. The question to which degree it is causing worries for them has to remain unanswered.

5.4.3 Does school request more parental support than available?

The German elementary school is requiring a significant amount of practical support, learning promotion and expenditures from side of the parents. Professionals argue that this is not available to all children to a sufficient degree.

First and foremost, education is costly. Even though schools are free, each child needs a lot of equipment and material, such as pens and notebooks, art supplies, lunch and so forth. This is indeed a big expenditure and shopping effort, in the beginning as well as in the course of each school year. The new education and participation law is offering a refund if one is classified as being in need (Deutscher Bundestag & Deutscher Bundesrat, 2011). Yet, some families might not fall under the necessary income line, others might not want to be sorted in to the "needy" category. Professionals estimate that the provision of school material is challenging for many families.

> Ms Seidel: "*It is a lot of money for material. Also with trips, they cost about, I think Herr Huber*[28] *collected about 130 €. That is too much for many. Yes, they do not even enrol and say: gosh, my child would like to go but it is not possible.*"

> Ms Seidel: "*We have this law now: Education and participation. The children do not have to pay for trips, they get lunch for just one Euro. We have, in comparison to all of Munich, a great amount of children.*[29] *But there are also parents, I experience again and again, who say: No, it is unpleasant for us to ask for welfare money. There are also those, who do not get welfare money, but are always on the edge. They just scratch along.*"

Also tutoring lessons, quite common in the Germany, are costly and might therefore not be easily available for children in the area.

> Mr Roth: „*Take a look at how many people, how many children get extracurricular support, tutoring, or whatever, to cope with school. Here, the options families have are: Getting a funded place from the youth welfare or not getting it. I think this is revealing something, the gap!*[30]"

In observations, the impression was won that children are confronted directly with a mismatch between material demands and parental possibilities of paying and obtaining schooling equipment. In this example, the boy might even have to take the blame for it.

> One boy has no glue in class. The teacher gets angry about it. "You do not really care, right?" (fn)

Furthermore, a German school asks for a high amount of organisational support from side of the parents. This involves for example controlling or supervising homework or practicing

[28] Name changed
[29] Children, who are entitled to this benefit
[30] The gap between rich and poor

according to individual needs (Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Bildung und Kultus, 2015). Professionals think that this is happening to an insufficient degree in the neighbourhood. As reasons for this, they put forward a lack of time and energy, language barriers and expectations towards the school.

> Mr Roth: "*A single mother with three children does not have the option to play that mother, who always sits down with the children and supervises homework. It is a structural problem and I admire how the people manage their everyday life.*"

For some families, organising the everyday life with work, household and children might leave little room for additional educational promotion. Parents could be forced to set different priorities. Also language barriers are argued to play a role, possibly posing a high threshold for some to communicate with the school and get involved in children's school work.

> Ms Seidel: "*I am experiencing our parents, they are reluctant to come to school. And I think some colleagues say that they are not interested in the children. I do not think so! I think that they are actually having trouble with our language, that they are ashamed, yes!*"

The WVC study points out the requirement of high parental support in elementary school. There is a tendency that parents with low income or migration background do involve themselves less in schooling issues. For the latter, the authors estimate that language skills are a central obstacle (Leven & Schneekloth, 2007b). There might also be different expectation towards the school from the side of migrated parents.

> Ms Beck: "*Especially in the Turkish culture, a lot of things are just school. In Turkey it is like that, it happens in school so it is not the business of parents at home. Here, the thought is totally different. Two cultural expectations meet and somehow collide.*"

Pedagogues and teachers express their dissatisfaction, as they cannot take so much responsibility and additionally expect more commitment from parents at home.

When applying Bourdieu's thinking tools to the discussed issues, it becomes visible how visiting the elementary school is requiring a decent amount of material and cultural capital. To be successful in the field of school, pupils need to be able to resort to parents finances. A new law aims at relieving financially weak families, but the school's employees give hints that it does not have sufficient coverage and might be experienced as stigmatizing. Children are furthermore relying on parents' cultural knowledge and skills, so that they can receive support with homework and individual practicing. This is also linked to time, which parents need to have available. Thinking back to the earlier discussion on burdened parents (5.2.2), one can imagine how a difficult job market might make time and energy to scarce goods in some families. Schooling success of children is thereby directly connected to parental capacities

(Bourdieu, 1977; Brooker, 2015; Kuhlmann, 2008). It is comprehensible, how boys and girls whose parents have less time, material and cultural capital, are disadvantaged. The question is, why is an education system that wants to convey cultural capital to individuals, not self-sufficient but strongly coming back on the cultural and also financial capital originally available to those individuals? Why is the school conditioning educational chances on pupils' backgrounds? An imbalance emerges. Thinking back to the discourse on the social structural child, Jens Qvortrup (2002) argues how the family is carrying all the costs for raising children while society as such is the main beneficiary of families' efforts and children's system-immanent contribution to schooling. In this context, the Bavarian primary school is burdening parents with an additional task, instead of taking over full responsibility for children's education.

5.4.4 Summarising

This last subchapter explored challenges that emerged in terms of schooling. Considering its length, it seems to be fruitful to briefly summarise the discussion: while children commonly do have motivation for school, they also often address exhaustion and frustration regarding control exercised on them by teachers. Professionals point to a gap between children's abilities and the language and organisational requirements of the elementary school. Furthermore, school is directly relying on parents' economic capital, educational skills, and time capacities and creates thereby further disadvantages. Instead of profoundly questioning this school system, children are often viewed in a deficient light.

6 Concluding reflections

In order to round the thesis, this final chapter gives an appraisal of the research questions and discusses the findings from a summarising perspective. The reader is supposed to win an understanding of the broader lines of argumentation formed during the analysis chapters. Finally, an outlook on further research needs and own thoughts will conclude this work and open up new questions towards the topic of childhood poverty in Munich and elsewhere.

6.1 Appraising the research questions

Each research question will be given an appraisal in the following. Having read the analysis chapters, the reader has surely developed her or his own thoughts towards the findings. In order to avoid repetition, the elaborations will be short and held in a summarising manner.

What are children's experiences of everyday life (school, leisure time, social relationships)?

Children make variated experience, both analysis chapters can be seen as "answer" to this question. Central elements of their everyday life are school, the day care centre as well as leisure time involving peer and family activities. They presented especially friends and family as important social resource. Schooling is at times exhausting to them, while they appreciate to learn and to meet peers in this environment. Children initiate and organise their leisure time widely for themselves, which is joyful for them. Furthermore, diversity of culture, religion and ethnicity is a normal part of their everyday life.

What are their perceptions of living in a marginalised neighbourhood?

The children appreciate their neighbourhood, they see it as rich in opportunities and life and do not present their quarter as marginalised. Thereby, they directly dissent many adults' descriptions of a dull and monotone city part.

Which challenges do they meet in their everyday environment?

Challenges expressed by children themselves are schooling and homework as well as the absence of peers to play with. The second analysis chapter hints furthermore to pitfalls connected to growing up outside German mainstream cultures. Obstacles in this terms might be language barriers as well as high thresholds between city parts and social classes. More research on these matters is necessary. Structural instances such as schooling policies or an unfavourable

job and housing market have furthermore the potential to disadvantage children and their families. Having little financial assets is most likely recognisable and unpleasant to the boys and girls. Yet, the thesis cannot answer the question if this is an issue of minor or major significance in their lives. It is thinkable that the informants experience this very differently.

What kind of capacities and resources are available to them?

Children have rich cultural capacities, social resources as well as special multicultural abilities. The boys and girls met in the field can be described as socially competent, creative and enthusiastic. Also certain structural features of the neighbourhood, such as the full-time school, can be seen as beneficial. Children have abundant resources they can fall back on, even if it may not be the financial ones. The central question is: will they have the opportunity to fully utilise them when they get in touch with mainstream cultures?

In what ways do children become active and strive for advantages?

Children are competent agents in the relation to peers and adults. Boys and girls develop and engage in colourful peer cultures. They seek to thicken their agency whenever it is constrained by adults. In course of this, they expose a sophisticated set of social and communicational skills. Also, contributing their reflections to this research can be seen as an act of agency. The young informants clearly presented themselves as "doers" and "thinkers" (Robson et al., 2007).

During the planning stage and when the field was entered, my picture of poverty was that of a simple correlation between a low income and a possible deprivation in different areas of children's lives, like material supply or cultural participation. However, already during fieldwork it became visible that childhood poverty is a far more complex matter. The next section will explore how my understanding grew and what could be discovered when looking beyond a linear perspective of "little money equals disadvantage".

6.2 Discussing the findings

First of all, by far richer life worlds than imagined were found in the researched neighbourhood. The children met in the quarter engage in prospering peer cultures, exercise agency and strive to thicken it, possess sophisticated communicational skills, are embedded in social networks and have access to multicultural capacities and connections. The neighbourhood is characterised far more by a diversity than by a monotony. Yet, being poor shall not be romanticised. Many of the families in the quarter do indeed have little and might have to cut

back in material and cultural provision of their children. Structural issues are clearly at play. A competitive housing situation, a precarious job market and high living costs are characteristic for the city of Munich and have the potential to create a row of disadvantages, such as a disconnection of the neighbourhood, participation barriers, or a burdening of parents. Considering the boys' and girls' own interpretation and the capital held by them, I would not argue that this leads automatically to a deprivation of children. In any case, the young informants do not consider themselves as deprived, but point out many aspects of a colourful life.

Dissonances can be found elsewhere. When summarising Bourdieu's elaborations on the arbitrariness of culture, Liz Brooker (2015, p. 50) concludes that "…*the valued qualities acquired in one field of practice* […] *may lose their value in another* [...]". Accordingly, it shall be argued that the rich resources to be found with the children in the field are at danger of going unrecognised and undervalued. They grow up outside the mainstream, but are evaluated from the perspective of the mainstream (Brooker, 2015; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Infamous example is the primary school, which amongst other requests a mastery of the German language and strongly falls back on parents' time and capacities to give support. Although a mismatch between requirements and the actual capital of children is recognised, the shortcomings are still commonly ascribed to children themselves and there is little opportunity for them to put variant skills, for instance bilingualism, to play (Brooker, 2015). Linked to this are also powerful notions of what childhood should optimally entail (James et al., 1998), a frame which the young informants do not always fit in. As a consequence, perspectives on them are at times deficiency-oriented and thereby valuable capacities are again running the risk of being underestimated and overlooked. Furthermore, a certain mismatch between adults' and children's notions, for instance regarding the quality of the residential area or family activities, has to be noted. Professionals' interpretations are frequently more negative than the understandings children express. At this point, I want to stress that all of the adult interview partners indeed appreciate the children and see a lot of potential in them. Variety and variation are not un-valued, but when it comes to the working of overriding systems, e.g. education, conformity to the mainstream gives by far greater advantages (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). One also has to ask questions regarding a future perspective. Could the qualities which children possess now retreat in the future, in case they have no opportunity to apply them and find recognition for them? If their abilities are not socially recognised, children are at danger of being marginalised.

Therefore, it shall be argued that a re-evaluation of children's capacities has to take place. Deficiency orientations are unhelpful. Instead, the focus should lay on the resources boys and girls bring and these need to be valued and promoted at their own right (Prout & James, 1997). Thereby, children should be also provided with possibilities to put their original skills to play and profit from them (Brooker, 2015). Societal and political levels need to catch up and provide for instance an educational system which is able to convey cultural capital impartially to pupils, regardless of their social backgrounds. Also, it is essential to blur spatial and mental barriers between dominant classes and those who occupy a lower status. It is thereby surely no new claim that, for instance, the German education system or the Munich housing market need to undergo profound reforms (Beyer, 2013; Kuhlmann, 2008).

A question emerging quite often during analysing and writing was if the challenges met by children are actually revolving around having little or around being different? There is no definite answer to this, yet the insight that childhood poverty entails more than a lack of money, followed by possible deprivation plays a role. This perspective can be a limited one: by determining what makes children deprived, one again applies a dominant definition on them. And, by labelling a child as deprived according to a catalogue of items or capacities, one is making poverty to an attribute of the child and thereby possibly fails to recognise excluding mechanisms (Brooker, 2015). It shall be argued that boys' and girls' own understandings need to be included in the definition of childhood poverty as well as that processes between dominant and low social classes, which create barriers in society, have to be considered.

6.3 Further research

If there was a chance to repeat this study, it would be highly beneficial to include also interviews from mothers and fathers. This could give a third perspective on the field and parents' understandings would be valuable in order to appraise professionals' interpretations. During the field work, adults repeatedly asked the question on what experiences the youth of the neighbourhood might make. Is the quarter still attractive for young people in their teenage years? Are there tendencies of marginalisation? Considering the many challenges faced by the young women in Blumenau, it would be interesting and fruitful to explore the understandings of youth in the neighbourhood. It is likely that their experiences differs from those of the child participants. Not specific to the field the thesis explored is a third research need I would like to bring forward: what alternative ways of schooling could help to enhance impartialness in

German education? This entails also research on language use and the working of language barriers in schools.

6.4 Epilogue

Thinking back to the fieldwork, I surely had a pleasant time with the boys and girls. Each day, I came to and went from the neighbourhood with positive anticipations. The small fare-well party during the last days in the field is fresh in my mind. A cake with smarties topping and music from the radio programme recorded by the informants created an excellent atmosphere among the children. All of them formed a big circle and danced around the room in a line.

I might have presented the reader with a one-sided perspective of Munich. It is also the city where an immense support for thousands of arriving and transiting refugees was organised spontaneously, only a few weeks after the fieldwork took place. Talking together with professionals and reading the municipality's statements, I won the impression that there is an actual political will to take social inequality seriously and find ways to temper it. Economic conditions are most likely not going to change profoundly in the near future. In my opinion, benefits can be achieved if the city utilises the initiative from residents themselves when planning support in an area like the one that was researched. I quote an interview partner when I say, "*in Munich, everybody has his province*", people separate according to backgrounds, income and education. Establishing more contact points between these provinces could be an initial step to more equality in the city.

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Information letter to children and parents

Dear parents, dear children

I would like to introduce myself and tell you that I am going to be an intern at [name of the day care centre] from 6. to 31. of July.

My name is Kathrin Bösch and I am studying Childhood Studies at the University of Trondheim, Norway. For my Master's thesis, I would like to learn about the lives of children here in [name of the city part]. Therefore, I am going to be a guest in the group of [name of pedagogue], for an internship and for conducting a research project. I am especially interested how children actively influence and construct their everyday lives, happiness, networks and their city part.

To find out about this interest, I would like to carry out two smaller painting projects together with the children as well as assemble a radio programme with them. Towards the end of my stay, I also would like to conduct short interviews with children. Before any interviews take place, you will be informed with a letter once more and asked for a written permission.

You can find elaborate information about the research project in the attached flyer.

I would be very glad, if you would allow your children to participate in the research. If you want to know more, feel free to contact me or the team in the day care centre. Please also let us know, if you are having concerns and do not want your daughter or son to be included in the research.

Have a pleasant week!

Kathrin Bösch

E-mail address

Telephone number

Research project: Life in [city part] – Experience, perceptions and activity of children

Information for parents and children

What is the research about?

For the project, children in [city part] are at the centre of interest. How do they perceive their everyday life here? What do they like and what do they find challenging? And: How do they actively construct their life and environment and create advantages for themselves?

We as adults often overlook perceptions of children. Therefore, I would like to listen to the girls and boys as well as to the professionals here to find out about their experience, perceptions and activity.

Therefore, I am going to be five weeks as a guest in the day care centre in [street name]. I would like to find out together with the girls and boys about their everyday life, their leisure time, happiness, networks and their perceptions of Munich. Drawing and playing shall thereby make communication easy and pleasant. In the last two weeks of my stay, I would like to conduct interviews with some of the children.

It is especially important for me that the research is interactive and enjoyable for the children. I hope that they are going to feel listened to and taken seriously.

Why is the research being done?

The research shall contribute to understand children and their needs better. I want to show that children can be very active in the construction of their environments. The finished thesis will be sent to the municipality of Munich, so that also the officials there can be informed about the experience, problems and talents of the children in [city part]

The research results will be summarised in a Master's thesis. The project is supervised by a professor (Anne Trine Kjørholt) of the University in Trondheim and has been approved by the Norwegian Social Data Service (NSD).

Who is participating in the research?

I am going to be a guest in the day care centre in [street name], in the group of [pedagogue's name] and hope to find answers on my research questions together with the children there. It would be a great help for me, if you, children, join in my offers and if you, parents, allow your children to participate.

Of course do parents and children decide if they want to contribute to the research or not. Nobody has to participate and it is always possible to quit, also when it has been decided to join at first. Children always have the possibility to say no if they do not want to do something or do not want to answer a question.

Who gets to know about the research?

During the whole project, all information is confident and anonymous. I am not going to tell what has been said or discussed. Drawings or audio recordings will be stored in an inaccessible place. In the final thesis, everything will be anonymised, so that it is impossible to reconstruct who gave which information.

How can parents and children get to know about the research?

A short report with results is going to be sent to the team of the day care centre in spring 2016. The finished thesis will be available in summer 2016 for everybody, who is interested.

Thank you very much for your interest!

Consent letter to parents for child interviews

Dear parents

In the last week before the summer holidays, I would like to conduct short interviews with children for the research project “Life in [city part] – Experience, perceptions and activity of children”.

Discussed topic shall be how children perceive and construct their everyday life, happiness, networks and city part. Of course, the interviews are voluntarily, short and take a positive focus.

I would like to ask your written consent for interviews. If you agree that your son or daughter gets questioned, please sign and bring the section below to school.

If you have questions, feel free to ask me or the team of the day care centre.

Thank you very much and have a pleasant week,

Kathrin Bösch

E-mail address

Telephone number

I agree, that my son/ my daughter [name of child] is interviewed in context of the research project “Life in [city part] – Experience, perceptions and activity of children”.

_____ _____

Place, date Signature

Interview guide for children

Challenges in daily life

1. What do you do on a typical weekday from morning until evening? Can you explain in sequence?
2. What do you like most on a typical day, what is easy for you?
3. Is there also something you find difficult? How do you manage to do that?

Networks

4. Which places do you visit during a normal week?
5. Where and with whom do you like to spend time the most?

Leisure time

6. What do you like doing most when you have free time?
7. With whom are you spending your free time?
8. Where in Munich are you on the way when you have free time?

Being happy

9. When do you feel happy? What do you need to feel happy?
10. Is there something that could make you even happier then? What could you do to attain it?

Munich

11. When I say “Munich”, what do you have do think about?
12. What do you like about Munich?
13. Is there also something you don’t like about Munich? How are you avoiding that?

Interview guide for adults

Poverty in Munich

1. Why do families have a low income in Munich?
2. Why is especially Munich difficult place for families with low income?
3. How is this low income effecting children?

Perception of children

4. Are children here different than elsewhere?
5. If we take a look at the issue from a children's rights point of view, which rights of poor children in Munich are violated in your opinion?
6. In how far are children able to actively influence their environments?

Challenges

7. What challenges do the children meet here?
8. In how far do children meet prejudice or stereotypes?

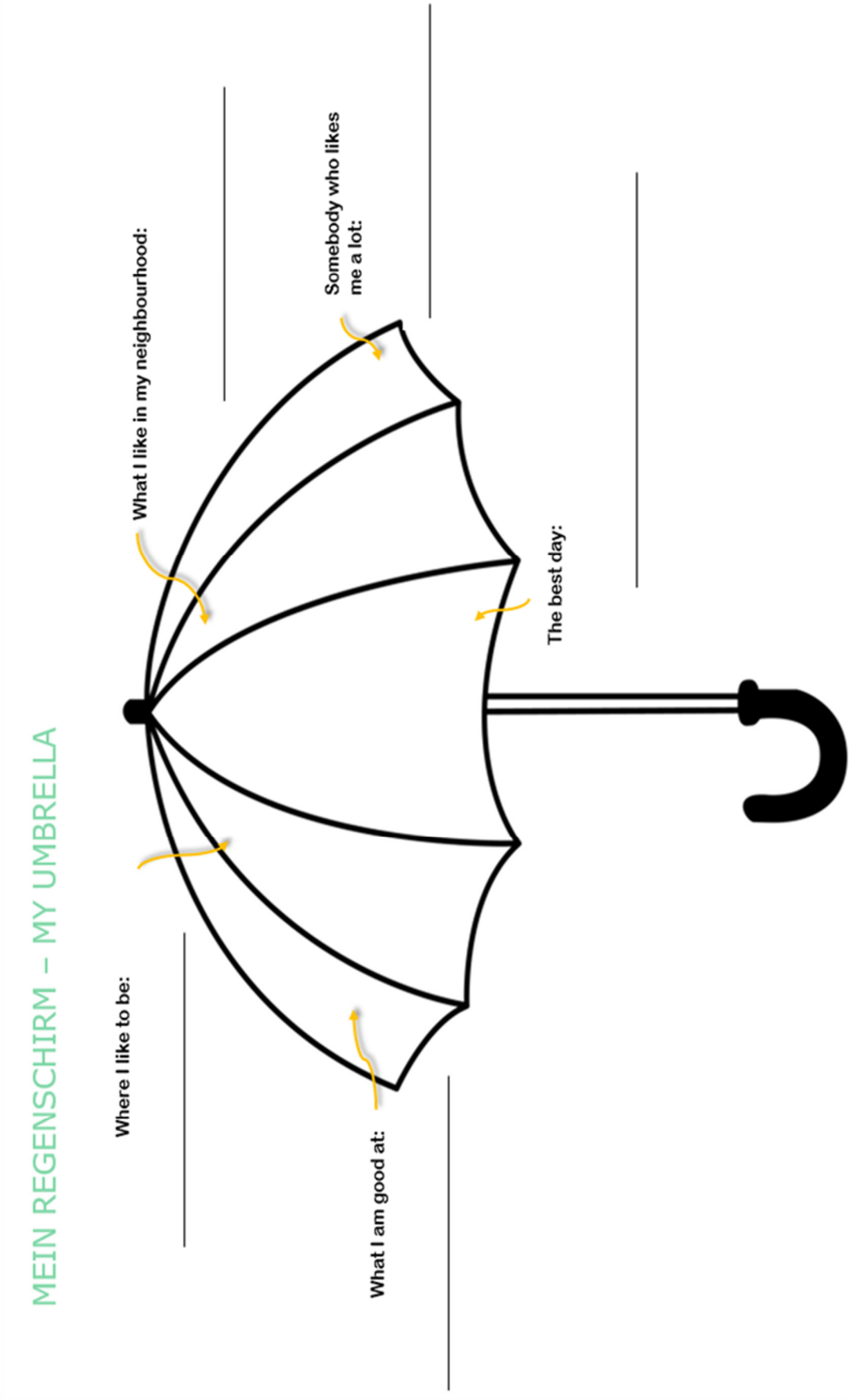
Resources

9. What capabilities do children have here? What can they do well?
10. Do you see capabilities with the children here, which are maybe less distinct with children elsewhere?
11. Do children have strategies to balance disadvantages?

Munich and the neighbourhood

12. There is a visible social inequality in Munich, but the life of children takes place mostly in this city part. Do you think they recognise disparities?
13. What is developing well in this quarter?
14. What is missing in this quarter?
15. Could the municipality of Munich do more for the children here?

Ethical tool



Standard observation sheet

Standard Observation Sheet

Researcher: _____

Date of session: _____

Time of session: From _____ to _____

Research tool used: _____

Place of data collection: _____

What factors might have influenced the collection of data during this session?

Researchers:_____

_____

_____

Adults:_____

_____

_____

Children:_____

_____

_____

Characteristics of the place:_____

_____

_____

Interrupts or distractions:_____

_____

Other:_____

_____

Weather:_____

Letter from NSD

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Anne Trine Kjørholt
Norsk senter for barneforskning NTNU
Loholt Allé 87, Pavillion C
7491 TRONDHEIM

[illegible]
Norway
[illegible]

Vår dato: 07.07.2015 Vår ref: 43925 / 3 / AMS Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 30.06.2015. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

43925	*Being Poor in a Rich City - Experience of Exclusion and Coping Strategies of Children and Young People in Munich*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Anne Trine Kjørholt*
Student	*Kathrin Bösch*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.07.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Anne-Mette Somby

Kontaktperson: Anne-Mette Somby tlf: 55 58 24 10

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.