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CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES IN TAIWAN

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CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES IN TAIWAN

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Abstract

There are approximately 2000 children living in residential care homes in Taiwan, the result of child abuse, neglect and youth offending. Available literature on residential care in Taiwan focuses on the role of professional workers, and little is known about the experiences of Taiwanese children in residential care. Despite falling outside the family of the United Nations, the notion of children's rights is articulated in Taiwanese legislation and public policy on child welfare. This offers a strong rationale to explore experiences of children's rights in Taiwanese children's homes.

An ethnographic approach involving i) participant observation, ii) participatory group activities and iii) semi structured interviews with 50 children was adopted in one public and one private children's home. Drawing on theoretical and conceptual frameworks of children's rights, happiness and resilience, the use of mixed methods facilitated a rich understanding of children's experiences of life in residential care and their understandings and experiences of children's rights.

The findings reveal that while children's basic survival rights are met, a reality of strict routine and punitive discipline led the children to express their need for supportive companionship (expressed by some children as 'love'), privacy and freedom to pursue individual interests. The tension between children's expressed needs and the institutional regimes within which they experienced daily life reflected the cultural values of Confucian familism with expectations of unquestioning obedience to adults. The research also revealed that the children were not only capable of, but also showed enthusiasm for articulating their understanding and experiences of children's rights and in doing so demonstrated their potential to contribute to the development of social policy and social work practice in Taiwan.

This research contributes to the field of social work relating to the nature and development of resilience in children living in residential care homes, and to ongoing debates on the value and reality of children's rights to be heard and participate in all matters that affect their lives.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAHR	Chinese Association for Human Rights
CBI	Child Welfare Bureau, Ministry of the Interior
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
CCF	China Children Fund
CWLF	Child Welfare League Foundation
CPSL	Child Protection Special Line
DOS	Department of Statistics
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
IFSW	International Federation of Social Work
KMT	Kuo Min Tang
MOI	Ministry of the Interior
NDLTD	Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
TFCF	Taiwan Fund for Children and Families
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
PRC	People's Republic China
ROC	Republic of China
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPSL	Women's Protection Special Line
WCPSL	Women and Child Protection Special Line

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Declaration

The contents of this thesis are produced solely for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy at Durham University and consist of the author's original individual contributions with appropriate recognition of any references being indicated throughout.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Recent statistics (CBI, 2012) show that in 2012 Taiwan had 43 residential care homes. In 2005 Wang undertook a study for the National Policy Foundation that outlined the historical development of residential care for children, examined current provision and made recommendations for the future. National concerns have focused on the change of use of residential care homes from 'orphanages' to homes that accommodate children as a result of increasing family breakdown associated with poverty, single parenthood, child abuse or involvement in the criminal justice system. This relatively new phenomenon in Taiwan has created a new challenge for social work and social policy as children in residential care homes are amongst the most socially excluded. They are located outside of the system of family support in a cultural context that places heavy emphasis on the values and role of the family. As a result both children and their families are stigmatized.

In his study Wang (2005) likened the residential care home to a castle with a resplendent outward appearance, but with life inside unknown to the public. Residential care homes are regarded as places closed to the outside world. He explained:

> *The reason to use the castle as a metaphor for the children's home is because on one hand, children's homes have stern entrance guards and grand buildings, which are beyond our reach; and on the other hand, they*

shine with the holy light of virtue that makes people always praise their good will. However, is a children's home really like the castle that only exists in fairy tales? Who are living in the castle, the merry princes and princesses, or the fire dragon and monsters? (Wang, 2005:96)

Exploring a range of issues, Wang found that staff were poorly trained, few had professional qualifications, and there was insufficient attention given to developing positive relationships with children or to making long term care plans. These concerns about the quality of 'child-care' contrasted with acceptable physical standards of care, although he argued that greater attention could also be given to health and safety issues. Strong recommendations were made about i) the need for more, and improved, training and development opportunities for staff, many of whom had only basic child care qualifications and ii) the need to improve the range and quality of social work activities to facilitate better links with birth families. Overall he concluded that there was room for much improvement in the quality of residential child care services and that attention to the notion of the child's best interests must be given greater priority.

In the following section I explain my own position in undertaking this research before moving on, in section 1.3, to discuss the context of children's homes in Taiwan. In section 1.4 I explain the research aims and questions and complete the chapter by providing an outline structure of the thesis in section 1.5.

1.2 Personal Background and Position

In order to explain my motivation in designing and carrying out this study, I briefly introduce myself and my background and how I developed my interest within this field of social care. With a Bachelors degree in social work and a degree in secondary education from my home country, Taiwan. I have both a background in social work practice and experience in counselling and teaching secondary school aged children in full time education. Whilst I was a university student, I volunteered to work with children living in a residential care home in my spare time, and I was an intern in a local secondary school.

Since the vast majority of social work literature, and some of the most promising research I studied as a university student in Taiwan, was from Western sources, I had a strong desire to travel to the West in order to immerse myself in these philosophies. After being awarded my undergraduate degrees, I came to the UK to gain a thorough understanding of western social welfare and social work perspectives and systems in the context of the historical culture and the local socioeconomic and political environment.

I believed that choosing to study abroad would broaden my mind and further my experiences and give me a full and thorough understanding of Western approaches to child care and development. I have since gained a Master's degree in social work studies from Durham University. My MA dissertation compared systems for helping children in need in Taiwan and England. During this period, my awareness grew of the adult-centred nature of research on children in Taiwan, as I became more

familiar with the contrasting emphasis on children's rights within social work discourses in the UK.

With an interest in the welfare of children separated from their own families, my initial plan was to study the position of children in substitute family care in Taiwan. This changed as it became clear that foster care is rarely used in Taiwan and that contemporary social problems that have led to the separation of children from their families are more often addressed through the use of residential care. Combining my interests, I decided to focus on children's rights, specifically addressing how they are understood and experienced by children in children's homes in Taiwan.

My knowledge of Taiwanese residential care led me to the conclusion that children living in residential care homes have little opportunity to voice their feelings and experiences, primarily due to the constraints of Confucian social norms that stress the importance of respect and unquestioning obedience of children towards adults. One of the effects of this 'filial piety' is the suppression of uninvited views. During my daily experience in university I heard many stories about children whose ideas had been ignored, despite the Taiwanese government having promoted the concept of children's rights to its citizens (CAHR, 2009). In addition, whilst I worked in a secondary school, I became aware of children who had experienced family breakdown and needed to be separated from their parents. I began to understand how difficult it is for children to express their own thoughts and feelings.

Furthermore, as a volunteer in a residential care home, I noticed that almost all the children wished to express their views but that these were rarely accepted by staff. I

also read local reports and newspapers that mentioned that children in residential care often receive support from charitable donors and organizations to ensure that their basic daily needs are met (Kuo, 2008). Therefore, I considered that it would be timely to focus on children's emotional and psychological needs in addition to understanding the notion of children's rights and how these are experienced by children in residential care homes. Due to my personal and professional experiences, I argued that children's experiences and their rights in residential care homes in Taiwan deserve more attention from society generally and, in particular, from the research field in Taiwan. This conclusion inspired my own interest in researching the issue, with the aim of developing a nuanced understanding of the lives of children in Taiwanese residential care homes, and identifying insights into child care practice and policy as seen through children's own lenses. This is an unusual view in a society that experiences tension between the cultural discipline of Confucian familism characterized by filial piety and obedience to the will of adults, and the global agenda of children's rights to which the government of Taiwan aspires.

This description of my background and position has focused, so far, on my personal motivation for developing an understanding of ways in which the welfare of children in residential care in Taiwan might be improved through an exploration of children's views and experiences. But I have also faced challenges in developing a growing realisation of the impact of Confucian familist culture on me as a person. With internalized values linked to filial piety, or obedience, I have had to learn new ways of relating to teaching staff and research supervisors in the British context.

'Critical analysis' of published argument and evidence, and the development of my own argument in my own 'voice' has been a significant challenge and it has taken

me a long time to feel comfortable writing in the first person. The results of my efforts to engage with children in children's homes are revealed later in the thesis, and it has been an interesting experience to see that supporting children to express their thoughts and feelings has helped me to 'claim' my own voice.

This has been a significant challenge at every stage of the research: developing a critical analysis of the literature, critically reflecting on my own role in the process of data collection, and critically analyzing the findings. The high point of the research process was working with the children and seeing the richness of the data they generated. The challenge of developing critical analysis and critical self reflection has been heightened since it is the norm in Taiwanese culture to mask personal difficulties. I include this observation here in the hope that it may assist future students from cultural backgrounds where the expression of critical self reflection is discouraged. In the following section, I discuss the context of the study.

1.3 Context

From a long-term perspective, children are an essential human resource in every society. It is important to protect children and provide a safe and healthy environment for them (Lee, 1987). Traditionally, the Taiwanese family has played the central role in the development of society with special roles for different members within each family. Taiwanese social values provide a powerful framework for familial hierarchy and a means of vertical communication according to seniority (Chang, 1989: 12). Taiwanese tradition also values the birth family as the best environment for nurturing the upbringing of children. However, Taiwanese society is changing and

the traditional family institution has been joined by an increasing number of single parent families due to the rising divorce rate (UNSD, 2008). Since more families are breaking down social problems directly affecting children are also rising. Although the family is widely regarded as the best environment in which for a child to grow, threats to family stability mean that the family is not always able to guarantee the strong support systems or stability necessary to keep children and their birth parents together. This is a particular problem when parents experience significant challenges in caring for their own children. The use of residential care is both a symptom and a product of family breakdown and raises the question of whether, and how, children's homes can provide security and serve children's interests in a way that recognizes 'children's rights' in line with Taiwanese government policy.

Child welfare was the first aspect of the national social welfare system to be developed in Taiwan. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) began to implement child protection schemes in the 1940s (Lin, 2006: 345-356). And it was NGOs that pushed the government into action in this field. A good example was the Child Welfare League Committee, comprising a group of enthusiastic professionals including legislators, lawyers, social workers and other concerned participants, who organised themselves to amend the 1973 Child Welfare Law in 1990. After that, the Taiwanese Government established the Children's Bureau (CBI), in the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for the care of children in Taiwan. The CBI provides different social services for children, it promotes children's rights and has established a system for the protection of children who need help. It is organised into four sections for children who cannot live in their birth family: emergency placements, institutional care homes, foster care and adoption. The foster care system has

encountered stiff challenges in Taiwan. A report from the Child Welfare League Foundation in Taiwan (2008) showed that over the previous six years a rising percentage of foster parents had abandoned their foster child. Fostering, as a form of substitute family care, has been particularly difficult to establish in Taiwan. The primary reason is that Taiwanese culture places such high value on the 'blood-tie' in relationships that the successful inclusion of 'outsiders' in the family system, either by fostering or adoption, is rare (Yang, 2000). Institutional care was the first provision to be developed following the Second World War (Lin, 2006: 342). When the nationalist government moved to Taiwan in 1949, there were no children's homes on the island. But one legacy of the war was many orphans, abandoned and disabled children, who had no relatives to look after them. As a result a number of children's homes were established. Further detail of the Taiwanese context is provided in chapter 2.

Awareness of child abuse and child neglect is spreading throughout the world (UN, 2007), and Taiwan is no exception. The Government Department of Statistics (2006) reported that across Taiwan 12,081 cases of suspected abuse and neglect had been investigated in the child and adolescent protection system and 7417 children were deemed to have been abused by their families. Some of the serious cases were attributed to lack of parents' education, marriage break up and alcohol and drug addictions. Due to the increasing number of children protected under the Children and Youth Welfare Law 2003, the need for alternative care has also been rising (Children's Bureau Ministry R.O.C, 2006).

As indicated by these figures, the demand for state care of children and young people has become more significant in recent years. In the past, most children living in institutional care were orphans, i.e. children who have lost both parents (Chung, 2008: 2). But contemporary profiles of children's homes reveal several different factors affecting children living in them. Figure 1.1 shows that in 2009 only 6% of children in care were orphans and the majority were referred as a result of contemporary social problems.

Figure 1.1 Backgrounds of Children in Residential Care in Taiwan

- Orphans
- Signal family and no person who can look after children in family
- Children are from families in crisis
- Children are on the Child Protection Register
- Children have been removed from their parents by the court
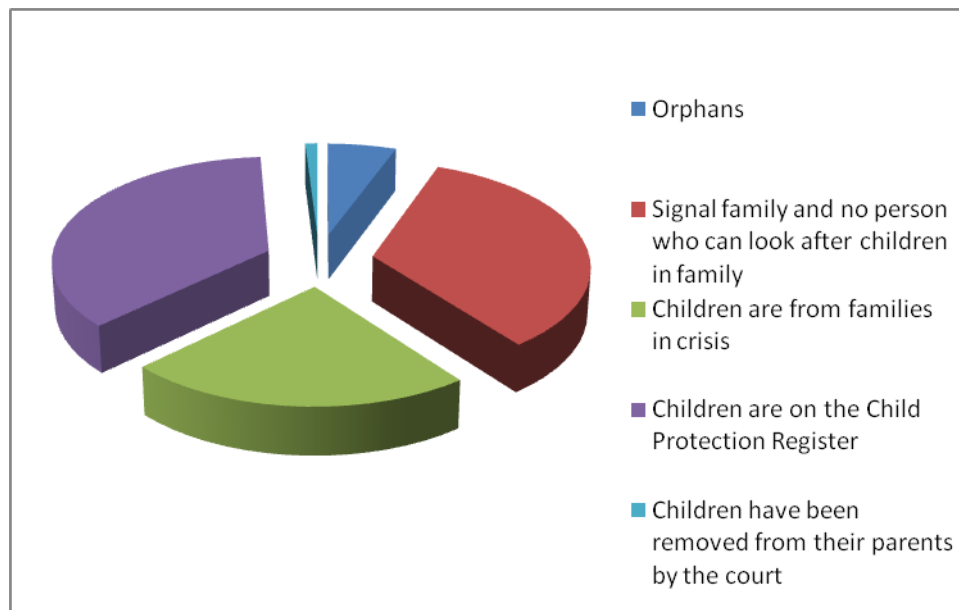
Source: Children's Bureau Ministry of the Interior (CBI), 2009

Residential care in Taiwan has historically been the domain of non government, including religious, organisations. Although the state has developed residential care facilities, the NGO sector still provides a greater number of homes and cares for a greater number of children. Table 1.1 shows a marginal increase in the number of children's homes from 1996 to 2006, with a small decrease in the number of resident children. With a total number of children in residential care at around 2000, it could be argued that their situation constitutes a small 'social problem'. However, it is important to consider that: i) in the context of a decreasing birth rate (National Statistics, R.O.C, 2008), an increasing percentage of children is living in children's homes; ii) children's homes are no longer simply orphanages, but also accommodate children who have various difficulties and needs (social, physical and mental) (See Figure 1.1). It is therefore important to understand the experiences of children living in children's homes and to identify factors that support or threaten their well-being.

Table 1.1: Residential Care Homes in Taiwan

| Year | Children's Home | | | | | |
| | State-run | | Private (NGOs) | | Total | |
	Number	Children	Number	Children	Number	Children
1996	8	742	33	1,720	41	2,462
1997	8	689	35	1,792	43	2,481
1998	8	712	33	1,742	41	2,454
1999	7	581	32	1,700	39	2,281
2000	8	602	34	1,793	42	2,395
2001	8	591	34	1,732	42	2,323
2002	9	770	33	1,547	42	2,317
2003	8	608	35	1,518	43	2,126
2004	7	584	35	1,329	42	1,913
2005	7	588	35	1,319	42	1,907
2006	5	587	38	1,324	43	1,911

Source: Children's Bureau Ministry of the Interior (CBI), 2013[1]

1.4 Research Aims and Questions

There have been few empirical studies of children's homes in Taiwan and these have focussed predominantly on staffing issues; most have used quantitative methods and none have adopted an ethnographic or participatory approach. This study aims to address the invisibility of children's experiences, by adopting an ethnographic approach employing a range of methods to explore children's

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[1] 2007 – 2012 data missing due to governmental administration change.

experiences and their understandings of their own rights as children. The aims of the study are:

- To explore children's experiences of life in children's homes.

- To contribute to our understanding of children's knowledge of their own rights.

- To investigate how children living in children's homes experience their rights.

- To contribute to knowledge that forms the basis from which strategies to develop children centred services appropriate for future action can be recommended.

These broad aims, refined through a review of the literature, led to the following research questions:

➢ What are children's experiences of life in two children's homes?

➢ What are children's understandings and perceptions of their own rights in the context of the children's home?

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

Table 1.2: Structure of the Thesis

Context	• Chapter 1: Introduction
Cultural and Theoretical Framework	• Chapter 2: Taiwan Overview • Chapter 3: Literature Review
Methodology	• Chapter 4: Methodology
Results	• Chapter 5 and 6: Findings and Discussions
Conclusion	• Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations
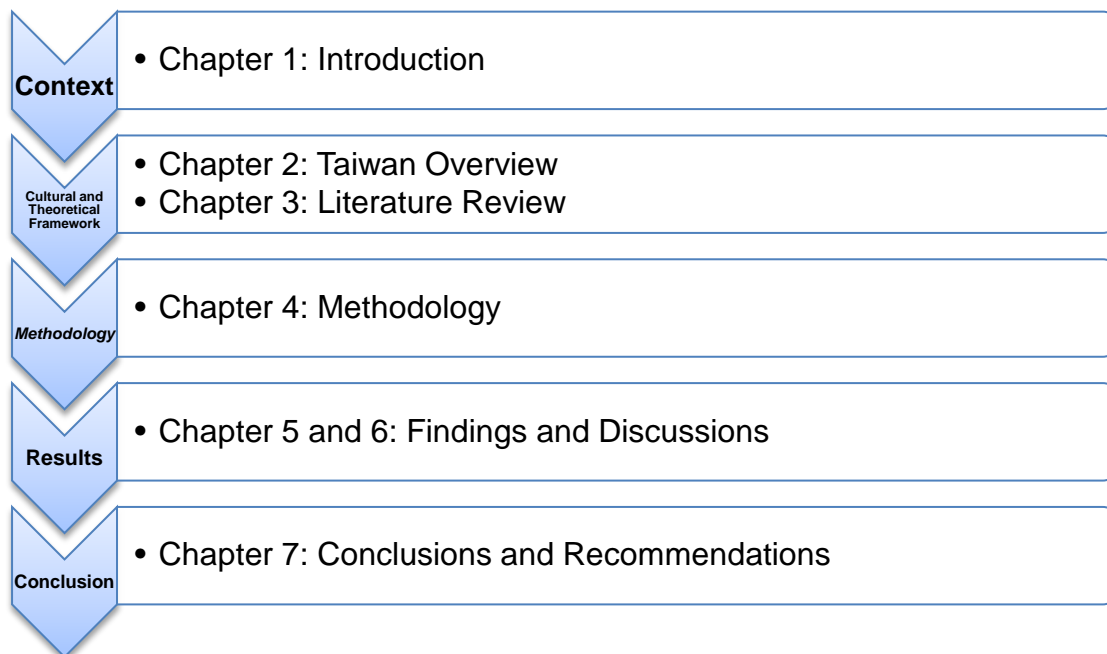
Following this introductory chapter, which sets the scene for the study, chapter 2 provides an overview of Taiwan and Taiwanese society. I present demographic, historical and cultural information including the impact of Japanese colonisation, Chinese and Western cultural influences, as well as indigenous Taiwanese culture, the development of child welfare services and the introduction of children's homes. I discuss family relationships and the influence of Confucianism in Taiwanese culture. Key challenges for developing an understanding of the differences between western and Confucian perspectives revolve around the importance of hierarchical family structures and filial piety with strong emphasis on obedience and conformity in the interests of maintaining family harmony. This implies the subjugation of individual interests to collective interests. However, the influences of modernisation and globalisation have also influenced Taiwanese family life, bringing in to sharp focus the ambivalence between individual and collective interests. The question of children's rights (widely accepted as being based on western concepts – Jefferess,

2002), in children's homes, that in themselves suggest a breakdown in family harmony, presents a new set of important questions for social work and social policy in Taiwan. I also discuss the importance of 'happiness' in Taiwanese culture. This closely approximates with the concept of subjective well-being and is most usefully conceptualized as a trait, rather than a transient emotional state (Veenhoven, 1991; Uchida et al, 2004). So important is the concept of happiness [幸福/快樂] that it is both highly visible and ubiquitous in the promotion of education, family and child care policy. I end chapter 2 by providing an overview of the research location in and contemporary welfare policy that underpins the provision of residential care for children and young people.

In Chapter 3, the literature review presents a critical analysis of the key literature relevant to the research. Firstly, I present evidence and arguments about the changing place of children in their social worlds and how childhood experiences are shaped by cultural context. Secondly, I compare and contrast different disciplinary contributions to debate children's rights at international and national levels. Arguably, children's rights are designed as the benchmark to guarantee/enhance children's well-being. Based on such understanding, I go on to consider the relationship between children's rights, well-being and resilience (broadly understood as the capacity to withstand adversity) discussing the relevance of each for this study of children in residential care settings. I then explore evidence and argument about the role of children's homes internationally and in Taiwan, before examining the notion of children's participation as a right under the UNCRC and its relationship to children's wellbeing. I end chapter three by identifying specific gaps in knowledge and specifying three research questions.

In Chapter 4, I explain the research design and methodology adopted to address the research questions underpinning this thesis. I discuss the ethical considerations of undertaking a research study in one country when working to the ethical standards and procedures of another. In the last part of the chapter I discuss the choice of research settings, methods of data collection and data analysis processes.

Findings from the empirical study are presented and discussed in chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 focuses on children's happiness and their subjective accounts of well-being. The focus on happiness is consistent with the importance of this concept in Taiwanese culture and covers sources of dissatisfaction and what might be referred to as transitory states of unhappiness as well as areas of satisfaction relating to life in residential care. In addition, I go on to explore the tensions that arise as children and young people negotiate their way through daily life in residential care homes, displaying subtle forms of resistance and the development of resilience in the face of stressors that included bullying by other children, close monitoring that has the impact of compromising children's privacy, corporal and other forms of punishment by staff. The data forming the basis for this chapter are drawn from participatory group activities and individual interviews with 50 children.

Chapter 6 addresses the meanings and experiences of 'children's rights' from the perspective of the children and young people living in the Homes. I present children's understanding of their rights and major themes that emerged including questions of, privacy, freedom, rights and responsibilities. The role of staff in maintaining focus on discipline is discussed in the context of children's views that they had to negotiate

their rights and were encouraged to see them as privileges and as a reward for conformity.

In the final chapter 7, I summarise the key findings of the research, discussing how they have contributed to knowledge and how they may be used to influence policy and practice in residential care homes in Taiwan and other cultural settings informed by Confucian cultural values. I discuss the strengths and limitations of the study, reflecting on all stages of the research and my own role as a researcher. I conclude by proposing new agendas for further research.

Chapter Two

Taiwan: An Overview

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I provide a brief overview of Taiwan and Taiwanese society in order to contextualize this study of children's rights in children's homes. Following a brief political history of Taiwan (section 2.2) I examine the long held cultural values and family relationships, based on Confucian philosophy, that have an important and enduring impact on contemporary society (section 2.3). I go on to outline the development of child welfare policy in Taiwan (section 2.4) before focussing on the development of residential care homes for children in Taiwan and the implications of Taiwanese cultural values in providing support to children whose birth families are unable to care for them (section 2.5).

2.2 Taiwan: Political History

Figure 2.1 Map of Taiwan-1

Figure 2.2 Map of Taiwan-2

The island of Taiwan lies 120 kilometres off the south eastern coast of mainland China, across the Taiwan Strait, and covers an area of 35,801 km^2. Taiwan resembles the shape of a sweet potato in north south direction, and Taiwanese

people, especially the group of Min-Nan, often refer to themselves as 'children of the sweet potato'. (Tsai and Yang, 2004). Formerly known as 'Formosa', Taiwan has a multi-ethnic population and a great diversity of cultures (Knapp, 1995), the result of rapid political, social and economic transformation in recent years. Taiwan's population of approximately 23 million, mostly lives on the main island of Taiwan. About 98% of the population is of Han Chinese ethnicity also known as 'native Taiwanese'. This group consists of two subgroups: the Southern Fujianese or Min-Nan, who migrated from the coastal southern Fujian region in the southeast of mainland China, and Hakka who make up 15% of the total population of southern China. This ethnic group initially migrated south to Guangdong and surrounding areas and then to Taiwan, intermarrying extensively with Taiwanese aboriginals (Chen, 2009). About 2% of the Taiwanese population are recorded as Taiwanese aboriginals, divided among 13 major groups: Ami, Atayal, Paiwan, Bunun, Rukai, Puyma, Tsou, Saisiyat, Yami, Thao, Kavalan, Truku and Sakizaya. Over 93% of Taiwanese citizens are adherents of of Buddhism, Confucianism or Taoism. About 4.5% are Christian and 2.5% are from other religious groups (Taiwan Year Book, 2006).

In the early history of Taiwan, the southwest of the island was occupied by the Netherlands and the northwest by Spain who operated separate colonial regimes. The Dutch subsequently defeated the Spanish colonists in the North and unified the colonial governance of West Taiwan in the first half of the 17th century (Jacobs, 2011). In 1662, Zheng Cheng-Gong, leading remaining officials and troops after the fall of the Ming Dynasty, successfully defeated the Dutch colonists forcing them to surrender colonial rule of Taiwan. Following the end of the Dutch colonial period,

Han migrants from the mainland of China began to settle in Taiwan, bringing with them Chinese cultures and customs. In 1895, following the first Sino–Japanese War and the subsequent Treaty of Maguan (Treaty of Shimonoseki), Taiwan ceded to Japan. The empire of Japan became the first internationally recognised foreign regime that had full sovereignty and governance of Taiwan. In 1945, at the end of the Second World War, Japan's fifty years of colonisation came to an end and in the same year, the Kuomintang (KMT) regime took control of Mainland China and Taiwanese nationals became citizens of the Republic of China under the Retrocession of Taiwan. The KMT later lost control of the mainland to the Communists, and retreated to Taiwan after four years of the unified regime. The KMT built an authoritarian political system in Taiwan based on a one-party dictatorship and in 1950, the President Chiang Kai-Shek renounced the KMT plan to recapture Mainland China (Roy, 2003).

During the 1950s, the KMT government imposed many restrictive policies to prevent the importation of foreign-manufactured products. The focus was on the development of Taiwan's own manufacturing capacity and besides instrumental support for state-run industries, the government also encouraged local capital investment to achieve the privatisation of state-run industries. Under this economic environment, the Taiwanese economy enjoyed rapid growth and transformation (Roy, 2003). In the 1960s, helped by a revision of the constitution, Chiang Kai-Shek was returned to power and oversaw further social reforms including the extension of compulsory education from six to nine years. This helped to develop the intellectual and technical resources that enabled the Taiwanese economy to take off in the 1970s (Jacobs, 2011).

The 1970s saw further changes to the political fortunes of Taiwan. In 1971 the KMT regime lost its seat at the United Nations to the People's Republic China. In a reversal of its long-standing policy of refusing to recognize the communist People's Republic of China (PRC), the American delegation to the UN supported the PRC's bid to become a permanent member UN at the expense of Taiwan, which was expelled. In 1975, Chiang Kai-Shek died after almost 30 years of continuous rule and his son, Chiang Ching-Kuo, was elected indirectly to become the sixth president of Taiwan (the Republic of China). On the first of January 1979, the USA terminated diplomatic relations with Taiwan and established an exclusive diplomatic relationship with the People's Republic of China.

During the 1980s the success of Taiwan's economic policies led to its recognition on the global stage as one of the four Asian tigers, along with Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea, and in 1987 the lifting of the strict regime of martial law paved the way for significant advancement in the democratisation of Taiwan. This process was aided by what was, at the time, the illegal formation of the new Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 1986. At this time the Taiwanese government also allowed some Taiwanese citizens to return to the mainland to visit their relatives from whom they had been separated during the political stand-off.

During the 1990s, Taiwan was transformed into a democratic country. In 1996, Lee Teng-Hui became the first president in Taiwanese history to be directly democratically elected by its people. In 1997, Hong Kong was returned to Mainland China, and the People's Republic of China started reinforcing its sovereignty over Taiwan. During this period Taiwan continued to maintain its stability in both political

and economic aspects (Roy, 2003) and in 2007 applied to rejoin the United Nations as an independent state. Although Taiwan has not yet succeeded in being recognized as an independent member of the United Nations, and has been described as an international 'orphan' (Liou, 2006), it was given a small boost in 2009 when it rejoined the World Health Organisation as Chinese Taipei. Taiwan's aspiration for international recognition as an independent state has relevance for this study of children's rights in as much as Taiwan is strongly motivated to show its loyalty to the ideas and policies promulgate by the United Nations, including showing respect for United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its aspirations in relation to children's rights, however, face significant challenges as we see in the following section.

2.3 Cultural Values in a Changing Society

Taiwanese society is dominated by Confucianism, a philosophy based on moral ethics that inform both Taiwanese and Chinese cultures. It is deeply rooted in the Taiwanese psyche and the majority of Taiwanese people maintain adherence to Confucian values alongside any specific religion with which they are affiliated (Taiwan Year Book, 2006).

Confucianism is based on filial piety and strict adherence to 'Li' rules that operate through strict hierarchies based on age and gender, in the interests of avoiding conflict and achieving family and wider social harmony (Li, 1997). However, this emphasis on unquestioning obedience to those of higher status in the context of global modernity has exposed new challenges for Taiwanese society. A strong

example is the application of unquestioning obedience to teachers and elders in schools and other educational settings which has had the effect of suppressing creative and critical thinking.

The inflexibility of thinking in relation to Confucianism has given rise to widespread tension in a context of rapid global socio-economic change (Tu, 1998; Yang and Tamney, 2011). As Taiwan has changed from a largely rural agricultural society to an urbanised industrial society the extended family required for subsistence agricultural production has given way to the small, independent nuclear family, which is more compatible with individualistic patterns of work and their separation from the home (Hughes, Sharrock and Martin, 2003:54). Those living in the modern cities, such as Taipei, prefer smaller families and the shift in socio-economic conditions has forced people to reflect on the value of traditional customs (Chang, 2006). However, the centrality of the family and the high value placed on blood ties and filial relationships remains. The power of the Confucian model of family norms plays an important role in Taiwanese culture and its emphasis on 'paternalism' demanding that children follow parents' discipline and decisions results in children rarely questioning their parents' views or direction. Traditionally, children were expected to obey parents with trusting submission and respect (Lee, 1998), and there are still proponents of this system who claim that the Confucian belief in strict authority and submission to parental will, whether through trust or fear, contributes to family harmony and happiness. In other words, Taiwanese families are thought to be more harmonious and happy while children show more trusting/fearful submission towards their parents. (Liao, 2001)

Democratisation and freer movement of Taiwanese citizens have seen the development of new social challenges. The population is becoming more diverse in its ethnicities with high levels of recent immigration from mainland China, predominantly women who have become Taiwanese citizens through marriage. Increasing levels of marriage with partners from Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, as well as with men from Western countries has contributed to one in seven marriages being between people of different ethnic origins and this has also raised new social issues in Taiwan (Lin, 2006). As a country that values the harmony of the family above all else, rural urban migration, and trends from collectivism to individualism encouraged by global neo-liberalism, Taiwan is experiencing a relatively new social problem of how to care for children whose parents are unable, for whatever reason, to care for them.

2.4 The Development of Child Welfare Policies and Services in Taiwan

Lin (2006) identified five stages in the development of child welfare services in Taiwan: orphanages at the end of the Ching dynasty of Taiwan; child welfare in the Japanese colony of Taiwan; and child welfare policy at the beginning of Kuomintang (KMT) regime of Taiwan (1946-1972) preceded the development of Child Welfare legislation in the 1970s and 80s and the development of contemporary child welfare services from the late 1980s when the idea of children's rights began to have an impact on political thinking (Neary, 2002).

Early forms of child welfare services included 'inside adoption' and 'outside supporting', with 'inside adoption' involving support for orphans or children from poor

families who could stay in 'orphanages', usually for only one year (Lee, 1996). In the second stage, the Japanese tried actively to develop the welfare system, and the view that 'children are the country's property' appeared in the 1920s. Children were celebrated as the treasure of the country, and the nation was seen to bear responsibility for them. In 1930, there was a first 'children's festival' run by a social affairs association, which focused on 'children's rights'. At that time Japan ruled Taiwan, and child welfare facilities included the Kaohsiung Catholic Church of the Orphan, a nursery, kindergarten, child hygiene facility and a community welfare association. These provided very basic support services. After the Second World War, child welfare services began to develop beyond simply addressing basic needs (Lin, 2006) and in the third period between 1946 and 1972, child welfare in Taiwan was mainly dependent on support from the United Nations and international NGOs (Non-Government Organisations), which included faith based organisations. Previously called the Christian Children's Fund (CCF), the China Children Fund (CCF) was established in 1938 by an American missionary. The CCF aimed to help children who had no family, or children who had difficulty in finding their parents, or who were orphans from the War between China and Japan. Since 1985 it has been known as the Taiwan Fund for Children and Families (TFCF).

In August 1950, a residential care home was established in Taichang, in order to support orphans from the War. This was the first formal children's home and the first family style children's home in Taiwan. From that time, the government started a formal service for supporting children who lived in residential care homes in Taiwan. Also, in 1950, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was instituted in Taiwan,

to promote social welfare including: child health services, support for pregnant women, and the 'rescue' of women and children.

The most recent stage in the development of the contemporary child welfare system has coincided with the global focus on children's rights. In developing its child care policy Taiwan has been influenced by global trends such as the focus on human rights and the human rights of children. These global initiative, channelled through the mechanisms of the United Nations, have, in themselves been influenced by Western thought and so non Western societies have faced particular challenges in finding ways in which long held traditions and values can be synchronised with global instruments based, implicitly rather than explicitly, on different traditions and values.

Government welfare services support disadvantaged people who need help, including children and young people and the State aspires to develop a positive healthy environment for children and young people, in the family, school, community, and social environment. When birth families are unable to provide a positive environment for their children, the Taiwanese government is obliged to protect their children, including the identification of alternative living arrangements. But there is no detailed policy development to help guide providers of child welfare services and only a rudimentary system of inspection of child care facilities.

Recent challenges in the field of child welfare have arisen with the recognition of child abuse as a serious social problem and child protection work is one of the most important aspects of the child welfare system in Taiwan that, since 1988, has faced

many challenges including child abuse, neglect, and child abandonment (Shiu, 2003). The Taiwanese government has started to promote awareness of child protection issues and to remind citizens of the importance of good child care and passed a series of laws aimed at the protection of children from different forms of abuse. These include the 1985 Sexual Assault Crime Prevention Act, the 1999 Child and Youth Sexual Transaction Prevention Act and the 2001 Domestic Violence Prevention Act. In 2001, the Child Protection Special Line (CPSL) merged with the Women's Protection Special Line (WPSL), and became the 113 Women and Child Protection Special Line (113 WCPSL). In 2003, the Child and Young People's Welfare Act was passed introducing a series of protection related regulations. However, child abuse, in different forms, remains a problem in contemporary Taiwanese society (Department of Statistics, Ministry of the Interior, 2010). Records from 2010 show that there were 9,064 children and young people whose families were unable to provide adequate protection for them (Department of Statistics, Ministry of the Interior, 2010).

2.5 The Development of Residential Care Homes

The history of residential child care in Taiwan is not dissimilar to many countries in different parts of the world. Early forms of residential care centred on war orphans and abandoned babies whose parents were too poor or had broken strictly observed social codes (Lin, 2006).

The changing economic basis of Taiwanese society from agriculture to industry and the changing pace of technology have seen the emergence of new social problems

including the misuse of alcohol and drugs, extreme economic deprivation and domestic violence, all problems that are associated with child neglect and/or abuse. Where children are found to have been abused they are placed on a child protection register and alternative living arrangements are made for them. The evolution of alternative living arrangements is deeply influenced by Confucian thinking. As Tucker (1998) has explained: The influence of Confucianism has been significant in political thought and institutions, social relationships and ritual exchange, educational philosophy and moral teaching, cultural attitudes, and historical interpretation. A core Confucian value is the importance of blood relationships and there is no tradition of unrelated individuals sharing their homes. This has made the development of alternative family care extremely difficult and the limited availability of foster families is compounded by the brief time limits during which a child may stay in a foster family. This has given rise to what appears to be the popularity of children's homes as the solution to providing a home to children in need of protection.

In the past, development of children's homes has been piecemeal with government and non-government, including faith-based, homes being set up with little regulation or systematic attempts to promote particular policies or practices. The last decade, however, has seen the introduction of regulation and inspection and there have been attempts to develop a more systematic approach to residential care.

In the following chapter I examine evidence and argument about residential care homes in other parts of the world in order to identify the specific gaps in understanding about the impact of children's rights thinking on the experiences of children living in residential care in Taiwan.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I provided an overview of Taiwan's history, geography and cultural background and presented a discussion of Confucian familist values, and their implications for the development of national social policy and practice in the care of children whose own families are unable to care for them. Building on the aims of the study: i) to understand the experiences of living in children's homes in Taiwan, and ii) to explore children's perceptions of their own rights in residential care settings in Taiwan, this chapter presents a critical analysis of the literature with evidence and argument about:

i) Current understandings of childhood and children's social worlds, how these are shaped by power relations in different cultural contexts.

ii) Discourses of children's rights including consideration of different disciplinary critiques of children's rights, and the challenge of achieving global implementation of children's rights in different cultural contexts.

iii) The relationship between children's rights, children's subjective well-being, which in the Taiwanese context is closely associated with the concept of happiness (Lu, 2001), and the development of resilience.

iv) The use and effectiveness of residential care for children.

v) The relevance and application of these issues in children's homes in Taiwan.

3.2 Literature Searching Strategy

All research studies and journal articles included in the literature review and throughout this thesis were published prior to February 2013. Literature published in both English and 'traditional' Chinese was reviewed. The search strategy used the following sources:

- A literature search of electronic data was undertaken using the following databases

  ➢ eHRAF world cultures.

  ➢ Social care online.

  ➢ Web of Science.

- The literature search was also supplemented by using Google Scholar, and websites of relevant organisations

  (For example: Child Welfare Bureau, Ministry of the Interior,

  http://www.cbi.gov.tw/CBI_2/internet/english/index.aspx;

  UNICEF, http://www.unicef.org/.)

- Manual searching of journals and books in Taiwan, such as Journal of Child and Youth Welfare (Taiwan), Journal of Community Development (Taiwan), Journal of Social Work (Taiwan), The perspectives of Adolescent and Child Welfare in the Current Taiwan, Child Welfare (Taiwan).

- Literature from Taiwan sourced principally from National Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations in Taiwan.

(http://ndltd.ncl.edu.tw/cgi-bin/gs32/gsweb.cgi/ccd=3L2xhF/webmge?switchlang=tw)

The following search terms were used for database inquiries, as appropriate: children's rights, the rights of the child, children's human rights; children's homes, orphanages, residential care homes, residential children's homes; residential children, residential child, children, young people, adolescents; child care, residential care, Chinese culture context/influence, Confucian, happiness, resilience, children's experience, children's everyday lives.

3.3 Children's Social Worlds: Power and Powerlessness

I start by exploring the importance of childhood experiences and questions of power and powerlessness in children's social worlds. In particular, I examine how childhood experiences are shaped by cultural contexts with respect to individualism and collectivism.

The concept of childhood is related to historical, political, economic, social and cultural contexts (Qvortrup, 2008: 66-86). New conceptual frameworks to explore children's experiences are continually emerging and being refined. Writing about childhood in the 1970s in Western societies Johnny (2006:24) argues that:

> *…conceptions of childhood have transformed throughout the centuries. Although is it likely that childhood has always been regarded as a distinct stage in life, the image that is attributed to children has shifted according to social influences. The notion that children are vulnerable and dependent is largely a product of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries whereby people came to appreciate the natural goodness of children.*

As Zigler and Finn-Stevenson (1987) have argued, ideas about the nature of the child and concepts about what childhood entails are reflected in the way children are treated, in the concerns that we have for them, and in the policies that are created for their benefit.

Referring to the seventeenth century, Philippe Ariès analysed the historical development of childhood and articulated the notion of childhood as both an ideological and social construct. However some scholars (eg Wilson, 1980; Pollock 1983; Veerman, 1992; Cunningham, 1995) have criticised Ariès' work, arguing that 'each society and social group has devised its own distinct way of managing the differences, similarities and continuities between childhood and adulthood.' (Hill, 1997: 19). And there is a growing understanding of the ways in which children's diverse lives, situated within complex social worlds vary with, and are affected by, age, gender, ethnicity and background (Hill and Tisdall, 1997).

Different disciplines offer different perspectives and understandings of childhood. For example, the psychologist Piaget wrote about childhood in terms of developmental stages. The developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst Erikson, writing about 'Childhood and Society' argued that in the early stages of childhood children lay the foundations for the development of their personality, their relationship with family members and wider society (Archard, 2010). In contrast, Tomlinson (2008) argues that the concept of childhood is affected by political and economic considerations that are vital ingredients in any consideration of children's well-being. In order to gain a holistic understanding of the influences that may have a bearing on the situation of

children in children's homes in Taiwan I have sought to explore a wide range of perspectives.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) was a revolution in the legal perception of the child and childhood (Archard, 2010). Focussing on the UNCRC, Welch (2008) argues that there is a strong relationship between children's rights and children's service provision since on the one hand childhood is socially constructed and children learn social behaviour, attitudes and language from their society, while on the other hand, society needs to provide a positive environment for children. Therefore, she claims, child welfare services must pay more attention to children's rights. At the same time, Tomlinson (2008) has argued that while the children's rights agenda has been increasingly emphasised across the globe, there has been an increasing discrepancy between children's rights and the provision of social services.

Writing about comparative policy and the practice of implementing children's rights, Franklin (2004:19) stresses that:

Being a child continues to express more about power relationships than chronology, although the two are intimately intertwined. Children's powerlessness reflects their limited access to economic resources, their exclusion from political participation and the corresponding cultural image of childhood as a state of weakness, dependency and incompetence. Definitions of a 'child and 'childhood' entail more than a specification of an age of majority; they articulate a particular society's values and attitudes towards children.

Mayall (2002), writing about power in childhood, argues that the power relations between adults and children are frequently defined by adults' viewpoints, particularly so in institutions such as children's homes. Smith's model of the child in the world (2004) has provided precise concepts about the issues of power in children's everyday lives and suggests that 'power is manifested at different levels, which may all have an impact on the specific context of social work practice with young people' (Smith, 2008: 65). As John (2003) argues:

> *Power and rights are not generally popular words. Adults prefer to talk about their care and authority or the need for firm control, rather than their power over children. Child power is still a less popular term. This happens when power is seen as something to be divided rather than shared, like the slices of a cake when the more power one person has, the less everyone else has (Griffith 1996). (John, 2003: 48)*

This argument reinforces the complex and clouded nature of children's power. For instance, the experiences of children within residential care settings are easily shaped by the power of the staff. Children's voices are often neglected and power dynamics influence the development of childhood (Johnny, 2006). Children are usually located in a powerless position, so they cannot easily trust residential staff. This also signifies the importance of the content of service users' rights. Otherwise, power is exclusively in the hands of the staff (Clough 2000). However, as Prout (2005:12) demonstrates, relationships between adults and children continue to be explored and scholars continue to develop understandings of the world of children.

3.4 Children's Power and Powerlessness: The Taiwanese Context

Understanding questions of power and powerlessness in the social worlds of Taiwanese children requires an understanding of the status and place of children in a society that remains heavily influenced by Confucian familism. As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.3) this places the highest value on family harmony and relies heavily on the concept of filial piety - unquestioning acceptance of parental decisions and discipline (Lee, 1998), and deference to older siblings (Kwan, 2000) - to maintain harmonious family relations. And as Lu (2001) explain, there are still proponents of these values who claim that the Confucian belief in strict authority and submission to parental will, whether through trust or fear, contributes to family harmony and happiness. Although children are strongly portrayed as 'the national treasure' in Taiwanese society (Wang, 2005), their power within the family is highly restricted by the importance placed on filial piety and unquestioning respect for parental and adult authority. In their cross-cultural study of work/family demands, work/family conflict and well-being in Taiwan and the United Kingdom, Lu et al. (2005) point to differences between societies characterised by individualism (UK) and collectivism (Taiwan). They stress the importance placed on family welfare in Taiwanese society associated with the avoidance of conflict and the achievement of harmony. As Ali et al., (2005:5) point out: 'in a collective culture, there is an emphasis on decision styles that maintain and reinforce consensus whereas, in an individualistic culture, styles that maximise or serve individual interests are adopted.' Hierarchical family systems still play an important role in Taiwan with younger siblings being expected to respect older siblings and all children being expected to respect parents and grandparents both in the course of daily life and in relation to key decisions affecting children's lives. By contrast, cultures in which individualism is

held in high regard place greater emphasis on the importance of autonomy (Kagitcibasi, 2005)

In reflecting on questions of power and powerlessness in the Taiwanese context, I have drawn on literature in the field of indigenous research, knowledge and practice (Gray and Coates, 2010; Smith, 2005; Tsui, 2004) to strengthen my awareness and understanding of the use of Western concepts that inform social work in Taiwan, and more broadly to ensure that I maintain focus on the generation of knowledge that is valid, meaningful and useful (Tsui, 2004). As an 'indigenous researcher' my aim has been to privilege: indigenous knowledge, voices, experiences, reflection, and analysis of conditions (Smith, 2005: 87). But in a context in which little value is placed on the idea of children's autonomy and 'rights', the challenges of exploring children's rights in children's homes in Taiwan are substantial. But, as I discuss in the following chapter, these arguments help me to reflect on the ways in which the children in residential care resist the oppressive practices associated with institutional life. As a number of scholars have argued, children's rights are widely acknowledged to be heavily influenced by Western thinking, yet are also perceived as helpful in counterbalancing what can be damaging effects of ethnocentrism where long held power structures are easily reproduced (Law and Lee, 2014; Huang and Zhang, 2012; Gray and Coates, 2010).

 I found myself subject to the hierarchical power structures within children's homes where my status as a research student meant I had to demonstrate respect for the thinking and decisions of all members of residential care staff. At the same time my own commitment to addressing the position of children in the two care homes within

a framework of children's rights, created a silent space in which I reflected on current debates on the tensions between i) indigenous, or culturally relevant, social work practice and ii) the influence of 'universal' tenets such as children's rights that the government of Taiwan has adopted.

3.4.1 Autonomy

A review of the literature on children's rights (Reynaert, Bouverne-de-Bie and Vandevelde, 2009) identifies the predominance of autonomy and participation rights in academic literature on the UNCRC. Yet the question of children's autonomy is strongly contested. Arnott (2012) articulates the position that recognizing and encouraging autonomy in children not only respects children's right to have a voice in matters that affect them (UNCRC article 12) but also has wider societal interest in enhancing children's capacity to develop into autonomous citizens. Yet, paradoxically, increasing children's autonomy has coincided with greater regulation of children's lives in the UK (James and James, 2001) reflecting what is often claimed as the need to balance the autonomy of children as active agents with the protection of children as 'vulnerable' (Mantle et al, 2007, Molinari et al, 2002) Discussing questions of children's privacy in England, Dowty (2008: 397) argues that privacy embraces the notion of autonomy, and focuses on how the growth of surveillance techniques, designed to protect, or perhaps more precisely 'control', children, have had an invasive impact on children's autonomous spaces. Yet, as Livingstone (2008) shows, young people continually take advantage of new opportunities, for example social networking sites, to create opportunities for intimacy, privacy and self-expression. Interestingly, the children and young people in my study were denied the opportunity to use electronic forms of social networking.

3.4.2 Autonomy in the Taiwanese Context

Attention to questions of children's autonomy in Confucian cultures has, in recent years, been addressed by Chan (2002) who argues that in the context of global social change:

> *practising this norm of obedience is not conducive to the long-term well-being of children in modern society. Modern Confucians need a new norm to express the more fundamental moral requirement of: respect for one's parents …… personal autonomy would strengthen the contemporary appeal of Confucianism. It need not be seen as forsaking Confucian ethics, but rather as an internal revision in response to new social circumstances (Chan, 2002:304).*

Relating these observations to questions of power and powerlessness in residential care homes in Taiwan, I show in later chapters (5 and 6) that children in residential care have little power and little autonomy. They do not feel free, entitled to make decisions or secure their own privacy and this leads to more subtle practices of resistance and subversion of the disciplinary expectations of the care homes.

3.5 Discourses on Children's Rights

In this section I review contemporary debates about children's rights as shown in Figure 2-1. I start with a brief history of children's rights in order to provide the background for global interest in children's rights. In the section on global perspectives I examine arguments about the application of children's rights and explore the notion of children's best interests and how this varies widely between

cultural groups across the globe. I then move on to consider how children's rights have been studied and critiqued within different academic disciplines. Since this study is influenced by my own identity as a social worker, and my commitment to human rights, social justice and the empowerment of individuals and groups to improve their own well-being, it is important that I consider wider debates about the nature of childhood, and different philosophical and legal approaches to children in different cultures. Referring to Article 12 of the UNCRC[2], I consider specific aspects of culture, exploring cultural norms that have relevance for this study of children in Taiwanese children's homes, as well as external influences and the impact of social change on contemporary Taiwanese culture. Finally I address the question of children's individual experiences, an approach that is consistent with the values of social work, and the new sociology of childhood that focuses on children's agency and the importance of listening directly to children. This is particularly crucial in the Taiwanese context which, characterised by values of collective familism, has paid little attention to understanding children's subjective experiences.

Figure 3.1 Discourses on Children's Rights

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[2] Article 12 of the UNCRC: You have the right to say what you think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect you, and to have your opinions taken into account.

History of Children's Rights

Global Perspectives:
1. UNCRC
2. Rights vs. Best interests

Disciplinary Perspectives:
Anthropology/Education/ Geography/Law/Philosophy /Sociology/ Social Work

Cultural Perspectives:
Values/ appropriateness

Personal Perspectives:
Individual experiences of residential care
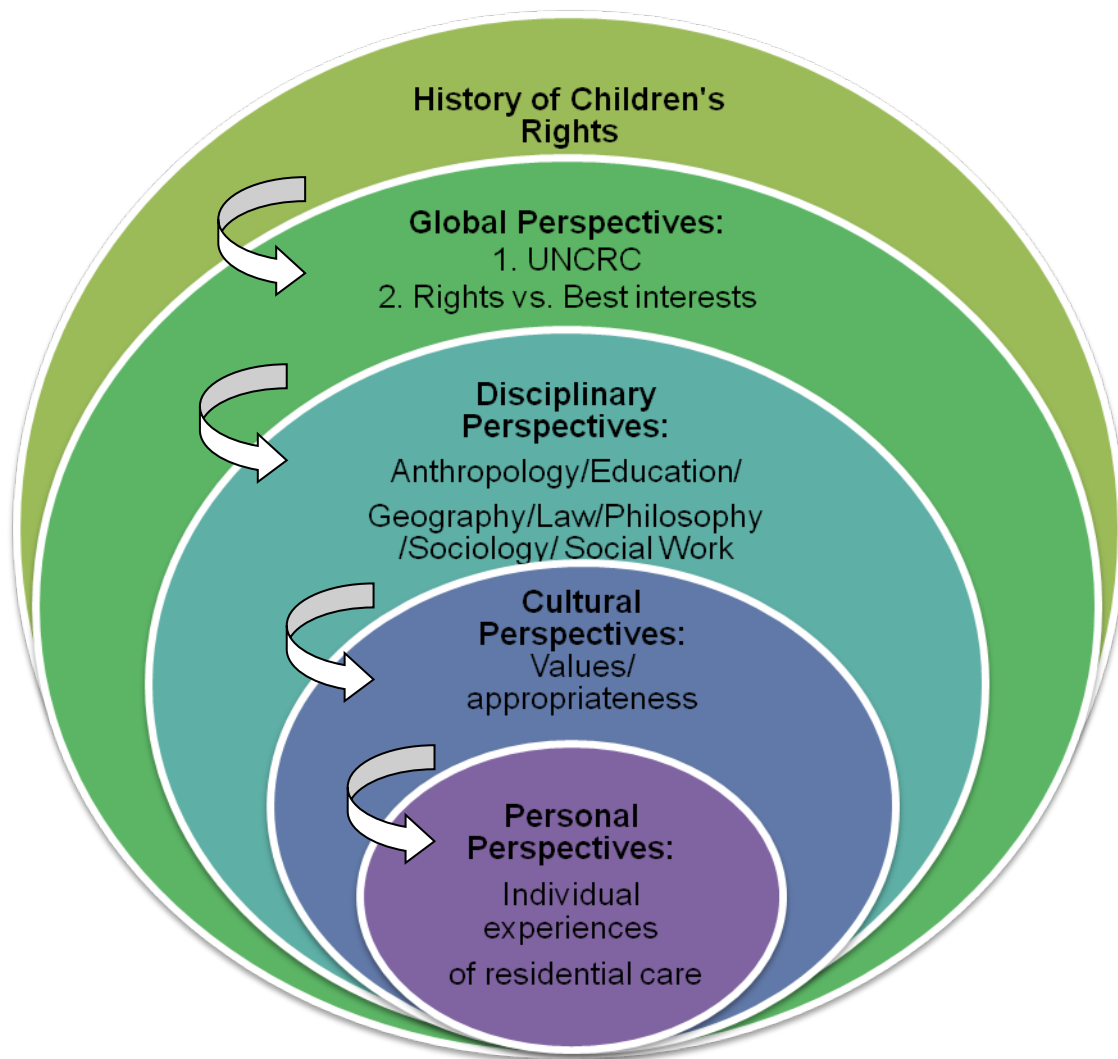
3.5.1 History of 'Children's Rights'

Children's 'rights' have their origins in concerns about the care and treatment of children without the effective protection of their own families. While there are many reasons why a child's family may be unable to provide effective care and protection the articulation of 'children's rights' has its origins in the work of Eglantyne Jebb who responded to the plight of the civilian population in Austria who were exposed to famine conditions by the continuation of the Allied Blockade in 1919 following the end of the First World War (Veerman, 1992). Identifying children as victims she created the 'Save the Children Fund' and employed a combination of political

campaigning and direct action in England, before articulating a declaration of the rights of children that was adopted by The League of Nations in 1924. This 'Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child' together with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, formed the foundations for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that was signed in 1989. Ratified by all but two sovereign nations (Somalia and the United States of America) the UNCRC provides strong leverage for those wishing to promote the welfare of children in their own right. Despite its exclusion from the United Nations (see chapter 2) the Taiwanese government respects and attempts to implement the provisions of the Convention UNCRC (UNICEF, 2010).

Making a reality of children's rights is far from straightforward. As Franklin (2004: 20) explains:

> *Children in all societies are denied basic human rights which, as adults, we take for granted. Among the most significant is children's right to make decisions about their affairs. This denial of rights is evident in the public realm of children's involvement in education and the care arrangements of the state, as well as the private realm of the family. The latter is significant since conventions cannot enforce rights within the family: it is virtually impossible to police what goes on behind closed doors.*

Franklin (2004) provides many examples of how adults continue to control children, excluding them from important decisions about their lives. But the UNCRC provides

a rationale and a framework from which attention to children's rights has gained legitimacy (Jones and Welch, 2010).

3.5.2 Global Perspectives

Since the signing of the UNCRC in 1989 and its near universal ratification , children's rights have been strongly debated and analysed in attempts to monitor progress and identify challenges in implementation across different cultural contexts.

One common analysis categorizes rights in terms of 'the three P's

- Provision of basic needs: children's survival and development

- Protection from a range of harmful and abusive acts and processes: abuse and exploitation

- Participation in decisions affecting the individual and collective lives of children (Jones and Welch, 2010)

Participation rights are addressed in Article 12 that sets out children's rights to express their views and have them taken into account in all matters affecting them. Freeman (2000: 288) emphasises the importance of Article 12 but argues that it still requires development. The continuing gap between the rhetoric and reality of Article 12 is manifested in tokenism, unresolved power issues between adults and children, consultation being limited to relatively trivial matters and the inclusion of some children at the expense of others **(**Reynaert, Bouverne-de Bie and Vandevelde, 2009: 522). In the face of these continuing challenges, Jones and Welch's (2010) have argued that it is unhelpful to disaggregate children's rights and that they are more helpfully seen as a whole.

An alternative analysis of the UNCRC (UNICEF, 2009) presents four core principles

- Non-discrimination: No matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion/ gender/ culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are poor or rich. They should be treated fairly on any basis (Article 2)

- The best interests of the child: All adults should do what is best for children and think about how their decisions will affect children. (Article 3)

- Survival and development: The government has the responsibility to make sure children's rights are protected and create an environment where children can grow (Article 6)

- Child's participation and influence: All adults need to be concerned that children have their views heard and respected (Article 12)

Another analysis is provided by Freeman (2000: 277-278) who identifies five groupings: general rights – including children's rights to express their own views, protective rights, civil rights, development and welfare rights, and special circumstances rights. According to Freeman's analysis, the UNCRC has brought attention to the significance of family, culture and tradition alongside the protection of children's healthy development within a participatory framework. But he argues that Article 12 which he identifies as the most important provision in the Convention, could also be improved upon.(Freeman, 2000). And in research on different conceptualisations of Article 12, Lundy (2007:930) stresses 'a need for a greater awareness of the fact that respecting children's views is not just a model of good pedagogical practice (or policy making) but a legally binding obligation'.

Almost two decades ago Willow (1996: 83) argued that respecting children's rights to participation can i) make children feel valued and important; ii) improve and develop their skills; iii) lead to increased knowledge for all; iv) provide opportunities to meet a wider range of people and v) to develop relationships and make friends. Mayall (1999) and Sinclair (2004) have also argued that encouraging children to participate in all matters affecting them not only provides opportunities for children to learn how to make their own decisions, but also helps adults to develop a better understanding of children's social worlds. And like many other authors, Koren's (2001) research about the emerging story of the human rights of children, emphasises the importance of children's rights to express their views freely on all matters affecting them. She is, however, careful to link children's participation rights with adults' duties to act in children's best interests, including thinking about how their decisions will affect children. She also argues that children's best interests are likely to be based on children's thinking rather than adults' sole decision making on their behalf (Koren, 2001: 246).

Yet achieving the aspiration of children's right to be heard and to particpate in matters that affect their lives remains, largely, an aspiration. International debates about children's participation rights have given rise to a myriad of research demonstrating gaps between rhetoric and reality, promoting ways in which children can be supported to express their views and participate in decision making as well as cultural and structural barriers to children's participation. A key question is what should be the role of adults in supporting children's participation. Wyness' (2009) work on 'juggling children's places and spaces to support children and young

people's participation' stresses positive aspects to adults' involvement in children's participation, although a degree of children's autonomy is seen as important within a wider framework of chidlren's participation as an adult supported field of practice (Moss and Petrie, 2002).

Powell and Smith's (2009) study of children's participation rights in research suggested that adults, in their gatekeeping roles, often treated children as vulnerable and prevented their participation in research. They argued: it is important for researchers to be good communicators and able to establish relationships, particularly when the research topic is sensitive. Gatekeepers who work professionally with children who are considered especially vulnerable, should become more aware of children's competencies and their rights to participation. (Powell and Smith, 2009:139)

Research on children's rights, particularly their rights to participation in matters affecting them, are highly reflective of the cultural values of researchers and it is important to be mindful of the impact of the cultural environment on research involving children. As the IFSW reminds us: speaking out, however, is not without risks and children and young people must be supported to understand the potential consequences and risks of speaking out. At times social workers may need to act on children's and young people's behalf because there are too many dangers in individuals taking action for themselves (IFSW, 2002:12). Conceptualising the rights of children in residential care in particular cultural contexts, Panter-Brick (2000: 10) argues the importance of the relationship between Articles 3 (best interests) and 12 (participation). Pinheiro (2007) reminds us that the UNCRC is based on Western

notions of childhood and there remain wide gaps between the entitlements envisaged by the UNCRC and the reality of children's everyday lives around the world (Pinheiro, 2007). In the Taiwanese context, there exists a strong tension between popular interpretations of the values of Confucian familism with emphasis on filial piety and obedience to hierarchicies based on age as well as gender, and the notion of children's rights.

3.5.3 Disciplinary Critiques of Children's Rights

Critiques of children's rights come from a number of disciplinary bases including anthropology, education, geography, law, philosophy, as well as sociology and social work. Offering subtly different but sometimes overlapping perspectives on children's rights, all bring useful contributions to this study of children's rights in children's homes in Taiwan.

Anthropologists Reynolds, Nieuwenhuys and Hanson (2006) explore how children's rights impact on their life worlds in developing countries. Focussing on the lives of vulnerable children in a variety of social contexts across the world, they argue that:

> *Anthropology can help map changes in children's lives as concepts are formulated, theories built and interventions made. Our hope is that by closely examining children's experiences and our theoretical understandings of rights, development and childhood itself, we can begin to unravel the tangle that has developed out of the world's professed concern for children.* (2006: 293)

Attention to these details may help determine the significance of issues involved in obtaining a balance between universal children's rights and traditional cultural values. Given the wide variety of traditional and cultural values around the world, a one size fits all approach to the UNCRC is not always appropriate and local conventions, customs and practices must be considered to allow the effective implementation of children's rights in different cultural settings.

Molinari, Melotti and Emiliani, (2002), exploring children's rights in educational relationships in Italy found that the social representation of children's rights was organised around three contrasting topics: rights as freedom, rights as protection and rights as autonomy, based on the acknowledgement that the child is an evolving and growing up subject who is asking to be educated. They point particularly to the tension between protection and autonomy and the interpretation of autonomy as freedom to young people. Jeffs (2010: 56) identifies a further tension in considering children's rights from an educational perspective. He argues:

Whatever solution is espoused, the question of children's rights in relation to schooling and education will remain stalled until the thorny issue of compulsion is addressed. Compulsion ensures young people are axiomatically second-class members of the school community and forces teachers to behave in ways that contradict their prime role as educators and mocks all discussion of the rights, freedoms and dignity of their students. It brings schools, and by association education and teaching, into disrepute, all in order to achieve the dubious end of incarcerating within the system some young people who actively wish to be somewhere else and many more, who, like working adults, want to miss the odd session when they have something better to do.

This argument has direct relevance for considering the rights of children in residential care settings, in which children have rarely chosen to live.

Geographical perspectives focus on spatial aspects of children's lives. With relevance for discussions of children's rights are questions of privacy and private

spaces for children who live in residential care homes, a particular challenge in cultural settings with strong links to collective family spaces. Holloway and Valentine (2000), investigating spatiality and the new social studies of childhood, argue that 'schools and homes need to be thought of not as bounded spaces, but as porous ones produced through their webs of connections with wider societies which inform social-spatial practices within those spaces.' (Holloway and Valentine, 2000: 779). In this way they stress the importance of recognizing different understandings of spatiality in different cultural contexts and particular spaces such as children's residential care settings. Dowty (2008) writing about the tensions between child protection and children's right to privacy (article 16, UNCRC) states:

> *Privacy is about far more than secrecy or furtive activities: it is about our autonomy, the control we have over our own personal boundaries and the means by which we define who we are in relation to other people. We establish our relative distance from friends, acquaintance or potential enemies by the simple expedient of regulating our self-revelation; on some matters we may choose to remain entirely silent. We keep the powers of our governments and other public servants in check, at least in part, by preventing them from knowing more about us than strictly necessary for good government. (Dowty, 2008: 397)*

This argument, that privacy embraces the notion of autonomy, focuses on the growth of surveillance techniques to protect or, perhaps more accurately, 'control' children, and their invasive impact on children's autonomous spaces. In the context of residential care homes, this tension might be appropriately described as the tension

between child discipline and the right to privacy that is undermined through the reinforcing of strict discipline to control children. In this way children's autonomy is discouraged. In the context of Taiwanese society, where children's autonomy is subordinated to filial piety and family harmony, the creation of autonomous spaces for children might reasonably be expected to be a significant challenge to traditional child-parent relationships.

Legal perspectives on children's rights have been strongly represented in the UK by Van Bueren (1998) and Freeman (2007), both ardent supporters of children's rights. Van Bueren (1994) stresses 'the international law on the rights of the child' and explains the formulation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child served as a facilitor for future developments in the international laws on children's rights, especially because it has helped to make children visible at both global and national levels. Freeman (2007: 19-20), defending the notion of children's rights argues that despite strong opposition: *The case for children's rights will prevail. We have to believe this because out of it will emerge a better world for children and this will redound to the benefit not only of children but of all of us.*

Discussing article 12 of the UNCRC Archard (2010: 58) argues that:

> *Children are recognised in a major international convenant as moral and legal subjects possessed of fundamental entitlements. They are acknowledged as having agency and as having a voice that must be listened to.*

Turning to socioloogical perspectives, Mayall (2000), exploring the sociology of childhood in relation to children's rights, argues that childhood, and children, have been depoliticised and depersonalised by adults and that it is difficult to listen to children seriously and more difficult to include than exclude children. As a result, she argues: 'we must extricate children, conceptually, from parents, the family and professionals'. (Mayall, 2000:243).   In order to take children seriously as people Mayall (2000:248) identifies three important conceptual challenges for sociologists of childhood:

- *Children move from being objects of adult work, to being seen as competent, contributing social actors.*

- *At a broader level, when facing the age-old debates about agency and structure, we have to consider the extent to which children may be regarded as agents intersecting with the structures surrounding their lives.*

- *The idea that adult views are sufficient for defining children's needs has to give way to the understanding that children's own wishes and expressed needs are relevant to the construction and implementation of social policies and practices.*

Mayall's study of nine year-olds in London pointed to the importance of 'responsibility and free time' in children's lives. Noting that children enjoy their freedom from adult responsibility she also observes that children take or are delegated responsibility. While they think they have a right to free time for play, outside the immediate control and supervision of adults, adult domination of time, at home and especially at school, means they often have to argue for free time (Mayall. 2012: 253-4). In contrast to children's positive experiences of their rights to provision and protection, Mayall

found that while they acknowledged their rights to participation, they found that these were not always respected with parents only sometimes, and school staff hardly ever, respecting their participation rights (2012: 255).

James and Prout (2005) are credited with 'the new sociology of childhood and there is a much wider range of sociologists who have focussed on various different aspects of children's rights. Sociologists explore social identities, relationships and culture in childhood research studies (Holland et al. 2008). Recently, sociological research on children's everyday lives has paid attention to the exploration of children's own perspectives (Christensen and James, 2000), the focus of the empirical study that follows.

Social work perspectives place specific emphasis on the notion of 'best interests'. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) defines the value base of social work, and articulates five building blocks for working from a children's rights perspective. (IFSW, 2002:8)

1. The acceptance that children are people now, not people–in-the-making. It is critical that social workers respect and value children as complete human beings from the moment they are born, This does not deny that children will change and develop over the years. However, it does accord them full human status from birth.

2. The acceptance that childhood is valuable in its own right and is not simply a stage towards adulthood. This has major implications for social programmes and services, shifting the emphasis of work with children to the here-and-now of their

experience. If this perspective were university accepted education systems, for example, would be founded on children's self-fulfilment and happiness as people today in addition to the need for them to acquire skills and qualifications for their future adult lives.

3. Working from a children's human rights perspective acknowledges that children are active agents of their own lives. Every person can only live one life. Social Workers must not under-estimate children's accumulated knowledge and insights into their own needs and life history. Although they may have access to information not shared with children, social workers, must never assume they know more about a child's life than the child.

4. Age discrimination needs to be identified and tackled, recognising that children across the globe are treated less seriously than adults simply because of their age.

5. A commitment to working from a children's human rights perspective requires social workers to address the special vulnerability of infants and children, arising from their small size and physical strength and from their low status and dependency on adults. Children are vulnerable because they do not have the physical strength, experience or psychological capacity to withstand pressure from adults. This can easily lead to situations of exploitation and abuse.

Applying children's rights in the area of social work, the *IFSW,(2002:9) explains:*

> *social workers need to be ready to listen to children and to make a reality of their participation rights. That means using games, play and drawings as well*

as conversation. They should not place their own interpretations on children's

actions and behaviour without first checking this out with them.

The challenges that adopting a children's rights perspective presents for Confucian familist societies might appear impossible, yet it also seems clear that in socieites across the world the challenge of achieving children's participation in decision making has met with structural challenges related to adult power and children's relative powerlessness that renders their participation largely tokenistic. Much emphasis has been placed in Western contexts on demonstrating that children are capable of understanding relatively complex ideas and making decisions. But the role of adult support in facilitating children's decision making has also been identified as a vital ingredient.

In this section I have shown how a number of different disciplines has contributed different perspectives to broaden our thinking about children's rights. These different perspectives help to create a framework for the empirical study of children's rights in children's homes in Taiwan that aims to deepen the understanding of children's experiences in residential care in Taiwan, how these are shaped by the cultural context, how children's rights, particularly participation rights, are understood, and how they are experienced by children in children's homes in Taiwan.

3.5.4 Cultural Contextualisation

The preamble to the UNCRC reminds us that the Convention is intended to maintain respect for diverse cultural values and that implementing rights invovles: 'Taking due account of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the

protection and harmonious development of the child'. Article 30 also refers to rights in the sense that children have a right to enjoy their own culture, religion and language. Perhaps the greatest challenge of all in making children's rights a reality is the question of the ways in which cultural values may, in themselves, operate to deny or limit children's claims to rights. For example, the values of Confucian familism continue to remain of paramount importance in Taiwanese society (See Chapter 2) creating seemingly insurmountable barriers to the idea of 'children's rights'. But as Van Bueren (1998: 25) argues, although there is plentiful argument that children themselves think they have no power to make their own decisions, 'researchers need to develop innovative and embracing approaches to the child's capacity in order to maintain the dynamism which is at the heart of Articles 12 and 13[3] of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.' The question of cultural appropriateness merits particularly close attention since the UNCRC itself pays little detailed attention to diversity and difference among children around the world (Freeman, 2000: 282). In this thesis I explore children's experiences of children's rights not simply in Taiwan but among children in residential care in Taiwan and this adds a further dimension to chilren's diversity. It is an unexplored field and I start with clues from research that has been conducted in other cultural settings. In relation to children's rights in children's homes in the UK Willow (1996) has reminded us not only that adults constantly need to reflect on their attitudes to, and assumptions about, children, but that adults' knowledge about children's lives and experiences is not always current. In the context of residential care homes it is not difficult to see that the layers of adults assumptions and layers of children's experiences are likely to be complex and require significant effort to open up and

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[3] Participation rights

understand. Currently there are no published accounts of research that attempts to explore children's own experiences of residential care in Taiwan. The following section identifies some of the conceptual and cultural barriers and challenges that have rendered this important area of knowledge unexplored. In particular I pay attention to notions of happiness and resilience that are conceptualised and understood in different ways in different cultural contexts.

3.6 Children's Rights: Happiness and Resilience

3.6.1 Happiness

In the context of this study, happiness is a concept of central importance. Happiness is widely represented in everyday life in Taiwan through the use of public images explicitly promoting happiness and, for example, the use of songs about happiness in schools. The idea of happiness is taken seriously at government level with national debates about the promotion of happiness and 'Happy Children's Day' cards and posters to mark Children's Day, a public holiday celebrated each year on 4th April (see image below[4]).

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[4] Source: http://acidolphilus.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/tomb-sweeping-day-and-childrens-day.html

In this section I discuss the concept of happiness as it is considered in Western and Chinese cultures, and go on to consider how happiness has been considered in relation to children and childhood.

The Development of Happiness and Well-being Research

Intertwined with the central importance of harmony in Taiwanese society is happiness. Lu, Gilmour, and Shih's (2001) qualitative study of perceived sources of happiness among samples in Taiwan and in the West indicated that the Western conception of happiness places greater emphasis on intrapersonal or internal evaluation and contentment, whereas the Chinese conception of happiness places greater emphasis on interpersonal or external evaluation and satisfaction. 'Happiness' in Taiwanese culture closely approximates with Western concepts of life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Diener, Oishi and Lucas, 2003), and is most usefully conceptualized as a trait, rather than a transient emotional state (Veenhoven, 1991, 1994, 2006; Uchida et al, 2004).

An early pioneer of Western research focussing on economic and psychological aspects of well-being Easterlin (1995, 2001, 2004) has long argued that happiness is associated with relative abundance as opposed to absolute abundance observing that: happiness, or subjective well-being, varies directly with one's own income and inversely with the incomes of others. Raising the incomes of all, he argues, does not increase the happiness of all, because the positive effect of higher income on subjective well-being is offset by the negative effect of higher living level norms brought about by the growth in incomes generally (Easterlin, 1995: 36). This situation has been referred to as the Easterlin paradox.

While many international studies of happiness and well-being have sought to identify individual personality, broader cultural and economic variables associated with differences in states of well-being, Diener, Oishi and Lucas (2003: 403) have shown that although personality-related characteristics explain a significant amount of variability in subjective well-being, long-term levels of well-being are also influenced by life circumstances and by cultural factors including 'norms dictating appropriate feelings'. They argue that in East Asian cultures adherence to social norms and perceived acceptance by parents and friends are as important as emotions in contributing to life satisfaction.

Historical literature on happiness in Confucian cultures has focused on philosophical aspects of happiness and the importance of family and collective well-being even where this involves sacrificing personal well-being. But following developments in Western measurement of quality of life from the 1950s, researchers from mainland China began to take an interest in exploring quality of life on a macro scale from the 1980s, leading to the development of a well-being index (Xing, 2011, 2012) and revealing more nuanced understandings of social inequalities. He and Pan's (2011) research on the Easterlin paradox in China, explains the importance of: i) income gap and ii) inequality of opportunity as dimensions of social inequality. They found that while inequality of opportunity was associated with lower levels of happiness, in general its effects were more serious for those with low-incomes and those living in rural areas.

Happiness and Residential Care

Although the 'happiness' research discussed above has little direct connection with happiness among children in residential care homes, research with children and young people living in residential care or boarding schools in England (Ofsted, 2012) has formed the basis for developing a Children's Happiness scale. The findings of an Ofsted study (2012) indicate that children thought that:

happiness also had a lot to do with being satisfied with how things are for you – being 'satisfied with themselves and their environment', 'being comfortable in their own skin'. It was also to do with being with people you want to be with: 'being with people you love and you want to be with'. One group said happiness wasn't one thing, but could depend on lots of different things for different people: 'Happiness depends on themselves, depends on your life, parents, teachers – it could be a million things'. (Ofsted, 2012: 7)

Interestingly, piloting the resulting happiness scale led to the conclusion that it was easier for children to express what made them unhappy rather than happy.

The Good Childhood Report (Children's Society, 2013), again in the UK context, explores children's own understandings and indicators of well-being. This identified a number of factors beyond poverty that affect children's well-being, notably experiencing bullying, experiencing family change, and problems at school. It also identified key family-related factors that affect well-being: family conflict, parental support and parental autonomy granting, and pointed to an acknowledgement

among children that their own choices and behaviour could affect their sense of well-being.

While there is clear evidence of the importance of family and family relationships in contributing to well-being, or happiness, it is also important to understand how children who do not enjoy the benefits of family support can achieve a sense of well-being, or happiness.

3.6.2 Resilience

Writing about resilience across cultures Ungar (2008:225) has defined resilience, in the context of exposure to significant adversity, as: *both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways*. Expressed more simply, Gilligan (1997:12) defines resilience in terms of: '*Qualities which cushion a vulnerable child from the worst effects of adversity in whatever form it takes and which may help a child or young person to cope survive and even thrive in the face of great hurt and disadvantage*.' Masten (2001) has argued in her study of resilience processes in development that while resilience is remarkably common – indeed she refers to it as 'ordinary magic' – it develops through the normative functions of human adaptational systems. The greatest threat to the development of resilience in children is, therefore, anything that compromises children's protective systems. Fergusson and Horwood's research in New Zealand on resilience to childhood adversity, based on a 21-year study using mixed methods including parental interviews, self-reports, psychometric test,

teachers reports, medical records and police records, led to three general conclusions about the relationship between childhood adversity, adolescent outcomes and resilience factors. First, that exposure to adversity in childhood led to increased rates of both externalizing and internalizing problems in adolescence; second, that the effects of exposure to adversity could be mitigated or exacerbated by a series of different factors; and third, that factors contributing to resilience among children exposed to high levels of childhood adversity were equally beneficial to those who had not been exposed to such adversity (Fergusson and Horwood, 2003: 150-151)

Further contributions to understanding resilience, including the notion of 'robust' resilience', draw attention to the difference between the ability to withstand everyday adversities and the development of resilience to withstand structural inequalities (Dominelli, 2012). Dominelli notes that social workers engaging in 'disaster' situations perceive resilience as a continuum representing a range of responses to adversity from non-response to surviving to thriving (2013: 65). And Cutter et al's. (2003) research on social vulnerability, while also linked to environmental hazards, is helpful in shedding light on the interacting effects of major environmental and social indicators such as exposure to hazard risk, quality of human settlements and the built environment, social networks and social dependence. These insights are useful in extending thinking about the ways in which children's lives and well-being are affected by family disruption, and by exposure to new 'carers' in institutional settings.

The common message from resilience research is that threats to the development of resilience in children are associated with threats to children's protective systems.

This focuses attention sharply on the challenges faced by children in residential care homes whose principal protective system, the family, has been damaged, if not dismantled. Research in Western settings on resilience in residential care settings has focused both on the role of the individual child in developing resilience: the ability to know where, how and when to put your energies to improve things for yourself and how to recruit help in that endeavour' (Daniel, 2008: 61), and the role of staff: not merely to provide a structured space for children where strict discipline is enforced, but also to assimilate and adapt the theoretical concept of resilience and support the children in the practical development of resilience (Houston, 2010: 67).

With the central focus on family harmony in societies influenced by Confucian familist values, attention to the study of resilience in Confucian cultures has focused on families (see for example Lee et al, 2004). To date there have been no studies of the implications of residential care for the development of children's resilience in Taiwan. A key question, therefore, is how, in Taiwan where residential care is a relatively new phenomenon, can children who are unable to live with their families access the resources and opportunities to support them to develop resilience and achieve a state of happiness? What qualities allow them to do so? And how can 'children's rights' influence access to resources and opportunities? It is the relationship between children's rights, happiness and resilience that I explore in the following pages.

Figure 3.2 Discourses on Children's Rights, Happiness and Resilience
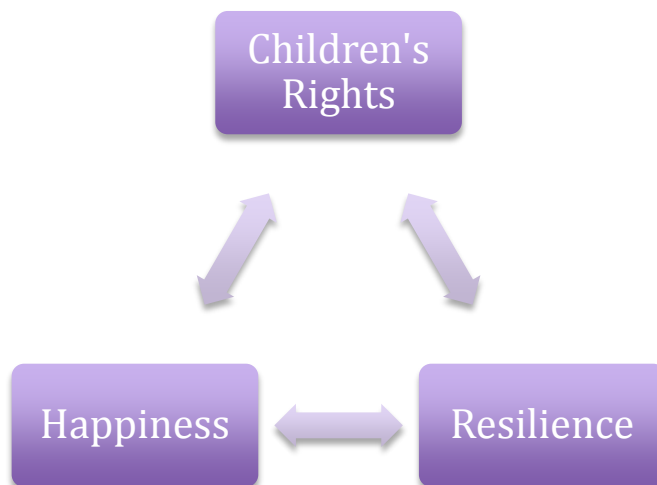
In Taiwan the mission statement of the Child Welfare Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior claims that 'Children are the public wealth of society and the most important treasure of a country and should be seen as the capital of the future since the whole society will be the biggest recipient of benefits once they come of age'. Huang (2002) studied rights standards for children in residential care in Taiwan using a survey and focus group with residential care staff in public and private children's homes. She argued that when children have their rights, they can achieve a sense of happiness, but where they do not enjoy their rights, they need strength to adapt, in other words, resilience. Of particular interest here is the fact that the Huang's conclusions about children's rights and children's happiness are drawn from the views of adults rather than the children themselves.

In searching the literature for existing evidence and argument about how we can understand issues of children's happiness and resilience in residential care settings, children's rights featured prominently. For example, The Scottish Executive (2006) argued that hearing and consulting looked after children, consistent with children's participation rights (UNCRC articles 12 and 13) is vital for their current and future

welfare and happiness. Holder and Coleman's (2009) Canadian study of 'the contribution of social relationship to children's happiness', involved 9-12 year-olds who participated, along with their parents. They found that 'family and friendship contribute to one's happiness while still a child', and suggested a need for further research to understand the links between children's relationships and their happiness. Although Holder and Coleman do not directly address the role of children's rights in supporting the development of their focus on the importance of the family and friendship in contributing to happiness suggests that children's rights have an important place in enabling those responsible for alternatives to family care to identify alternative means of facilitating children's happiness. As article 8 of the UNCRC states, governments should respect children's right to family ties and children deprived of a family environment (article 20) have a right to special care and to be looked after properly (with due respect for cultural context). An important question, therefore, in examining the relationship between happiness, resilience and children's rights in children's homes in Taiwan is to determine the ways in which daily life for children in residential care achieves, or fails to achieve, the benefits of family life in contributing to children's happiness.

Gibbs and Sinclair (2000) also explored happiness in their study of 223 children in 48 residential homes in five local authorities in the UK and highlighted the negative impact of bullying as a source of unhappiness in residential children's homes. They argued that a useful route to understanding happiness in residential care homes would be an exploration of bullying behaviour. Feelings of happiness or unhappiness are linked with the quality of relationships with peers and staff in children's homes and when children experience bullying, they do not feel happy. Gibbs and Sinclair's

study (2000:251) revealed that while 13-14 year-olds were vulnerable to bullying, younger children were at even greater the risk of bullying or attempted bullying. They argue that bullying is an issue that needs to be addressed by staff in residential care settings through the development of anti-bullying and harassment programmes as well as arranging therapeutic help. Although they do not relate their research directly to children's rights, I argue that their findings highlight the link between bullying and unhappiness that is associated with a failure to protect children from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally (UNCRC article 19) including protection from bullying.

Houston's (2010) participatory action research to build resilience in a children's home in Northern Ireland, used Daniel and Wassell's (2002) six domains of resilience (education, talents and interests, a secure base, positive values, social competences and friendships) as a conceptual framework in trying to understand approaches that were helpful in building resilience as well as contextual factors that enabled and constrained social work practitioners' interventions. Although the domains of resilience make no explicit reference to children's rights, three do relate directly to children's rights: education (UNCRC article 28), talents and interests (article 31), and a secure base (article 6) which, if recognized and acknowledged can be facilitated by care givers. Houston argued that the key to building resilience in children in residential care was for staff to develop an ability to relate both to the system within which they were located, and to the needs of the children in the system. Key interventions to support staff focus on: i) support to understand theories of resilience, ii) the development resilience building skills; iii) the identification of ways in which agency structures could be adapted and iv) managing the tensions

inherent in balancing: children's needs and risks, caring and controlling, and professional and personal aspects of the practitioner role. He showed that, with support, staff were better able to make creative use of resources and tools to mediate between the spheres of the State mandated parenting system and the informal, meaning-oriented, world of the young people and move from the provision of a structured space for children where strict discipline is enforced to an approach that facilitated the development of resilience in children.

While happiness and resilience both feature clearly in research on the well-being of children in residential care, there is little evidence and argument that addresses, explicitly, the role of children's rights in building resilience. There are, however, clear references to the role of participation in building resilience in young people. For example, an Australian study by Oliver et al. (2006) argues that meaningful participation can itself enhance a young person's sense of connectedness, belonging and valued participation, and thereby impact on mental health and well-being (p1446). The authors draw a connection with the participation right of young people to be involved in the making of decisions that affect them, but draw a clear distinction between different degrees of participation that can range from the tokenistic to the meaningful.

In the following section I turn my attention to a consideration of residential care of children who are unable, for a wide range of reasons, to remain in the care of their own families.

3.7 Children's Residential Care Homes

Residential care, in a wide range of forms, has existed for a very long time and has catered for children who have been separated from their usual family caregivers for a variety of reasons. The history of residential care for children across the world reflects cultural, national and global politics and power relations based on economic and socio-political structures and institutions. Residential care has taken many forms, from British workhouses that accommodated the children of destitute families in the nineteenth century to residential schools and orphanages run by colonial adminstrations, State governments and faith based institutions. Presented as a form of welfare provision, large scale residential care has also served to control and punish, to further the interests of its providers through political or religious recruitment, and has come to be associated with forms of exploitation and abuse. Sociological insights Goffman (1961); Foucault (1979), Wardhaugh and Wilding (1993) have helped us to understand the mechanisms by which adults, recruited to care for children and other 'vulnerable' groups in institutional settings, can intentionally or unintentionally become their oppressors. With growing recognition of abusive power relations in residential care, Western practices have turned attention to smaller units and to the use of substitute family care for children whose families cannot care for them on a temporary or permanent basis.

In the English context, Sinclair and Gibbs' (1998) large scale study of residential care homes found that i) many of the children were 'extremely unhappy or moody'; ii) the great majority of children behaved in 'disturbed and delinquent' ways; iii) many children were poorly integrated into education or work and their prospects for long-term secure employment were generally dismal, and iv) the great majority of children

came from dysfunctional families with whom they were almost always at odds (p253). The most recent research on children's homes (Berridge et al, 2012) concluded that they offered comfortable environments but retained some unnecessary institutional features, and only about half the homes provided a consistently warm and caring environment throughout the day and across the staff group.

Given the central role of staff in children's experiences of residential care it is important also to understand staff perspectives. Hicks, Archer and Whitaker (1998) explored the culture and the dynamics of residential staff in children's homes, including questions of staff training. Staff in 39 children's homes were interviewed, and in-depth telephone interviews conducted with managers in thirteen local authorities. They identified the following key practice skills for residential child-care workers: i) the ability to listen to and observe individual young people; ii) the ability to be careful and to be close to the group as a whole; iii) alertness to early warning signs of problems escalating that may lead to problematic behaviour; iv) to develop as full and as accurate an understanding of individual children and young people as possible; v) to check the meanings of what they saw and what they heard from children; .vi) to constantly revise original perceptions, based on later experiences; vii) to develop proper plans for individual young people; viii) to help children to address negative behaviour; ix) to identify and use opportunities to benefit young people in daily routine life; x) to acknowledge children's feelings, understand their emotional reactions to an episode, and help them to express negative emotions in ways that would not be seen as bad behaviour; xi) to learn and use positive ways of giving support to residential children and xii) to develop interpersonal and group management skills (Hicks, Archer and Whitaker 1998: 368). Reflecting later on this

study Archer (2002) concluded that the homes that were rated as most effective were those in which there was a culture of learning among the staff, where management was supportive of the staff group, where communication was constantly reviewed and where staff made time to reflect about their work. Heron and Chakrabarti (2003) examined the perceptions of residential staff towards children and young people living in community based children's homes in Scotland. They used interviews and repertory grid techniques in their research and concluded that children's behaviour reflected the low level of staffing, which could not really meet their needs, and left the staff feeling powerless to address the real issues and problems affecting children. Without referring directly to the priority given to discipline, the authors concluded that current thinking in social work at the time left staff ill-equipped to confront the realities they were facing and by not taking steps to empower staff, residential child-care practice was, inadvertently, failing to address the needs of children.

Political conflict around the world at the end of the twentieth century focussed attention on the growth of residential care in economically poor countries of the global South as part of international aid programmes that have been associated with neo-colonialism in contexts where the State was not in a position to provide 'good enough' care (Tolfree, 1995). The dismantling of the Soviet Union and the fall of autocratic political regimes in Eastern Europe during the same period revealed widespread practices of what are widely considered to be poor child care practice. Bilson and Cox's (2005) exploration of children's rights in institutional care in Sri Lanka, using a questionnaire to collect data from 329 institutions and more in depth study in 84 homes, concluded that children's emotional needs were rarely met. And

they argued that one of the simplest ways to meet their emotional needs would be to listen to children when they want to express themselves. In many non-Western countries residential care is the main form of provision for children in the care of the State, with substitute family care either underdeveloped or not perceived as appropriate. A recent publication by Save the Children, a children's rights based NGO: 'Keeping Children out of Harmful Institutions' (Csáky, 2009) reminds us that an estimated 8 million children worldwide are living in care institutions, the result of lack of political commitment, financial challenges, the continuing use of children as commodities or misconceived good intentions.

The use of residential care as a solution to these problems varies across cultures and is a relatively new phenomenon in Taiwan because of the Taiwanese emphasis on blood relationships. It is not common for children unrelated by blood to live with another family. Even in parts of the world where there is significant research about residential child care, Berridge and Brodie (1998) have argued that quality of care is an increasingly important factor with Berridge (2002) calling for greater learning about what is and is not effective in order to inform social policy and social work practice. In particular, he argued that the role of staff in the development of the 'whole' child needs to be highlighted.

3.8 Residential Care Homes in Taiwan

There are currently approximately 2000 children living in children's homes in Taiwan and previous research has focused, almost exclusively, on staff rather than children. Literature from Taiwan, sourced principally from the electronic thesis and dissertation

system in Taiwan (NDLTD, 2012), suggests that the issue of children's homes has been largely ignored in the field of social work and education, and as seen from Table 1.3, there is little published literature on the issues of children's homes in Taiwan (He, 2004). In other words, there is a gap in knowledge and research into the well-being of children in Taiwanese children's homes. Although the awareness of children's rights has been raised and the situation of children resident in homes has been increasingly discussed in recent years, these two issues have not been considered together in a significant way. There are only a few studies in Taiwan about children in children's homes (Wu, 1999; Lin, 1999; Huang, 2002; Lo, 2003; Yu, 2003; Chang, 2004; Yang, 2005), and they focus on different issues in residential care homes: the cooperation model and task commitment of the social workers and child-care workers in orphanages (Chang, 2004); children without parents – an exploration of the inner world of two girls in the orphanage (Lo, 2003); correlations among social workers in custody arrangements and decision-making approaches; child rights' preservation and assessing professional intervention (Yang, 2005). Only Huang (2002) and Yu (2003) focused on the issue of children's rights in the setting of children's residential care homes.

Huang's (2002) exploration of rights standards for children in residential care through a survey of staff in public and private Homes, concluded that many children who live in children's homes have negative experiences as they develop through childhood. They experience a lack of love and, as a result, have little self-confidence. In addition she pointed out that there are many rigid regulations that need to be followed. It seems that their lives are less flexible than those of other children who do not live in children's homes. However, Lin's (2000) study of prisoners' children found that

although they only experienced a 'group'[5] life in children's homes in Taiwan, this was still considered better than their original and disordered family life. On the other hand, Huang (2002) argued that they have no private space, are limited by home rules and have no freedom.

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[5] Likely to be a minimum of ten children in any group.

Table 3.1: Research on Residential Care Homes in Taiwan

Author	Year	Title	Type of Study	Findings
Wu	1999	Discussion of issues raised when working in child welfare service in a residential care home in Kaohsiung.	Observation and Interviews with staff	The number of children affected the quality of children's homes.
Lin	2000	The discussion of resident children's childhood- A case study of a prisoner's children.	Interviews with Six children in homes over 3 years	Children have difficulty developing stable emotions - linking with people.
Huang	2002	The Study of Rights Standards for Children in Residential Care Service.	Survey with staff of public and private homes and a focus group	Children have identity problems, and the high turnover of staff is one of the primary reasons.
Lo	2003	Children without Parents-Inner World of Two Girls in the Orphanage.	Interviews with two children	Entering new environment (children's home) affected children's world.
Yu	2003	Social adaptation of abused children in a residential care home: a case study of Northern Region Children's Home, Ministry of the Interior.	Interviews with 8 residential care workers?	The crucial importance of children's rights.
Chang	2004	Research into Cooperation model and task commitment of social workers and child care workers in 42 orphanages.	Questionnaires completed by 39 social workers and 77 child care workers	Contrasts the roles of social workers and care workers.
He	2004	The adjustment of child care workers to work in a children's home: a case study of one children's home in Taipei.	Observation and interviews with staff	Heavy workloads and poor pay affected child carer turnover.
Yang	2005	The Study of Correlation among Social Workers to the Custody Arrangement Decision-Making approach, Child rights Preservation and Judgment of professional intervention.	Survey of staff	Judgment of professional intervention affected the value of child rights and their preservation.

Huang (2002) used both survey methods and focus groups to research children's rights' and standards in residential care services. Her participants were drawn from both the state-run and private children's homes in Taiwan, and residential staff were sampled. Data were gathered through both quantitative and qualitative approaches, using questionnaires and a focus group of residential staff. Her findings revealed that children in residential care homes often have identity problems, and one of the primary reasons for that is because of the high turnover of staff. Residential care work is hard work, with much shift-work and overtime involved and Huang's (2002) recommendations included strategies to keep residential staff on a longer term basis. Although the study focused on the staff, Huang argued that children's voices were also important. Yu (2003) used both ecological systems theory and attachment theory to analyse the social adaptation of abused children in children's homes. Although his research focused on abused children, his findings still highlighted the crucial importance of children's rights.

3.9 Why This Study? Why This Study Now?

As can be seen from the Table above, research that draws directly on children's own views and experiences of residential care in Taiwan is extremely limited. And concern about the quality of care in children's homes had been raise over the preceding decade. In September 2001, there were rumours of child abuse at a children's home (Lee, 2001); at another home, sexual abuse was identified (Chen, 2008); and the head of The Mustard Seed Mission children's home Su Yu-Hui claimed that because of previous negative experiences, children who live in the children's home need more psychological support (Huang, 2008). According to Yu

(1996), social workers in Taiwan are often worried about sending children into children's homes because a) the children have few rights and b) staff are generally poorly trained. When children are abused, they do not know to whom to turn. Huang (2002:4) argues that although child abuse in children's homes is a rare occurrence, the quality of care is not good enough. Children in residential care need to understand that they have the right to protect themselves. But as we have seen from research in Western contexts, children are relatively powerless and do not easily develop trusting relationships with residential staff. As Clough (2000) argued, unless the content of children's rights is clear, it is all too easy for power to remain exclusively in the hands of staff (Clough, 2000).

Empirical studies conducted in children's homes in Taiwan (Wu, 1999; Huang, 2002 Lo, 2003; Yu, 2003; Lin, 2000; Chang, 2004; Yang, 2005) have focussed on special case studies or quantitative research. Focussing on outcomes and content none has provided a participative study examining children's experiences of children's rights in children's homes. Christensen and James (2000: 229) claim that *'listening to children is central to recognizing and respecting their worth as human beings.'* Thus, this thesis aims to address the invisibility of these children's experiences and will involve listening to their previously unheard voices. It will also attempt to make a contribution to the knowledge and achievements of children's rights in children's homes in Taiwan.

3.10 Research Gap

Since 1997, there has been an annual survey of the standards of children's rights run by the Chinese Association for Human Rights in Taiwan. At the governmental level, in 2000, the Child Welfare Bureau held a conference on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and published a report of children's rights in Taiwan. Additionally, the Ministry of Education held a council for promoting human rights in the field of education (April 2001). Programmes for promoting children's rights were organised by the Child Welfare Bureau in 2001. These examples demonstrate government and NGO concern for children's rights, and their endeavours to enhance the awareness of Taiwanese citizens about children rights, and to promote respect for those rights (Chinese Association for Human Rights, 2000; Child Welfare Bureau Ministry of the Interior, 2001). Although the Taiwanese government has tried hard to promote children's rights, the literature review has shown that, to date at least, there has been lack of research in this field and very little emphasis on children's rights within the setting of residential children's care homes.

In this research study, I set out to work alongside one public and one private children's homes to explore children's rights and the lived experiences of resident children in the children's homes. In order to achieve these goals, the aims of the study are:

- To explore children's experiences of life in children's homes.
- To contribute to our understanding of children's knowledge of their own rights.
- To investigate how children living in children's homes experience their rights.

- To contribute to knowledge that forms the basis from which strategies to develop child-centred services appropriate for future action can be recommended.

These broad aims are operationalized through two research questions:

- What are children's experiences of life in two children's homes?
- What are children's understandings and perceptions of their own rights in the context of the children's home?

3.11 Summary

This chapter has reviewed conceptual understandings of children's social worlds and, children's rights, and explored the theoretical relationship between children's rights, happiness and resilience, with particular reference to children's homes across the world and in Taiwan. The review has examined power relationships between adults and children and presented research into abuse and bullying. Finally it examined the gaps in the research in the Taiwanese setting, where there have been few investigations of the experiences of the children situated within children's homes themselves. In the next chapter, I move on to discuss the methodology and methods used to operationalize the research questions and describe the empirical research design, ethical considerations, the empirical research setting and processes of data collection, management and analysis.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Research involving children presents particular challenges (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Alderson, 2008; Christensen and James, 2008; Hill, 1998). In developing the methodological framework for this study I paid close attention to previous research with children (see Goodenough et al., 2003, Prout, 2001, Sinclair, 2004) and to current theoretical concepts about research methods with children as outlined in Chapter 3. In this chapter I briefly revisit the research objectives and research questions in section 4.2. I then move on to section 4.3 to explain the research methodology highlighting the reason for adopting an ethnographic approach in two residential care homes. In section 4.4 I articulate the choice of research methods: participant observation, participatory group activities and individuals interviews with children and discuss questions of sampling. I then move on to section 4.5 where I discuss ethical considerations, including the process of ethical approval and the ethical challenges of researching across cultural boundaries. In section 4.6 I provide a reflective account of the experience of data collection: i) participant observation to gain familiarity with the research setting and to allow the children to become familiar with me; ii) participatory group activities in which children made collective contributions to understanding their experiences of life in the homes and individual, face to face, semi-structured interviews with children. Section 4.7 provides an account of processes of organising, managing and analysing the data making use of Nvivo. In section 4.8 I address questions of validity and reliability before concluding the chapter in section 4.8.

4.2 Research Aims and Research Questions

The broad aim of this research was to investigate children's rights within residential care homes in Taiwan and to understand children's own accounts of their rights as they experienced them within these homes. My initial research aims were:

- To explore children's experiences of life in residential care homes.

- To contribute to our understanding of children's knowledge of their own rights.

- To investigate how children living in children's homes experience their rights.

- To contribute to knowledge that forms the basis from which strategies to develop child centred services appropriate for future action can be recommended.

To fulfil the aims of the research I specified the following research questions:

- ➢ What are the resident children's experiences of life in two residential care homes in Taiwan?

- ➢ What are children's understandings and perceptions of their own rights in the context of the children's home?

4.3 Methodology

A qualitative research framework was the most appropriate for accessing the children's subjective worlds, understanding their perspectives and experiences of life and perceptions of their rights within the homes (Morgan et al., 2002; Thomas & O'Kane, 2000). But within this framework I needed to select the best methods to generate data and the best ways of interpreting the data to have a chance of really understanding children's experiences. As Greig and Taylor (1999: 43) articulate:

Interpretive scientists seek to understand the social world from the point of view of the child living in it. By way of constructs and explanations, interpretivists attempt to make sense of how children understand their experiences and how this affects the way they feel towards others.

4.3.1 Ethnography and Institutional Ethnography

Ethnography refers primarily to a set of research methods that involve the researcher participating in people's daily lives watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – to illuminate the issues that are the focus of research (Hammersly and Atkinson, 1989). This approach allowed me to observe what children and staff do and to hear what they said about their daily lives.

More specifically, institutional ethnography is an approach to empirical inquiry that focuses connections among the sites and situations of everyday lives, professional practice and policy making, and uses everyday experience as a lens to examine social relations and social institutions. It begins with some issues, concerns, or problems that are real for people and that are situated in their relationships to an institutional order. Their concerns are explicated by the researcher in talking with them and thus set the direction of the inquiry. (Smith, 2005:32). As Smith further explains: Institutional Ethnography recognizes the authority of the experiencer to inform the ethnographer's ignorance. By formulating a problem ('problematisation') when taking an institutional ethnography approach, it is possible to translate the actualities of what people are doing from implicit forms of organisation in the everyday world into forms of discursive representation that facilitate analytical inquiry'

(Smith, 2005: 40).

My research began from where children in institutional care are located in their everyday worlds, the residential care home, and endeavoured to adopt the views of children who are subject to the socially organized exercise of power that shapes their actions and lives (Campbell and Gregor, 2002:32).

This framework for my study allowed me to access the real world contexts of the children living in residential care homes which would not have been possible through other means of data collection such as questionnaires. Institutional ethnography has also facilitated my own learning process in several ways. In particular, it helped me to explore children's understandings about their rights and to provide opportunities for children to express their views and experiences of everyday life in the residential care homes. Prout (2002) makes the case for treating 'children as social actors' in accessing new knowledge in both theoretical and methodological terms:

Including children as research subjects and participants, rather than objects of enquiry, has been shown to reveal many novel aspects of the situations, settings and issues they were asked about. These are in danger of remaining invisible when research relies only on adult accounts. By engaging children in research they have been shown to have a 'standpoint', from which social life often appears differently from how it looks from an adult perspective. Of course any one child sees and speaks from multiple, combined and intersecting positions of gender, class, ethnicity, disability and so on. However, within this diversity there appear also to be commonalities between children (Prout, 2002:68).

4.3.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation is also referred to in the methods literature as a common method to understand people's daily lives, and includes seeing and hearing what people do and say in their own environment, and reflecting on the meaning of what is seen and heard. As Bryman (2004) argues:

Many definitions of ethnography and participant observation are very difficult to distinguish. Both ethnography and participant observation draw attention to the fact that the participant observer/ethnographer immerses him or herself in a group for an extended period of time observing behaviour, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the field worker, and asking questions Bryman (2004: 292).

Bryman (2004) further clarifies the term 'participant observation'. There are four levels of the relationship between observer and participant: complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer and complete participant. In my role on the continuum of participation, by using participant observation to inform my understanding of the research setting, as well as participatory group activities and semi-structured interviews with children, I remained engaged in each home for a period of three months during which time I was able to focus interchangeably on the whole environment, children in groups and children as individuals, and to integrate and summarise the research as a whole.

Here I briefly discuss issues of theoretical significance when conducting ethnographic studies with children and young people. Eder and Corsaro (1999:521) identify three features of ethnography as: i) sustained and engaged: naturally

involves long fieldwork period such as months or years in order to let ethnographic researchers gain access to a social group, know their daily life, and interpret what these participants do and say under the circumstances being studied; ii) microscopic and holistic: here Geertz's 'thick description' (1973) is considered a very important technique to analyse participant's daily activities and routines, and iii) flexible and self-corrective: initial questions may change during the study of inquiry and self-correction is built into the processes of data collection. Eder and Corsaro (1999:525) explain: the flexibility and self-corrective nature of ethnography applies not only to the research question and to data collection but to data analysis and theory generation as well. I found that not only did I have to be flexible in responding to opportunities and constraints in collecting data, but I was also able to create flexibility particularly in working with the children in ways that they enjoyed.

4.3.3 Insider or Outsider? Or 'Insider and Outsider'?

In addressing these research questions I conducted research in two residential care homes, one public and one run by a non-government organisation, in a large city where I was fluent in the local dialect and familiar with the local customs and culture. The focus on two different residential care homes offered a potential opportunity to compare and contrast the values and practices of these different settings and the experiences of children within them. I had volunteered in the NGO home several years earlier and this eased my access to the Home where the Head assisted me in gaining access to the public residential care home. In this sense I was an 'insider' and I was aware of the need not to take my familiarity with one of the Homes, or my own upbringing in a milieu of Confucian familism, for granted and to strive to 'make the familiar strange' (Kaomea, 2003; Hwang and Charnley, 2010). The role of

supervision was important here, both during fieldwork when I used skype to keep in touch with my supervisor, and while analysing and interpreting findings. This helped me to 'problematize' words, behaviours and settings, reminding me to provide sufficiently 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) to show how I had collected, analysed and interpreted data.

While I was an 'insider' in a number of respects, I also occupied an 'outsider' position in this research. This was particularly true for my involvement with Home B, and in terms of my adult status in exploring the lives of children. I reflect further on the implications of the different positions I occupied in the section on participant observation that follows later in this chapter.

4.4 Research Methods

In considering different methods of researching with the children I followed Christensen & James' advice:

> *what is important is that the particular methods chosen for a piece of research should be appropriate for the people involved in the study, for its social and cultural context and for the kinds of research questions that are being posed. (Christensen and James, 2008: 3)*

Most research in residential care homes has been based on interviews or quantitative methods such as questionnaires. A review of research conducted in this field suggested that existing studies of residential care have been designed mainly

to: i) identify children's basic needs in residential care settings and ii) to explore issues of staffing (Colton, 1989, Horwath, 2000, Votruba-Drzal, 2003, Nicholas et al., 2003, Törrönen, 2006, Stein, 2006, Colton and Roberts, 2007, Hewitt, 2007, Milligan and Stevens, 2006). However, none of these studies explicitly explores children's views about their own rights. In order to address the research questions I used different methods to give a more insightful and thorough understanding of children's views concerning their rights and their experiences in residential children's homes.

The main focus of this study was to gain a valid understanding of children's experiences in residential care homes and to identify the potential for improving them in the future. As Clark (2004: 4) claims: Children and young people are increasingly regarded as a group for whom having greater power and knowledge, and consequentially, a 'voice' is vitally important. It was, therefore, imperative to listen to the children participating in the study and understand their points of view. My aim, in this sense, was to become closer to the children and, in effect, become an insider in the child's world.

Table 4.1 shows a simplified representation of the principal stages of the research process in which the stages overlapped and did not follow a precise linear progression. Each stage is discussed in further detail below.

Table 4.1 Stages of the Research Process

	Objectives
Stage 1 Preparation and ethical approval	• Negotiating Access: Meeting with the Heads and staff in Home A and B, explaining the proposed research and its purpose. • Ethical approval.
Stage 2 Participant Observation	• To build relationships with residential staff and children. • To understand children's activities in the homes in order to devise appropriate Participatory Group Activities. • To make sense of children's own experiences in residential care homes.
Stage 3 Sampling and recruitment	• To raise interest in the study, invite participation and recruit child participants.
Stage 4 Participatory Group Activities	• Generate data on children's experiences of happiness and understanding of children's rights. • To build participants' interest in taking part in interviews.
Stage 5 Individual Interviews	• To drill down into deeper understanding of children's individual experiences of their lives and their rights in residential care homes.

4.4.1 Negotiating Access and Gaining Trust

The *first stage* was preparation for accessing two residential care homes. I was undoubtedly aided in gaining what can be considered privileged access to the two children's homes: i) because I had already volunteered in Home A and had the support of the Head of the Home, ii) the Head of Home A assisted me in gaining access to Home B, and iii) more generally because of the contemporary push by the Taiwanese government and funding agencies to pay attention to matters of children's rights. After meeting with the Heads of the homes in order to obtain permission to undertake the research I gained ethical approval from Durham University Ethics Committee. The *second stage* was a period of observation in the homes. The aim of

this stage was to integrate myself into the children's daily lives, especially at the weekend when life within the homes was less structured. Box 4.1 below describes the two children's homes.

Text Box 4.1 Description of Homes A and B

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Home A

is run by a non-government organization and has the capacity to be home to 29 children. The Home is located fairly close to the centre of the city with convenient access to urban facilities. There are two interconnected buildings with a small playground for activities. There is a primary school about two minutes walking distance, available for children to do exercise and play sports. The Home is run by a head, a supervisor, a manager and six carers. There are 29 children in the Home which is divided into two family units based on gender[6]. Each family unit has two carers who take turns to work eight hour shifts to look after one family unit, providing 24 hour care. The majority of carers are female. The children sleep in dormitories where each child is provided with a single bed, one desk with drawers and a desk lamp. They also have allocated space in a wardrobe. Meals are served in a communal canteen and follow a strict timetable. The Home has its own transport (van), separate shower rooms, a reading room, computer room and laundry. The children do their homework at their own desks provided in their dormitory. It is unusual for children from the surrounding community to come into the Home and the children must seek permission before inviting anyone in. Children are expected to follow the Home's timetable shown below. Only when they complete their duties do

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[6] This implies a separation of siblings of different gender, reinforcing the differences between the strong cultural norms surrounding family life and life in the care Homes.

they have free time to pursue their own interests such as watching TV and listening to music. They are free to contact their birth family by phone at any time and are generally supported keep in touch with their family and relatives. When children have longer school holiday such as summer and winter vacations, those with families are allowed to return to stay with their family. Those with no birth family or relatives, including children whose parents are in prison, or unable to care for them for other reasons, remain in the children's home. Each family unit has its own routines. Each family unit runs a 'big family meeting' most weekends, depending on staff availability.

Timetable

Weekday timetable		Weekend and holiday timetable	
06:00 - 06:30	Get up and cleaning	*07:00 - 08:00*	Get up, cleaning and breakfast
06:30 - 07:00	Breakfast	*08:00 - 10:00*	Self-study session
07:00 - 12:00	Go to primary school	*10:00 - 12:00*	Self-study session; Sunday service in the Church
12:00 - 14:00	Junior primary school children (grade 1, 2 and 3) finish school, lunch and midday break	*12:00 - 14:00*	Lunch and midday break
14:00 - 16:00	Junior primary school children do their homework	*14:00 - 16:00*	Music sessions
16:00 - 17:00	Senior primary school children finish school	*16:00 - 17:00*	Free activity time
17:00 - 18:00	Shower and washing	*17:00 - 18:00*	Shower and washing
18:00 - 19:00	Dinner and cleaning up	*18:00 - 19:00*	Dinner and cleaning up
19:00 - 21:00	Evening self-study session, free time for activities when homework is finished. Tuesday and Thursday there are tutorials facilitated by university student volunteers	*19:00 - 21:00*	Evening self-study session, free time for activities when homework is finished.
21:00	Bed time	*21:00*	Bed time

Home B

A government Home, catering for 150 children, is located further from the centre of the city. It has more physical space than Home A being located over two separate buildings with a larger open space for activities. Home B is run by one head, one manager, one social worker and has seventeen care staff, two nurses and three tutors. The children are divided into eleven, single gender, family units with children aged under seven years old living in the Home's nursery. Each family unit consists of ten to 13 children. Like Home A, there are two residential carers for each family group who provide 24 hour care on a shift basis. The majority of carers are female. The children sleep in dormitories where they use bunk beds. Meals are served in a canteen and follow a strict timetable. The Home has its own transport (van), separate shower rooms, a reading room, computer room and laundry. The children do their homework at their own desks provided in their dormitory. They are able watch TV in their free time when they have finished their homework. It is unusual for children from the surrounding community to come into the Home and the children must seek permission before inviting anyone in.

Timetable

Weekday timetable		Weekend and holiday timetable	
06:00 - 07:00	Get up, cleaning and breakfast	*07:00 - 08:00*	Get up, cleaning and breakfast. Household work and cleaning public area
07:00 - 13:30	Primary school children gathering for school	*08:00 - 10:00*	Evening self-study session: self review and revision (based on the teaching pace in the school)
13:30 - 14:30	Grade 3 and 4 children finish school, lunch and midday break	*08:00 - 10:00*	Morning self-study session

14:30 - 16:30	Grade 3 and 4 children washing up and doing homework	*10:00 - 12:00*	Arts tutorial: Saturday for drawing classes, Sunday for music classes
16:30 - 17:20	Grade 5 children finish school, cleaning, doing homework and washing up	*12:00 - 14:30*	Lunch and midday break
17:20 - 19:00	Dinner, household work, tidy up and free activity time	*14:30 - 17:20*	Family unit activity time: tidy up desks and drawers, improve homework, reading and painting (arranged by staff member assigned to each individual family unit, in order to create unity and interaction in the group)
19:00 - 21:00	Evening self-study session: self review and revision	*17:20 - 19:00*	Dinner, household work, tidy up and free activity time
21:00 - 21:30	Snacks (dependent on the performance of individual child on the day), preparing for sleep – cleaning teeth etc.	*19:00 - 20:00*	Evening self-study session
21:30	Bed time	*20:00 - 22:00*	Snacks, evening self-study and indoor activities, bed time

At Home A I was able to spend more time *in situ*, while at Home B, I was only offered the opportunity to spend a limited amount of time in the home and at a summer camp run by the home before engaging children in the sample in participatory drawings and interviews. The purpose of this phase was to enable the children to get used to my presence and allowed me to become "part of the wallpaper". As I became familiar to the children, particularly in Home A, many of them welcomed the opportunity to talk with me. By investing in spending time with the children, they were able to see me as an adult who was different from the residential staff and this contributed to the development of children's trust in me (Stokholm, 2009: 554).

Following an initial visit to Home A to discuss the research with staff, I returned the following day to look at children's records and attend a staff meeting. In the evening I was able to meet all the children when they returned from school. A few of the children recognized me from three years previously when, as an undergraduate, I had been a volunteer in the Home, helping children with homework and organizing activities. They greeted me with smiles and came and offered me a hug. Following the evening meal in the communal dining room, the Head of the Home introduced me and gave me the space to present the idea of the research study to the children. I explained that I was doing a PhD at a university in England. Some children immediately asked about the meaning of a PhD and this gave me the opportunity to explain to the whole group of thirty that when I was a student in Taiwan I had spent some time in the Home as a volunteer. After graduating I had gone to study in England where I learned more about the different systems for looking after children who cannot live with their own families. I also learned that people in Europe do not know about children's homes in Taiwan and so I was now hoping to work together with children in two residential care homes in Taiwan to learn more about children's lives. I stressed that I really wanted to understand their own experiences from their own point of view. I explained that I would like to learn about their experiences partly by doing some group activities and also by talking individually to each child. I explained that I had some information in a leaflet (appendix C) and invited each child to take one, take time to read this and think about it. Accompanying the leaflet was a consent form (appendix E) and I stressed that they did not HAVE to take part, it was up to each of them to decide for themselves. I also explained that if they did take part in the activities, or agreed to talk to me individually then anything they told me would remain private and I would not tell anyone else. But in keeping with the notion of

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'contingent confidentiality' (Dominelli and Holloway, 2008) I also made it clear that if they told me about something very serious that might mean somebody had been hurt or might be hurt then I would have to tell a member of staff, but I would not do so without discussing it with them first. [7] The children were very attentive but, conforming to cultural norms of respect for those older than them, they waited for me to ask if they had any questions before speaking. The expressions on their faces indicated to me that they were curious to know more, and I noticed that a number of children were quick to sign the consent form. From that form the children knew that a member of staff, acting as legal guardian[8], would also be asked to sign. This is a common practice in Taiwan, for example parents/guardians sign children's workbooks on a daily basis, and did not cause any concerns among the children. When I invited questions a number of children raised their hands and the main question was 'When can we start'?! It was clear to me straight away that the children

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[7]In the findings chapters I reflect on ethical challenges that arose in relation to the need to make judgments about actual or potential harm as children referred to instances of bullying and being bullied, both in presenting their drawings and in individual interviews. Without exception the children who referred to bullying were adamant that they wished these disclosures to remain private and confidential. In sharing their experiences they did not feel they were not 'reporting' the unacceptable behaviour of other children, but rather showing pride in their own resilience. There are significant challenges in determining the responsibility that arises from gaining children's trust and hearing disclosures that indicate that children's human rights as stated in the UNCRC are not being fulfilled' (Kjørholt, 2013: 33). As Kjørholt reminds us, critical reflection is needed in contemplating the ethical challenges in preventing harm to children as part of research. Almost certainly influenced by my own cultural familiarity with the notion of showing strength and resilience, even in childhood, and in weighing up the balance of keeping children's trust and passing on their concerns about bullying, my decision was to keep an eye on children who had disclosed instances of bullying in the days following formal research contact, offering them the possibility of seeking my support with passing on their concerns. I was also able to discuss my concerns about bullying (without identifying individual children) with the Head of Home A. She indicated her awareness of what she perceived to be a common issue, and suggested she would raise the issue in routine staff meetings, and ask staff to pay closer attention to the issue of bullying in the Home. I did not have the same opportunity to speak with the Head, or manager, of Home B where my presence was accepted rather than enthusiastically supported. Although I have agreed to share my overall findings with both Homes and with a range of child welfare agencies in Taiwan, this experience has led me to reflect more deeply about the ethical challenges that can arise from respecting children's requests not to share information with staff. Undertaking analysis of the data and further reference to the literature has led me to develop my own knowledge of the harmful effects of bullying, not only through Western research but through recent developments in Taiwanese research (Yen, 2010; Yen et al, 2013). This has been an experience that will, without doubt, inform my future research practice.

[8] The Child and Adolescent Welfare Law (2013) article 3 states: parents and guardians have responsibilities for protecting children and when children are staying in residential homes, residential staff have the same responsibilities as parents.

were very enthusiastic to take part. They also asked about the consent form, explaining that they had never been given a choice about participating in activities before. My own interpretation at this point was that the children were responding positively to being treated with respect, and my interest in them as individuals. This interpretation was borne out in the interviews when a number of children talked about the difference between my approach in inviting them to participate and their daily experiences of being expected to engage in activities, many of which they would rather not do. As the study progressed I noted that the children addressed me as 'Wan-Yu chieh-chieh' indicating their sense of me as an older sister, and part of the family.

I was not familiar with Home B, but had gained permission to discuss the research with staff through the intervention of the Head of Home A. In Home B I made an initial visit to discuss the research with the Head of the Home, the manager and a social worker. They explained that the Home cared for approximately 150 children and it would not be possible to bring all the children together to hear about the research. The manager suggested that I create a poster explaining the research that could be displayed in various sites across the Home (seeing appendix I). I designed a poster which offered children an opportunity to take part in group activities and individual interviews about their experiences of life in the Home. It included a timetable for the activity sessions (the staff wanted to ensure that activities were arranged around the existing timetable of the Home) and an explanation that any child interested in participating could collect an information leaflet and consent form from the office. When I returned to the Home one week later I found that 21 children had asked to participate in the research. This contrasted with the 100% response

rate in Home A. This was linked, in large part, to the exclusion of some children who were unable to participate because they were involved in other organized activities at the time of the group activities.

The 21 children, twelve girls and nine boys, were aged between seven and 18 years. The age range was representative of the age range of all the children in the Home and the gender mix reflected the greater number of girls than boys in the Home. The 21 children came from a number of different 'family' units (each with 10-13 children) within the Home.

At the first timetabled session 18 children arrived at the arranged time. Three arrived late because of a previous programmed activity. I explained the study in the same way that I had done in Home A explaining my earlier experience as a volunteer in Home A and my experience of studying overseas and my desire to learn about their experiences of life in Home B. As in Home A the children responded by asking when the activities would begin. But in contrast to Home A I gained the impression that while some of the children in Home B were participating out of genuine interest, others appeared to be attending because they had been encouraged to do so by staff. However, they did show curiosity about the consent from and it was clear this was the first experience they had ever had of giving their own consent. Also in contrast to Home A the children referred to me as 'Wan-Yu lao se" indicating their view of me as a teacher. It took much longer to gain a sense of trust with the children in Home B, many of whom only began to relax in my presence in the individual interviews that followed between three days and two weeks after the end of the group activities. I also noticed that the children whose individual interviews occurred

later seemed more relaxed than the children who met with me in the first few interviews. I came to realize, directly from the children themselves, that those who had participated in the earlier interviews had passed on to others that I was a good listener, I seemed truly interested in what they had to say, and did not tell them what to do or say.

As Fetterman (2010: 37) explains, in the fieldwork stage of ethnographic studies, participant observation is significant and essential to understand what the participants think of the research topic and why it is of such importance. Atkinson et al. (2007) point out that participant observation is a typical method for ethnographic research. While discussing observation in children's everyday worlds, Christensen and James (2008: 241) argue that:

> *Field entry is crucial in ethnography because one of its central goals as an interpretive method is the establishment of membership status and an insider's perspective" (Corsaro 1996, 2003; Rizzo et al. 1992). In research in educational settings with young children these goals depend on dealing with and developing the trust of a range of adult gatekeepers; acquiring working knowledge of the social structure, nature of interpersonal relations, and daily routines in the setting; and gaining the acceptance of the teachers and children. (Christensen and James, 2008: 241-242)*

In this research study it was important to become familiar with the children and understand their daily routine in both children's homes. My role on the continuum of participation (Glesne, 1999) moved between 'observer as participant' and 'participant as observer'.

Initially I was an outsider to the children's homes, although in Home A some staff and a few children remembered me from when I had volunteered at the Home three years earlier. I was not a member of staff I had no specific office hours and no official duties assigned to me. In this sense I was an outsider. However, as time went by, I gradually gained status as a 'partial insider'. Rabe identifies this process as resulting from the process of participant observation.

> *As a social researcher you may initially be an outsider to a particular group, but as you spend more time with them, you become more of an insider. The latter is often the case when using participant observation as a social research method (Rabe, 2003:150).*

Ergun and Erdemir's (2010) work was also helpful in understanding the ambiguities of my position as both an insider and an outsider. In their article 'Negotiating insider and outsider identities in the field: "insider" in a foreign land; "outsider" in one's own land' based on fieldwork experiences in Azerbaijan and Turkey, they explore insider and outsider identities of researchers in settings that are neither unfamiliar nor fully familiar and explain that: 'the researcher is often suspended in a betwixt-and-between position' (p16).

Oliver's (2010) consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of insider and outsider research also chimes with my experience. Insiders have certain advantages. They i) tend to be familiar with the research field which makes it easier to select a sample; ii) appreciate the subtleties of the research field and can collect richer data

than the outsider, and iii) may be aware of various elements of the research field and take advantage of this knowledge to pursue their research aims.

However, being an insider can have some disadvantages: i) familiarity with the research setting can lead to overlooking aspects of data that an outsider would have noticed, and ii) this familiarity can lead to 'taking things for granted' (p3) in terms of observation.

Without adopting a single formal role within either Home, I was able to engage with children and staff in different ways. At Home A I was able to be present regularly from 8.30 in the morning between Monday to Friday and also attended special events at weekends. This enabled me to engage with staff and children who were not at school and at key daily events such as lunch where I was able to observe the roles of staff as monitors and guardians of discipline. Having lunch with the staff and children also enabled me to develop an understanding that while the children did not always like the food that was served, they did appreciate that they did not have to worry about how they obtained food. Attendance at Wednesday staff meetings enabled me to better understand how the staff discuss and share their responsibilities for day to day practice. Being asked to help the children prepare a performance of singing and dancing for private sector sponsors I learned that the children intensely disliked being expected to perform in this way. Being available to support children with their homework gave me insights into their academic skills and attitudes to school and learning.

These are examples of activities and roles I took. But it is important to note that I did not employ participant observation as a primary method for generating data, but rather to understand the context in which later data collection activities were to take place, to refine questions for inclusion in later interviews and to support the interpretation of my findings. Through these different activities and roles I was able to engage actively with the children and to continually reflect on my observations by completing a daily fieldwork diary. Brewer (2000:60) explains the advantages of this approach:

A proper balance in the participant observer's dual role as part insider and part outsider gives them the opportunity to be inside and outside the setting, to be simultaneously member and non-member, and to participate while also reflecting critically on what is observed and gathered while doing so.

The challenge for me as a researcher was to become integrated into children's daily lives whilst remaining professionally detached from them. Indeed, while the aims of participant observation are to observe events, Christensen and James (2008) argue that:

this perspective stresses the importance of children's participation in collective processes with adults and peers in the local cultures which signify that one is part of a group. In these, certain cultural practices and routines prepare or prime members for future changes… (Christensen and James 2008: 253)

During the six months I spent in Homes A and B I was able to observe children's

everyday routines as well as how children interacted with other children and the staff. I observed children's individual and group behaviours, and listened to formal as well as informal conversations. Being located in the two homes gave me the opportunity to participate in the children's daily life and attend their social events although at the state Home B, the staff team only agreed to my attendance at limited social events, a summer camp and one single afternoon to observe children's daily routine as one 'family'. Participant observation enabled me to closely observe the relationship between the staff and children. In particular, at Home A, when I offered to help in the preparation of some of their social events, I was able to observe and understand how the staff and children worked together.

Participant observation enhanced my understanding of the children's basic daily routines and their social events. This led me to redesign some of the questions in the semi-structured interviews. As Mack et al. (2005) point out:

> *This is the great advantage of the method because, although we may get truthful answers to the research questions we ask, we may not always ask the right questions. Thus what we learn from participant observation can help us not only to understand data collected through other methods, but also to design questions for those methods that will give us the best understanding of the phenomenon being studied. (Mack et al., 2005: 14)*

As discussed above there are different advantages in participant observation. Summarising them, Mack et al. (2005:15) note that the main strengths of the method are that it 'allows for insight into contexts, relationships and behaviour and can

provide information previously unknown to researchers that is crucial for project design, data collection and interpretation of other data'. I drew on participant observation to contribute to the design, redesign and development of the fieldwork process.

However, there are some limitations in participant observation that needed to be addressed and overcome. As Mack et al. (2005: 15) illustrate, one of the limitations is that it is 'time consuming'. I did not feel that this aspect had a negative impact on my study as participant observation went hand in hand with the other methods I used during the field research. I argue that the efficient use of participant observation depends on the researcher's ability to plan and negotiate access to research participants. Within the limited time period for the fieldwork I entered the two homes with planned timescales. I did not just spend my time observing, but I planned other activities including participatory group activities and semi-structured interviews during this same period. Therefore, in this research I was able to maximise the use of every minute I spent with the children in the two homes.

Mack et al. (2005: 15) note another weakness of participant observation as 'documentation relying on memory, personal discipline and diligence of researcher'. It was indeed difficult to write down everything that was significant while I was in the act of participating and observing. In order to document everything related to the research, after gaining permission from the staff, I used my camera to take photos during the arranged activities. I was also careful to record field notes as soon as possible before they faded from memory. These helped me to refresh my memory and made it easier to transfer events into my fieldwork diary at the end of the day.

Using these techniques helped me to write down my observations more accurately and clearly. In this way I was able to avoid this particular limitation associated with participant observation and it became a very effective and powerful method for becoming familiar with the children in this research and gaining their trust.

The **third stage** of the research process was to construct the sample for participatory group activities and semi-structured interviews. I bore in mind Eder and Corsaro's (1999: 523) emphasis on the 'microscopic and holistic' lenses of ethnographic research as well as Fetterman's (2010) reminder that:

> *Most ethnographers use the big-net approach conducive to participant observation-mixing and mingling with everyone they can at first. As the study progresses, the focus narrows to specific portions of the population under study. The big-net approach ensures a wide-angle view of events before the microscopic study of specific interactions begins. The big picture helps refine an ethnographer's focus and aids the field worker in understanding the finer details that he or she will capture on film and in notes for further analysis. (Fetterman, 2010:35)*

Based on the research questions, ethnographers usually rely on their judgement to select the most appropriate participants of the sub culture or unit (Fetterman, 2010:35). Since all the children in the homes were appropriate participants I ensured that they all knew about the research. In Home A I was able to make a presentation to all 29 children while in Home B I made posters (see Appendix I) that were displayed in public areas of different parts of the home. These explained who I was,

what I was studying (and where), and invited children to participate on a voluntary basis. As I became more familiar with the staff and children it became easier to reach out to the children for the organisation of participatory group activities and individual interviews and with the benefit of increased confidence and the rapport I had built, children's interest in participating in the research surpassed my aspirations and led to an important lesson about the ethical implications of inviting children to participate in research. The children had lived in the homes for periods ranging from a few months to 17 years as seen in Table 4.2 below. The study was conducted in a city dominated by Taiwanese of Han Chinese ethnicity (see Chapter 2, section 2.2), and there were no Taiwanese aboriginal children in either Home.

Table 4.2 Characteristics of Child Participants

Case	Age	Gender	Date of Admission	Responsible Authority
Home A[9]				
1	11	F	2006.06.30	Social Affairs Bureau of City X (SABCX[10])
2	14	M	2002.08.08	SABCX
3	7	F	2007.08.14	SABCX
4	13	M	2000.05.29	SABCX
5	8	F	2008.07.21	SABCX
6	16	M	2002.08.07	SABCX
7	11	F	2007.11.09	SABCX
8	10	M	2006.07.21	SABCX
9	10	F	2007.08.08	SABCX
10	7	F	2006.03.01	SABCX
11	15	M	2001.04.24	SABCX
12	8	M	2007.07.18	SABCX
13	16	F	2006.04.01	SABCX
14	10	M	2004.07.01	SABCX
15	9	M	2008.07.21	SABCX
16	12	M	2008.04.01	Y District Court
17	13	M	2000.05.29	SABCX
18	11	F	2005.02.23	SABCX
19	16	M	2001.02.27	SABCX
20	10	F	2009.03.26	SABCX
21	7	F	2006.03.01	SABCX
22	12	F	2006.07.21	SABCX
23	14	M	2006.04.01	SABCX
24	12	M	2007.09.01	SABCX
25	10	M	2008.08.01	SABCX
26	12	M	2007.08.07	SABCX
27	16	F	1992.08.24	Social Affairs Dept County Z
28	9	F	2006.07.18	SABCX
29	17	F	1992.04.08	SABCX

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[9] Cases 1-29 are from Home A; Cases 30-50 are from Home B.
[10] X, Y, Z, and Q are used to denote different cities/counties.

Case	Age	Gender	Date of Admission	Responsible Authority
Home B				
30	7	F	2007.08.23	Social Affairs Dept County Y
31	8	M	2007.08.24	Social Affairs Bureau County X (SABCoX)
32	10	F	2005.11.17	SABCX
33	11	M	2005.01.24	SABCX
34	13	F	2002.08.22	SABCX
35	12	F	2009.04.02	Social Affairs Dept County Q (SADCoQ)
36	11	F	2006.09.29	SABCX
37	10	F	2007.08.23	SABCX
38	11	F	2007.08.24	SADCoQ
39	9	M	2006.08.29	SABCoX
40	13	F	2004.09.24	SABCX
41	12	F	2007.08.27	SABCX
42	14	M	2005.08.24	SABCoX
43	7	M	2008.03.28	SABCoX
44	15	F	2006.02.07	SABCX
45	14	M	2004.11.01	SABCX
46	14	M	2002.10.24	Social Affairs Dept City Y
47	11	F	2008.08.27	SADCoQ
48	18	F	2001.02.16	SABCX
49	13	M	2006.08.23	SABCX
50	11	M	2004.10.05	SABCX

Participatory Group Activities

A *fourth stage* of the research was the use of participatory group activities with the children. The aim of these groups was to provide an opportunity for the children to express their views through participation in an arts-based activity (Sinclair, 2004:112-123). As Coholic, Lougheed and Cadell (2009) argue, in relation to children in foster care where a majority have had traumatic experiences, arts-based communication creates a fresh alternative channel to re-establish their self-esteem when the pressure of verbal expression may create further stress. The use of the participatory group activities involving participatory drawings followed by children's own discussions of their meanings enabled me to reach a more complete understanding

of why children 'said what they said' and 'drew what they drew'.

It was important, however, to remain critical in my thinking about this choice of method. While my thinking was informed by an attempt to reduce the imbalance of power inherent in situations when an adult researcher is working with children and moreover children in an institutional setting, the decision to use participatory drawing was my own and was not the result of involving children in a choice of methods. As Mitchell (2006) explains on the basis of her own experience of using drawing with children in the Philippines, the rationale that asking children to use visual methods that can overcome some aspects of power imbalance between adult researchers and child participants, must not be equated with an assumption that drawing in and of itself makes research child-centred. My argument for the use of participatory drawing in the context of this study involving children in residential care homes in Taiwan is that it was the strategy most likely to minimise adult child power relations in a social environment in which hierarchies of power are explicit both through the normative expectations associates with Confucian culture, and in the context of residential care. Power relations between children were a serious consideration in thinking about the method most likely to facilitate children's free expression. On balance, however, the likelihood of encouraging free expression through individual drawing was small given the children's exposure to an educational system that is associated with discouraging free expression and emotion. As we shall see in the following chapters, my decision to ask children to work in this way was both popular with the children and in many cases clearly facilitated the expression of emotion. The time spent familiarising myself with the Homes and becoming an accepted figure was vital here and, together with an undertaking to keep the content of children's

contributions to the research confidential, I gained a level of trust that permitted some children to express themselves in ways that they acknowledged would have been considered 'silly' or unacceptable to the adults they encountered daily in the Homes and schools.

I facilitated the arts-based activities utilising my professional experience gained during training as a teacher and later working in a secondary school in Taiwan. The participatory group activities involved single gender, but mixed age, groups since this reflected cultural norms of life in residential care homes in Taiwan where children are segregated by gender but not by age. The advantage of single gender groups in the Taiwanese context is that the girls can express their opinions freely without worrying about the boys' reaction and whether it has offended them. Likewise, when the boys are describing what they are thinking about a topic, they do not need to worry how it will impact girls' perception of them. In other words, this treatment can remove the unnecessary complications arising from gender differences.

I started by playing a popular song with a theme of happiness, a technique that is commonly used in Taiwanese secondary schools (Chiu, 2006) as a 'warm up' session designed to motivate children to relax and engage with each other. It is important to note that the use of these songs must be seen in the context of Taiwanese cultural norms and should not be interpreted as having influenced the research by referring to 'happiness' in the theoretical sense in which it is used in this thesis.

The importance of clear language in research with children has been highlighted by Punch (2003: 326-327) yet children may also have a limited vocabulary and so visual methods can be a particularly effective way for children to express their feelings and ideas and overcome the difficulty of putting their feelings into words (Pain et al., 2007). Advantages of group activities are outlined by Goodenough et al. (2003: 118) who argue that there are multiple advantages for children in group discussions in terms of autonomy and a more natural pattern of dialogue.

The participatory group activities were held before conducting individual semi-structured interviews. It is accepted within institutional ethnography that there are advantages to all methods available to the researcher and the main aim is the collection of relevant data to achieve the research aims. The aim of the participatory groups was to give the children opportunities to voice their views (Sinclair, 2004) in this case, about children's rights and their experiences of them. I included the use of arts-based techniques to enable the children to overcome the challenges of limited vocabulary (Punch, 2003: 326-327) and to express their feelings and ideas about children's rights in small groups. Presentation of their drawings to other groups and the discussions that followed revealed layers of their own views and experiences of children's rights. As Goodenough et al. (2003: 118) argue, the advantages of group discussions for children are that "they replicate methods of interacting that they are familiar with already, permitting interaction, allowing children some freedom to move the discussion at their own pace and in the light of their own interests, overcoming a sense of 'question and answer' testing of knowledge."

In the *final stage* of the data collection process I collected further data through individual semi-structured interviews with 25 boys and 25 girls aged 7-18 who had already been involved in the participatory group activities across both homes. The children had lived in the homes for periods ranging from a few months to 17 years. The interviews provided an opportunity to clarify and develop a more thorough understanding of the issues and themes raised through the drawings and their presentation. Mauthner (1997: 19-21) highlights the importance of focussing on children's subjective experiences through small group discussions, interviews and 'self-complete instruments' such as drawings. As she explains, this multi-dimensional approach effectively helps to rebalance 'power relations' between researcher and child participants. In addition, I adopted a flexible and open ended interview style enabling the children to enjoy a certain amount of freedom and flexibility to build up a fluent dialogue. This allowed me to focus on their subjective experiences by encouraging them to express themselves through their personal stories.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

In this section I first consider ethical issues in a general sense before going on to document my thinking and reflections on ethical issues before, during and after the research. Ethics play an important role in research involving children as emphasized by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2012). In recent years, the direct participation of children in research has become increasingly common. There is some debate in the literature about whether children require 'special consideration' as the subjects of research and whether ethical issues arise that may not exist when undertaking research with adults. During the process of fieldwork the child's best

interests must always be taken into account. As Hopkins (2008:42) argues: "It is important to think carefully about the time required to obtain informed consent and explain all aspects of the research and the influence that this will have on the time and resources then available to do meaningful research with children".

There are no equivalent national ethical requirements for research undertaken with children in Taiwan. The only ethical recommendations are contained in 'The Code of Ethics for Social Workers' (See Appendix F) developed by the Taiwan National Union of Professional Social Workers Association. The Code upholds key values and principles such as love, equality, confidentiality and professionalism. However, adhering to the principles outlined in the ESRC research ethics framework, I ensured that the research would not conflict with my aspirations to respect children's rights and would respect cultural differences (See Text Box 4.2). The children's consent form was approved both by Durham University and by the two participating children's homes in Taiwan. With these ethical issues in mind, I made sure that every step taken before the research, during the research and after the research would conform to the highest ethical standards. The predominant ethical considerations pertinent to the research included the principles of informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, avoidance of harm to children and secure storage of data. Examples of the information and consent forms used within this research can be found in Appendix A

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Text Box 4.2 Reflections on Ethical Considerations

Reflections on Ethical Considerations

In the Taiwanese situation, especially in the social science research environment, it is not necessary to get permission from the government or the University to undertake research. There is no research ethics committee as Taiwan has not yet a developed a system to cope with ethical issues in social research[11]. I only needed to get permission from the Heads of the Children's Homes before proceeding with my fieldwork although I was required to obtain full permission and ethical approval by Durham University. In addition in Taiwan, it is not common for children to sign consent forms but I learnt the importance of this as part of respecting participants' rights. I took ethical issues into account throughout the study always reminding myself of their significance in protecting both the children and myself as the researcher.

It is clear to me that the protective system for research participants in Taiwan is not as highly developed as in the UK, only relying on the researcher's moral conscience. Understanding the importance of ethical issues has had a profound impact on my thinking. I had an opportunity to discuss ethical issues with a Taiwanese scholar who teaches in the department of Social Work in Taiwan, we agreed that the lack of attention to ethical issues is not a product of cultural differences or social customs but rather of a lax system. When conducting research we cannot just ignore participants' rights. We need to work hard to further participants' rights by raising an awareness of the need to safeguard both researchers and participants in that research. It would be helpful if we could draw up and publish a code of practice for researchers to follow and lobby those in government to support that code and show respect for the rights of the individual. Moreover, this would help in terms of building trust and giving children more confidence to open up to the researchers.

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[11] Taiwan is clearly represented in the proceedings of the Asia Pacific Research Ethics Conference (http://www.aprec-nhg.com.sg/) though this is home to clinical researchers.

I move here to consider ethical considerations in more detail before, during and after the fieldwork, in this study.

Before the research

I first made personal contact with the Heads of the two Homes, Home A where I was already known and Home B where I was introduced via the Head of Home A. I discussed the ethical considerations with the Heads of the Homes who invited me to submit written applications to conduct the research and replied by email to indicate their permission. I needed to feel confident that they would understand the implications of the ethical principles that would inform the research since these reflected 'different' understanding of children's rights. For example, I wanted to be sure that children were able to make a free and unpressured choice about whether to participate. The Heads of the Homes were open minded enough to accept my approach, which included documented procedures for the effective protection of children within the research, and showed interest in learning about it. At this point I submitted an application for ethical approval to Durham University Ethics Committee having taken care to ensure that the principles of ethical research conduct –informed consent, voluntary participation, the right to withdraw, anonymity and confidentiality, and safe storage of data – had been built into the research design. I received ethical approval before embarking on data collection in the two Homes.

In Home A I presented the aims of the research to all 29 children using simple language in the local dialect. Following the presentation, I made myself available for discussion about the research and the children were encouraged to ask questions.

By contrast, in Home B that had 150 resident children, I did not have an opportunity to speak to all the children and provided information about the research through a poster that was displayed in public areas. In both homes children were given a full explanation of their rights, including their right not to participate, and their right to withdraw at any time.

I asked the children to decide whether they would like to participate in the research within one week of presenting or posting information about the study. Children who expressed interest were then given an individual information leaflet and consent form that included full information about the research, including an undertaking of confidentiality and a clear statement that they could withdraw at any time without having to give any reason (Shaw, Brady and Davey, 2011). I explained in clear language at a level that could be understood by the youngest children and used simple visual aids to encourage children to 'speak from the heart' knowing that the information they shared would be treated in confidence (Alderson and Morrow: 2011).

I used the approved consent form[12], to confirm that each child was happy to participate in the research. In line with local custom and practice, the children's permission to participate was sought by the staff[13] who then passed their signed

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[12] Consent forms were collected by residential care staff, designated as children's primary guardians under The Child and Adolescent Welfare Law (2013) article 3. Birth parents are not legally required to give consent and are commonly considered to have relinquished control over non-critical issues, such as this research study, to residential care staff. In addition to the formal consent forms I checked children's willingness to participate in group activities and individual interviews and reminded them of their right not to participate, or to stop participating at any time during the group activities or interviews. In practice, the children showed active interest in the group activities although one group in Home B worked quickly in order to move on to the computer room. All the children were eager to talk with me in individual interviews.

[13] The term 'staff' has been use in the thesis to refer to a range of staff with backgrounds in social work, child development and early childhood education. Where children's words are used verbatim, their use of language is reported faithfully and may appear as 'staff', 'teacher' or 'carer'.

consent forms to me. As highlighted in chapter 2, Taiwanese society is based on Confucian values and children are expected to comply with the requests of their elders and it is uncommon for children to be asked for their permission or agreement to consent to anything which is felt by their carers to be in their best interests. This led me to reflect on the possibility that carers may have led children to believe that participation was mandatory rather than voluntary. On the other hand, failure to involve the staff, as the children's legal guardians, would have prevented them from satisfying themselves that the children wished to participate and would have severely undermined them in the context of Taiwanese culture. After gaining the trust of the children, anecdotal evidence from conversations with them suggested that all those involved were happy to be included. This gave me confidence that none of the children were coerced to participate and their eagerness gave me added confidence that none were participating against their will.

During the research

Writing about ethics in children's research, Kendrick et al. (2008: 80-81), draw on sociological approaches to childhood in which power relations between children and adults are acknowledged and in which children are seen as active social citizens with needs, rights, strengths and competencies. Indeed Kendrick et al. (2008) point out that research that provides a space for children's voices to be heard contributes to ethical research practice that acknowledges children's right to be heard. They also identify important ethical issues in research with children in residential care settings including information, consent, confidentiality, privacy and safety. Drawing on the experience of Kendrick et al., I continually strived, throughout the whole research process, to foster mutual respect and confidence between the child participants and

myself. The children were provided with child-friendly letters of invitation and consent forms (See Appendix E) that explained the research, the safeguards and their right to withdraw at any stage without needing to give any explanation.

At my first meeting with children in Home A, I gathered all 29 children together and explained the purpose of the research before a question and answer session, and asked them to think about whether they would like to participate. Children's consent to participate was sought approximately one week later, ensuring that they had had time to think about their participation and make a considered decision. All of the children from Home A were enrolled into the research study and expressed enthusiasm.

The state-run Home B was a much larger facility than Home A, with approximately 150 residents over several buildings with children under school age (7+) in a separate building. Due to the time constraints of this project and the large number of residents, a different approach to recruitment was required. Poster advertisements were placed in the home covering the aims of the research and the rights of the participants. Children wishing to participate were invited to register their interest to care home staff. In fact, this Home allocated me a specific week in which to conduct the participatory group activities and during this time many of the children were visiting their families. In contrast to Home A, only 21 children volunteered to participate and they were presented to me via the staff.

Before beginning the group activities and individual interviews with children, I always checked verbally whether they had understood the purpose and process of the

research. If they had forgotten or were not sure about the purpose of the research, I took time to explain the research and answer their questions. In addition, I made it clear that if they did not want to continue or wanted to withdraw from either the participatory group activities or the individual interviews that this was fine. I made efforts to avoid asking questions that might have distressed children during the interview process, in particular, I was careful to avoid any lines of inquiry regarding their past family history and the reasons they were living in residential care. If the children brought up these issues, I did not stop the discussion. However, I remained conscious at times of the need to avoid offering any advice. I informed all the children that if they disclosed anything to me that suggested that they had faced harm, or faced the risk of being harmed, that I would need to discuss with them the next steps and communicate their disclosure to the social worker in Home A and the manager in Home B. I did indeed face a number of situations where children recounted past experiences of bullying or corporal punishment, by other children, staff and teachers. But each was adamant that they did not want me to raise the issue with staff members. The reasoning behind this is discussed in the following chapter, the first of two presenting the findings of the study.

As might be expected the children conformed to the Taiwanese social code of respect of seniority and they initially remained rather reserved. But gradually, by showing respect to the children they began to relax as trust was built between us. They gained confidence through assurances that the ideas they conveyed in group activities and information they gave in interviews (with exception of disclosure of suffering harm or abuse) would not be used in ways that exposed them to the risk of being identified and that their contributions would be used only for the purposes of

this research. I gained full permission from the children to take photos of group work (without displaying facial images) and to record the individual interviews.

After data collection:

As a matter of confidentiality, I kept all the collected data in hard-copy paper format locked in a cupboard and electronic data was saved on my laptop and a University PC that were both password protected.

After completing my participatory group activities with children at Home A my undertaking to maintain the anonymity of participants was tested when I was asked to display the drawings of the groups on the walls of the Home. I reflected on this in my fieldwork diary (See Text Box 4.3).

Text Box 4.3 Reflection Following Data Collection

> **Reflection following data collection**
>
> *After learning of the drawings, the Head was trying to persuade me to show the children's drawings/posters on the wall of the Home because (although she had not actually seen them) she felt that these posters were good evidence for their future evaluation by the government. In this situation, I faced an ethical dilemma - a balance between cultural values and confidentiality. In Taiwanese culture, it is not common to ask children's permission before showing their work. However, as a social researcher studying in a British university, I was aware of the importance of ethical conduct and I had promised participants that I would not show their original drawings to the staff of the Home. By putting their work on the wall, as the Head requested, all the staff would be able to see the work. I had stated to participants before the research that I would only use these data for the purpose of this research. Finally she saw how important the ethical issue was and we reached a common understanding and the posters were never displayed. I was very appreciative that the staff could accept the need for privacy at the end. I was mindful of my own position as a visitor in the Home and my own obligation to show respect for the Heads of the two Homes.*

4.6 Empirical Data Collection

Data collection involved working with children from both children's homes: Home A with 29 children aged 7-17 years was run by an NGO. Home B, with approximately 150 children was divided between a nursery facility for children under seven and a children's home for those aged 7-18, was a government run home. The data collection consisted of three elements: participant observation, participatory group activities with 48 children (See Table 4.2) and individual semi-structured interviews with 50 children across the two Homes.

Research at Home A was conducted between February and May 2009 and at Home B between June and September 2009.

Table 4.3 Fieldwork Plan

Home	
A	Participant observation of daily life in the Home.
	Participatory group activities with 13 boys divided into three groups. Participatory group activities with 14 girls divided into three groups.[14]
	Individual interviews with 29 children.
B	Participant observation of a residential Summer Camp and a meeting for former residents and staff
	Participatory group activities with eight boys divided into three groups. Participatory group activities with eleven girls divided into three groups.
	Individual interviews with 21 children.

I immersed myself in each home for a three month period observing the children's behaviour, listening to conversations and asking questions, followed by participatory group activities and individual interviews with children. (See Text Box 4.3 for details)

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[14] Two of the 29 children were absent at the time of the group activities, because of preparation for their national exams, reducing participation in this element of the research to 27 children

Participant Observation Home A

On the first day of fieldwork at Home A, the Head of the home asked me to join their weekly meeting in order to understand the Home's routine. Observing these meetings also enabled me to understand the children's backgrounds more quickly since the weekly meeting with staff also included social workers and residential carers. During the first meeting I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the research so that the staff could understand both the fieldwork being undertaken and my role.

The research was planned to suit the schedule of Home A. I spent one month focussing exclusively on participant observation attending as many activities as possible in order to observe children's behaviour and their conversations in the home During this time I explained to the children that there were going to be opportunities for participatory group activities and face to face interviews to share their experiences with me. I explained that if they were interested in participating they needed to sign a consent form and return it to me via their residential home carers.

Text Box 4.4 Example of Participant Observation Home A

*The regulations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Taiwan) concerning child protection point out that the Taiwanese government follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNCRC. Therefore, three types of 'Ps' are involved: provision rights, protection rights and participation or autonomy rights. In the participant observation, I focused on **participation and autonomy** rights when observing children from Home A.*

'Big family' meeting

A 'Big family meeting' is held every weekend bringing together all the boys and all the girls in two separate groups. The purpose of the meeting is to let children express their opinions and discuss issues with the care staff. I attended their meetings and found that children's participation was tokenistic. Most of the time was spent by the carers 'educating' the children, repeating rules and effectively silencing the children who were only given a few minutes to express their views. They were not really free to express themselves and even when the staff gave them the chance to say something, they did not respect their opinions and told them that they need to follow the regulations. For example, the boys had an issue about their MP3 players. In the past they were allowed to keep their own MP3, but when one boy misbehaved in school, the school teacher informed the staff at the Home. After that, all the children had to hand over their MP3 to the staff for 'safekeeping', and the carers said that it was a regulation of the home. It was not clear that this was the case, but the children had no choice but to obey.

Participant Observation in Home B

Before the research began in Home B, I had a meeting with key members of the home including the Head of the Home, the Social Work Supervisor, a social worker and a member of staff responsible for the care and education of the children. Once they had understood the purpose and scope of the research, I discussed with the member of staff in charge of care and education the possibility of participant observation embarking on group activity sessions. The research was designed, with the help of staff, to fit in with the schedule of Home B. The staff member suggested that one opportunity for participant observation would be a summer camp with the children. The camp was to be for two days and one night for children in senior high school that had completed their second year studies (approximately 12-14 years old). I was able to observe the children for the whole period of the summer camp. I also observed routine activities back in Home B when birth families came to visit their children. Another activity I was able to observe was a meeting for former residents and staff at which they to shared their experiences with current residents and staff. In Taiwanese terms this is known as 'return to the parental home' and is designed to offer the children a sense of connection to a childhood home.

Group Activities and Interviews

All 29 children resident in Home A at the time of the research asked to participate in the group activities and to be involved in the face to face interviews. This unexpectedly high response rate led to a challenge for me in honouring the children's desire to participate and to share their experiences and concerns with me. I made a decision that it would be unethical to deny any of the children this opportunity as it would have resulted in an inequality of participation. This resulted in

the generation of an unexpectedly larger volume of the complex data than I had envisioned collecting. In Home B I displayed three posters on the ground floor of each building comprising the care home inviting children to participate in group activities and individual interviews. Following an explanation of the research and their rights as participants, twenty-one children signed a consent form to participate in the research. A counsellor helped me to collect the consent forms from the carers. Unfortunately, the research period in Home B spanned a holiday period and many of the children had permission to return to their families. The result was that there were fewer children present in the home than originally anticipated. This reduction in sample size was not unwelcome since recruitment in Home A had presented me with the unexpected challenge of having recruited too many children (in terms of managing the data collection and data).

Participatory Group Activities: Home A

Two of the 29 children were absent at the time of the group activities, because of preparation for their national exams, reducing participation in this element of the research to 27 children. The children were divided into single gender groups, one of 13 boys and one of 14 girls in accordance with usual practices in school and the Home. The boys' participatory group activities took place in a spare room while the girl's participatory groups took place in the girl's living room on the second floor of the building, both offering quiet and safe environments that were familiar to the children. There were no carers present so the children did not have to worry about being overheard by any of the carers. This work was completed before lunch time.

Participatory Group Activities: Home B

The participatory group activities in Home B centered around two groups, of eight boys and eleven girls. Two younger boys were absent at the activity time because they had a computer class they did not want to miss. The boys' participatory group started at 3 pm and the girl's group followed after the boys' group had finished. The participatory groups took two hours in total. Both the boys' and the girls' groups took place in a meeting room as this provided a quiet and safe environment. All participatory activity groups were completed before suppertime.

In both Homes I engaged each large group of girls/boys through the use of music, a familiar technique in Taiwanese educational settings, before dividing each large group into three or four smaller groups to facilitate closer interaction among participants. As Wang (2000) explains, as the number gets smaller, each participant enjoys more time and a more relaxing atmosphere to express himself/herself.

Table 4.4 Composition of Participatory Groups[15]

Group Name	Home	Girls/ Boys	Age Range	No.	Group Members
Group 1	A	M	10-14	4	M4, M6, M8, M25
Group 2	A	F	7-16	4	F9, F21, F22, F27
Group 3	A	F	7-16	5	F1, F3, F13, F20, F28
Group 4	A	F	7-17	5	F5, F7, F10, F18, F29
Group 5	A	M	8-14	5	M2, M12, M15, M17, M24
Group 6	A	M	10-16	4	M11, M14, M16, M19
Group 7	B	M	10-14	3	M32, M42, M46
Group 8	B	M	9-14	3	M45, M49, M50
Group 9	B	M	7	2	M39, M43
Group 10	B	F	12-18	4	F34, F35, F44, F48
Group 11	B	F	10-13	4	F36, F37, F40, F41
Group 12	B	F	7-11	3	F30, F38, F47

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[15] Two children in Home A, who expressed interest in participating, were away from their home when the participatory group activities were arranged. Nevertheless, they subsequently took part in individual interviews. Another child who expressed interest in participating was only available for the participatory group activities, and then was away from the home when interviews were arranged. With these exceptions all the other participants took part in both participatory group activities and individual interviews.

With one exception in Home B, small groups of participants were of mixed ages. This diversity was consistent with conventional practices whereby older children are expected to help younger children. Group membership had been decided by staff in Home A while the children in Home B had not been organised in this way.
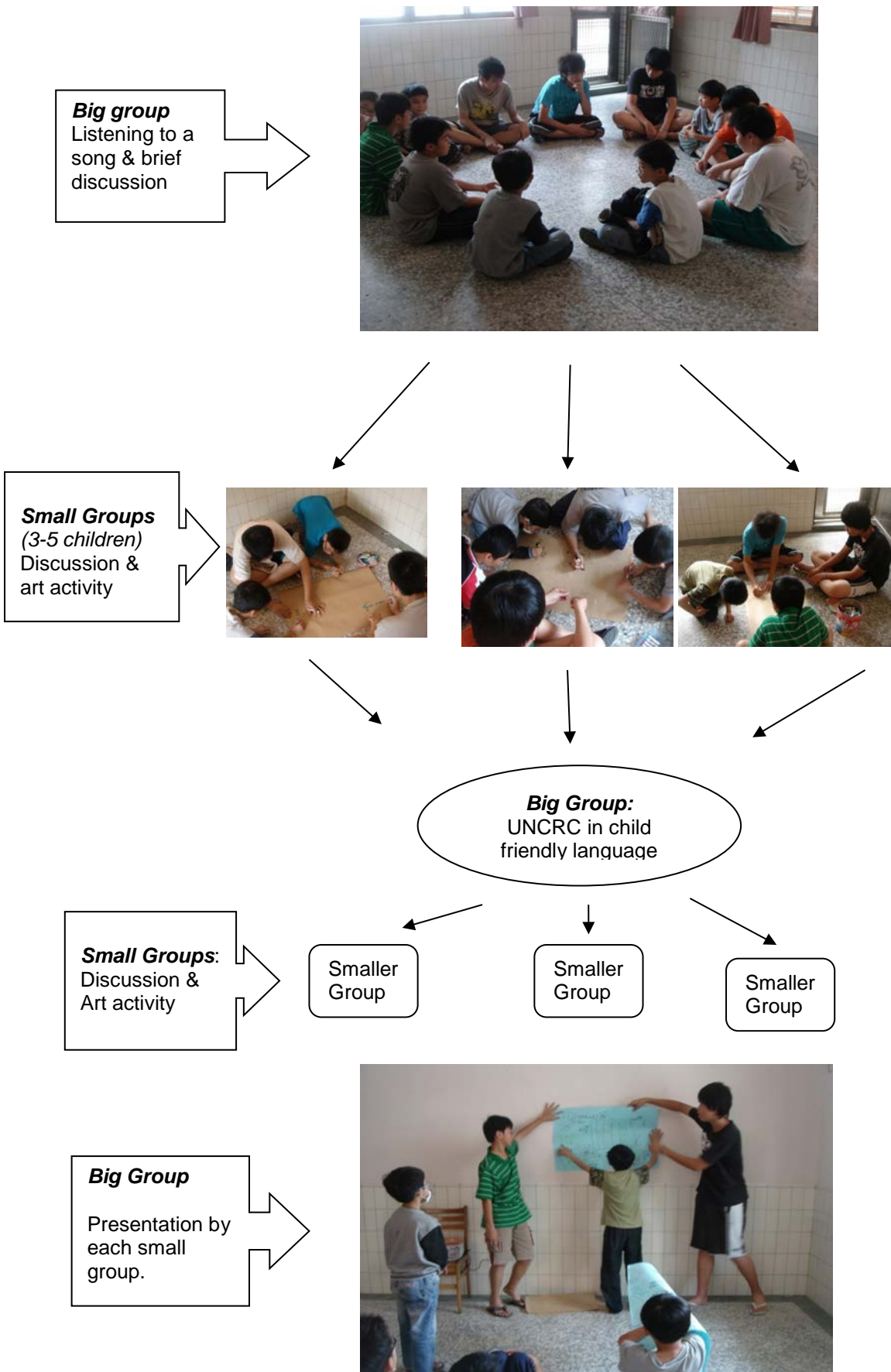
I divided each activity into two parts. First I played a popular song with a principal theme of happiness. The children were then invited to think about the issues raised in the song. They all listened to each other speak and then spent 15-20 minutes drawing pictures and/or words representing their ideas of happiness in the children's home using poster[16] size paper (54x78cm) that had been provided. In the small groups, the children provided visual representations of their understanding and experiences of happiness (and unhappiness) in the home as they discussed and shared ideas with each other. Back together as a big group I showed them a Taiwanese picture book '*What we all should know - understanding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*' Making use of the Taiwanese book on children's rights I encouraged the children to think about their own experiences of 'Rights' in the Home. Referring to the picture book and using child-friendly language I encouraged them to think about how they could relate their experiences of daily life. This was designed to encourage the children to feel more comfortable and talk more freely about their experiences. After a few minutes of discussion in the larger group when their minds were focused on the subject they returned to the same small groups. I gave each group a piece of paper (54x78cm) and encouraged them to illustrate their ideas and experiences of 'rights' within the setting of their residential

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[16] NB. the footnote to this sentence (Using the format of group poster is a common group communication/discussion vehicle in Taiwan, particularly by teachers (Hwang, 2014). The use of posters must be seen in the context of Taiwanese educational norms.) has been inadvertently deleted and needs to be restored.

care home. This activity lasted for between 10 to 15 minutes. Once the groups had finished the activity, each group nominated a spokesperson for the final activity of the session when all the small groups came together to present their thoughts and ideas about children's rights. The spokesperson was not always the oldest member of the group, and one group involved feedback from two people. This part of the session lasted for roughly 20 minutes and generated further interaction and discussion amongst the children. I recorded all these different activities by using photographs and recorded my observations and reflections in my fieldwork daily diary.

Figure 4.1 Group Activity Process

Example of Home A

Big group
Listening to a song & brief discussion

Small Groups
(3-5 children)
Discussion & art activity

Big Group:
UNCRC in child friendly language

Small Groups:
Discussion & Art activity

| Smaller Group | Smaller Group | Smaller Group |

Big Group

Presentation by each small group.

Individual Interviews in Home A

In Home A 29 children participated in face to face interviews, which were conducted over a period of one month. The interview times were flexible as they were adapted to each child's availability. Interviews took place between 4:30 in the afternoon and suppertime and between 7 and 8pm. Usually, two interviews were completed each day. To facilitate the discussion of sensitive and ethical issues in the interviews the environment needed to be arranged carefully. The interviews took place in a counselling room which was quiet, bright and safe and had seats around the table. Each interview began with an explanation of the aim of the research, a reminder of the right not to participate or to end the interview at any time, and participants could decide to use the MP3 recorder or not. After seeking permission I recorded interviews with most of children by using the MP3 and there was only one child that declined to have their interview recorded. In this case I took notes as we spoke.

Individual Interviews in Home B

Following the holiday period all 21 children participated in the face to face interviews. The interview times were flexible and adapted to each child's availability. Interviews took place between 9:30 in the morning and lunch time and then between 3 and 5pm. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and I usually completed three interviews per day. As with the interviews conducted with children in Home A, the environment in which the interviews occurred was arranged carefully to facilitate the discussion of sensitive issues. The interviews took place in a counselling room which was a quiet and safe environment and had chairs around a table. It also had comfortable sofas around another table in the same room. An important element of the interview environment is the positioning of participants relative to the interviewer and for this

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reason the children were free to decide where they wished to sit. All of the participants chose to sit on a comfortable sofa around the table. As Figure 4.2 shows, the participant and I always sat at right angles to one another (a similar arrangement was adopted in Home A). Sitting at right angles enabled me to communicate easily as the children were adjacent to me but in a non-confrontational position (Seden, 2005, 30). As in Home A, each interview began with an explanation of the aims of the interview, the confidentiality and safe storage of the data, the children's right to determine the extent of their participation and whether to permit the use the MP3 recorder or not. As in Home A, recording commenced only after the children had given their permission.

A total of 49 children recorded by using MP3 techniques and only one child declined to participate in this aspect of the study.

Figure 4.2 Seating Arrangement in Interviews at Home B

Participant Child

The researcher
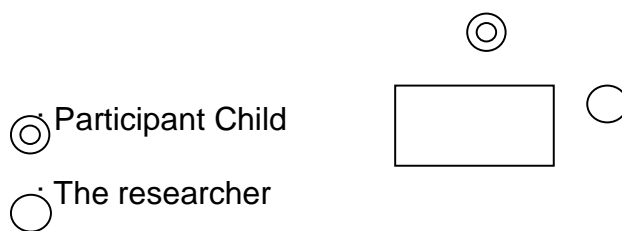
4.7 Data Management and Analysis

Principle sources of data were participant observation, participatory group activities (arts-based and elicitation discussions) and semi-structured interviews with child participants from two children's homes. As emphasised earlier, participant observation helped me to familiarise myself with the homes, and with relations between children and staff, and to enable me to make more informed interpretations of the data collected in the participatory group activities and individual interviews. The data represent the children's experiences of life in residential care and their understandings and experiences of children's rights within the context of their everyday lives. I also made use of a fieldwork diary to record reflections on my own experiences and thoughts as the research progressed. This continued throughout the fieldwork and I added to my fieldwork notes as I reviewed and transcribed the data. The semi-structured interviews were recorded using an MP3 recorder and the audio files were saved in my laptop with added security. The notes of my interview with the child who did not wish to be recorded were destroyed after transcription to electronic format.

Dominelli (2004) draw attention to the issue of language in international setting, and describe language as:

> *a means of communication, a way of structuring our understanding of our role in the world or situations, the social relations that we are positioned within and the power relations elaborated in and through our interaction with each other. (2004:516)*

In order to preserve original subtleties of my interviews with children and facilitate the accurate identification of important themes and sub-themes in them retrospectively, I first transcribed audio recordings in Chinese before translating into English and then present them bilingually in the relevant chapters of my thesis. After the fieldwork ended, I read over the transcripts several times to get a detailed 'feel' for the data before organising and managing the data using Nvivo 8.0 software.

There are different techniques for analysing qualitative data. It is becoming common to use software packages such as Nvivo as an aid in handling complex qualitative data collected using different methods, including unstructured information such as field notes, observations and children's drawings. Within this research, the mixture of methods meant that I had a lot of information that was difficult to handle manually. I had undertaken training in Nvivo and when I was familiar with the system I found it quick to reach the data and very easy to move from one file to another. I revisited the interview and group discussion transcripts and children's drawings identifying key themes. I built up two tree nodes reflecting the key concerns of the research questions: children's lived experiences and lived experiences of children's rights in residential care. During the analysis phase, I prepared a table summarising key themes from my data that helped me in remembering significant points. Through the process of the analysis I extended my understanding of the data and continued to interrogate the data until no new themes emerged and I felt I had a full understanding of the themes.

In analysing the children's drawings, I drew on the work of Coates and Coates (2006) and Wright (2007). Coates and Coates argue that the way in which young children

talk as they are producing drawings can be as helpful as the final product in understanding the nature and the content of their drawings reflecting their intentions and processes of thinking. They cite James (1968) who argues that: 'what children want to do is to talk to themselves in pictures' (Coates and Coates, 2006: 221). Analysis of children's drawings, therefore, needs to go beyond observation and analysis of the final product, to include contextual analysis of children's 'social interaction, problem solving, conceptual and creative thinking, predicting, debate and introspection' while engaging in drawing (p221) and taking note of other details, for example, children's 'delight in the use of colour' when drawing 'showing awareness of the relationships of colour and the qualities of each with regard to its visual purpose.' (Coates and Coates, 2006: 240).

Also useful for my analysis of the children's drawings, that included both images and words, was the work of Wright (2007: 37-48) who has referred to 'filmic textual features' embedded in children's drawings:

> *Children's meaning-making shifts fluidly between intratextual components such as graphic images (e.g. objects, characters), labelling, 'whoosh' lines, captions and other techniques that help anchor the text. Such relationships all contribute to the generation of meaning through dynamic enactment, which is similar to role play on paper (Wright, 2005). Consequently, at times there can be unclear boundaries between child-as-subject and child-as-spectator, and between child-as-creator and child-as-created.......Hence, to understand children's meaning, interpretation must involve an awareness of the sequential and structural relationships within aspects of their works, which often are analogous to filmic*

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features.

With these insights, I incorporated observations and appreciation of images, words and the use of colour in my analysis of the children's group posters. Following Coates and Coates (2006) I immersed myself in the context in which the drawings were produced, not simply as a detached observer, but as a participant observer, playing an active part in the children's conversations and acting as a focus for their questions and insights' (225-6). As a result, the children's drawings offered rich sources of data despite the short period of time in which they were generated, and I was able to view and re-view them many times beyond the children's own presentations to reflect on the children's own meanings and establish connections between symbols, script, and "random scribbles", e.g. mapping nicknames to the cartoon characters drawn, and thinking about the significance of differences in size and colours of the drawings. I was mindful, however, of not over-interpreting the pictures or making claims that could not be supported on the basis of the children's drawings alone.

Validity and Reliability

Before turning to the next chapter, I pay attention to questions of validity and reliability in order to develop greater clarity about the potential contribution of this study to a wider field in future. Seeking to understand the views and experiences of children and through children in Taiwanese children's homes has been to explore new research territory. It must therefore be considered experimental while being informed by careful consideration of cultural factors, power relations, and reflection on my own position as a researcher introducing challenging questions and concepts

to residential care institutions. For the research to be considered credible, dependable and transferable (Bryman, 2004) I have endeavoured to make explicit my decisions relating to the research design and process, to provide 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and to 'make the familiar strange' (Kaomea, 2003) to ensure that the advantages of researching within my own 'culture' have not been compromised by failing to take a sufficiently critical stance (Keval, 2009). Revealing the challenges of working in the macro and micro socio-political context of children's homes in Taiwan will, I hope, encourage others to explore similar territory. I am aware that it is only by exposing my decision making processes, my assessment of what worked well and how I might do things differently if starting again, that will enable future researchers to develop a better sense of the value of the methodology and methods I have used.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the methodology and methods adopted to explore the research questions, designed to facilitate an understanding of children's experiences of daily life in children's homes in Taiwan, and their understanding and experiences of children's rights. I discussed the research design, and the respective roles of participant observation, participatory group activities and individual interviews. I described the processes of recruiting children to the research sample and the contexts and circumstances in which group activities and interviews were conducted. I went on to outline the processes of data management and analysis. This leads into the following two chapters in which I present a critical analysis of the findings to address the research questions. In chapter 5, I focus on

children's experiences of living in two residential care homes in Taiwan. Chapter 6 focuses on children's understandings of children's rights in the in the context of residential care homes.

Chapter Five

Children's Experiences of Daily Life in Residential Care Homes:

Happiness, Unhappiness, and Resilience

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I start by presenting a brief description of each Home in order to contextualize the empirical findings that help to illuminate children's own views of their 'happiness' as well as indicators of resilience in the face of adversity. This addresses the first of the research questions: 'What are children's experiences of life in two children's homes?'

The findings are drawn from two sources: participatory group activities and individual interviews. Participatory group activities with children aged between seven and 18 were formed around three small groups of girls and three small groups of boys in Home A and three small groups of boys in Home B[17]. One group in Home B consisted of two boys while other groups consisted of three to five individuals. The composition of the groups is shown in Chapter 4 Table 4.4. All but two of the children were living in the Homes as a result of being in need of protection, understood broadly as parental inability to care, child abuse or neglect. Only two were recorded as being orphans. The make up of the groups largely reflected the sense of order in the homes whereby older children both support and regulate the behaviour of younger children, consistent with the norms of Confucian familism. Groups had been

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[17] Despite significant success in negotiating (albeit limited) time to undertake participatory group activities in Home B I was reminded of my relative powerlessness when the girls' computer class ran over making them late for the research activities. They were only able to participate in one activity and chose to focus on 'children's rights' rather than happiness. Their contributions are considered in the following chapter.

pre-arranged in Home A from which all children took part. One of the participatory exercises undertaken by each group was to produce visual representations of their own meanings of happiness. Each group produced a drawing on a single large (54x78cm) sheet of paper and group members discussed the work amongst themselves before presenting their ideas to other groups of the same gender in the same Home, and generating further discussion.

Individual interviews offered the children the opportunity to talk in confidence and in greater depth about their experiences of daily life in the children's homes. The children revealed a range of factors associated with happiness and unhappiness in their lives in residential care. They also spoke of strategies for withstanding the impact of sources of unhappiness. In this sense they showed how they developed resilience in the face of adversity.

Following a brief description of each Home in section 5.2 I present the children's own meanings of happiness through an analytic commentary of the children's representations in each group drawing. Special consideration is given to the meaning of the drawings and any obvious differences on the basis of gender or between the Homes are drawn out. Findings from the individual interviews are presented in section 5.3 and reflect dominant sources of happiness, unhappiness and resilience. Happiness is conceptualized in terms of security and warmth, and refers to a sense of security in relation to the satisfaction of basic needs including food, shelter and safety, attempts to create a familial atmosphere, the availability of friends, and accessibility to enjoyable activities such as music and art. Bullying, experienced by one in five children, is associated with experiences of unhappiness,

while resilience refers to the ways in which the children find coping mechanisms to deal with sources of unhappiness or adversity. In the final section 5.4, the themes from the participatory group activities and the individual interviews are drawn together to determine what can be deduced about the common experiences of these groups of children in their children's' homes.

Before embarking on the analysis of the children's participatory art activities and individual interviews, it is appropriate to remind the reader that happiness has been defined as a predominance of positive over negative effect and as satisfaction with life as a whole (Argyle, Martin, & Crossland, 1989; Diener, 1995). Importantly it is conceptualized as a personal trait than as a transient emotional state (Veenhoven, 1994, cited in Lu et al 2001: 477).

5.2 Participatory Group Activities - Happiness

The participatory group activities are described in detail in Chapter 4. In each Home the children were divided by gender into large groups (approximately 12 children), in which they were engaged through the use of song, a typical technique used when working with children in Taiwan. They were then subdivided into smaller groups where they discussed their concepts of happiness within the setting of their residential care home and illustrated their ideas of the meaning of happiness in the form of a group drawing.

In the following sections, group membership is described followed by a description of the textual and illustrative content of the drawings about happiness and a discussion of the meaning of the concepts emerging from the group drawings. I present each

group and drawing in turn using both (traditional) Chinese characters and the English translation in order to increase the transparency of my analysis and to make the thesis more accessible to users of traditional Chinese. Where the children identified their contributions during the presentations of their drawings I have matched each element of the drawing to its (anonymised) contributor. This was not possible in all cases as not all presentations included identification of individual contributions. Finally, a holistic approach is taken, discussing the data from all the groups in each Home, focussing on common themes and any differences on the basis of gender and residence of Homes A and B. In the sections that follow A indicates Home A and B Home B. M indicates male and F female. I draw not only on the content of the drawings themselves and notes from the children's presentations of each drawing, but also from supplementary observation data gathered during my period of familiarisation in each Home and contextual information drawn from case records.

The drawings and their respective presentations reveal complex 'stories' indicating sources of happiness and unhappiness as well as activities that may be best understood as ways of responding to unhappiness. I do not claim expertise in the analysis of children's drawings, and the accounts that follow draw on additional explanations given during the presentation of the drawings by one or more members of each group.

Group A1

M4 **aged** 13 has lived in the Home for nine years. His twin brother also lives in this Home.

M6 **aged** 16 has lived in the Home for seven years. He has seven siblings, but is the only one living in this Home.

M8 aged 10 has lived in the Home for three years. He has a sister who also lives in this Home.

M23 is 14 and has lived in Home A for three years.

M25 aged 11 has lived in the Home for one year following some time in foster care after the death of his father.

Drawing 5.1 Happiness - Group A1
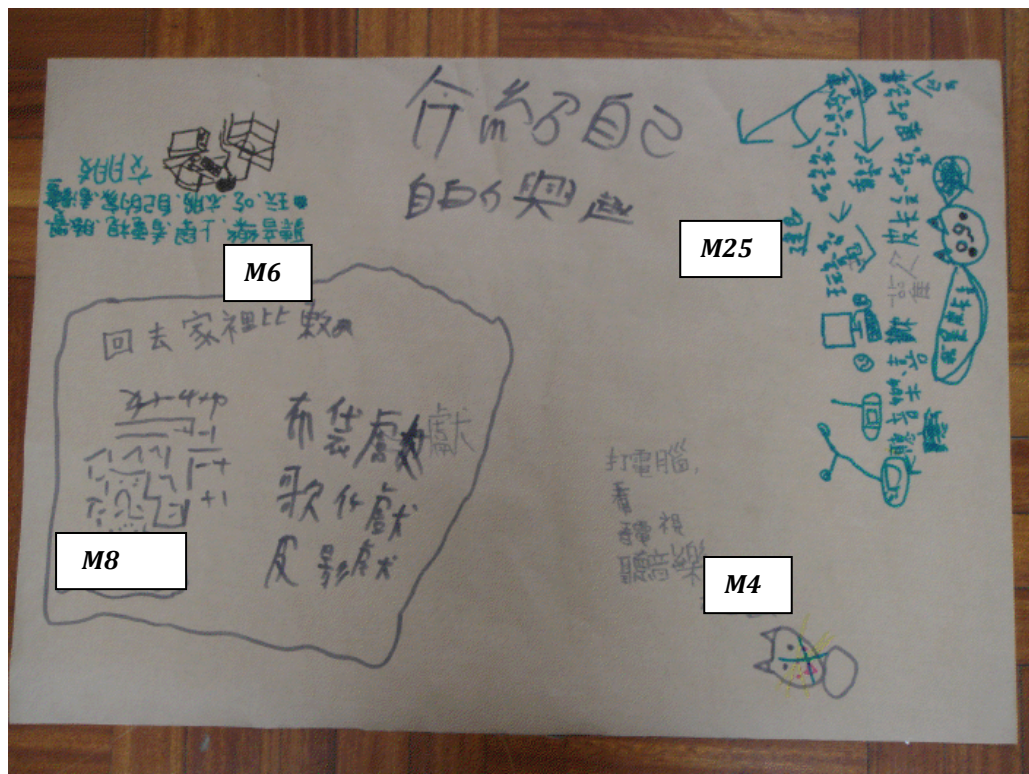
The following text appears in this drawing:

M4: 聽音樂 上學 看電視 睡覺。

Listen to the music, go to school, watch TV, sleep.

M6: 玩 吃 衣服 自己的家 看漫畫 交朋友。

Have fun, eat, have clothes, live in my own home, read comic books, make friends.

M25: 介紹自己的興趣。回去家裡比較好。布袋戲 歌仔戲 皮影戲。

Introduce your interests. It's better to go back home. Glove puppet show, Taiwanese Opera, Chinese shadow puppetry.

M8: 打電腦 看電視 聽音樂皮卡丘(卡通) 喜歡聽音樂 吃糖果 吃餅乾 玩電腦

吃冰棒 騎腳踏車。

Play computer games, watch TV, listen to the music. Pikachu (Japanese cartoon character), like listening to the music, eating candies, biscuits, and ice lolly, playing computer games, and riding a bicycle.

M6 presented the work of this group for whom happiness was expressed in terms of having fun through i) specific activities such as watching TV, listening to music and reading comic books; ii) special interests such as glove puppetry, Taiwanese Opera and shadow puppetry; iii) using skills that gave pleasure such as playing computer games and riding a bicycle; iv) socializing, for example making friends and going to school and v) access to food treats such as sweets, and clothes.

One of the five children made reference to happiness as 'living in my own home', something he returned to in the subsequent interview when he expressed a sense of

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loneliness while living in the children's home.

Group A2

> **F9** aged 10 has lived in Home A for 2years.
>
> **F2 aged** 7 has lived in the Home for 3 years.
>
> **F22** aged 12 has been resident in the Home for 3 years.
>
> **F27** aged 16 and has lived in Home A for 3 years.

Drawing 5.2 Happiness - Group A2
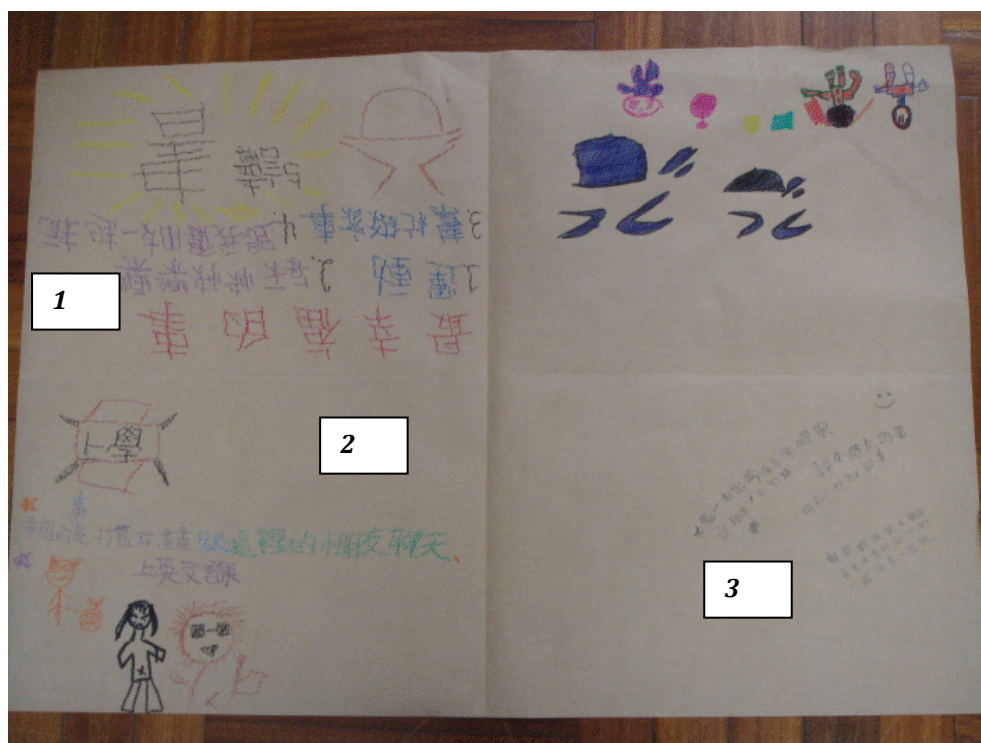
In this drawing, individual contributions were not identified during the presentation and I have simply matched the text in three contributions to the figures 1, 2 and 3 so that the reader can follow the argument.

1.   *運動。每天快快樂樂。幫忙做家事。 跟我朋友一起玩。 讀書。*

Take exercises. Keep happy every day. Help to do some housework. Have fun with my friends. Read books.

2.   *上學。幸福的是:打籃球 畫畫 和這裡的小朋友聊天, 上英文課。*

Go to school. The happy things are: playing basketball. Drawing pictures. Chatting with other children here. Have English classes.

3. 大家一起出去。聽音樂。唱歌。興趣。做自己的事。

Go out with friends. Listening to music. Singing songs. Interests. Do what I want to do.

This group's drawing, presented by F22, referred to the importance of keeping happy every day. Companionship was important: having fun with friends, chatting with other children, going out with other people and going to school, as well as helping others (with housework). Favoured activities included sports, drawing, listening to music and singing songs as well as reading books and learning English. A single reference to what might be called 'freedom' was indicated by the expression: 'do what I want to do'.

Group A3

> **F1** aged 11 has lived in Home A for three years.
>
> **F3** aged 7has lived in the Home for two years.
>
> **F13** aged 13 has lived in the Home A for three years and has a young
>
> brother in the same Home.
>
> **F20** aged 10 is new to the Home having lived there for just one month.
>
> **F28** is a 9 year-old girl and has lived in the Home for three years.

Drawing 5.3 Happiness - Group A3
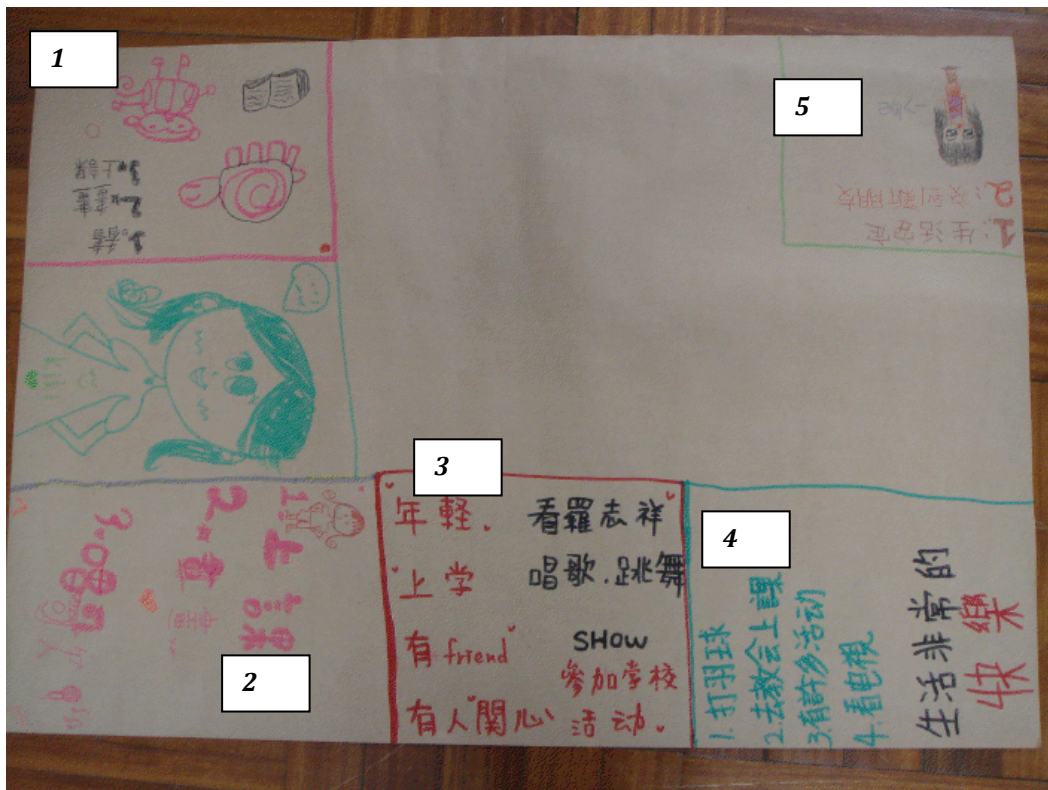
1. 　看書。畫畫。上課。

Read books. Draw pictures. Go to school.

2. 　上課。畫畫。唱歌。

Go to school. Draw pictures. Sing songs.

3. *年輕。上學。有朋友。有人關心。看羅志祥(偶像)唱歌。跳舞。參加學校活動。*

Be young. Go to school. Have friends. Have someone to care about me Show Lo (Luo Zhixiang, a "Taiwanese Idol" star). Sing songs. Dance. Take part in school activities.

4. *打球。去教會上課。看電視。生活非常的快樂。*

Play basketball. Go to church to have classes. Watch TV. Life is very joyful.

5. *生活安定。交到新朋友。*

Life is stable. Make new friends.

Group A3, another girls' group, similarly focused exclusively on conveying a sense of happiness. Interestingly, their drawing was presented to the wider group by F3, the youngest child in the group. Education, at school or at church[18] featured strongly alongside activities such as drawing, singing and playing basketball. F3 explained that they like to sing songs and watch TV: We like to see a super star and enjoy watching his dance and singing songs. We like to have someone to care about us. Happiness means we have friends. This drawing included explicit mention of stability, and the images of red hearts suggest a sense of care and companionship. The meaning of the monkey and tortoise is unknown and neither F3 nor other members of the group explained their presence.

---

[18] Going to church implies participating in a Christian religious ceremony. This is rather unusual in Taiwan where over 90% of the population claim adherence to Buddhism, Confucianism or Taoism, Less than 5% of the population is Christian.

Group A4

F29 aged 17 has been resident in the Home for almost all of her 17 years. She has adopted the role of a big sister who looks after the other children. She will be required to leave the Home when she is 18 years old and legally becomes an adult.

F18 is aged 11 and has been in the Home for four years.

F7 is also 11 years of age and has been in the Home for two and half years. She is the only child in the sample from a minority ethnic group with one Vietnamese parent.

F5 is 8 years old and has lived in the Home for nearly 2 years. She has a brother living in the same Home.

F10 is aged 7 and has lived in the Home with her twin sister for 3 years.

Drawing 5.4 Happiness - Group A4
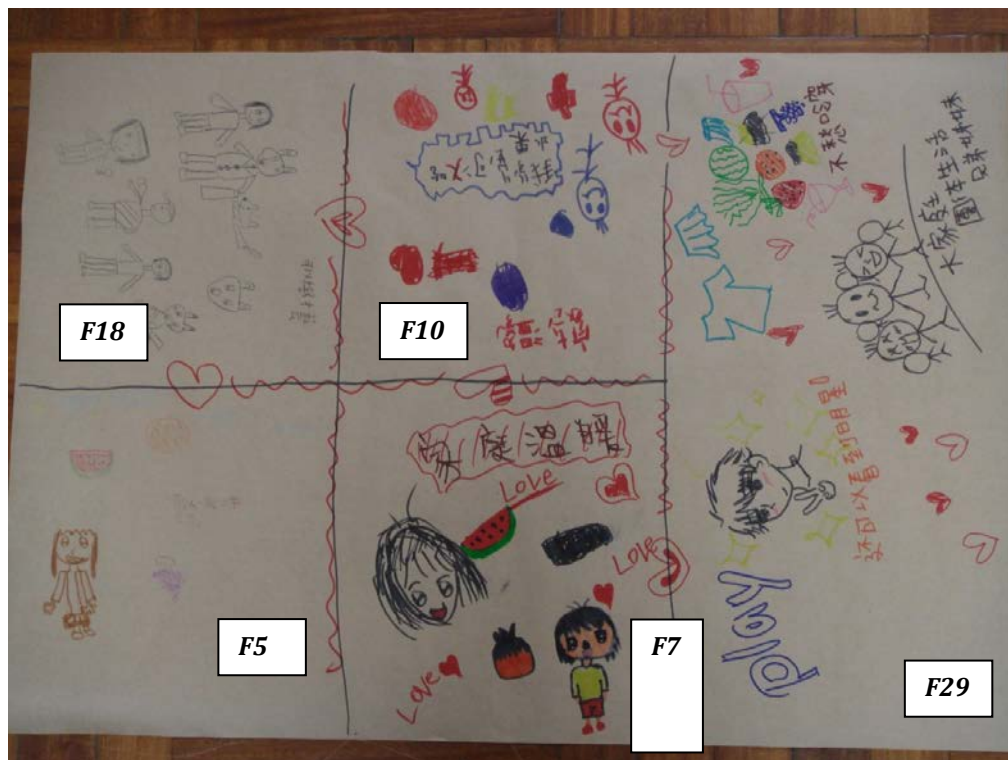
F18: 可以學才藝。

Being able to learn in enrichment programme.

F5: 可以一起玩。

Being able to play together.

F10: 家庭溫暖。我感覺可以吃水果。

A warm family. I feel I can eat fruit. I do not worry about food and clothing.

F7: 家庭溫暖。兒童的簽名。

A warm family. Child's signature. I do not need to worry I do not have food to eat.

F29: Play。還可以看到明星。大家庭 團體生活 兄弟姊妹 不愁吃穿。

Play. See celebrities. Big family, community life, brothers and sisters, No worries about food and clothing.

Group A4, the final group of girls in Home A, were aged between seven and 17. They approached the task by completing individual drawings and text. F29, aged 17, then completed the task by drawing a pattern including red hearts around the edge. She explained that this signified the sense of warmth and happiness she derived from living in the Home. F17's presentation of the group drawing was highly articulate and her more detailed explanation describes each child's contribution.

In the drawing of F5[19], there is a girl who has a happy smile, two types of fruit and a sentence that says *'can play together' (可以一起玩)*. This shows that *F5* feels happy in the Home because she can enjoy different activities such as music or art, and she does not need to worry that she has to find food for herself.

F7 wrote: '*A warm family' (家庭溫暖)* and drew a picture of a girl who is smiling, surrounded by fruit[20]. F7 was trying to express the idea that a family needs to have warmth and love and that she feels that she has this in the Home and that she does not need to worry about physical needs because she receives enough care and food in the Home.

F10 wrote two phrases in her picture: *'A warm family' (家庭溫暖)* and *'I feel I can eat fruit' (我感覺可以吃水果)'.* There are three children, all of whom are smiling. *F10* was the youngest member of this group (7 years old) and at the start of the group she did not know how to express her feelings. When she saw others drawing, she told me that she had the same feelings as other group members and so she decided to write the same or similar words as the others. In may be helpful to critically reflect on the strong value placed on harmony in Taiwanese culture with younger children being expected to respect their older sisters and brothers. It seems highly likely, therefore that F10 felt it was appropriate to write what others had written.

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[19] F5 is a quiet girl who has an older brother in the same Home with whom she has an unusually strong relationship. This means that when she has any issues or problems, she often asks her brother's opinion and her brother always looks after and protects her.

[20] In this group the presenter explained that 'fruit' meant they do not need to worry about not having food to eat in the Home. They know they can often get generous donation form supporters.

In F29's drawing, there are pictures of fruit, drinks, clothes, and a skirt. She explained that she is happy because she does not need to worry about food and clothing as she has physical support from the Home. In the group discussion, F29 explained that she knows that there are still some poor people or children who cannot get food and clothing, so she expressed her satisfaction with the support she receives from the Home. She also drew seven children who are holding hands as a family, attempting to illustrate her own feelings of happiness in the Home because she has many 'brothers and sisters'. She feels that she has a big family and enjoys group life and the feeling of togetherness. F29 explained that in the middle of her drawing a handsome man is giving a victory gesture. Here F29 is referring to her happiness at the chance to meet celebrities in the Home more often than her classmates in school. Some celebrities are regarded as role models and visit children's homes in an attempt to encourage other citizens to support disadvantaged children. Taiwanese teenagers like F29 enjoy seeing their idols and interacting with them and through this they feel a sort of happiness. There are also some red hearts in F29's drawing. These signify happiness because she can live in the Home where, she explained, she has lots of possessions (for example, clothes, toys and books) which her family could never have provided. She feels fortunate in staying in the same Home since she was small. She knows that she is going to leave the Home soon and become independent. This realisation has led her to value her time in the Home.

Taken as a whole, this group's drawings convey a sense of security, satisfying basic needs of food and clothing. This is the first group that placed such an emphasis on food as a source of happiness. As indicated in the drawings of red hearts and happy

figures interacting together, and through the written references to the family, this group placed importance on love, family life and being listened to.

> **M2** aged 14 has been resident in the Home for nearly nine years. He has a significant talent for art, which the staff have actively supported to further develop his art skills. He does not like to spend time with other children.
>
> **M17** aged 13 has a twin brother in the same Home. As with M2 he does not mix well with the other children.
>
> **M24** is aged 12, and has lived in the Home for two years. By contrast with M2 and M17 he is outgoing and likes to help his friends.
>
> **M15** is aged 9 and has a younger sister in the same Home of whom he is very protective.
>
> **M12** aged 8 has been resident in the Home for approximately two years and had made few friends.

Drawing 5.5 Happiness - Group A5
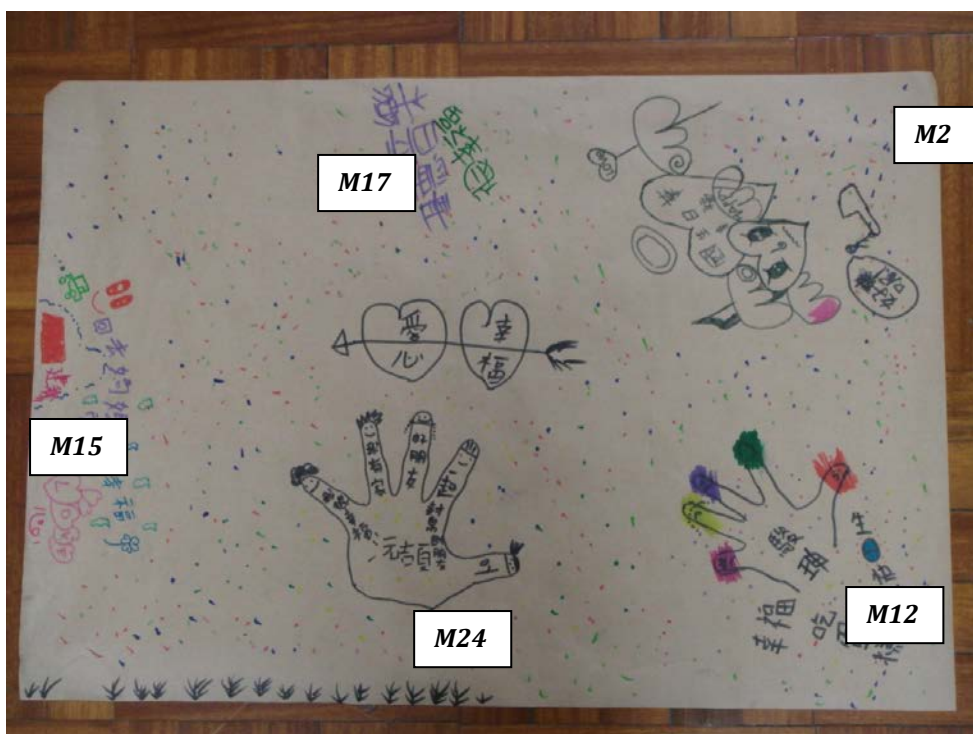
M24: 愛心。幸福。兒童的簽名。我很幸福。我有家。好朋友。

Loving heart. Happiness. Child's signature. I am happy. I have a home. Good friends. We help friends together.

M17: 聽音樂。很幸福。

Listen to music. I am very happy.

M2: 兒童的簽名。生日幸福。好爽呢。

Child's signature. Happy Birthday means happiness.
I am so high. (slang)

M12: 兒童的簽名。生日快樂。吃蛋糕。幸福。

Child's signature. Have a happy birthday and eat cakes mean happiness.

M15: 回去媽媽家。兒童的簽名。好幸福。Love。

Go back to mother's home. Child's signature. Love.

Group A5 also proved a source of very rich data but of a very different kind. Members of this group were able to convey their sources of unhappiness as well as real or imagined happiness. Their drawing was presented by M24 who was outgoing and displayed confidence. M17, who had joined in with the introductory song, simply wrote 'listening to music = happiness' as his contribution. M2 described happiness as 'birthdays' alluding to the rare occasions when he felt he received attention, felt loved, and experienced a sense of happiness when all the children sang a birthday song to him.

M12 and M24 both drew pictures of a hand. M12's hand shows negative terms including sadness, anger and tears. But he also indicated that he experienced happiness at the Home's monthly birthday parties when the birthdays of all children with birthdays in that month are celebrated with birthday cake and a birthday song. By contrast, the digits of M24's hand indicate happy phrases: *I feel happiness, I have a family, good friends, friends helping together*, and he also refers to a *kindly heart and happiness.* M15's representations are more complex with written words indicating *love is happiness.* But he also suggests that happiness would be to return to his mother's home and he drew a car that would take him back to his mother with whom he believed he would be happy.

Despite openly displaying sources of unhappiness, love and friendship are clearly shown as important and this group of boys has used drawings of hearts, references to friends and family, birthday parties and listening to music as sources of happiness. M24 also indicated enjoyment through eating cake at birthday parties and the drawing of grapes indicated a sense of satisfaction with food in the Home.

M11 is aged 15 and has been resident in the Home A for 8 years.

M14 aged 10 has lived in the Home for 5 years.

M16 aged 12 has lived here for 1year.

M19 aged 16 has lived in the Home for 8 years.

Drawing 5.6 Happiness - Group A6

XX 他女友。

XX his girlfriend.

Group A6's drawing contained images with very little accompanying text. Apart from 'World' written in English, the only other script was the names of the two group members. M11 presented this drawing and explained that a part of drawing is a boy and girl holding hands together (labelled with the child's name and the name of his girlfriend) with a rain cloud overhead. This represented M16's meaning of happiness and reflected his enjoyment of friends, and the desire to have a good girl friend. Another part of the drawing shows a person sitting on a chair (as a king) with a large bowl (with insects) set in front of him on a table. The King is eating but is also thinking about the world and being powerful. The drawings of couples holding hands were seen to indicate companionship while the child 'snoozing' in bed listening to music was a representation of this child's wish to be allowed to stay in bed undisturbed, for longer in the morning.

There are clearly other signs and symbols in this drawing but it was important for me simply to listen to the children and not to impose my own meanings on the drawings. The purpose of the drawings was to allow the children themselves an opportunity to express themselves, and not for me to use in any diagnostic sense. This became clearer to me as the exercise continued and as I move to present the drawings from three boys groups in Home B, the larger, state run Home, the visual representations take on what might reasonably be considered darker undertones. Three groups of boys contributed to this exercise.

B7

Four boys aged 10-14 years old in Group B7.

M32 is aged 10 and has lived in Home B for 4 years.

M33 is aged 11 and has lived in Home B for 4 years.

M42 is aged 14 and has lived in Home B for 4 years.

M46 is aged 14 and has lived in Home B for 7 years.

Drawing 5.6 Happiness - Group B7
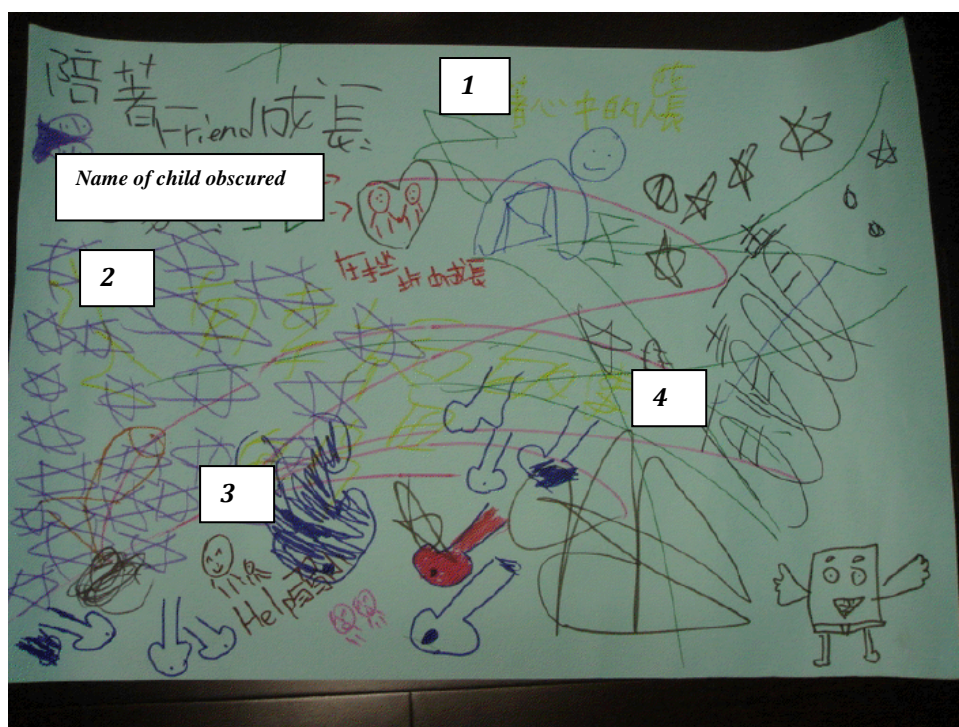
1.   *陪著朋友成長 在挫折中成長。*

Grow up with friends Grow in the setbacks

2.   *沒有幸福的事。*

There are no happy things.

3.   *幫助弱小。*

Help the weak.

4. *友情可貴。*

Friendship is precious.

Group B7's drawing was presented by M46 who explained a complex set of messages including multiple representations of male genitalia which were explained as references to a child in the Home who was nicknamed 'mushroom'. Friendship featured in this drawing with the Home offering the chance to grow up with friends, a message that friendship is precious, and the possibility of drawing strength from friendship in order to 'grow in the setbacks', suggesting a sense of developing resilience. One child indicated that happiness was associated with helping others particularly those who were weaker. One of the four children felt there were no happy things about life in the Home. During the presentation M46 explained that he had witnessed bullying and had learned how to resist bullies by ignoring them, but also by not telling the staff. I return to the question of 'not telling staff' later in the chapter.

B8

> **M39**aged 9 has lived in the residential care home for 3 years.
>
> **M45** aged 14 has lived in Home B for 5 years.
>
> **M50** aged 11 has lived in the Home for 5 years.

Drawing 5.8 Happiness - Group B8

Name of Home obscured

Name of child obscured

1.   兒童監獄。

a prison for children. We do not like to live in the residential care home.

2.   我喜歡ㄐㄧㄢㄩˋ。

課長是点ㄩˋ長。 I am very happy. 我愛河 horse. Teacher touch[21] me. River horse.

The manager is like a gaoler. I am not really happy to live in the Home. I love

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[21] The explanation of the drawing revealed that 'touch' referred to being hit.

hippos.[22] *Teacher hit me before.*

3. *課長是典獄長。*

The manager is our gaoler. We do not like her.

Group B8 consisted of three boys who also illustrated their drawing with representations of male genitalia and contrasting messages that the Home was experienced as a prison, and the manager the gaoler, but nevertheless a prison that was 'liked'. While the boys had no choice about living in the Home they drew strength from the support they gave each other. This led M45 to say he was 'very happy'. References to 'river horses' (hippopotami) were linked to a resident whose nickname was 'hippo' and two members of the group referred to loving Hippo and other residents.

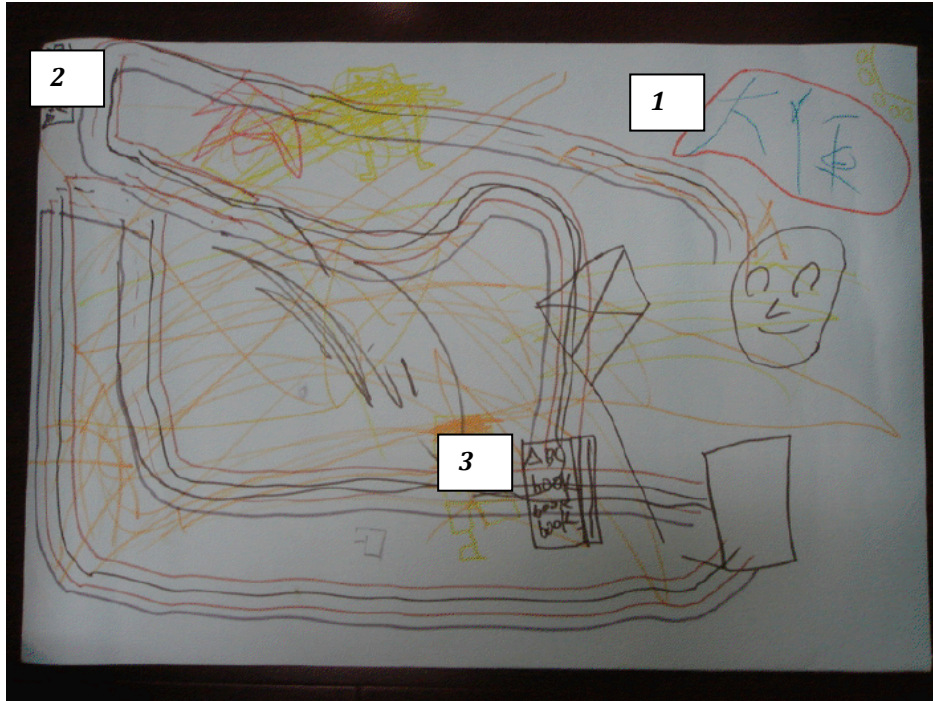[22] (hippos is one child's nickname of residential children). River horse (only written in English – in Mandarin a hippopotamus is literally known as a river horse)

M43 is aged 7 and has lived in Home B for 2 years.

M39 is aged 7 and has lived in the Home for 3 years.

Drawing 5.9 Happiness - Group B9

1. 大便。

'Shit'.

2. 沒有課長。

The manager is absent.

3. *ABC book book book.*

The final group, B9, was made up of two seven year old boys. Their drawing included a drawing of 'shit'. They explained that they did not like the manager and that they had drawn tracks as routes to escape the Home and achieve freedom represented by a smiling face. This freedom, they explained, was associated with the absence of the manager.

5.2.1 Critical Commentary: Group Representations of Happiness

Immediate observations about the joint production of drawings that were intended to encourage the children to express their understandings and experiences of happiness are:

i)   the individuality of the drawings within each drawing, allowing for differences of expression by each child;

ii)   reference to culturally dominant representations such as the use of red hearts (both the colour red and hearts are associated with happiness);

iii)   similarities within a number of groups where it seems likely that some children imitated, or followed, the ideas of others;

iv)   differences between groups, particularly between boys and girls in Home A with girls focussing more on positive representations of happiness and boys including representations of negative emotions and sources of unhappiness. In particular, none of the girls expressed a desire to return home while this was an openly expressed desire by a number of the boys;

v)   the contrast between boys in Homes A and B with those in Home B producing illustrations of a harsher regime. The boys in Home B appeared uninhibited in producing drawings that involved swear words, human excrement and sexual

imagery as well as strong feelings of dislike for staff members and ridicule of fellow residents.

Overall, many different ideas, thoughts and concepts of happiness, and unhappiness, were represented by the different groups. These fell into three main categories: friendship/companionship, leisure and learning activities, and meeting basic needs:

Friendship/Companionship

With the exception of the two seven year old boys in B9, who had no older children to guide, or indeed regulate, them, all groups made some, and often strong, reference to friendship as a source of happiness and illustrated a strong desire for love and a sense of belonging through friends, family or other representations of a loving relationship such as being part of a couple. The focus on friendship is important given its contribution to happiness during childhood (Holder and Coleman, 2009) and in the context of Chinese culture, (Ip, 2011) the emphasis placed on the collective rather than the individual. With emphasis on the importance of the interpersonal (Lu and Shih, 1997) the children's drawings suggest rather mixed messages. Some, particularly girls in Home A, were able to see the Home as a place where they could develop friendship and interpersonal relationships. Some boys however, particularly those in Home B, appeared to be less at ease with residential care as a site in which they could develop positive friendships or gain a sense of 'home'. The boys in Home B conveyed a sense of confinement and incarceration, possibly due to the strict routine imposed by the managers, exemplified in Groups B8 and B9, where the Home was portrayed as a gaol and running away was considered as escape to freedom. The subject of bullying arose spontaneously during the

presentation by one of the groups in Home B, an experience that, as we shall see, is more widely referred to in individual interviews.

Leisure and Learning Activities

Activities, whether in the sense of leisure or occupation, also featured strongly. These ranged from solitary activities such as reading or listening to music, to group activities such as basketball and learning in classes, to the pleasure expressed by one girl in helping with housework and by boys in B7 who made reference to helping those weaker than themselves.

Meeting Basic Needs

References to happiness in terms of meeting basic needs such as having sufficient food or clothing and a 'home' were apparent through the text included in the drawings and in relation to food, through representations of items considered to be treats such as fruit, sweets or birthday cake.

Discussion

It appears that the environment created in Home A and the disciplinary control from the staff and managers did not appear to prevent a sense of harmony and mutual support among the children. They felt able to express their ideas and conveyed many happy experiences. In contrast, the boys in Home B took the opportunity to mock their peers and staff and portrayed their Home as a prison in which they enjoyed little freedom or happiness, and from which they would like to escape. The emphasis on friendships and leisure activities in the children's drawings show signs

of Daniel and Wassell's (2002) resilience domains ('friendship' and 'talents and interests'). Of interest is what appears to be girls' greater capacity to develop friendships. While boys indicated a desire for friendship, they also illustrated their sense of being in residential care as restricting their freedom. In terms of talents and interests both girls' and boys' groups portrayed activities and talents in their drawings, including both solitary and group activities, based on interests, such as music, art and skills including helping other children with their homework.

At this point it is helpful to reflect on the circumstances and factors that have directly or indirectly shaped the process of data construction during the participatory activities group sessions at the two residential care homes, as they are also informative in conveying information about my research experience.

Text Box 5.1 Reflections on the Participatory Group Activities (PGAs)

Time mismanagement of Home B: In the both Homes, I had managed to schedule one hour for each gender group to conduct the PGA sessions. However, at Home B, the large government run Home my time was cut short due to the preceding Computer Lab session being prolonged. This affected the girls' PGA session so that there was only enough time to run through one of the two designated topics (happiness or children's rights) with the girls. I offered the girls the choice and they chose to talk about children's rights.

Drawbacks in spatial provision: Also in Home B, the space provided by the residential staff for the PGAs was a conference/reading room that was furnished with a full wall of picture books and other books of entertaining nature. This turned out to be rather distracting, in particular, to the younger boys who were distracted by the seemingly rare opportunity to read books out of their reach. It was especially difficult to retain their attention during the drawing session, when it became obvious that they were rushing to finish in order to negotiate time to explore the books.

Individualism versus collectivism: when designing participatory group activities, I deliberately blurred the line of the underlying task in terms of its individual or collective nature. Revisiting the drawing sessions at both homes, it is easy to notice, for instance, the dominant preference for individual drawings as opposed to concerted collaborative effort. An important message here is that while the collective may be given precedence over the individual in terms of achieving harmony, the children opted to work independently and showed that they were perfectly capable of expressing, or illustrating, their own views.

5.3 Individual Interviews - Happiness

The following sections present the major themes derived from analysis of individual interview transcripts: i) warmth, security and enjoyment, ii) bullying, and iii) resilience.

5.3.1. Warmth, Security and Enjoyment

Topics most frequently referred to by children in one to one interviews as being associated with happiness were warmth, a concept that involved relationships with other people, material security and access to enjoyable activities. I draw directly here on interviews with F41, aged 12 from Home B, M24 aged 12 from Home A both of whom participated in the group drawings, and four further girls: F34 aged 13, F37 aged 10 and F38 aged 11 and F40 aged 13 all from Home B who had not participated in the group drawing activity.

F41 described her life in Home B as follows:

生活都很開心啊～沒什麼不快樂的。Life is happy! Nothing is unhappy.

But she did not want to expand on her general level of optimism. In contrast, other children were able to articulate their experiences. For example, when comparing the experience of living in a residential care home and a foster home M24, who had had both experiences, clearly showed his preference for residential care over the foster home environment.

M24: 這裡可以跟很多朋友玩，那裡只能和一、二個人玩而已，有什麼困難的時候不能大家一起幫忙。因為人太少。我喜歡人多，這裡有大哥哥可以幫我課輔，那邊沒有.

M24: I have a lot of friends to play with in the Children's Home. While at the foster family, I only had one or two friends. When I had something difficult to deal with, maybe they could not help because we didn't have enough hands. I like more people. Here I have bigger brothers to help me with my studies. I didn't have this at the foster family.

He reasoned that the presence and assistance of many peers of similar family backgrounds enabled him to feel more supported and able to access help in the care home more freely and readily, whereas in the his former foster home, he felt isolated and neglected.

M24's experience in a foster home represented a common experience of foster care in Taiwan linked to the cultural limitation of Confucianism that relies heavily on family ties and the dominance of blood relationship elaborated in chapter 2. M24's relatively positive account of residential care is striking. The importance of human warmth and being continually surrounded by peers has added to M24's positive experience of life in the children's Home and can be further underlined by the force of collectivism in Taiwanese society to which the children are already accustomed. In this sense M24 is expressing his greater sense of belonging in the children's home than in a foster family.

F34 began her conversation explaining that the children's Home provided her with a place to live.

F34: 覺得很幸福，因為有地方可以住。

F34: I feel happy, because I have a place to live in.

But she suddenly jumped to explain her own sense of happiness in other ways.

F34: *我們…因為兒家有很多小朋友,我們就會有很多才藝課可以上啊！然後我們去跟其他班上同學說，因為我們在兒家可以學啊! 但他們都沒有啊！他們就說我們很好，然後我就覺得很幸福！他們沒有，我們有。而且他們要補習上那課，我們都不用，我們玩，就是練球學才藝這樣。*

F34: I'm happier than other people. We…it's because the children's home has a lot of kids living here, and we have a lot of arts and music classes to attend. We can tell my classmates at school that we can learn a lot in children's home. They don't have such classes. They all said we were really lucky. I feel happy about this! We have what they don't have. In addition, they have to go to extra classes to study. We don't need to. We are just playing. We play ball games and learn arts and music and other interesting things.

Not only was she surrounded by other children but she also had a sense of being privileged over her peers in school, having opportunities to attend many desirable arts and music classes which were not available to her classmates. This appeared to have raised her sense of self-esteem. She experienced exemption from extra school classes (buxi) as positive, allowing her more time to play and engage in creative arts and other activities she enjoyed. Of potential interest here is the reference to the

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common pressure within families for children to strive for academic success in terms of school performance (Grolnick, 2009), a pressure from which F34 felt relieved.

F37 also focused on a sense of happiness derived from the activities organised by her residential care home. But although she described her life in the Home as being positive, she had found the initial phase unsettling.

F37: 現在很開心. 我一開始的時候到這裡很緊張，可是也很開心。來這邊看的時候很開心，搬東西過來的時候我就很緊張，然後就變的非常開心了。

F37: I'm very happy. I was very nervous when I first came here but happy at the same time. I was happy when I came here for a visit. I was very nervous when I moved my stuff in but after that I was very happy again.

Without providing more details on what exactly had alleviated her nervousness during the initial period in the residential home, F37 seemed to have genuinely settled in the Home. She disclosed her nervousness about this transition in her life with confidence suggesting successful adaptation.

As with M24, F38 had previously experienced foster care and her account of the advantages of residential care echoed M24 in that she felt surrounded by friends and supported by teachers in her schooling. F38's account of life in Home B offered an interesting insight into children's need for security in the sense of discipline and boundary setting. She explained:

F38：我喜歡住在這邊，因為在家都沒有很多人在一起的同伴，感覺就很無聊，比如我一個人跟媽媽她們在家，就感覺無憂無慮的，跟大家在一起就比較快樂，感覺很幸福。我喜歡住在這裡除了有很多好朋友之外，還有老師的教導。就是做錯是的時候老師會把我們改正過來。所以我覺得我住在這邊很幸福。

F38: I enjoy living here. Because I didn't have many people as companions and felt bored. If I stay alone with my mum, I'll feel careless; but I'll feel happy with everyone here. I feel happy to live here because of having a lot of good friends and teachers' guidance. When we do something wrong, teachers will correct us. I feel very happy to live here.

F40 also appreciated the advantages of group living in the immediate availability of companionship in residential care home with its communal life unhindered by physical distances. She argued that this could sometimes result in an even more enjoyable and happier living environment than that available to the 'kids who are living outside'. In her interview F40 referred to the loneliness that can be experienced by only children living in their family home.

F40: 現在這邊有很多個小孩子 所以就是因為有…有..有時候因有時候在就是在家裡做一個獨生子獨生女 他們就沒有人陪他們玩 啊比如說在外面就算有一群朋友 可是搞不好他們都有事不能來 對啊 可是在這邊不一樣 這邊大家的時間都一樣 對啊 所以可以一

起玩 不可能在說大家都有事 他們不想來的話我們自己有朋友 所以有時候會覺得說雖

然沒有比外面的孩子還幸福。

F40: There are lots of kids here, so sometimes…some…sometimes, because they are the only-child in their families and no one can play with them, for example, they have a lot of friends, but those friends may not come to play with them because they have something else to do. But here is different. Here every one has the same time schedule. So, we can play together. It's impossible that everyone is unavailable. If the friends from outside don't want to come, we have our own friends here. So sometimes we will think we are happier than the kids who are living outside.

It is important to note here that F40's birth family (her mother had been abandoned by her father) was unable to care for her and she had no prospect of returning home. As a consequence she saw her future childhood in terms of residential care on a permanent basis.

Discussion

The illustrative examples here offer evidence that residential care can offer security and safety, a sense of companionship, belonging and access to activities that may not have been enjoyed in family homes. However, these experiences must be understood in the context of the circumstances that led to the children coming to live in residential care. With the exception of two children who were orphans, all were subject to formal child protection interventions suggesting that experiences of life in their birth families were unlikely to be full of happiness. In terms of developing our understanding the relationship between resilience and happiness we can see clearly,

in the interviews with children, the relationship between happiness and Daniel and Wassell's resilience domain of friendship. As M24 explained, he enjoyed being in the Home because of the availability of a wider set of friends and especially *'bigger brothers to help me with my studies'*. Daniel and Wassell's resilience domain of 'talents and interests' is clearly evident through references to leisure and learning activities including art, music and games. And gaining 'positive values' (Daniel and Wassell, 2002) is also mentioned as a source of happiness but by very few children such as F38 who explained that she valued the guidance of friends and teachers who she felt could help her learn from mistakes. In the following section I move on to explore the clearest manifestation of negative experiences of life in residential care, bullying.

5.3.2 Bullying

In individual interviews bullying emerged spontaneously in wider conversations about experiences of life in the children's homes, particularly when speaking of unhappy experiences. This was the case for one in five children participating in this study. This reflects findings from English studies of residential care (Gibbs and Sinclair, 2000; DCSF, 2009) and the recent attention to bullying and its implications for mental health among children and adolescents in Taiwan (Yen, 2010).

The children in both Homes A and B referred to bullying from different perspectives: as a victim, staff responses to bullying, direct engagement in active bullying and experiences of witnessing bullying. Taiwanese research on bullying is embryonic and has drawn on Western literature to define bullying as: *negative or malicious behaviour intended to harm or distress, repeated over a time period and a*

relationship in which there is an imbalance of strength or power between the parties
involved (Yen, 2010: 4).

Whilst acknowledging that great care must be taken to avoid inappropriate transfer of ideas to different cultural contexts, the English Department for Children, Schools and Families has described bullying as including: name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate touching; producing offensive graffiti; spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours; or always leaving someone out of groups" (2009:6), and younger children, particularly those admitted to residential care under the age of twelve, seem to be more vulnerable to bullying (Gibbs and Sinclair, 2000: 251). Here I offer examples of children's accounts of bullying that were reported by one in five of the children, largely in the younger age range.

F21, aged seven and living in Home A, experienced verbal and physical bullying. She was reluctant to go into detail but it was clear that her experiences had had a strong impact on her. She explained:

F21：他們每次都欺負我。常常打我頭。他們就用罵的用打的。他們就用罵的用打的。
我很不高興。

F21: They [boys] *are bullying me every time. They often hit me on my head. They would yell at me and then hit me. They would swear at me. I can become very unhappy.*

This type of disclosure placed me in a difficult position as a researcher. I had promised the children anonymity yet I felt as an adult that it was not satisfactory to simply hear such accounts without responding. In each case where this occurred, I asked the child whether s/he would like me to report the bullying behaviour to a member of staff. The response was invariably negative. Exploring this further it became apparent that the children felt that the staff did not respond even when they were aware of bullying.[23]

Nine year old F28 from Home A referred to the repeated nature of her experience of bullying explaining that:

F28: XX(人名) 還是會欺負我。 XX (Name) is still bullying me.

Also in Home A, F3 aged seven had experienced bullying in the form of name calling linked to the colour of her skin. This had undermined her confidence and made her feel unvalued. Her experiences made her angry and upset, particularly when she was blamed by staff for things she had not done, and she would take things out on her own toys by throwing them. She said:

F3: 有些人對我很好，有些人就欺負我。那個欺負我就是那個(人名)，他們有時候就叫

我黑黑(綽號)，我就不喜歡他們叫我黑黑阿! 他們在我生日卡上面寫說，"黑黑"你現再

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[23] After the interview with F21 I made sure that I kept in touch with her over the following days to ask if she was still experiencing the bullying. She assured me that things were fine. I noted that she seemed happy and over the period I spent in the home she regularly approached me, eager to tell me about her day in school and what she had achieved.

多一歲囉!!我不喜歡他們叫我黑黑, 我哪裡黑阿。他們以前一直叫我黑黑,黑黑,然後現在叫黑黑 (台語),黑黑(台語)。我討厭人家叫我黑黑. 聽到他們叫我黑黑, 我都會很生氣。……委屈就是我自己沒有做的事,老師就怪我,就覺得很委屈然後我就跑到房間哇大哭了 有時後會甩玩具,甩玩具,摔我自己的娃娃。

F3: Some people are very kind to me but some are bullying me, for example, XXX. Sometimes they will call me "Heihei" (nickname, meaning the dark girl). They wrote "Heihei, you're one year older now!" on my birthday card. I do not like people calling me Heihei. My skin is not dark at all. They used to call me Heihei, Heihei. Now they call me Heihei in local dialect. I hate people calling me Heihei. I get very upset when I hear them calling me Heihei…… Being wronged is that teachers blame me for what I did not do. I will run into my room to cry loudly and sometimes I will throw my toys; my own toys!

The basis of the bullying behaviour here was F3's darker skin colour. As Horton (2011: 271) argues, bullying is frequently based on difference: *While one student may be bullied because of the colour of her skin, another student in the same class, whose skin colour is similar to those doing the bullying, may be bullied for having red hair, for being 'gay', for being 'weak' or for studying too hard.* Such behaviour, based on difference in skin colour is, essentially, racist. In the context of this study, teasing and bullying F3 on the basis of her darker skin is based on the wider cultural preference for white skin reflected in socio-economic practices including the sale of facial and body lotions (*mei bai*) that almost invariably contain skin lightening chemicals, as is the case across China and Taiwan (Pan, 2013).

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In the case of F30, another seven year old living in Home A the bullies, unusually, included her elder brother and sister. She described how she was mocked and taunted and how unhappy it made her feel:

F 30：為什麼不喜歡待在這邊 是因為一堆大人（大哥哥，大姐姐）欺負我 他們會取笑我。

F30: Why do I dislike staying here? It's because many people (Da Ge ge, Da Chieh chieh[24]) are mocking me and making fun of me.

In Home B eight year old M31 showed the physical marks resulting from bullying behavior but, as with the other children, he did not want say who had inflicted the bullying and did not want the behavior to be reported to the staff.

M31:因為我每次沒有怎樣，他都拿橡皮筋射我。我被燙傷了。那不是我自己用的，是別人用熱水燙傷的 因為他亂用熱水，然後潑到我身上. 他是故意的,現在也都還會欺負我…….你看我的臉，這個是被早上抓的.早上別人抓的。

M31: I have not done anything but he used his catapult to shoot at me. I got scalded. Not by myself. I got scalded because someone splashed hot water on me on purpose. He would still be bullying me now…… Look at my face: This was scratched by someone this morning.

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[24] *Da Ge ge,*and *Da Chieh chieh* are names given to an older brother and older sister respectively.

Following this revelation I asked whether the staff knew about this situation and he explained: *當然啊，老師一定知道。* *'of course the staff know. They helped me to put some lotion on my skin'.*

M43 aged seven and also from Home B described how he was bullied, physically and verbally, by another child from the same family unit:

M43: 我們家的人. 他就打我怎樣的或是罵我啊～他都打我的背和肩膀.我們家的老師都知道這件事，但都沒有處理。

M43: Someone from our family (group unit). He beats me or scolds me. He often hits me on my back and shoulder…. The two staff members in the unit know about this but don't do anything.

Nine year old M15's story was rather different in that he had reported what he thought was unacceptable behavior to staff. He told how his elder brother disciplined him and how the staff were ineffective in stopping the bullying behaviour, and that his only choice was to try and avoid his brother at all costs.

M15：(ＸＸ人名)哥哥, 他有時候，他就會有一些打人的動作, 我就嚇到了。例如: 早上要上學, 但我還在睡覺的時候，他不會跟別人一樣，不會像別人一樣一直搖我搖到醒，他是叫到一半不耐煩時，他就直接用踹的！老師她就說…就…好像沒有說什麼，然後就叫我們改快去做掃地工作……這件事情…很痛苦. 因為被踹也很痛啊！……老師知道

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啊！每一個老師都知道 老師就罰他一些勞動服務啊！我也常常在想辦法躲避他 就不想再靠近他。

M15: XX Ge-ge sometimes pretends to beat me and I would get scared. For example, when it's time to go to school but I am still sleeping, he will kick me to wake me up as he doesn't have much patience to wake me up by shouting, while others would just use hands to gently shake friends or siblings to wake them up. The teacher said nothing but instead asked us to do the house cleaning immediately. About this, it's painful. It's really hurting when being kicked. Teachers know about it. Every teacher knows and will ask him to do some housework as punishment! I try every means to avoid him. I just don't want to get close to him.

The story of F47, aged eleven, and living in Home B, bore similarities with M15's experience in terms of staff responses to bullying. Unless a situation was considered very serious and getting out of control, the children being bullied were often encouraged by adults to reconcile the situation by accepting the unfairness for the sake of peace and harmony of the larger group, and in the case of older siblings fulfilling their expected roles in taking responsibility for disciplining their younger siblings, for the sake of maintaining harmony among the family group.

F47: ……如果較嚴重的話老師會處罰。如果比較輕微的老師就叫我們和好，如果嚴重的那種, 就是有人吵架會打來打去，家裡有些人個性較不一樣，跟別人吵架就會打架，或罵髒話。

F47……Teachers will punish them if it is serious. If it is not very serious, teachers will mediate between us. Some people will fight when they quarrel and then it's getting serious. We have different characters in our home. Some people will swear at people or hit others.

This sense of enforced toleration and submission in the avoidance of conflict and pursuit of harmony is, arguably, bound up in the cultural values of Confucianism (Liao, 2001). Yet the unquestioned application of corporal punishment/physical abuse may have serious unintended consequences for both bullies and their victims and I discuss these in the following pages.

In his interview, M16, aged 12, from Home A, referred to his own bullying behaviour towards younger children. He justified his behavior claiming that he was following the example of staff who, he alleged, would use corporal punishment if verbal requests or advice were not effective in achieving children's compliance.

M16: 都我欺負別人！阿就…看…那個國小…啊如果他們不乖…，讓我講不聽，我就打他們啊！因為用說的，就說不聽啊！說不聽，說不聽才用打的嘛！我們這裡也有老師講說不聽，然後老師用打的，而且拿藤條耶！如果，我們做錯事，她都拿大支的藤條，啊這麼粗喔，我們就要守法！……我曾經被打到瘀青耶！還有瘀血！但現在老師說不想打了！打也沒用！打也不會改！

M16: It's me who would bully others. If the kids from primary school are not behaving well and would not do what I ask them to do, I will beat them! Because they would

not listen. I only beat them because they don't take my words seriously. Even teachers beat us with a cane if we do not obey what they say. If we do something wrong, she will use the bigger cane, like this thick. We have to obey the orders! ...... I have been beaten up so badly to have bruises and bumps. But the teacher said she would not beat us anymore because it's useless. We would not change anything even if we get beaten.

M50, aged eleven, from Home B applied similar logic in justifying his bullying behaviour. He felt that his behaviour was reinforced by its effectiveness and felt that it was appropriate for him to be acting as a monitor and disciplinarian in the absence of the staff. In giving an example of how he reacted when another child locked him in a room, his ownsense of power is strongly conveyed:

M50：上次關我門那個男生又被我打了一次，因為他關別人的門，然後我就問他幹麻要關別人的門，就往他這裡打了一下，然後就瘀青了，之後他就不敢再關門。很好笑。

M50: The boy who locked me up got beaten up by me again last time because he locked someone else's door. I asked him why he locked other people's door and hit him here and then he got bruised. After that he would not dare to lock the door. It is very funny.

Speaking as a witness of bullying F34 aged 13 explained how some children are marginalized by bullying exercised by a number of others:

F34：大家都排擠他了。

F34: Everyone dislikes him and excluded him out of their group.

F44, an older girl of 15 from Home B spoke of her experience as a victim of bullying and as a witness to bullying behaviour. She described how reporting bullying ran the risk of being bullied and explained that the only effective means of addressing bullying was to create a united force among the children in the Home.

F 44: 雖然說跟老師講，但是如果被那個人知道我去打小報告，之後遭殃的人是我。

或者是說那個被欺負的小朋友自己去跟老師講，那被知道了之後，會被欺負的更慘。

就真的是啞巴吃黃蓮，讓人家很不舒服……很嚴重是也還好，可是有這件事情的存在。

後來會利用眾人的力量去苛責他，可能會比較改善，我們看到也會去阻止，所以現在

這種情況就會還好，雖然說可以跟老師講，有些事情也是講不得的。我們樓下有意見

箱，我有投過，可是我覺得其實沒有什麼改善。

F44: I would have talked about this with teachers [staff] but if that person finds out that I snitched on him, I will be the one who bears the consequence. If some other kid who gets bullied talks to teachers [staff] about this, and the person who bullies him/her finds it out, he/she will be bullied worse. It's really unfair and uncomfortable and we have to suffer in silence……It's not too bad but it exists. It might get improved if we unite together. When we see this these days, we will try to stop it together. It's getting better now. Although we can talk to teachers about this but sometimes it's better not to tell. There is one suggestion box downstairs. I used it but I don't think there is much improvement.

In the absence of trust that staff will intervene then an alternative response is acceptance and despair, as experienced by F48.

F48: 我小時候也有被欺負。我剛來時大家都覺得我胖胖的好欺負，都會欺負我，可是長大了就覺得說不可以像以前一樣.其實我知道在這裡(育幼院)，會惡性循環，大的欺負小的，小的欺負小的……老師他們知道。

F48: I was bullied before when I was little. Everyone thought I was easy to bully when I just came to the center because I was a little bit fat and they bullied me. However, when we have grown a bit older, we know we should not do the same as before. I know it is a downward spiral here (at the Children's Home): the elder bully the younger; the younger bully the much younger ones……Teachers [staff] know about it.

The effect of such a downward spiral contradicts and challenges the fundamental role of the Homes as sanctuaries and shelters for vulnerable children. Although bullying has been recognized as a common issue of concern among children and adolescents in Taiwan (Yen, 2010), there does not appear to be any systematic approach to bullying in the children's homes. The children interviewed in this study indicated clearly that staff exercise arbitrary power in responding to situations of bullying brought to their attention and this appears to have a twofold effect. First, children learn not to rely on staff to protect them from bullying or to listen and attempt to restore any sense of justice, and second, some children step in to the role of disciplinarian and exercise an alternative manifestation of arbitrary power.

Bullying has been described as an outward manifestation of malfunctioning and an imbalance of power relationships between children and adults (Smith, 2008; Mayall, 2002; John, 2003). The findings from this study show clearly that bullying involves the exercise of power, and importantly it shows the exercise of power exclusively by older children over younger children reflecting the central importance of age hierarchies in Confucian cultures. F48's reference to a downward spiral in which older children bully younger children and they, in turn, bully children younger than themselves offers a succinct analysis of age-related bullying. What is also clear is the partial acceptance of bullying behaviour by staff, reinforcing the normative age hierarchies so that the norms of respect for one's elders are simultaneously invoked to reinforce problematic power relations. In terms of gender, it is not possible to reach any clear conclusions given the limited number of children (ten) who revealed experiences of bullying. However, it is possible to say that all five boys who reported bullying referred to physically aggressive acts and verbal bullying while of the five girls, only two mentioned physical bullying while all five referred to verbal forms of bullying.

Yen's (2010) and Yen et al's (2013) research on bullying in schools in Taiwan has developed contemporary understandings of the impact of bullying revealing the relationship between bullying and anxiety symptoms in a survey of over 5000 Taiwanese school children. A central finding was that girls and younger children experienced more severe anxiety symptoms as a result of being bullied, but the pattern was complex and they urge caution in interpretation and a need for further study in this area. But the relevance of this wider work for this study of children living in residential care homes is that it reinforces concerns about the negative effects of

bullying as well as a lack of adult awareness of, or attention to, children's experiences of bullying. And these concerns are accentuated precisely because they are less likely to surface in a cultural setting in which normative expectations are based on unquestioning respect for older peers and adults.

I return to this issue in section 5.4 where the three principal themes of the chapter are drawn together. But I turn now to the question of how the children respond to the adverse circumstances they encounter in residential care.

5.3.3 Resilience

The third key theme identified during the semi-structured interviews is concerned with the ways that children respond to hurt and subsequent negative emotions. As I show in the following pages, not all children seemed able to respond to adverse circumstances in ways that developed a positive sense of resilience.

With heavy emphasis on family and social hierarchy and the importance of filial piety and unquestioning obedience to elders, in the interest of maintaining harmony, it is unsurprising that the children who experienced bullying made a conscious effort to call on their inner resources to deal with the challenging and difficult experiences they encountered whether these emanated from staff or other children. Drawing on one's own resources to respond to adversity is seen as an honorable way of coping, ensuring that harmony among the wider group is maintained. And can be conceptualized as a form of resilience. Similarly, externalizing expressions of hurt or injustice through complaints to third parties can be perceived as shameful in the sense that this threatens the harmony of the wider group.

While the internalization of adverse experiences and negative emotions can be conceptualized as a critical building block in developing resilience that will serve children well throughout their lives, there has been little critical thinking about the implications of such expectations for children who do not enjoy the protection of their own families who, following principles of family harmony, have an interest in supporting the wider well-being of their children. As Masten (2001) has argued in her study of resilience processes in development, while resilience is remarkably common – indeed she refers to it as 'ordinary magic' – it develops through the normative functions of human adaptational systems. The greatest threat to the development of resilience in children, therefore, is anything that compromises children's protective systems. With the central focus placed on family harmony in societies influenced by Confucian familist values, there has been greater attention to the study of family resilience (see for example Lee et al, 2004). But for children in residential care, their principle protective system, the family, has already been damaged if not dismantled.

In analyzing the children's accounts of how they deal with adverse circumstances, it became clear that one group of children was able to find ways of responding that allowed them to move on with little if any lasting impact. For example, M31 aged eight from Home B, who had experienced many bullying events and what he perceived to be unfair treatment in the Home, had reached the conclusion that staff were not able or not willing to help him. As a result he had developed his own ways of resolving these negative experiences through drawing and sports that seemed to be effective in channeling his emotions. He explained:

M31: 就找一些開心的事情，畫畫、唱歌、運動阿！

M31: I'll find something pleasant to do, like drawing, singing or doing some exercise!

One of the older boys in Home B, M42, had also established his own way of coping when he felt unhappy for example, following an argument with other children in the Home.

M42: 就打球阿. 打球讓自己的心情恢復囉!

M42: Playing basketball. It helps to calm my mind!

F34, aged 13 and also from Home B, was in an interesting position with regard to the way she responded to adverse events. While she faced her own challenges of dealing with conflict and difficult relationships in the Home, she gave support to her friend who was facing similar emotional hurt and stress resulting from unreconciled differences with a friend. This appeared to constitute a constructive way of dealing with difficult issues in the absence of the love and care that most children would derive from the protective system provided by their birth family, and could be understood as developing resilience, moving from a focus on survival to one of thriving (Dominelli, 2012).

F34：她 (xx人名)就來找我聊天，然後問我說有什麼方法，我跟她說用寫信的。……然後我又偶爾…，然後她最近來，我問她說你有跟她和好嗎，她說有啊！我自己心情不好時也用寫信的，我就寫信給對方跟她講清楚…就是看那個人的個性，如果那個人個性好的話就會寫，如果個性不好的話，我就直接跟他嗆聲。

F34: She (XX Name) came to talk to me and asked me whether I have some ideas of resolution, and I suggested to her to write in letters…She recently came and I asked her how she was getting on with [her friend] and whether she had reconciled the matter with her friend, she said she didn't. I also write when I am in a bad mood. I would write to the person who makes me feel unhappy to clarify things. It depends on the other person's personality. S/he will write back if s/he is kind. For the person who is not kind enough to write back, I will confront the person directly.

When confronting negative emotions F36, aged eleven, also sought support through friends rather than seeking support from the staff in her residential home. She was not necessarily seeking advice or direct support but had learned that play and spending time with friends gave her a sense of belonging and helped her to overcome difficult emotions and move on.

F 36：…我有時候也不會講 我都自己發洩就好 過了就算了 讓自己開心就好了，我會去跟就跟別人玩要不然就跟一好朋友玩。

F36: ...sometimes I would not say anything. I would find ways to release the emotion on my own. I'll let it go and find a way to release myself as long as I am happy. I will go out with some other people or play with my good friend.

F36' s response represents a good example of turning adversity into strength, made possible by a process of social acceptance among a group of friends in her residential home. As Ungar (2005: 27) has argued, children who grow up in

children's homes might, in general, be expected to develop better resilience skills compared to other children of the same age and social group.

However, as indicated in the beginning of this section, not every child interviewed fared well in the face of adversity especially when the adversity emanated from an authority figure regarded as unchallengeable and unquestionable in a Confucian philosophical framework. For example F37 aged ten felt she had no choice but to suffer in silence.

F37:……我就是忍著，然後做其他事。假如老師罵我，我就只能忍著阿，寫東西或是畫畫。

F37:……I will bear with it and do some other things. I have to bear with it if teachers scold me. I will write or draw.

This release of negative emotions via individual activities such as writing and drawing was also adopted by M31 who found it an effective way of dealing with the distress caused by bullying.

F40 aged 13 from Home B was willing to share her experiences of confronting difficult issues in her residential care home:

F40: 睡覺……假如是很困難的事, 我會講,會跟人家講. 我會跟同學說,不會跟老師講。因為其實我不太信任我們老師! 嗯,其實不是說不信任,是因為沒辦法每個人都有刻板印

象 對啊 就是 是因為 因為他跟以前不一樣。我不知道是我們不一樣還是 他不一樣 可是我們就覺得說 他越來越忽略我們 有時候我們就會 不太喜歡老師 而且那個老師他講話很刻薄。就比如說你這次做不好 有些老師會婉轉告訴你說可以再做好一點 這樣 可是他就說 做不好啦 奇怪耶 這樣 就用一些負面的話 就會用一些很刺的 詞語來刺你 我就會想放棄 。其實我覺得就不用跟他講覺得沒用 自己會調釋! 不然笑一笑就忘了 而且我很容...我我我很容易就快樂 對 所以我就覺得說 比如很多人覺得看一封信,比如說他跟我說分手,就會很難過這樣 一直哭一直哭哭了一個禮拜 然後還是哭還是哭這樣 但我看了一封信,是說你跟我分手喔. 那我就覺得:好啊 隨便 就這樣子就好了.我無所謂。

F40: Sleep…… If it is very difficult thing, I will talk to someone. I will talk to my classmates rather than care staff. It's because I do not really trust our staff. … it's not about trust; it's about the stereotyped impression that we think now he is different from before. I'm not sure whether we changed or he changed but we all think he ignores us now. Sometimes we don't like him and [the staff member] is so mean. For example, when I do not perform well, some staff will encourage me and tell me that I can do it better. However, he always says some negative things, "it's really strange that you cannot do it well"; or he says some irritating words. Actually I don't think it's necessary to talk about this with him. It's useless and I can adjust myself. I will forget about it with a smile. I'm very easy…very easy to get happy. Unlike many people crying over a breakup letter for a whole week, I don't care about this. I will think it's all right.

Here F40, whose own family was unable to care for her, indicates a sense of distrust and disappointment in the care staff and offers what appears to be a rather defensive response claiming that she finds it easy to feel happy. Yet earlier she had spoken of the advantages of living in residential care on the basis that it offered easy access to companionship and its potential to offer a more enjoyable and happier living environment than that available to children living outside. F40's claims to emotional self-sufficiency must, arguably, be weighed in the wider context of her circumstances. What does seem clear from her story though is that she has a greater degree of trust in the other children, her classmates, than she does in the staff of her children's home.

Aged 15 and more mature, F44 from Home B had been able to develop a clearer understanding and perspective on the issues arising from conflicts and adversities in her care home, as well as her ideas of what she can expect from carers and teachers when she is experiencing difficulties. She particularly appreciates the confidentiality staff are able to offer when she is in need of support and this contrasts with the accounts of other children who were involved in interviews.

F44：我覺得很好阿，老師就是有盡到責任. 當然心靈方面，是比較有缺失的部份啦。

雖然老師也會相對的提出意見或是想法、親身歷練這樣。以我來講，跟老師講過之後，

會覺得心情輕鬆不少。所以我會選擇去跟老師說，跟朋友之間也是可以啦，只是如果

你不要讓事情流傳出去，還是跟老師講比較好。跟你說喔: 其實我都傷心的時間點過了，

再回頭看，就會覺得還好。因為畢竟我在這邊得到的關愛還有一切，勝過那些我當初

被拋下的感覺。(當初被拋下被送進children's home)…..老師都跟我說，我對一些事情都很愛鑽牛角尖，想太多，會造成一些事情得誤會，或是不妥當的處理方式那類的，後來也是真的有遇過，因為我的胡思亂想而造成的傷害。在學校的時候，就是因為有造成一些傷害，所以我後來就努力改善。我就是把事情看的簡單一點，盡量往好處想。我試著學習，當我開始胡思亂想的時候，我就會告訴自己要往好的方面去想。像我之前知道我被拋棄的事情，剛開始想會覺得很難過，父母都不要我，我是個被詛咒的孩子，我不應該出生，但是現在就不會這樣想，我現在過的很幸福，因為這一段關係，讓我遇到更多貴人、更多好的朋友，那我現在開始會往這方面想，以前都是比較負面的，現在不會了，都是比較正面的。我覺得這在這裡也是將心比心啦，但是他們(其他小朋友)都沒有對我將心比心，真是氣死我了，像他們在睡覺的時候我關門都輕輕的，但是他們不是喔，我在睡覺他們就會很吵，要不然就是東西摔來摔去，門碰來碰去的，但是我又不忍心去吵他們，而且他們也吵不醒，我是比較淺眠的，他們一個笑聲，我就會醒來，但是他們是鬧鐘響、警鈴響，都吵不到他們，我就覺得很佩服。

F44: I feel good. Staff are responsible but of course I feel something is still missing, especially in the area of mental health. Staff will provide their opinions and thoughts, or share their experience with me. Based on my experience, I feel better after I have a talk with staff…. It's all right to talk to friends, too. It's just sometimes I don't want my personal issues to get around in public, so it's better to talk to staff. Tell you what, I feel it was not a big deal when I look back after I passed through the sad times. I

have love and care and everything here. It exceeds the moment when I was abandoned. The staff member told me I was prone to think too much and get myself into a dead end, thus it causes misunderstandings or sometimes I deal with issues in an inappropriate way. I did get hurt when I think too much nonsense. It's when I was at school. I try to improve and change after I got hurt. I try to think simple and positive. I am trying to learn to think positively when I think too much. When I just knew that I was abandoned, I was so sad to find out that my parents didn't want me. I was doomed and thought I should not have been born. However, now I think differently. I'm happy now. I met a lot of good and noble people because of this, and I have loads of good friends. I start thinking positively, but I thought negatively previously. However, we need to be more considerate here. I always close the door quietly when they are sleeping, but they don't. They are very noisy when I am sleeping; they throw things around and shut doors loudly. I am very easy to wake up even if they just laugh. Can you believe that even their clock alarms or fire alarms cannot wake them up? I'm so jealous of this.

Of relevance here is F44's family history and her own abandonment. Her experience of residential care has involved 'meeting a lot of good and noble people' who have helped her to develop healthy and constructive relationships with other community members. Having overcome these past difficult experiences she has gained strength to confront other challenges. This quality is recognised by Gilligan (1997:12) who defines resilience as 'that which cushion(s) a vulnerable child from the worst effects of adversity in whatever form it takes and which may help a child or young person to cope, survive and even thrive in the face of great hurt and disadvantage'.

The examples I have given so far paint an encouraging picture of resilience and perseverance being born out of adverse experiences. However, not all the children had fared well enough to reach such a stage, M32, for instance, adopted a suffer-in-silence approach to personal problems. M32, aged ten, was instinctively aware of his capacity to contain negativities on his own, but had been struggling to explore alternatives. In telling me about how he dealt with bullying behaviour from staff he explained:

M32： 我平時不會跟別人講這些事情。我都會很單純 都自己忍住這樣子. 忍不住的話 我就不知道了,但我想我還是會忍住啦 不可能忍不住的。

M32: I normally do not share this experience with other people. I am simple and keep all to myself. I'm not sure what will happen when I cannot control myself, but I think I can keep it. It's impossible that I cannot control it.

Like M32, M39, aged nine, also remained silent when dealing with difficult personal issues. he had an idea that this may not be helpful but he was struggling to make sense of what might be the best solutions when faced with problems.

M39:我自己悶悶的。因為他們一些女生說那個如果男生都會忍耐但是長大都會有憂鬱症。我忘記了！就是好像xx xx……我自己覺得自己這樣不好……為什麼不講會得憂鬱症啊？但是如果給它忘記咧？但是有時候我會找別人講，我會跟我的好朋友講。……有時候老師會幫我處理啦，會幫我想辦法。我記得有一次老師就是跟我聊聊天，然後我們就很開心就給他忘掉。

M39: I keep everything to myself. Some girls said that when boys grow up, they might develop depression if they bear with everything. I'm not sure, ……. I think it's not good for me.…...Why do people have depression if they don't talk about their problems with other people? How about I forget about it? Sometimes I will talk about my problems with others. I will talk about it with my good friends.…... Sometimes teachers help me to deal with my problems. They try to figure it out. I remember one time, they will chat with me and make me happy so that I can forget about those unhappy things.

F41 shared her way of dealing with what she called 'bad moods' (for example when achieving a low mark in school) by swearing. She did not regard this as destructive and unhealthy, but as a natural means of releasing bad emotions. She also spoke of the role of her (single gender) family unit in the Home in helping her to face adversity.

F41：罵髒話還好還好 因為只是發洩，發洩後感覺比較好，總比打人好. 我覺得罵髒話是抒發的一種。感覺啦～ 壞心情的感覺，就是你罵完你會感覺你的心情會好一點點......我們盡量不要被老師聽到......一下子就過啦～只會生氣一下，後來就氣消了～因為我們家比較樂觀啊～我們家的人(指其他住再一起的小朋友) 看你難過或生氣他就會逗你開心啊！所以其實生氣不會生氣太久...如果我們家有些人生氣啊～我們家都已經習慣他生氣了，就不會管他，就他要摔東西也是摔他自己的啊～啊他只剩下他自己

嘛～所以我們也沒辦法，就讓他摔啊～阿如果有時候太大力就會說一下，然後過一陣子之後就好了。

F41: Using bad words is not bad, because I just want to release myself. It's better than having a fight. I think saying bad words is a good way to let yourself out. That's what I feel. When I am in a bad mood, I feel better after swearing…..We try not to let that happen…… It will be gone every soon. I'll just feel upset for a little while and then feel calm. All my family members are optimistic. My family[25] will try to make you happy when they see you are sad or upset. If some members in the family get upset, we'll leave her alone because we get used to that when she gets upset. If she wants to throw something to get her anger out, just throwing her own stuff. We cannot do anything. If it is too much noise, we will remind her and she will feel better after a while.

Touching on the role of care staff and teachers in monitoring children's behaviour, 14 year old M45 expressed his disappointment and frustration:

M45: 老師永遠都是最難溝通的。我永遠不會找他們。都是自己解決。……因為不是什麼重大事情啦.其實我覺得保護自己比較重要，不要講那麼多，管那麼多，反正基本權利有到就好。老師有理就對了，老師永遠都是對的，學生永遠是錯的。發聲反而日子過得更難過。

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[25] referring to the other children she lives with

M45: Teachers are always the most difficult people to communicate with. I will never turn to them. I am always relying on myself……It depends. It cannot be something very important. It is even more important to protect myself. Don't need to think about too much, it's all right as long as I have basic rights. It is right that it only makes sense that teachers have the truth. Teachers always are right and students are always wrong. It will make it harder if I speak up.

Here again we see the implications of Confucian values that rest on strict hierarchical codes and conformity to the will of those with higher status, even where there is a clear sense of social injustice.

We can see that children's own accounts of how they respond to adversity reflect different strategies for surviving rather than thriving (Dominelli, 2012). Coping mechanisms included engaging in activities as a form of distraction, seeking support from friends, and only very occasionally from staff, 'suffering in silence', attempting reconciliation, the use of strong language to express frustration, and 'taking it out' on inanimate toys. From these accounts it is possible to identify five of Daniel and Wassell's (2002) six domains of resilience. Reliance on friends was the most commonly reported way of overcoming adversity, for example F34 who explained how spending time with friends gave her a sense of belonging and helped her to overcome difficult emotions and move on. Social competencies were also important for several children, for example F40 who described how if he was facing a very difficult situation: *I will talk to someone. I will talk to my classmates.* The use of talents and interests to deal with adversity was also clearly present in several children's accounts. M31, for example explained that if he was feeling unhappy: *I'll*

find something pleasant to do, like drawing, singing or doing some exercise, and M42 who referred to *'Playing basketball. It helps to calm my mind.* A secure base was rarely mentioned, though F40 whose account indicated resilience linked to social competence also implied a sense of confidence and positive self-esteem suggesting a secure base: Talking about facing difficult situations she explained: *I will forget about it with a smile. I'm very easy…very easy to get happy.* Only one young person, F44, aged 15 who had lived in Home B for three years, offered any explicit reference to the idea of positive values. She talked of having met good and noble people in the Home who had helped her to develop healthy and constructive relationships with other community members. F44 was the only young person in either Home who referred to support from care staff in overcoming adversity. She had been abandoned by her parents and had come to see the Home as a place of safety.

The sample is not large enough to claim any significance in the occurrence of these reactions in terms of gender or indeed any differences between Home A and Home B, though in these examples it was two boys who were struggling to see any alternative to suffering in silence. While some children freely spoke of crying and feeling unhappy, others wanted to show that they were strong enough to deal with the difficulties they faced alone.

With one or two exceptions the children did not feel they could trust or rely on staff to help them to deal with adversity. As Houston (2010: 67) argued from his study of children's resilience building in residential care in Northern Ireland, the role of staff must not merely be to provide a structured space for children where strict discipline

is enforced. It must also be to assimilate and adapt the theoretical concept of resilience and support the children in the practical development of resilience. In the Taiwanese context, where family harmony is valued above all else, it seems that consideration must be given to ways of supporting children to develop resilience that will minimize, rather than reinforce, the negative experience of having lost their primary protective structure, their family.

5.4 Concluding Discussion

In both Homes in this study children's views and experiences of happiness and unhappiness are complex and multi-layered. This study reveals the limitations of residential care in its present form as an institutional solution to meet the emotional as well as the physical needs of children whose families cannot care for them. The children in this study were aware of the material benefits they derived from life in the Homes and they derived pleasure from the friendship and companionship that living with other children could bring. But they were largely resentful and unhappy about issues of discipline, bullying and personal injustice. They struggled to find ways of reconciling unhappy experiences through displacement activities, seeking support from friends or suffering in silence, rarely feeling able to seek support from staff who were seen principally as disciplinarians and were portrayed by some as 'gaolers' depriving the children of their freedom.

The lack of capacity among staff to respond to the emotional health needs of the children, particularly when faced with the bullying associated with unbalanced power relations, presents a serious concern and it is noteworthy that during the course of this study Yen (2010) raised similar concerns about what is perceived as a new

concern in Taiwan – the effect of bullying on the mental health of children and adolescents. While it can be argued that children in residential care are developing resilience in response to adversity, it is important to remember that children in Taiwanese institutions are at a higher risk of failing to develop resilience since their principle protective system, the family, is not available (Masten, 2001) and there was little evidence of attempts in either Home to compensate for the role of the family in this vital aspect of healthy child development. Resilience has long been recognized as being clearly associated with happiness and involves not only the capacity of individuals *to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being,* but also the capacity of *the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways* (Ungar, 2008:225). This adds further weight to the argument that greater emphasis should be placed on support for children in residential care to navigate their way to health sustaining resources.

In the context of a Confucian dominated society, the development of resilience, in pursuit of happiness, forms part of everyday family life, something that children in residential care cannot access. Without this protective system children are likely to require additional support to develop their own inner resources to withstand adversity. This in turn suggests that residential care staff require greater understanding of the risks of mental health problems (Yen, 2010) to which children without family support are likely to be exposed.

Addressing questions of happiness and resilience among children in residential care is to search for appropriate solutions to what are relatively new problems in

Taiwanese society. What the children's drawings and interviews in this study have revealed is what makes them feel happy and unhappy and how they deal with the unhappiness they experience, not simply through the loss of their own family, but through the behaviours of staff and peers in residential care who have the power to contribute to a child's happiness or, as we have seen, to a child's unhappiness.

In the following chapter I turn to an explanation of children's understandings and experiences of children's rights in order to develop our own understanding of the potential of children's rights to influence resilience and happiness.

Chapter Six

Children's Understandings and Experiences of Children's Rights in

Residential Care Homes

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I continue the investigation of the data collected from children in the two Homes through participatory group activities and semi-structured interviews to address the second research question: What are children's understandings and perceptions of their own rights in residential care home settings? In section 6.2, my focus is on children's broad understandings of children's rights as illustrated through participatory group activities. In section 6.3, drawing on interview data, I investigate how the children perceived their own rights as individuals in their respective care homes. Section 6.4 concludes the chapter.

6.2 Children's Understandings of Children's Rights – Participatory Group Activities

Hodgkin and Newell (2002:166) note that 'rights are of little use to individuals unless individuals are aware of them'. My decision to explore children's rights in children's homes from children's own perspectives draws on the new sociology of childhood (Prout and James, 1997) but was also influenced by article 12 of the UNCRC that addresses children's rights to express their views freely in all matters that affect them with due weight to the age and maturity of the child. However, among others, Freeman (2000) has pointed to significant gaps in the realisation of this particular right. Taiwan's declared interest in promoting the UNCRC, despite its non

recognition by the United Nations, has led to the publication of literature about the Convention, consistent with article 42 of the Convention that obliges governments to make the Convention known to adults and children, and articulates the role of adults in helping children to learn about their rights. I used a children's picture book introducing the framework of the Convention to stimulate thought, and to set the tone of the discussion as objectively as possible among the children participating in the group activities. The only previous exposure to the topic of children's rights was in Home A where a drawing about the UNCRC was displayed on a wall in the entrance lobby (see Text Box 6.1). But despite its prominent placement, the children did not appear to have noticed its contents, and there was little evidence that teachers or residential care staff had been involved in supporting the children in learning about their rights as indicated in article 42 of the Convention.

Text Box 6.1 Child Rights Poster: Home A

Declaration of the Rights of the Child

1. I will not be treated differently.
2. I can keep my secrets from everyone else.
3. I can express my opinions in all kinds of ways.
4. I can enjoy all life's necessities: food, clothes, accommodation and transportation.
5. I have the right to enjoy adequate nutrition, medical care and treatment.
6. I have a right to education.
7. I have a right to enjoy a safe, healthy and happy life.
8. I have a right to have the opportunity to attend social gatherings, leisure and cultural activities.
9. I have the right to enjoy sufficient care and protection.
10. I have a right to enjoy all the rights conferred by law.

In the second part of the participatory group activities, following a brief introduction to the UNCRC, the children were asked to continue working in small groups to discuss

and express their ideas about children's rights in a second drawing. As with the drawings of happiness (see chapter 5) these helped me to gain insight into the children's understandings of, and views about, their rights in the context of the children's homes.

As the children presented and explained their drawings I took notes and used their images and my supplementary notes to identify their thoughts about, and understandings of, children's rights. As might be expected, there was a clear, though not exclusive focus on areas of their lives where the children felt they did not enjoy rights: privacy (article 16), being heard/consulted (article 12), equal treatment (article 2), and free time for play and activities of their own choice (article 31). By contrast there was recognition and acknowledgment of the right to the means for survival, especially food (article 6), that was met in their Homes and the right to education (articles 28 and 29). My purpose here is not to develop an evaluation of the children's experiences against each provision of the UNCRC but rather to develop an understanding of their sense of entitlement in order to inform policy, practice and future research in this area. What was clear from the drawings produced in this part of the study, children identified closely with notions of freedom, of discipline and punishment, and raised issues that linked with the theme of love that featured strongly in the drawings on happiness, and the right to express emotions. The articulation of these themes cuts across the rights of children as set out in the Convention.

In the following section I use seven drawings from six children's groups that illustrate the range of children's engagement with children's rights and the key themes that

emerged during the process of analysis in which I drew on all the drawings. In the remaining part of this section, I present the data in their raw form and use these as well as my notes from the children's presentations as the basis of the analysis that follows.

Group A4

> **F29** aged 17 has been resident in the children's home for almost all of her 17 years. She has adopted the role of a big sister who looks after the other children. She will be required to leave the children's home when she is 18 years old and legally becomes an adult.
>
> **F18** is aged 11 and has been in the Home for four years.
>
> **F7** is also 11 years of age and has been in the Home for two and half years. She is the only child in the sample from a minority ethnic group with one Vietnamese parent.
>
> **F5** is 8 years old and has lived in the Home for nearly 2 years. She has a brother living in the same Home.
>
> **F10** is aged 7 and has lived in the Home with her twin sister for 3 years.

Drawing 6.1 Children's Rights - Group A4
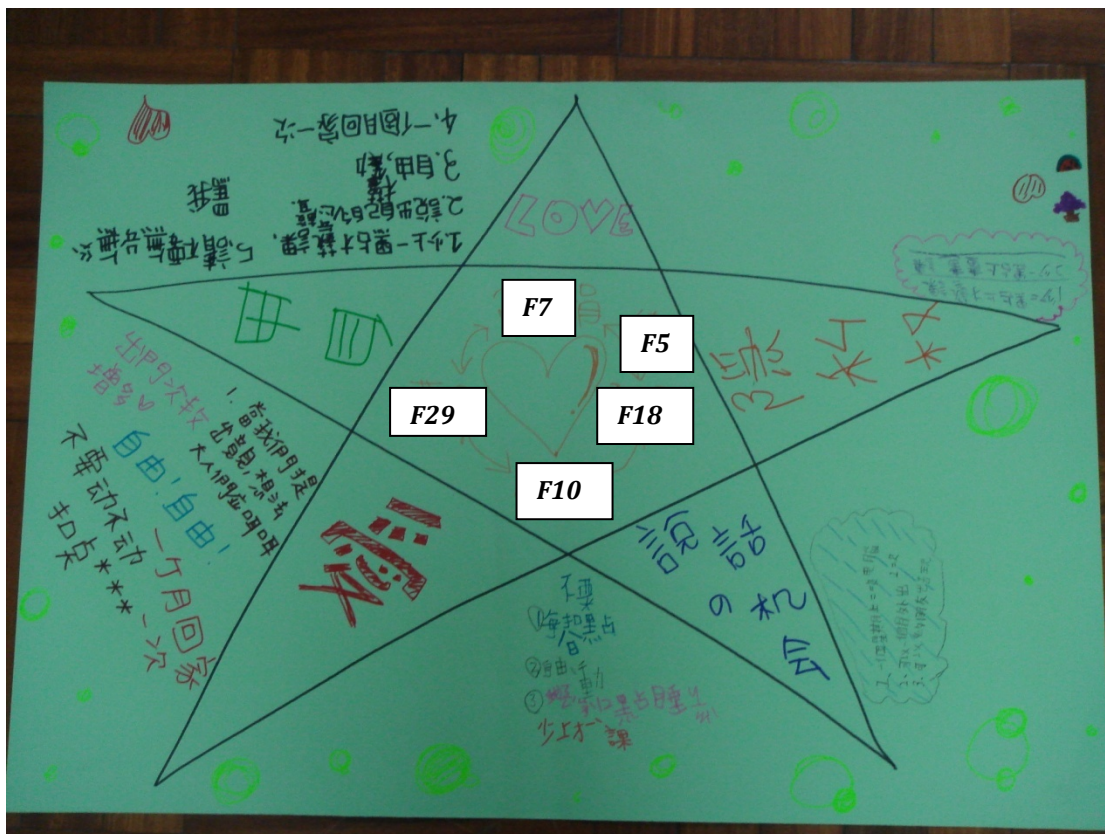
Group A4 represented their views of children's rights by drawing a five-pointed star at the centre of their drawing that contained their collective views, with individual contributions outside the star. It was clear during their presentation that the girls in

this group were proud in their ownership of their individual contributions. But they had also succeeded in undertaking a constructive, collaborative exercise. Inside the star members of the group identified four rights-related issues. From the top and moving clockwise these are *privacy (隱私权), the opportunity to speak (be heard)* (說話の机会), 'love' (愛) and freedom （自由）. The emphasis on love is reflected in the centre of the star that contains a heart and the nicknames of each member linked by two directional arrows. The individual contributions to this drawing fell into three themes: *freedom (自由)*, strict regime of discipline and punishment (expressed indirectly in relation to a variety of structured obligations, restrictions and punishments), and 'being listened to': (*想法 大人們應聽聽 - adults should listen to us).*

All five members of this group referred to either a lack of free time to enjoy their own interests or to the highly structured regime of the Home. F10 referred to the dominance of organized group activities such as doing homework and housework at set times while three members of the group referred specifically to what they felt was *too much time spent on music or art classes (少一點上才藝課)* at which attendance was required. They expressed a desire for more *free time to play with friends: 可以約 朋友出去玩* (F18), and the opportunity to go outside the Home including *visits to their birth families: 一個月回家一次* (F7)。

A second set of experiences expressed by this group was linked to discipline within the Home. F10, F7 and F29 all referred to the points system that was used to

reinforce discipline. F10 explained that points were deducted when children infringed the rules but were never added for good behaviour. She felt this to be unfair and discouraging because it implied too much focus on the negative and too little on constructive support for positive behaviour. F7 and F29 made explicit reference to punishments that included denial of visits to their birth families.

The third set of comments related to a sense of 'not being heard'. This related not only to hearing words, but to a sense that staff were not responsive to the expression of emotion. For example, F7 wrote: *說出自己的心聲* expressing her desire to be able to talk about what she thinks and feels. She also expressed a sense of being unheard when blamed and punished for infringement of the rules that she had not committed: *請不要無ㄩㄢˊ無ㄍㄨˋ罵我' (Please do not blame me for no reason).*

Analysing A4's drawing, chosen because of its clarity, I became acutely aware of the positionality of this group of girls, who were attempting to engage objectively with the notion of rights as discussed in the briefing session, but quickly moved to express their own subjective experiences, particularly where they felt their rights were being denied. This tension echoed Wright's argument that 'there can be unclear boundaries between child as subject and child as spectator, between child as creator and child as created' (Wright, 2012: 47-48). Group A4 gave central importance to the theme of love, with the right to love and be loved appearing in their drawing. A child's right to be loved, not expressed explicitly in the UNCRC, is the subject of current debate in the field of philosophy with Liao (2006, 2012) and Cowden (2012) the principal protagonists. I return to this debate later in the chapter. Privacy, (UNCRC article 1), for this group, referred to infringements on the part of the adult staff who

behaved as though they had a right to inspect children's notebooks and personal possessions in the individual space provided for each child. As Dowty (2008) has argued in relation to children in England, privacy is about autonomy and control over personal boundaries. And it was clear that this group of girls in particular felt strongly enough to comment on what they felt were unjustified intrusions into their personal space. While I did not seek to discuss such behaviour with staff and must, therefore, tread with caution, it seems likely that, as with intrusions into children's privacy with the use of information technology in England, efforts to monitor children that are justified in terms of child protection may also produce some unintended consequences. In Home A these intrusions were associated with a lack of trust of the adults who were charged with the children's care and protection.

References to freedom were associated with: i) a desire for freedom from the strict regime of the Home in terms of enforced times to get up, for homework, housework and bed time as well as required attendance at classes outside the school curriculum they found uninteresting, ii) freedom to spend more time out of the Home and greater ability to choose activities that reflected personal interests and iii) freedom to express thoughts, feelings and opinions and to have these actively heard by adults.

Group A6, produced two drawings but they were presented as a whole with no attribution of individual contributions.

Group A6

M11 is aged 15 and has been resident in the Home A for 8 years.

M14 aged 10 has lived in the Home for 5 years.

M16 aged 12 has lived here for 1year.

M19 aged 16 has lived in the Home for 8 years.

Drawing 6.2 Children's Rights - Group A6 (1)

Drawing 6.3 Children's Rights - Group A6 (2)
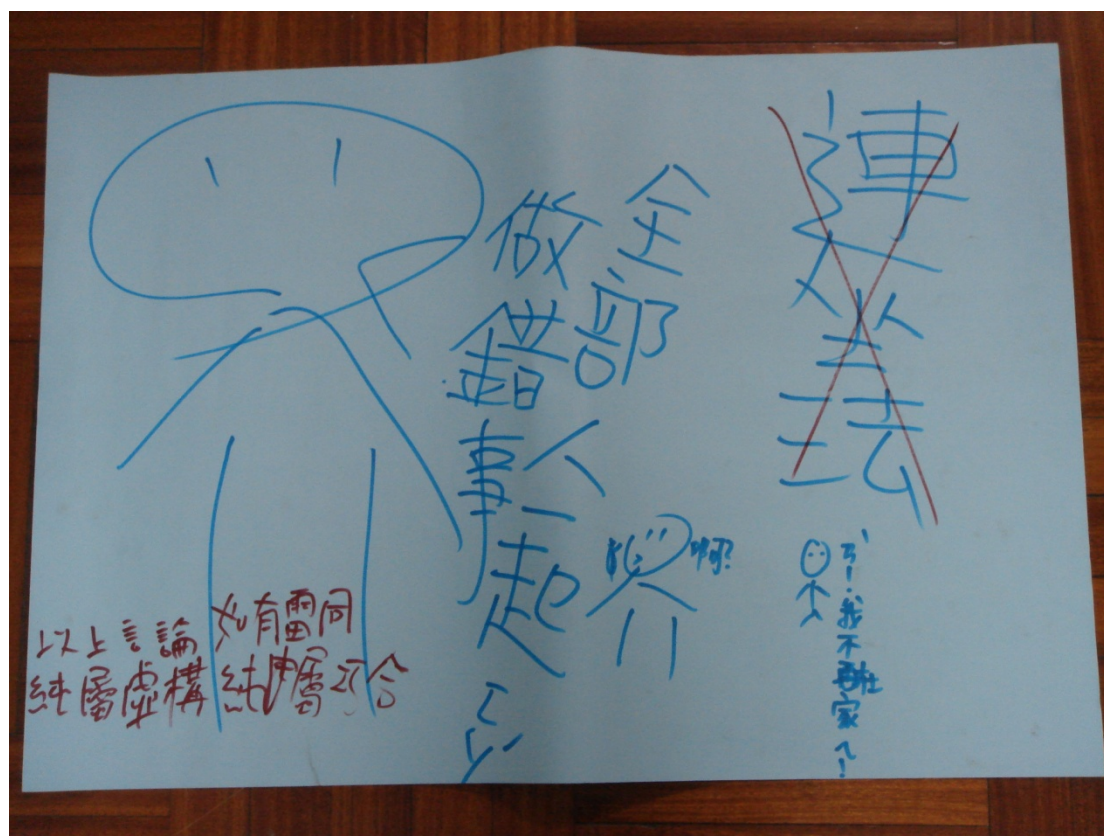
These two drawings convey a strong sense of negativity with the participants possibly taking the opportunity to express their frustration and raw resentment associated with what they experienced as the confinement and disciplinary regime of the Home. The first drawing clearly depicts a sense of imprisonment – the child behind bars saying: 放我出去玩~~ *(let me out to play).* Two figures at the top right corner are in conflict saying respectively: 我想… - 吃屎 *(I want to ……eat shit)* signifying refusal. Further representations refer to the *confiscation (徵收)* of personal possessions, a request for food: 我想吃 *(I want to eat) …吃屁' (eat fart)* again signifying refusal, and a request by a child for reasons: 為什麼 *(why?)* only to be met with the response 沒有為什麼

(there is no reason why). Two sets of Chinese writing 因為太多了，所以省略~~

(Because there are too many (to list) therefore omit) and: 不勝枚舉~~ *(too many to*

list them all) refer to there being too many rights and issues related to their

experiences of children's rights to include in the drawing.

The second drawing refers to a sense of injustice when blame is attributed and

punishments meted out to groups rather than individuals: 做錯事全部人一起罰 *(One*

does anything wrong, everyone gets punished for it). This notion of group punishment

(連坐法) has its origins in Chinese military law when communities were divided into

small groups that were collectively punished for the wrong doings of individuals within

the group. This group focussed exclusively on their subjective experiences with no

direct reference to children's rights. Interestingly their second drawing was completed

with the phrase: 以上言論如有雷同，純屬虛構 純屬巧合 *(The above remarks, if of*

any resemblance to the real situation, are purely coincidental and fictional), an

expression commonly used by adult authors creating a distance between their written

word to avoid any responsibility for having misrepresented identifiable individuals.

Overall themes of this group's depiction of their experiences of children's rights

include the right to play, to be listened to and to be judged fairly. By contrast to

Groups A4 and A6, A1's drawing is mainly text based with each child using a different

colour pen although the individual pieces of text are not attributed to individuals within

the group.

Group A1

M4 aged 13 has lived in the Home for nine years. His twin brother also lives in this Home.

M6 aged 16 has lived in the Home for seven years. He has seven siblings, but is the only one living in this Home.

M8 aged 10 has lived in the Home for three years. He has a younger sister who also lives in this Home.

M23 is 14 and has lived in Home A for three years.

M25 aged 11 has lived in the Home for one year following some time in foster care after the death of his father.

Drawing 6.4 Children's Rights - Group A1

The themes emerging most strongly from this drawing include freedom in a general sense: *放我自由. 拜託. 謝謝 (Let me free. Please. Thank you very much)* with other contributions referring to freedom in more specific ways. One child referred to the notion of participation expressing the view that: *活動要經過我們的意見和參加 (activity planning should involve our opinion and get our participation),* and another made a plea not to be forced to study. Privacy was referred to through the following expressions:

不要亂動私人的物品 (Do not move personal stuff); 不要亂動我的皮卡丘 不然他會電你喔 (Do not touch my Pikachu or else he will electrify you!); 不要收我的 MP3 MP4 (Do not take away my MP3 and MP4 as punishment) and 只要講就好不要沒收任何東西 (Oral warning is enough. Do not confiscate). The theme of punishment is further referred to, as with Group A6, in terms of: i) the negativity of deducting points: *不要扣點(0 點) (Do not deduct points from us (zero points) - 要加點(20 點) (they should reward us with points (20 points); ii)* deducting pocket money: *不要亂扣零用錢 (Do not deduct my pocket money) (!)* and iii) punishment at will: *不要亂處罰我，不然我會生氣，不然我會躲起來 (Do not punish me at will, or else I will get angry and hide).*

This particular expression focuses not only on the sense of injustice felt by this child but also offered an insight into the implications of the exercise of adult power over children: *or else I will get angry and hide.* But this drawing also displays strong

recognition of gender and age and the differential responsibilities ascribed to older children and to boys that members of this groups felt to be less than fair:

然後搬東西不要叫男生搬 (*Do not just ask the boys to carry stuff*)

不要什麼事都叫大的做，應該叫小的做 (Please do not just ask older children to do everything, should get the younger ones involved too)

輕的叫小的搬 或是重的是大 (The younger ones can move something light and the heavy ones can be left for the older children)

Group A5's drawing, prepared by five boys between eight and 14 reflected, and was the only one to reproduce directly, material shown in the picture book on the UNCRC, including the depiction of figures.

Group A5

> **M2** aged 14 has been resident in the home for nearly nine years. He has a significant talent for art, which the staff have actively supported to further develop his art skills. He does not like to spend time with other children.
>
> **M17** aged 13 has a twin brother in the same Home. As with M2 he does not mix well with the other children.
>
> **M24** is aged 12, and has lived in the Home for 2 years. By contrast with M2 and M17 he is outgoing and likes to help his friends.
>
> **M15** is aged 9 and has a sister in the same Home of whom he is very protective.
>
> **M12** aged 8 has been resident in the Home for approximately two years and made few friends.

Drawing 6.5 Children's Rights - Group A5

Alongside their drawing they listed seven ideas about rights:

1.   *'Identity'（身份）*

2.   *'Freedom'（自由）*

3.   *'Opportunities'（機會）*

4.   *'Equality'（平等）*

5.   *'Rights'（權利）*

6.   *'Privacy'（隱私）*

7.   *'I am very special~~' (我很特別~~)*

The drawings of *'Strong' (壯), 'Fat' (肥) and 'Slim' (瘦)* characters side by side were explained as indicating that everyone is an individual and special.

This group of boys responded to the request to illustrate their ideas about, and their experiences of, rights in a seemingly straightforward way. Their presentation gave few clues here, though it should be noted that the two older boys aged 13 and 14 did not mix well with other children in the Home and this may have affected group dynamics. What is clear though is that they had retained and reproduced information from the briefing session and, perhaps unknowingly, chosen to produce drawings signifying different manifestations of power, based on representations of status (a crowned King), money and body size.

> **Group B10**
>
> **F34** is aged 13 and has been in the residential care home for 7 years.
>
> **F35** is aged 12 and has been in the residential care home for 1 year.
>
> **F44** is aged 15 and has been in the residential care home for 2 years.
>
> **F48** is aged 18 and has been in the residential care home for 8 years.

Drawing 6.6 Children's rights - Group B10

Group B10 had not been able to participate in the group activities focussing on happiness. The group consisted of four girls aged 12-18 and their drawings, assisted by one member of the group who was seen to have a talent for art, were accompanied by text making the children's meanings more accessible. The group's meanings were also made more accessible by an extremely articulate presentation of the drawing. Of the 14 drawings, freedom appeared directly in two places referring to

'*freedom of space*' (自由空間大) and '*freedom of speech*' (言論空間多) illustrated by

two figures having a conversation: *'Hey let me tell you this…' (ㄟ 我跟你 say)* - *'Of*

course!' (就是ㄚ). Two further illustrations refer to 'outings' (外出) and 'sleep' (睡覺)

illustrated by a figure of a child 'snoozing' (zzz..), areas of concern that were also

been expressed by other groups in terms of a desire for more outings outside the

Home and to be allowed to stay in bed longer in the morning. Arguably, reference to

'a lot of pocket money' (錢領得多), also relates to freedom in its power to confer

choice. A final freedom-related illustration is that of a young person riding a scooter

and this was the contribution of the 17 year old who was looking forward to being

able to ride a scooter when she was 18.

Rights to '*play*' (玩), illustrated by a child playing basketball, to '*watch TV*' (看 TV),

and to '*go to school*' (上學) relate respectively to articles 31 and 28 of the UNCRC. In

the context of the Home, time for play and for sleep were experienced as being highly

regimented, while going to school was presented as a right they enjoyed. The

question of sleep is complex with potential links to children's right to relax (UNCRC

article 31) and to healthy development (UNCRC article 6), but the routine of the

Homes involved set bed times and getting up times for children. Those who, for

whatever reason, wished to continue sleeping/relaxing for longer, were disciplined,

sometimes painfully as shown by a younger child in chapter 5, into complying with

the timetable of the Home. *Privacy* (隱私) appeared just once and interestingly one

member of this group referred to the right to *'cry'* (哭) and express emotions. One

further contribution, *'stay blank' (呆),* was explained as a perceived freedom to do

nothing.

Finally, two elements of the drawing referred to the difficulty some children

experienced in trying to express their views about children's rights, a topic that was

new to them. One explained: *'I have not thought about anything yet'* (我還沒想到)

while the other explained the rights she wanted were too many and she was unable

to list them all (*我可以說我的權力已經太多了…說不完…)* She illustrated this thought

with a picture of a child sitting on the floor staring at a spider's web.

The final drawing. produced by Group B11, consisted of a list of rights under
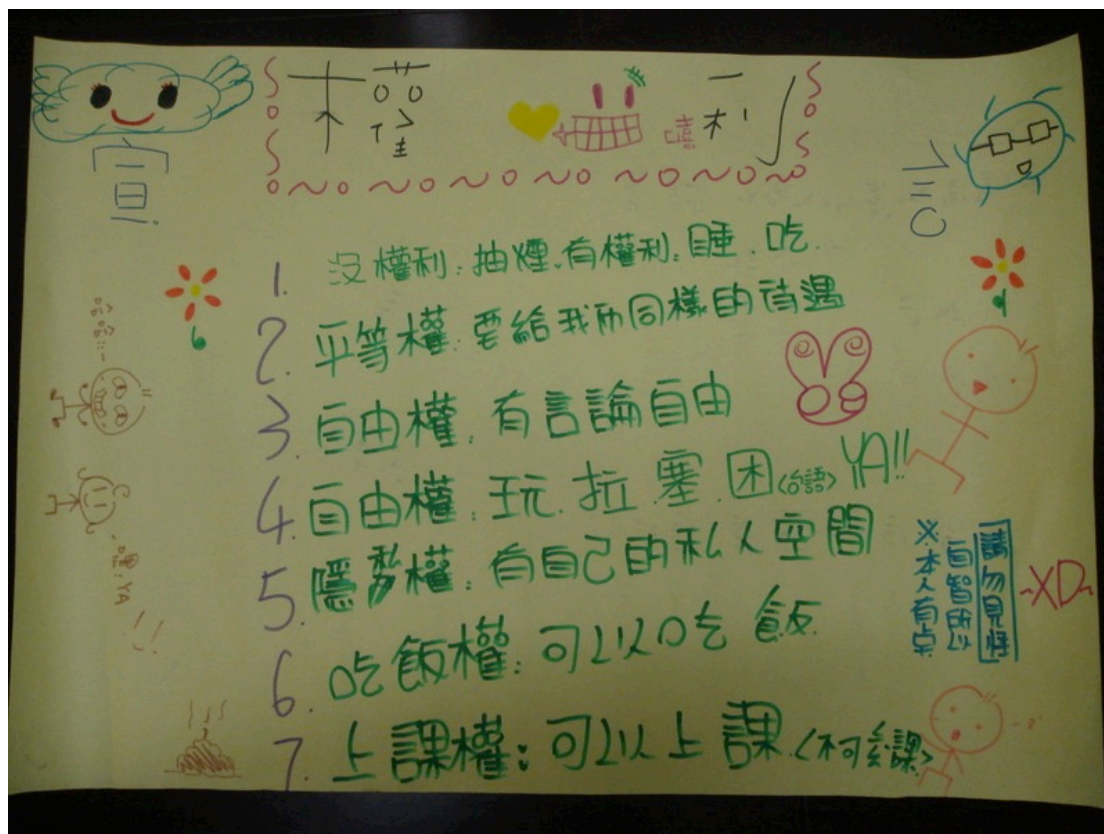
Group B11

> **F30** is aged 7 and has been in the residential care home for 2 years.
>
> **F38** is aged 11 and has been in the residential care home for 2 years.
>
> **F47** is aged 11 and has been in the residential care home for 1 year.

a banner *'Rights Declaration' (權利宣言)*. The drawings have little apparent

connection with the text.

Drawing 6.7 Children's rights drawing from Home B Group11

The rights listed are as follows:

1. There is no right of smoking; there are human rights of eating and sleeping. 沒權利: 抽煙; 有權利: 吃、睡

2. The Right of Equality: the same treatment for every one of us 平等權: 要給我們同樣的待遇

3. The Right of Freedom: there is freedom of speech 自由權:有言論自由

4. The Right of Freedom: play, poo, sleep (in Taiwanese) YA! 自由權:玩拉塞困(台語)YA!

5. The Right of Privacy: Having a personal space 隱私權: 有自己的私人空間

6. The Right of Eating: Being able to eat 吃飯權:可以吃飯

7. The Right of Going to Classes: Being able to go to classes; no right to skip class. 上課權: 可以上課 不可翹課

Point 7 also refers to being a 'bit silly' and asking observers not to take offence.

This group had applied messages from the introductory session to their lives in the Home to identify rights they enjoyed and those they did not. For example, they distinguished between survival rights (eating and sleeping) and smoking. They acknowledged the freedoms they enjoyed whilst also identifying a lack of rights in relation to equal treatment, play and privacy. This group also identified the contradiction relating to children's rights in that while they enjoyed the right to go to school, they did not enjoy the right not to go to school. This is an argument that has been made about children's rights more generally (Jeffs, 2010) and serves as a good example of the ambiguous nature of participatory rights as adults exercise power over children in all sorts of ways that affect their daily lives under the guise of taking

responsibility for them and acting in their best interests, while confining the meaning of best interests to adult thinking and logic.

6.3 Interpreting Children's Understandings and Experiences of Rights Through Participatory Group Activities

The children's representations and explanations of children's rights in both Homes showed variations in form and understandings of what children's rights should mean in daily life. Some groups used the opportunity to produce drawings to represent a wide range of rights they enjoyed as well as representations of rights they did not enjoy. The novelty of the idea of children's rights and the explicit introduction of children's rights through the use of a picture book appeared to stimulate deep thinking among some children, whilst others appear to have undertaken the exercise as a form of repetition. However, the majority showed that their drawings were based on their experiences of daily life in the two Homes and, for many, on the areas of daily life that they felt most strongly about. With the exception of survival rights and right to education which were openly acknowledged as being met, the focus was largely on rights they felt were infringed in the context of the residential settings in which they were living. There was significant overlap between the groups with the exception of the girls in group A4, the only group to include 'love' as a clear focus of concern and the boys in group A1 who drew attention to (un) fairness in terms of the allocation of greater responsibilities on the basis of age and gender. The older boys in this group felt they were left to bear greater responsibilities than younger children in the Home. In line with normative expectations, that being of secondary school age (from age 13) confers greater responsibility, older boys in the

Home were expected to help with physical tasks such as receiving and carrying boxes of donated food and moving rubbish bins ready for collection. This was the focus of concern for the older boys in Group A1.[26]

A key finding was the children's lack of awareness of children's rights even among those in Home A where a drawing displaying information was displayed in the lobby. This has implications for the government and organisations that claim to be promoting children's rights in that it seems clear that measures taken to make the Convention known to adults and children (article 42) have not been effective, at least in the Homes in this study. In the remainder of this section I examine each of the rights and cross cutting themes in turn:

6.3.1 Privacy: The right to privacy was mentioned most frequently across the participatory activity groups. Privacy was understood in terms of interference with private thoughts and recordings in notebooks and in terms of confiscation of personal belongings such as toys and MP3 players. There is little existing research on the question of children's privacy although many Western countries identify respect for personal space as contributing to the dignity of children in residential care settings and the quality of care provided. And wider concerns with children's right to privacy, researched in the UK, suggest that there are clear tensions between

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[26] Other differential responsibilities based on age and gender reflect the highest value placed on educational achievement in Taiwan, particularly for elder male siblings who experience higher expectations linked to their future responsibilities for the welfare of the family. Children of secondary school age are expected to support and encourage younger siblings to high educational achievement, for example by helping them with homework. This responsibility however also brings a sense of pride, and helping younger children in the Homes was considered an honour. With the exception of carrying goods and moving bins there were no other reported or observed gender-specific roles for boys and girls in the two Homes in this study. In a rapidly changing society, with changing family structures and patterns of employment, traditional gender roles have been subject to significant shifts in Taiwan although gender based hierarchies of family responsibility remain strong (Cheng, 2006; Cheung, 1996).

child protection and privacy that lead adults (from policy makers to practitioners to parents) to wish to intrude on children's private spaces in the belief that they are keeping them safe. The experience of the children in the two Homes in this study was that intrusions into their privacy were used as a means of control, discipline and punishment, a cross cutting theme that I address in the following pages.

6.3.2 Being Heard and Being Involved in Decision Making: There were two senses in which the right to be heard were expressed. One related to the right to be able to make independent and autonomous decisions over how 'free' time was spent with many children experiencing the institutional arrangements for additional classes and limited personal choice over the use of free time. Here we see an example of what has been referred to as the continuing gap between the rhetoric and reality of article 12 manifested in unresolved power issues between adults and children **(**Reyaert, Bouverne-de-Bie & Vandevelde, 2009: 522)**.** As Mayall (2012) has argued, adult domination of time at home and in school means that children often have to argue for free time, something that children enjoy and in which they learn to take responsibility.

The second sense of being heard was derived from two of the groups whose drawings are featured in this chapter who made reference to the right to express feelings and emotions. There is certainly a tension here in terms of the cultural value placed on facing challenges and overcoming adversity independently, without disturbing a wider sense of harmony. The closest study of residential care in Taiwan, albeit of the perspectives of residential care staff (Huang, 2002) indicated the importance of children's voices in a context in which there was a lack of continuity of

residential care staff, a lack of love, and a lack of self confidence among children. And in the Western context of Scottish residential care, Heron and Chakrabarti (2003) found that many staff felt powerless to address the issues and problems facing children. Without referring to the priority given to questions of discipline, Heron and Chakrabarti concluded that thinking in social work at that time left staff ill-equipped to confront the realities they were facing and by not taking steps to empower staff, residential child care practice was, inadvertently, failing to prioritize the needs of the children. The expression of emotion in terms of talking about feelings or 'the right to cry' and responding to children's emotional needs requires emotional labour. And whether in the privacy of the home or in the work place emotional labour is widely perceived as unskilled and stigmatised as emotional with significant implications for women who, by and large, are those who engage in areas of work involving emotional labour (James, 1989). There is no published reference to the notion of emotional labour in the context of caring for children as employment in Taiwan, nor indeed any that I can trace relating to other Confucian cultures. However, Wang (2004), writing about the role of the Taiwanese government in child care policy has cast a spotlight on the patriarchal nature of the political ideology that underpins State policy on child care and the consequently low status and poor employment protection ascribed to early childhood educators who are, for the most part, women. Her recommendations are for better training and employment security to raise the status of child care work.

6.3.3 Equal Treatment: Relating to article 2 of the Convention that addresses non-discrimination and the right not to be treated unfairly on any basis, groups of children were able to identify and express their own experiences of unequal, and what they

perceived to be unfair, treatment. Group A1 was the only group that raised questions of unfair treatment on the basis of age and gender, referring to the greater responsibilities placed on older children and on boys, mirroring the patriarchal nature of Taiwanese society and the importance placed on age hierarchies with specific responsibilities placed on older children and siblings with corresponding respect expected from younger children and siblings. Recognizing unequal treatment in these ways is to recognize the inequality that is deeply woven into the social fabric of Taiwanese culture and may therefore be perceived as threatening by adult staff members who, as mentioned above, may find themselves ill-equipped to support children with the problems they are experiencing.

More widely expressed across the groups was a sense of unequal treatment in terms of unfair punishment either when a whole group would be punished for the wrong doing of an individual, for example the confiscation of MP3 players, or when punishment was meted out to an individual who had been wrongly identified as a wrong doer. With references to being blamed for no reason, the negativity of a points system used to punish rather than to reward, and the denial of access to family visits as punishment, this cross cutting theme goes beyond the right to equal treatment and focuses sharply upon children's sense of justice. While this study has not been one of 'institutions' per se, it has been possible through the children's own representations to see that some have experienced the Homes as places of confinement where their freedoms are strictly controlled and their behaviour controlled by reliance on negative rather than positive reinforcement.

6.3.4 Freedom: another cross cutting theme, freedom was referred to in terms of the desire to spend more time outside the confines of the Children's Homes, and in relation to the specific right to play and relax (article 31). Molinari et al's (2002) study of children's rights in educational relationships in Italy also found that freedom and autonomy were important elements in understandings of children's rights, but that these were held in tension with an alternative understanding of children's rights being concerned with child protection that emanates from adults' perspectives on children's rights. Holloway & Valentine's (2000) work in the UK on spatiality in relation to childhood suggested that the spaces children occupy, such as schools and homes can be usefully conceptualized as porous, rather than bounded, spaces that are shaped by their 'webs of connections' that inform practices inside the spaces. In this way they stress the importance of recognizing different understandings of spatiality in different cultural contexts and particular spaces such as children's residential care settings. Interestingly, their metaphor of a web was also used by a child in group B10 who could not list the rights she wanted as they were too many, and she represented herself sitting and staring outwards at a spider's web

6.3.5 Education: The right to education was not questioned by any group but group B11 identified the lack of the corresponding right not to go to school and there were wider expressions of dissatisfaction with required attendance at extra-curricular art and music classes. Again we see an overlap with children's concern to have greater access to free time to follow their own interests.

6.3.6 Survival and Healthy Development: were similarly acknowledged although in yet another overlap, the question of sleep was raised in two groups. While sufficient

sleep is required for healthy development this was not how it was perceived by the children who were more concerned with what they perceived to be the highly regimented nature of the Homes' timetables with set times for going to bed and getting up that allowed little autonomy which has been argued elsewhere as being necessary for the development of responsibility and skills in decision making (Mayall, 2012).

6.3.7 Love: this was a theme that was raised in the previous group activities that focused on representations of happiness, but was also depicted explicitly in the drawing of group A4. They further elaborated this concept in the presentation discussion time as the need to feel cared for and to grow in an environment full of warmth. The UNCRC does not make any direct reference to love or a right to be loved. Yet Huang (2002) in her study of staff perspectives of children's rights in children's Homes in Taiwan, concluded that the children lacked love alluding to the importance of love in children's lives in residential care homes. The philosopher Mathew Liao (2006) has recently argued that a child's right to be loved should be viewed as a human right and builds an argument around evidence of i) the outcomes of the failure to provide children with a loving environment, for example through studies of children in institutions, ii) the potential to develop the emotional capacity to love that counters arguments that love cannot be a 'commandable duty', and iii) the existence of associate duties whereby even if a child's parents cannot provide love, then others in society bear this responsibility. Liao places love high up in a list of priorities based on further evidence of children's failure to thrive, or even death, despite meeting basic needs such as food and shelter, as a result of lack of love. Counter arguments from Cowden, not about the desirability of love but about its

commandability, have met with further counter argument, in the philosophical tradition, from Liao (2012). Here he sets out the empirical and theoretical basis of his argument drawing on different studies[27] that point to the vital importance of secure attachment and warmth and responsiveness (p6): i) love provides trust in others, ii) love provides trust in oneself; iii) love provides knowledge of how to love and iv) love provides a child with a motivation to develop. Without using the word, Liao suggests that love is an important ingredient in being able to develop resilience in the face of adversity. The importance of this debate in the context of my study is that children in residential care settings are aware of a lack of what can be described as love in Liao's terms, and some have taken the opportunity of being heard in the course of this research to articulate that love is what they would like, and for one group it was expressed as a right they could expect.

6.3.8 Discussion: Participatory Group Activities on Children's Rights:

There are a number of clear messages emanating from the participatory group exercises that preceded individual interviews with children in the two Homes. Despite being undertaken under strict time limitations, the children showed a keen interest in learning about and also applying notions of children's rights to their lived experiences in the Homes. As Mitchell (2006) explains, drawing as a visual research strategy with children is very valuable. Her experience of sensing the children's pleasure in drawing and in providing a non-stressful way for a researcher to engage with children was reflected in my own experience in this study. While the children were asked to draw representations of their understandings and experiences of children's rights, they used a variety of signs, symbols and illustrations to convey what might not be

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[27] Liao's paper sets out the evidence base from psychologists' research in or following periods of time in institutions to identify what is likely to affect child development.

shared in a direct conversation. Their drawings were, in themselves, rich sources of data and had the potential to yield even richer results had it been possible to spend more time on the elicitation process. This has been a valuable point of learning, yet it was also the product of negotiating access to children living in highly disciplined institutions in which I had to balance my desire to learn as much as possible from the children while minimising the effects of my presence on the routine of the Homes. What was clear from the children's drawings and feedback was their sense that they lived in an environment characterised by severe imbalances of power between the staff and children, which is the key factor affecting children's experiences in the Homes as illustrated in the previous chapter on happiness, bullying and resilience. Freeman's (2000) concerns about the gap between rhetoric and reality, between theory and practice in listening to children voices in order to facilitate their participation is evident here and this threatens attempts by the Taiwanese government to implement its own policy on children's rights. Ironically, the children's capacity to respond to their first explicit exposure to the idea of children's rights supports Mayall's contention that we (adults) should see children not simply as the objects of adult work but as contributing, competent, social actors whose wishes and expressed needs can contribute to the construction and implementation of social policies and practices (Mayall, 2000: 248).

I started this chapter by referring to Hodgkin and Newell's argument (2002:166) that 'rights are of little use to individuals unless individuals are aware of them'. In the second part of the chapter I turn to the findings from individual interviews with children that invited accounts, experiences and stories of everyday experiences of children's rights.

6.4 Children's Individual Understandings and Experiences of Children's Rights

Here I present the findings from the individual interviews which were informed by the participatory group activities reported in the first part of the chapter. The interviews gave children the opportunity to tell me their individual stories and it was striking that they all shared such enthusiasm to take advantage of this opportunity to talk directly to me. Like the group activities the children's interviews focused similarly on freedom, privacy and the right to be heard, less on material needs and questions of equality and fairness, and more on concerns with individual responsibility. In the following sections I concentrate on four major themes that emerged during the interviews: freedom, privacy, the right to express views and to be heard, and rights and responsibilities. In illustrating my argument I draw on examples of children's different levels of understanding and depth of experience. I focus on each theme in turn starting with children's understandings and experiences of freedom, a concept that children have related to rights in other parts of the world (Mayall, 2000, 2012) and eloquently expressed by F20 aged 10 from Home A:

F20: 就想要自由！那時候(參與團體的時候) 大家都寫自由。權利就是…自由。

F20: I just want freedom. At that time (when I did the participatory group activity with them), everybody wrote down "Freedom" Rights are…freedom.

6.4.1 Freedom

As revealed in the previous section based on their drawings, the children's understandings of freedom covered a wide spectrum of meanings and I focus here on how each child formulated their understandings and experiences in his/her residential care home. At the most basic level, freedom was perceived as time and opportunities to play or to control the use of time. The majority of interviews

conveyed children's experiences of a lack of freedom, illustrated simply by eleven year old F1 in Home A, who wanted more opportunities to play and go outside of her care home:

F1:就是帶我們出去玩。給我自由。

F1: Just take us out to play. Just give me freedom.

Other children explained their understanding and experiences of lack of freedom in more specific ways. For example, for M2 aged 14 from Home A, a lack of freedom was exemplified by the prohibition to play computer games which seemed to him to be a privileged freedom exclusively reserved for high school children.

M2: 我們以前可以玩電腦，但現在沒有人可以玩電腦了。我們沒有自由。我們不允許玩電腦，只有高中生可以玩電腦。

M2: We could play on the computer before, but no one is allowed to be playing on the computer now. We do not have freedom. It is not allowed. Only the high school kids can play with the computer.

Like F1, M16 aged twelve and also from Home A, viewed freedom in terms of play and having time to play. But he also referred to the conditionality of this freedom that was contingent upon the completion of his homework. In recounting his experiences he articulated a connection between freedom (or rights) and responsibility, a theme that is examined in greater detail later in the chapter.

M16：自由！玩啊！阿就玩…就玩的時間。寫完功課就可以玩了。……我完成了功課，

我就有時間，我就自由了。

M16: Freedom! Playing. Just playing…just at the time for playing. After the homework is done, we can play……As long as I finish my homework, I have time and enjoy the freedom.

F36, aged eleven, from Home B, appeared to understand rights in terms of privileges. While this might suggest that she felt her rights must be earned, she went on to describe basic daily activities such as taking meals and bathing, as well as play, in these terms.

F36: 特權 就可以自己出去玩 自己什麼的啊。有時候就可以自由活動啊 這可能也是權

利的一種 可以吃飯可以洗澡 可以幹嘛幹嘛 這是權利。

F36: Privileges. I can go out to play. I can decide what to do. Sometimes I have free time to do what I want. It can be a kind of rights. I can have meals, baths and showers. I can do many other things. It's a kind of rights. That's it.

F9, aged ten, from Home A referred to her previous experience in a foster home in explaining that she lacked freedom in her current care home, the result of strict routine based on a collective timetable and a lack of free time in which individual choice could be exercised.

F9: 在寄養家庭的時候比較輕鬆。我有比較多的自由時間。只要我完成了作業，我就

自由了。但當我在這裡的時候，我沒有自由，我必須要遵守作息時間。

F9: It is more relaxed at a foster family. I had more free time. I would be free once I finished my homework. But when I am in the residential care home, I have no free time. I need to follow the routine work.

F13 an older child of 16 in Home A also understood freedom in terms of free time and expressed a sense of conditionality with freedom being dependent on obedience. But she did not see this in terms of being rewarded for obedience, and expressed her frustration at the model of care that expected obedience but offered no positive reinforcement by rewarding obedience with greater freedom.

F13: 自由的時間吧! 就…放學後的時間他們要求的很嚴格。我們大的應該只是想要自由而已吧！也沒有什麼，可是…就管太嚴了這樣子！…嗯！就也是時間上的那個阿！只要他們給我自由…我就會照他們說的。侷限就是譬如說，就是他們給我們自由，我們也會照著他們事情做阿！其實都有做到啦！可是他們就是太要求吧！

F13: Free time! It's …the after-school time is strictly controlled by them. Bigger kids like my age only want freedom. Not much, but…it's too strict here! …Right. It's also about time (control). As long as they give me freedom… I'll do what they ask me to do. Restriction is, for example, if they give us freedom, we will still do the same as what they ask. In fact we have already done everything they asked. However they may ask too much.

Nine-year-old M15, living in Home A, who had experienced several different residential care homes, expressed a sense of spatial freedom in Home A but stressed that he did not have a sense of freedom in terms of being able to express himself and be taken seriously:

M15: 恩…就這邊很大阿～無聊的時候就是可以跑來跑去。阿因為我們這邊好像都很大阿～可以跑來跑去，阿就不會說…不會像那個…一般育幼院那麼小。我…已經換過很多間了耶！……比如說像…，就很多人啊！因為他們討厭參加活動，有很多人討厭活動啊！然後他們跟老師說不要參加，老師就說不行。就沒有自由. 但我都會參加啦！因為就像我講說不想參加的話，老師還是要我參加，如果我抱怨的話，老師還是會罰我啊～有一次我們跟老師說不想參加，我們就我們就走得慢吞吞的，然後老師就說什麼，然後別人就講一些很煩的事情。所以我覺得就算我講了，老師還是沒有聽我的，我還是要去參加。就…因為活動都很重要。像那一種…星期日的那些畫畫課，還有那些算才藝、藝術的那些，還要上那些藝術課什麼…豎琴還有直笛…陶笛啦。

M15: In here we have a lot of space. We can run around when we're bored, because we have a lot of space here. We can run around. It's not…not like the normal children's homes which are small. I already changed many residential care homes! Many people hate activities. They told the care staff that they didn't want to participate, but the staff said no. there is no freedom about this at all. I will participate then. If I said I don't want to join, the staff would ask me to join; if I complained about it, they would even punish me. I remember one time, we told the staff that we didn't want to join the activities, we walked slowly behind. The staff would blame us and some other people would also say something annoying. So I think even if I tell the staff about this, they will not listen to me and will still ask me to participate. It is just…because activities are very important. Such as the drawing classes on Sunday, and also those art and music classes. We have to attend many other art and music classes, such as harp, clarinet and ocarina.

F21 also combined an appreciation of her rights of freedom but explained that she did not enjoy them in every sense:

F21:我知道我有自由的權利。但是我在這裡沒有享受到權利，因為我必須要讀書而且我不允許去玩。……事實上，我可以自由的表達，我有權利去畫畫，寫字，表演或者是有其他的方式去表達我的意見和想法。

F21: I know I have the rights of freedom. However, I have not enjoyed the rights here, because I have to study and am not allowed play around.……Actually, I have the freedom to express; I have rights to use drawing, writing, performing or other ways to express my opinions and thoughts.

M24 aged 12 from Home A described his understanding of rights in his care home based on the experience of participating in the creation of drawings in this research study and this interview. He contrasted these experiences with the activities arranged by the residential care staff that he did not enjoy:

M24:我喜歡參與團體活動，它很有趣。我也喜歡和你面談，因為我可以說出我心裡的話和能說出一些不快樂的事情。在參與團體的時候，我們可以一起討論和分享經驗，那就是我想要的時間。在那時候，我可以自由的表達自己。通常老師都會限制我們的。……

M24: I liked the participatory group activity. It was very interesting. Also, I like meeting with you because I can tell what's on my mind and can tell some unhappy things. When I attended the participatory group activity, we could discuss and share

experiences together and that was the time I wanted…….At that moment, I had a freedom to express myself. Normally, the staff always control us…….

By contrast, a few children did indicate a sense of freedom in the Home that was closely associated with their understanding of 'rights'. They were satisfied with their time in the Homes and appreciated that they had time to play and could express their voices. For example, eight year old M12 in Home A, for whom freedom and rights were interchangeable, used an example of negotiating his own choice of free time activities to illustrate his meaning:

M12: 我有表達的自由! 我有權利用畫畫、寫字、表演及…或表演或其他方法表達意見或想法。比如說我想打乒乓球，我告訴老師，老師…就跟我說我要在後面打，然後我就跟別人在後面打。我覺得我有自由的權利去打球。還有，我覺得參與團體和現在都有自由。

M12: I have the freedom to speak up! I have rights by drawing, by writing, by performing…or by performing or by other ways to express my opinions and thoughts. For example, I like playing table tennis. I told the residential care staff, and they told me to play at the back yard. So I played table tennis with someone else at the back yard. I feel I have the freedom to play table tennis. In addition, just like we've had a participatory activity group and now (interview).

Here he referred to speaking up as a freedom and drawing and performing as means by which to claim rights. He explains his argument with reference to how he told the

staff he liked playing table tennis which led to arrangements for him to play and in turn to his sense that he had the freedom to play table tennis. As happened many times in the course of this research study, M12 expressed the view that participating in the group activities and an individual interview were also forms of freedom. Indeed, many of the children understood the opportunity to take part in the group activities and individual interviews as a 'right'. One of the older children in Home B, F44 aged 15 had internalised a sense of needing to balance rights with responsibilities in the interests of achieving harmony for everyone living in the Home:

F44: 院裡平常會在活動中心講關於權利阿，健保方面的阿。或是性侵害阿，教導方面的，

權利方面也會講，但是沒有像這種諮商方式的啦。……我覺得這裡的物質生活很好，然

後給的自由也不錯。可能有些小朋友比較愛玩，就會覺得比較沒有自由，我是覺得還好，

而且我已經要升高一了，平常表現也比較優，所以要放外出，老師就會覺得比較放心，

相對的其他小朋友，表現不好，老師可能就不會讓他們外出，他們就會覺得老師很機車

討厭之類的。……自由時間，但是其實是要去完成洗澡跟曬衣服的事情. 每個人有半小

時的時間，七點到九點是上自習時間，九點之後下自習，有的人要去拉琴。九點到十點，

就是自由活動，吃吃東西啊，類似這樣子，然後十點就是熄燈睡覺。……我們也有行動

上的自由，除非你不觸犯家規，就像觸犯法律會被關進牢裡這樣。……因為畢竟我們是

團體生活，不像是一般家庭，所以避免一些摩擦，才要訂這些家規。

F44: They will have some lectures about the rights and health care etc in the residential care home. For example, sexual abuse, education, sometimes they will talk about rights, too, but not in the way of consulting……I feel the material life here is very good. We have freedom, too. Perhaps some kids prefer more playing time and they will think they don't have enough freedom here. I think it's not bad. I will be a senior high school student soon and I behave well, too. So if I want to go out, the residential care staff will worry less about me. Some other kids may not behave quite well in general, the residential care staff will not allow them to go out, so they will think the residential care staff are annoying and hard to get along with…… Free time is actually the time to have showers and to hang out the clothes. Everyone has half an hour. Seven to 9 o'clock is the self-study time. After nine, some people will go to play the violin. Free time is from nine to ten o'clock. Having some snacks or some other stuff. Then we all go to bed at 10 o'clock……We have the freedom to do things we like as long as we do not break the family rules, otherwise we'll be like those who break the laws and are locked into the jail. After all we have a collective life here, unlike the normal family, so to avoid some frictions, we have to set up these family rules.

At age 18, F48 from Home B had also accepted the relationship between rights and responsibilities and how this helped her to negotiate a sense of freedom which is conditional on complying with the will of the care staff.:

F48: 講自由權，利益。……因為自己的本份有做好，所以老師不會管太多，所以等於相對的，你有做到老師的要求，你就有得到相對的權利。

F48: It's about freedom and benefits and so on…… If you do what you should do the residential care staff won't restrict you much. So it's relative. If you do what the residential care staff ask, you have the relevant rights.

Discussion - Freedom

The widespread association by the children between rights and freedom was given different emphasis by children of different ages with younger children seeing freedom in terms of free time to engage in activities of their own choice. Even where the children understood the 'rules' that free time was contingent on the completion of expected tasks such as homework, they still experienced a lack of freedom with the use of their 'free' time heavily prescribed. This contributed heavily to the younger children's experience of lack of freedom. Under conditions of anonymity offered by the interviews children were willing to share their thoughts that without greater respect shown by staff towards the children, the "rights" referred to, remain a simple slogan. As Huang (2002), argued, the core issue here regarding freedom is the tension between maintaining a system of discipline and routine from the staff's perspective and meeting children's individualistic desire to do things on their own at their own pace. There is a clear interconnection here with other rights of children, in particular, with the right to be heard and understood. What is not clear is how M12, for example, succeeded in expressing his wishes to residential care staff about his interest in table tennis in a way that he was heard and even facilitated to be able to play table tennis, whilst many other children felt thwarted in their effort to gain greater freedom of choice over their 'free time' activities. The views of two older girls who recognized the priority given to collective harmony over the satisfaction of individual interests had adopted a form of behaviour that might be described as the

'line of least resistance', not just having learned but also accepted that enjoyment of rights must be contingent on the performance of responsibilities, a theme that is continued in a later section on rights and responsibilities.

6.4.2 Privacy

There was unanimity among the child participants that privacy was a basic right, one which they wished to enjoy, but one that they felt deprived of. Their sense of privacy related to personal possessions that they wished to keep secure from others, to recorded information such as personal notebooks, and M42 referred to what can best be connected with the concept of bodily integrity, the right not to be hit:

權利就是我可以保存我自己的東西，沒有人可以弄亂我的東西，不可以動我的東西，

不可以碰我的身體。

Rights are I can keep my own stuff, and no one can mess with my stuff. No touching my stuff, no touching my body.

Children felt that the staff did not always appreciate their right to privacy. At the very least they expected staff to show them respect by seeking permission to access to personal and private spaces. Writing about the use of social networking sites by teenagers in Europe, Livingstone (2008) has argued the importance of the creation of private spaces for intimacy among friends. She argues that teenagers' definition of privacy is less concerned with the disclosure of certain sorts of information, but with a sense of having control over who knows what about you. Put more formally privacy has been defined as 'the rights of individuals to enjoy autonomy, to be left alone, and

to determine whether and how information about one's self is revealed to others' (Stein and Sinha, 2002: 414). Although her research context is very different from the day to day life of residential care in Taiwan, Livingstone's argument, that the creation of such intimate spaces involves both opportunities and risks, is helpful in thinking about the issues of control exercised by staff in residential settings. The young participants in my study were clear that they did not have a right of privacy, especially when they wanted to communicate with friends or classmates from outside. With the use of mobile phones banned in each Home, something that was taken for granted so widely that it was not even mentioned in interviews, the children felt deprived of access to private communication. This links back to findings in chapter 5 that children were limited in their access to the internet and obliged to use the office telephone if they wanted to make contact with their birth families but under the gaze and within the hearing of staff, in other words with no sense of privacy, they were reluctant to use this facility. They were also reluctant to write letters knowing that these would be monitored by staff. This sense of regulation and control over the amount of information held about individuals, even in the name of child protection, has been argued to inadvertently increase risks to children (Dowty, 2008). Molinari et al (2002) have also drawn attention to the tension between autonomy and protection of Italian school children. What is of importance here is the opportunity that children require to learn and develop skills for managing their decision making skills rather than having all decisions made for them.

M2, a rather quiet 14 year old from Home A who had spoken of the denial of the right to use the computer during the group activities, seemed excited when starting a

discussion of privacy in the one to one interview to tell me that he did not enjoy any right of privacy, but he felt unable to expand: He said:

M2 我沒有隱私權！(I do not have a right of privacy).

My own notes indicated: *無言 不知從何說起 表情很無奈 (Speechless, don't know where to start; facial expression is helpless)*

By contrast, F3 was a very talkative girl aged seven. In our conversation, she repeatedly complained that her belongings were frequently being moved and taken away without her knowledge and consent. Even the things she hid in her drawer would be taken away. She only realised they were being deliberately removed instead of simply lost when she found them in other people's spaces. Based on such experiences, F3 identified privacy as having the right to keep personal information confidential, and concluded that she had not been given any right of privacy. She believed that she should have the right not to disclose any of her personal possessions and unless she gave consent, no one should be allowed to look into her possessions.

F3: 在這裡，我沒有隱私權。隱私權就是自己的東西不可以給人家看。

F3: I do not have a right of privacy in here. Privacy means I can keep my own possessions from peeping by other people.

F5 complained that her letters were viewed by others during our interview. She pointed out that not only would other children in her residential care home read her letters without prior consent, but that even the residential care staff would do so in the name of routine checks. She felt helpless and didn't know what to do about this situation:

F5: 我沒有隱私權，因為人家都會偷看我的信。我記得有一次ＸＸ(名字)跟ＸＸ(名字),趁我在看東西的時候,就跑過去看,然後在學校的時候,好像在月考的時候,都故意跑去我那邊看,還有今天我再用東西的時候,我旁邊那各同學就跑起來,到我另外一邊去看,還有老師有時候也會看,就說是要檢查。

F5: I do not have a right of privacy. This is mainly because I found many people read through my letters without my consent. I remember that [Name) and [Name] would go to check those letters while I was reading something else. When I was at school, at around the monthly exams period, they checked my stuff on purpose. Also, even today, when I was doing something, my classmate beside me ran to my side to check my belongings. The residential care staff also check my stuff sometimes, as if they are performing a daily routine.

F29's situation is similar to that of F5. She concluded that there was no such thing as privacy in her residential care home, as all the letters from her family and friends outside of the home would be viewed without her consent. This made her feel very offended and disrespected, and therefore emotionally unsettled. As an older child of 17, she believed that her family and friends had stopped sending her letters precisely because they knew that the letters they send from outside the care home would be opened and read. She said:

F29: 沒有隱私權。之前不好的一點，有朋友寄信過來，我國中還蠻流行寄信的，他們都直接開來看，看有什麼東西，一封信也要看。先開撕掉。……因為寄來時我們在學校。現在大家都是因為怕了誰要寄信！

F29: No privacy！There was one thing not good before. If some friends wrote to me, (it was quite popular to correspond among friends when I was at junior middle school), they would open it to check what was inside, even a letter. They would open it first……. Because when letters arrived, we were at school……. Every one is so scared to write letters now.

Not all children felt their sense of privacy was breached. For example, F37 aged 10 from Home B said that no one would move her belongings without asking her first, and she felt her right to privacy was well respected:

F37:別人不會翻我的東西。這裡的隱私權還好。

F37: Other people will not go through my stuff. So the privacy here is not bad.

F40, aged 13, and also living in Home B also felt her right to privacy was well respected. But she kept emphasising her personality and character as a very simple person, who does not expect much in terms of her rights, and she went on to explain that the residential care staff would indeed come and inspect her personal belongings. She accepted this on the basis that there was nothing in her belongings that would cause trouble with the staff or cause them to be confiscated. She then subtly turned her argument to suggest she did not have many rights because she was a simple person.

F40: 就.... 嗯 隱私權啊 也其實還好 因為老師他們都會來檢查 所以有些東西會被搬出來 其實我是個很簡單的人 因為我很簡單就是...衣服啊什麼的 我就是跟正常人一樣... 然後就...會比較簡單 不然他們化粧水保養品什麼的 我都沒有 我就很簡單就一個洗面乳

一個牙刷牙膏這樣子就夠了. 對啊 我是個很簡單的人 所以其實 我其實沒有什麼 就不能說到有什麼權利 我覺得說我很簡單就這樣就夠了。

F40: It's…er, privacy is not bad, because the residential care staff will come to check and then some stuff will be taken out. Actually I'm a very simple person, because I'm very simple that…like my clothes or anything else is just like what common people have. And then it's comparatively simple. For example, other people may have some toners or skin care products etc, I do not have such things. I keep it simple. I only have one facial wash, a toothbrush and a tooth paste. That's enough. Yeah, I am a very simple person. So, actually, actually I don't have much, even not many rights. I think it is enough to say that I am simple.

When talking about her right of privacy, F47 aged eleven stressed that her belongings were her own possessions; no one should have the right to touch or move them without her consent. F47 was aware that the staff sometimes would schedule time to inspect her drawers and wardrobe, even just a very light and quick look. F47 pointed out that such inspection is not justifiable but at the same time felt helpless and exasperated by the fact that the staff would move her belongings knowing they are not supposed to do so.

F47：就是我們的東西不論是誰都不能去翻。我們有私人的櫃子，抽屜、衣櫃那些只能讓老師檢查看一下，我們就關起來，但老師不能去翻。老師只能看不能翻。櫃子抽屜也是不能翻，私人抽屜櫃子不能檢查。院長有帶客人去，來這裡參觀的人，他們有跟院長說，老師也跟我們說他們不會去翻東西. 但有時候老師還是會用檢查的名義來看

我們的東西。……在這裡只有隱私權，自己的東西老師他們不能亂碰，大概只有這樣子，因為我們的櫃子抽屜是可以鎖的，衣櫃很大是不能鎖的，所以衣櫃和拉屜會被看。我們家回去時都會看到破壞。二十二號回來時，我們家的姐姐看到別人的東西有被動過，就去看自己的，也是有動過。被人家弄得亂七八糟，就很生氣。

F47: No one can touch and mess up our stuff. We have a private cupboard, drawers and closets. The residential care staff are only allowed to have a look at these belongings and then we can lock our closets. The staff cannot mess up our belongings. They are only allowed to look but they cannot touch and mess up. They cannot go through our closets and drawers. Private drawers cannot be checked. The head of the residential care home had some guests visiting here. They talked about this with the dean and the residential care staff also told us that they would not mess with our belongings. However, sometimes, the care staff still go through our stuff to check……. Here {the cupboard] we have privacy. The residential care staff are not allowed to touch our own belongings. That's it. Only the cupboard drawers can be locked. The closet is very big but cannot be locked, so the closet and its drawers will be checked. When we go back, we can see it was messed up. When we came back on 22nd, my elder sister found someone else's belongings had been moved, so she checked her own belongings, and also they were moved. They had been messed up by someone, and it was really upsetting.

In the process of interviewing M50, also aged eleven, he explained that his right to privacy was badly infringed as his belongings were often removed without his permission:

M50: 就是你自己的東西看要不要借別人，如果不要那就代表偷，就是拿走別人的權

利……我覺得我在這邊都沒有隱私，因為別人都沒經過我的允許就會拿我的東西。

M50: It is something like I can decide whether to lend my own stuff to someone else or not. If I don't lend to someone, (someone takes it), it is theft, taking other people's rights away……. I feel I have no privacy in here, due to someone always taking my stuff without my permission.

Discussion– privacy

The majority of children interviewed felt that they did not have any right of privacy in their care home and this experience appeared to have affected their self-esteem and led to distrustful relationships with staff. Although identifiable research on privacy and children has been carried out in Western societies, the emphasis on tensions between autonomy and privacy and on children's need for private space (and time) to learn appears to be highly relevant to the children in this study. As Holloway and Valentine (2000:779) argued, homes are porous spaces linking with wider society through webs of connections that inform social-spatial practices within those spaces. And also in a Western context, Dowty (2008) has commented on the unintended consequences of child surveillance in the name of child protection as the invasion of children's autonomous spaces. The experience of the children in these two Homes suggests that the prevailing value of filial piety and family harmony over children's self-respect, identity and autonomy makes the achievement of a right to privacy in children's residential care homes a significant challenge. But given the children's own strong feelings about the lack of privacy, particularly in relation to personal information and personal possessions, it seems possible that involving children in

establishing norms for harmonious living in residential care might contribute to a greater sense of well-being or happiness.

6.4.3 Expressing Views and Being Heard

Children's concerns with the right to express their views on matters that affect them was less with their ability to speak out and more with the capacity of adults around them to hear and respect what they are saying, and acknowledge their emotional concerns. As Archard argues, article 12 of the UNCRC 'gives each and every child a voice that demands to be heard' (Archard, 2010: 21). As M8, aged ten, explained in his interview:

M8: 權利就是你有權利去表達你自己的想法。
M8: Rights are you have rights to express your own opinions.

F27 aged 16 reached a similar position in a more complex thought process arising from a less confident understanding of rights:

F27:我有權利去選擇。還有我們可以講出我們的一些想法，這事一個好機會去表達我自己。我覺得這是其中一個權利，對吧？
F27: I have rights to choose. In addition, we can talk about some of our opinions. It's a good opportunity to express myself. I think it is one of the rights, right?

F40 aged 13 showed a rather more sophisticated understanding that conceptualized rights in terms of mutual respect so that she wished to emphasize her own respect for other people's opinions and their right to speak out for themselves even if they are not showing respect for her:

F40: 權利喔...嗯 權利只要 假如是我 因為我個人比較開放 就是我對同學啊... 就是其實 我的權利 就是你尊重我就好 這樣就夠了......其實還好耶 其實就是就是說 因為會尊重 我的人就是會尊重 不會尊重我的我會尊重他。

F40: Rights…mmm…rights are just…If it is me…because I am a very open person, I treat my classmates…actually for me, rights are mutual respect. That's enough. Rights in my understanding is that if you respect me, then I will respect you; if you don't respect me, that's fine, I will still respect you.

M42, aged 14, felt that the right to express your views included the right to refuse requests and demands by speaking up clearly

M42:假如有人要找你做什麼事，你有權利說不，你有權利去拒絕。

M42: If someone asks you to do something, you have rights to say no; you have rights to refuse.

F1, aged eleven, felt that staff did not listen to her in any serious way, rather asking questions of her and demanding responses. She felt very strongly about what she felt was the unwillingness of staff to listen:

F1: 我會跟班上的同學說. 因為這理的老師他們會一直問一直問,問到我快煩死了。她就 是一直唸一直唸, 講廢話阿. 所以我拒絕掉了,不想跟她會談. 就一件事情,他就重複講了 好幾遍,重頭到尾都是她在講. 會談跟一般時候,她重頭到尾都是她在講,然後我們要講, 她就一直講一直講, 跟她講話,也沒有什麼好表達的,她就一直講一直講,很煩。

F1: The care staff here will continuously ask me all kinds of questions and I feel so vexed. She is talking and talking nonsense stuff, so afterwards I refused to talk to her. She repeated one thing from the very beginning to the very end. She is the only one speaking. We really don't have anything to talk to her. She is really annoying by non-stop speaking.

F20 aged ten also felt that: *老師都不懂我們的心情。(The care staff cannot understand us and cannot understand our thoughts).*

Fourteen-year-old M45 had developed his own critical analysis of how care staff monopolize rights. He had learned not to challenge instructions from the staff in order to avoid being scolded and blamed. To M45, the best strategy in dealing with staff instructions is to obey and endure in silence, otherwise, he argued, he would risk putting himself in a worse position:

M45:在這裡老師享受比較多的權利。你能做什麼呢？老師會要求你去做，就是去做，你不做，她就會開始罵人。……我覺得如何去保護我自己比較重要，不要講那麼多，不要管那麼多，反正基本權利有到就好。……發聲反而會讓生活更難過，因為我們必須是乖和安靜的。……因為找老師講他會說干我屁事 所以不想講。

M45: The care staff here enjoy more rights. What can you do about that? They ask you to do something, you do it; if you don't, she will start blaming you. I think knowing how to protect myself is more important. It's useless to talk and to care about other things. It's all right as long as I have basic rights. Speaking up will only

make living in the home worse. Because we have to be good and quiet. Because when I talk to the residential care staff, they will say it's none of my business and it makes me stop wanting to talk about it with them.

Aged nine and living in Home A, M15's way of explaining the right to express his views demonstrated the hurt of not being listened to, but also a form of resistance in finding alternative ways of expressing himself:

M15: 我們要畫畫表達自己的心意，不會再把那件事情埋在心裡。我喜歡參加團體，這樣感覺可以…比較可以抒發心情。

M15: We draw to express what we feel and will not bury what haunts us in our hearts. I like to attend the participatory group activities, I feel that I can express and release myself in that way.

More positive experiences of being listened to and feeling supported came from a number of children in Home B. F34 aged 13 described a supportive approach from staff referring to one staff member in particular:

F34: 我們跟老師講，然後老師會跟我們聊。老師不會管功課，可是老師還是會管說，要讀書！可是老師不會說你一定要考幾名，一定要考幾分，就不會逼功課，因為他知道我們很多人都不喜歡讀書,但老師也會鼓勵我們。

F34: I will talk to our residential care staff and they will comfort me. The care staff are not responsible for our studies but they always ask us to study hard. However, they

will not force us to do homework and will not set what scores we have to achieve in exams. She knows that many of us do not like studying but she still encourages us.

F37 aged ten explained that she felt able to talk to staff when she felt unhappy.

F37:當我不開心或傷心時，我通常都找老師。

F37: When I feel unhappy or sad, I talk to the care staff normally.

F44 aged 15 demonstrated a mixed picture of life in the Home. She had a positive experience of 'life and care' but felt too little attention was given to matters of the mind. She felt able to talk to staff and appreciated that this offered her a level of confidentiality that she might not get if she shared her thoughts with friends.

F44: 就是生活阿，照顧方面。我覺得很好阿，就是有盡到責任，當然心靈方面，是比較有缺失的部份啦。可是我難過的時候，我會去跟老師說，老師老師也會相對的提出意見或是想法、親身歷練這樣。以我來講，跟老師講過之後，會覺得心情輕鬆不少。

跟朋友之間也是可以啦，只是如果你不要讓事情流傳出去，還是跟老師講比較好。

F44: I think it's very good in terms of life and caring. The care staff fully perform their responsibilities. However, I feel it's not enough about our minds. But when I am sad, I talk to the staff. They will give their suggestions and share their thoughts and experiences. Take me for example, I feel quite relaxed after I talk to staff. It is OK to talk to friends, too. However it's better to talk to staff if you don't want words getting spread.

M50 also referred to the importance of confidentiality in feeling able to express his views. He felt able to talk to staff but particularly expressed his enjoyment of the opportunity to participate in this research with a promise of confidentiality:

M50：住在這裡就可以跟老師聊天阿，還有一些作美勞的活動。參加這個訪談,這樣子就可以把心裡的事情講出來阿，然後也不會被別人發現。我喜歡這個訪談。

M50: I can talk to care staff and join some art activities here. I can talk about what bothers me in the interview and no one else will know what we talked about. I like this interview.

Discussion – Expressing Views and Being Heard

Children reported mixed experiences on the right to express their views, to be heard and taken seriously. It was clear that they wished to express themselves and wished to be heard. Where they felt unheard by members of staff, children responded in different ways. Whilst chapter 5 showed significant use of internalisation of negative thoughts and unhappy experiences, considered a source of strength in Taiwanese society, approaching similar questions from a children's rights perspective opened a new window and allowed the children to express themselves in different ways. What the children have shown is their capacity to act as an important primary source of information for policy makers and practitioners (residential care home staff). And 'hearing' children could also address the less welcome implications of the severe imbalance of power between staff and children. As I argued following analysis of the drawings produced in the participatory group activities, the right of children to be heard and understood is critical to improving the implementation of children's rights. But what we have seen in the analysis of children's interviews is that the use of

conceptual framework of children's rights in researching children's lives provides opportunities to gain new insights and understandings of the lives of children and how they negotiate their position vis a vis their peers and adults who hold responsibility for their well-being or happiness. For children whose families are unable to care for them, and who are the subject of public social policy and systems of public welfare practice, the use of a children's rights perspective offers an exciting opportunity to policy makers and practitioners in Taiwan who are held in a state of tension between what seems an anti-Confucian notion of affording rights to children, not seeing any advantage to doing so, and the political will to conform to global policies on children's rights in order to be recognized on the global stage.

6.4.4 Rights and Responsibilities

In this final section that addresses children's understandings and experiences of the interplay of rights and responsibilities, I draw attention to the relevance of age in developing, and internalising, the concept of responsibility and the implications of responsibility in the children's lives in residential care. It was children over 13 years of age who appeared to have developed such understanding. On one hand, they were still debating their emotional and social needs, while on the other they were aware of their responsibilities as part of the wider community to uphold the discipline that was seen as necessary to cultivate orderly conditions to achieve institutional harmony. The first two examples, taken from interviews with F13 and M19 both aged 16, represent children's negative experiences of having responsibility imposed on them by staff in line with the strict disciplinary codes of their Homes.

F 13: ……就放學後的時間他們要求的很嚴格。…就管太嚴了這樣子！

F13: ……They have very strict time control and management even after school… It's too strict here.

M19 elaborated the strict enforcement of responsibility to study and to achieve well in school. He had noticed that his roommate had been given a particularly heavy study schedule after school and had offered to negotiate a more reasonable schedule with staff. However his attempts were unsuccessful.

M19:我覺得要有效率的讀書才對，不要去強迫。老師都會強迫我們去讀書。他們就會說讀書, 去讀書, 去讀書, 到哪裡都是去讀書。我是安排好自己的時間,這樣比較有用,我有去跟老師提,因為那時候(XX人名)他被老師叮的蠻兇的,就是7點到10點就是讀書,週一到五都是這樣子星期六也一樣都要讀書,那我有跟老師提說,你這樣,(xx人名)他很懶,他該讀會讀,但不會讀那麼久,阿老師就一定要10點,不讓他出來,連玩都不行,然後我就跟老師提說,這樣強迫他讀書沒有用,不如讓他想辦法去讀.然後老師就說那能怎樣,都要基測(基測是指初中考高中的考試)了,就要他讀兇一點阿!反正我就覺得這樣很沒有效果,因為到時候,我是跟(xx人名)一間房間,我看他其實讀到8點半9點的時候,他自己的就已經讀完了,就在房間裡休息了,不然他也不能出去,出去老師就說你怎麼還沒有讀書這樣子。

M19: I think it is right to study efficiently. It is not being forced. The care staff force us to study. They will ask you to study and study and study; everywhere. I arrange my own time efficiently. It is helpful to let me arrange my own time. I told my residential care staff about this, because at that time, [name] was under staff strict control: 7-10 o'clock, he had to study from Monday to Friday, even on Saturday. I told the staff that [name] was lazy and he should study but would not study for such a long time. However, the residential care staff still insisted that he could only come out to play until 10 o'clock. I said to the staff that it was useless to force him to study; why couldn't we figure out some way to make him interested in studying. However, they said there was nothing we could do; anyway he had to take the primary exams[28], so

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[28] entrance exams to senior middle school

he would better to study very hard. Anyway, I do not think it had any effect. [Name] shared the same room with me. I knew some times at around half past 8 or 9 o'clock, he already finished his homework and then took a rest in the room, because he was not allowed to go out; otherwise, the residential care staff would scold him for not studying.

M19 argued that such enforced study discipline was neither constructive nor effective since the staff's insistence on focussing on exam results had failed to motivate M19's roommate. While there is room for different perspectives in this situation it was clear that the staff had little interest in listening to M19 who also had his room mates' interests at heart and using their authority had made his constructive efforts to take some responsibility in helping his roommate seem futile. This strict use of authority in responding to children, insisting on obedience rather than listening to what they have to say and taking them seriously, I argue, leads adult staff to miss opportunities to nurture responsibility in children as they grow and learn to contribute to the development of the system in which they are living (Mayall, 2000; Koren, 2001).

F44 aged 15 offered a different scenario relating to rights and responsibilities and although she did not openly question staff requests, she used the opportunity of her interview to articulate her feeling about the unreasonable expectations placed on her in the Home as well as her submissive response in line with the value placed on the maintenance of harmony.

F44：每次客人要來參觀，然後我們就要一直整理、要刷、要洗、要怎樣的。因為是我們生活在這裡，所以都是我們要清理。我就跟老師抱怨過，為什麼他們要一直來檢查，老師就說，因為我們是公家機關沒有辦法，也不能夠拒絕別人阿。其實我蠻生氣說，每次都選在暑假，一大堆人都回家，就剩我們這些人要整理，累死了。像我們今天晚上又要刷洗紗窗那一些的。……有人要來評鑑。九月，只是我覺得太早了，九月才要評鑑，現在就在弄，到時候也是會髒掉阿，又要再弄一次，但是我們又不能去跟老師講，因為他們也是求好心切。……掃地、拖地、廚房、廁所、浴室。就每個人的工作都要再做一次，然後七點的時候下去集合，去學校上課，國小是四點多放學，回來就寫功課、洗澡，然後我們國中是五點多回來，五點半下去吃飯，六點到七點是自由活動時間，但是國中生要去洗澡，在這一小時之內要洗好澡曬完衣服。

F44: Every time when some guests come to visit, we have to tidy up, to brush, to clean and so on. We have to clean it because we are living here. I complained to the staff about their frequent visits and inspections. The residential care staff said they cannot do anything about it because the residential care homes are public organizations and they cannot refuse the inspectors' requests. Actually I am quite upset about this. Every time they choose to come to visit in the summer vacation and only some of us are left here to clean up. It's so tiring to do those cleaning things. For example, we are going to brush the window screens tonight…… Some visitors are coming to inspect in September. I just think it's too early to do this cleaning up right now for the evaluation in September. It will get dirty by September and we will have to do it all over again. However, we cannot talk about this with the staff because they are so eager to do everything perfectly……. sweeping and mopping the floor, and cleaning the kitchen, toilets and bathrooms. Everyone needs to do the cleaning and then gathering at 7 o'clock downstairs and then go to school. The

primary school kids finish school at 4 pm and they will do their homework and have showers when they come back. Then, we junior middle school kids come back at around 5 pm. And then we have dinner at 5:30. It's free time from 6 to 7 but we junior middle school kids have to have shower. We have to have showers and hang up the laundry within one hour.

As well as the strict conformity expected of the children by residential care staff, it is also of interest that the staff appear to be behaving in strict conformity with externally imposed standards in relation to the outward appearance of the Home. This is not an area I have explored in this study, but it raises the question of the relationship between residential care staff and the inspectors of public Homes, and the question of whether similar levels of interest might be taken in monitoring the emotional well-being of children as well as the physical standards achieved.

In contrast to F44, F34 aged 13 considered that learning obedience during her junior secondary school period had helped her to grow up. She explained that she had come to realise that freedom is coupled with responsibilities and was, for example, fully prepared to accept that she must finish her work before enjoying free time and she had no sense of having had to make a distinct effort to submit or conform. Rather she felt she had simply learned that she has more freedom if she conforms to staff expectations to undertake household tasks and school work:

F34: 嗯…我…就自己想要做的事情。可是不是每個人都行，不是自己想做什麼事就可以做什麼事。如果…哀～如果想要…想下來玩應該就可以下來玩，除非是自己事情沒有做好。 我覺得我都有做到，我之前剛上國中很皮耶！我覺得我現在變得比較乖了。

F34: I do what I want to do. But not everyone can do what he/she wants to do. If I want to play, I cannot play unless I have finished what I should do first. Normally I finish what I should do first. I was naughty when I just entered junior middle school. Now I think I behave very well.

F48 aged 18 held a similar view on how to approach rights in general, saying:

F48: ……因為自己的本份有做好，所以老師不會管太多，所以等於相對的，你有做到老師的要求，你就有得到相對的權利。

F48: …… If you do what you should do, the residential care staff will not restrict you too much. So it is relative. If you do what the residential care staff ask, you have the relative rights.

Discussion – Rights and Responsibilities

In this section I have presented the views of teenage children on the relationship between rights and responsibilities that is recognised globally as an important aspect of children's learning and growing (Mayall, 2000). The examples used show different strategies with girls appearing to understand the rewards of conformity while active attempts to take responsibility and contribute to problem solving by an older boy appeared to be unwelcome. While contemporary Confucian cultures retain elements

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of unquestioning obedience to hierarchies based on age and gender, some writers argue that this is the result of the politicization of Confucianism and has obfuscated its wider concerns with the achievement of a human world (Tu, 1998). However, the resilience of politicized forms of Confucianism is strong and despite modern shifts in the understanding of filial piety from unquestioning obedience to parents, to respect for parents that must be earned, there remains a deep sense of the 'moral crisis' that will result (or has resulted) from deviance from these strict hierarchies (Yang and Tamney, 2011). It is therefore unsurprising that the unequal power relations linked to age-based hierarchies that are so evident in the context of residential care both shape, and are shaped by, children's changing understandings of how they can negotiate a life in such conditions to maximise their sense of happiness.

6.5 Concluding Discussion

The use of complementary research methods: participatory arts-based activities followed by individual interviews, has yielded a number of important insights about the children's understandings and experiences of their own rights:

- The children had little if any knowledge of the concept of children's rights before participating in this study. They were unaware of the UNCRC, even the children in Home A where a drawing about children's rights was displayed in a public area. The implications of the gap between public policy (to follow the UNCRC) and daily practices in the homes are particularly strong not only in terms of the lack of participation rights, but also weakness of protective rights, as illustrated by bullying that was ignored by staff.

- Although questions of basic survival needs such as food and shelter did not pose a concern for the children, and apart from acknowledgement that their needs were met in these respects, there was little reference to these rights. This was also the case in relation to the right to education, which all children in the Homes 'enjoyed'.

- The children's experiences of daily life in the Homes and issues with which they felt dissatisfaction created a highly fertile environment for the discussion of children's rights in this study, particularly those related to participation and respect for the views of the children, rights to privacy, to play, equality of treatment, as well as wider aspects of freedom that were related to children's autonomy. Very clear was the children's positive responsiveness to taking part in the study, not only discussing their lives in the Homes but having the opportunity to speak freely about their subjective experiences and emotions. This was more strongly the case for the girls who shared their experiences and expressed their emotions more freely and expressed curiosity about my own experiences during interviews and actively sought me outside formal meetings associated with the research. This seems likely to be linked to a manifestation of gender differences in the expression of emotion (Wang and Hsieh, 2007), but may also have been linked to my own gender as a female researcher and the impact this had on the girls' interest in engaging with me.

- A number of children identified a desire to feel cared for, and about, or 'to be loved'. This opened a window onto a contemporary philosophical debate on whether children should, or can, expect to have a right to be loved. The

absence of a sense of being loved I argue, underlines the importance of children being listened to seriously.

Contributions from the children confirmed and complemented earlier work by Huang (2002) undertaken with staff of Taiwanese children's homes, that found the focus on physical needs which are more quantifiable as 'performance indicators', effectively masks wider concerns for children's well-being or happiness. The focus on the physical combined with cultural expectations of conformity to expectations of obedience in a context of strict hierarchies appears to be associated with an unwillingness or inability among staff to listen to, and respect, what children have to say. With a few exceptions of children who felt they could try to resolve problems by talking to staff the majority of children learned to avoid disapproval and punishment by not expressing themselves openly and internalising their feelings. This effect of silencing children is consistent with the well-known saying in Taiwan: *Silence is Gold.*

An important finding from the experience of undertaking the research is that the children responded very positively to the opportunity to reflect on their experiences in terms of children's rights. Although they took the opportunity to express resentment they were able to articulate the reasons for their dissatisfaction in ways that were informative and the older children showed a clear understanding of the role of responsibility as well as rights in their lives.

The research question addressed in this chapter: *What are children's understandings and perceptions of their own rights in residential care home settings?* has revealed not only severe restrictions on children's rights in these residential care homes with little noticeable difference between the Homes despite their difference in

scale, but also the value of research methods that allow children to work and be heard collectively and individually, in confidence. The children's articulation of their experiences offers a picture of competent social actors who have valuable contributions to make to the development of Taiwan's efforts to implement the UNCRC, but this will require that children's views are heard and respected. In this sense it is children's right to be heard that must be given priority in the cultural Confucian cultural context of Taiwan.

In the following, and concluding, chapter I draw the strands of this research study together reflecting on its conduct, findings, and its contribution to knowledge before making recommendations for policy, practice and further research.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I start by providing an overview of the research process. I then summarise the key findings from the empirical data collected with children in participatory group activities and semi-structured interviews. I go on to reflect on the conceptual, methodological, and practical outcomes of the study, highlighting how this study makes an original contribution to knowledge before describing the main strengths and limitations of the research and providing further personal reflections on the process of undertaking the research and writing up the thesis. Finally, I make recommendations for policy, practice and research.

7.2 Overview of the Research Process

With rapid social transformation driven by economic and material advancement, Taiwanese society has faced an emerging challenge of how to care for children whose families are unable to care for them. With an increase in the provision of residential care, Wang (2005) described children's homes in Taiwan as 'castles', outwardly strong, but impenetrable with little known about life inside. My own experience as a volunteer in children's homes while studying at university, and as a secondary school teacher, led to my own interest in exploring questions of children's rights in Taiwan. My aim was to focus on the more intangible aspects of children's lives in residential care homes, their subjective well-being - conceptualised in the Taiwanese context as 'happiness' - the development of resilience and how children's

rights are understood and experienced. In chapter 2 I placed the study in context by describing Taiwan's political history and contemporary cultural influences that affect children's lives today. Chapter 3 explored the literature on: children's social worlds and how these are shaped by power relations in different cultural contexts; discourses of children's rights and the importance of cultural context; the relationship between children's rights and children's happiness; the impact of residential care on children's happiness and the development of resilience in children living in residential care. This review identified specific gaps in knowledge about children's experiences of life in residential care homes and how children understand and experience children's rights in the context of residential care in a Confucian familist society. As a result I specified two research questions: i) what are children's experiences of life in two children's homes in Taiwan? and ii) what are children's understandings and experiences of children's rights in the context of children's homes? Chapter 4 addressed questions of methodology and set out the rationale for an ethnographic approach using participant observation, participatory group activities and individual interviews in order to address the research questions and to contribute to knowledge that can support the development child centred services in Taiwan.

7.3 Overview of the Research Findings

7.3.1 What Are Children's Experiences of Life in Two Children's Homes in Taiwan? (Research Question 1)

The use of mixed methods that allowed my own observations to be complemented by children's collective and individual voices in participatory group activities and individual interviews respectively, revealed children's own accounts of their

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experiences. While they acknowledged and appreciated the physical safety and material security provided by the homes, the children also expressed their need for supportive companionship as well as freedom to pursue individual interests rather than reliance on compulsory group activities. This tension between the collective and the individual was experienced by the children as a lack of recognition of their individuality. Lack of privacy was a concern expressed by a half of the children in each home. Principal concerns were the lack of private space and the behaviour of staff in accessing children's cupboard and wardrobe space. Lack of privacy in relation to communication with family and friends was also noted, though by fewer children, who referred to the practice of monitoring incoming letters. This led to children's unwillingness to write letters, fearing that their letters would also be read by staff. With limited access to the internet, and the disadvantaged position of many parents and families who did not have access to the internet, the most popular method of contacting family and friends was by phone. But with the use of mobile phones prohibited within the home, children were obliged to use the office telephone which limited their confidence that the conversations would be private.

One in five of the children in the study had experienced what they perceived as some form of bullying in residential care. The majority found it difficult to speak out about bullying, at best telling only close friends, but never confiding in staff members who they felt did not listen carefully to them, and were ineffective in stopping bullying even when they acknowledged such behaviour was happening. Internalising feelings of unhappiness associated with being bullied was perceived, in retrospect, as a learning process in developing the skills to withstand bullying, a way of 'being strong', and in that sense might be conceptualised as a form of resilience, particularly in a

socio-cultural context where the outward expression of negative emotions is not actively discouraged.

7.3.2 What Are Children's Understandings and Experiences of Children's Rights in the Context of Children's Homes? (Research Question 2)

The exploration of this question was set in the context of Taiwan's position outside the United Nations and therefore outside the international processes for monitoring progress on the implementation of children's rights. The government of Taiwan has, however, taken strides to work within the spirit of the UNCRC and educational materials have been produced in recent years to support the development of children's understanding of their rights. I used some of these materials as a way of introducing the topic of 'rights' in order to allow the children to express their own understanding of rights and to explore ways in which their experiences in residential care could be analysed within a framework of children's rights.

Through their collectively produced drawings and individual interviews it was clear that the children in the sample related most readily to the concept of rights where they held a sense of injustice, or lack of rights. These were concentrated on their lives in residential care rather than in school or the wider community. Many children felt strongly about their lack of individual freedom and privacy in the children's homes, feelings that were magnified by their strong sense of being treated differently from other children with whom they attended school or from their own experiences before being admitted to residential care.

In relation to the UNCRC, despite being introduced explicitly to the full range of rights, the children focused on specific areas of rights during the study. One clear message was that the physical conditions and material provision of food and clothing (UNCRC article 6) provided in the homes were both acknowledged and appreciated by the children. They associated this level of safety and security with a sense of entitlement, as part of their rights. The areas in which they felt most deprived of their rights were associated with freedom, both of expression (article 13) and freedom to relax and play (article 31) shifting the emphasis form organized predetermined groups activities, privacy (article 16) and the right to be heard (article 12). The idea of children's rights remains highly contested in East Asian cultures still strongly influenced by Confucian familism with strong value placed on filial piety, a sense of duty and the achievement of collective harmony. All the children were able to express a sense of their rights in the context of residential care, yet older children complemented this with a clear sense of responsibility. They had developed an understanding of the interplay between rights and responsibilities with rights as something to be earned, a privilege, following fulfilment of their responsibilities. A clear example of this was the understanding that any freedom they may enjoy was contingent on having fulfilled their duties within the home such as cleaning and tidying.

A key finding that underlies these two research questions is the evidence that the children in this study were able through collective and individual means to express their experiences of children's rights and the impact of not having these rights respected. This demonstrates that children living in cultural settings that are strongly influenced by collectivist family ideology, with expectations of unquestioning

obedience to adults, are perfectly capable of expressing, in different ways, their understandings and experiences of rights. And a clear message is that the children wished to participate in decision making about matters that affect their lives. This underlines the important role that children in Taiwanese society can play in aiding adults to understand that children's rights do not have to be seen as a threat to long held values associated with obedience and filial piety but could enable the development of mutual respect between adults and children.

7.3.3 Conceptual, Methodological and Practical Outcomes

Reflecting on the findings of the above two research questions, I pay attention here to conceptual, methodological and practical outcomes

Conceptual Outcomes

In this section I outline the contribution this study has made to conceptual understandings of happiness, resilience and children's rights as well as the ways in which they intersect, in the context of two children's homes in Taiwan. In exploring, analyzing and reflecting on data generated by the children in group activities where they produced drawings of i) happiness and ii) children's rights, and in individual interviews with children about their lives in residential care, I drew on Daniel and Wassell's (2002) six domains of resilience (education, talents and interests, a secure base, positive values, social competencies and friendship).

A dominant theme emerging both from the group drawings and individual interviews was the importance of **friendship** as a source of happiness and as an important factor in overcoming adversities. In other words, friendship was a key factor in

contributing to resilience. This bears direct similarity with Daniel and Wassell's (2002) resilience domain of 'friendship': *Friends are also for fun and companionship: children enjoy activities much more if they are carried out with friends rather than non-friends (Daniel and Wassell, 2002:51)*. Another of their resilience domains, **talents and interests** offers: *a link with a different group of peers, thereby opening up social networks for accommodated young people (Daniel and Wassell, 2002: 127).* This domain was also clearly identifiable in this study with children referring to leisure and learning activities such as art, music and sports/games as being an important source of happiness and strength in dealing with adversity. Findings about **social competence**: *possessing and using the ability to integrate thinking, feeling and behaviour to achieve social tasks and outcomes valued in the host context and culture* (Daniel and Wassell, 2002:72) suggested some ambiguity reflecting the valued goals of personal achievement, showing strength through helping others, and sacrificing personal well-being in the interests of the larger group. Examples of these valued social competencies included pride shown in high levels of school achievement and subsequent involvement in helping less able children with their homework. More difficult for Western observers to perceive as social competence was the use of inner personal resources in responding to adversity, 'suffering in silence', or engaging in individual activities such as listening to music to move beyond adverse events or circumstances. Despite displaying the articles of the UNCRC on the wall in Home A, this had not had any meaningful effect in terms of encouraging a culture of listening to children (article 12 – the right to be heard). Ironically, the children who participated in the study showed intense interest in talking with me explaining that they had never before had the opportunity to give their own views, or talk about their own experiences, of residential care.

Education as a resilience domain also threw up some ambiguities. While it was clear that all children in the Homes attended school and followed strict discipline in relation to completing homework (a compulsory part of the timetable), the children's own views and experiences conveyed a sense of school as a vehicle for personal achievement, and the potential for helping other children with homework in order to improve the overall achievement of the group. But wider concepts of education that encourage curiosity were less visible as children's timetables were heavily prescribed with little time for play and little time to explore ideas as individuals. Here we see the suppression of article 31 of the UNCRC, the right to play and relax, except in a highly limited and controlled environment. Ostensibly the right to education (articles 28 and 29) is honoured but the emphasis of article 29 on the development of each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest, again appears to be subject to adults' views of what should be developed. An example here is the organization of group activities that are highly regimented with children having little opportunity to pursue their own choices. Yet the curiosity shown by the children when arranging individual interviews as part of this study provided the clearest possible evidence that they would like more opportunities to tell their stories, be listened to, explore ideas and learn as individuals.

There was little evidence of Daniel and Wassell's resilience domain, **a secure base** that featured only in interviews with two girls, one who had been in the Home for many years and the other who had extremely negative experiences of her birth family having been abandoned by her parents. But the lack of a **secure base** was tangible for most children in the study. This was linked to poor relations with staff

who were largely perceived as powerful figures of control and discipline. The children felt that staff did not respect their privacy (UNCRC article 16), both in terms of the general lack of private spaces in the Homes, but more seriously to the invasion of private spaces such as reading children's notebooks. The sense of a secure base was also compromised by the reluctance of staff to intervene in cases of bullying.

The sixth of Daniel and Wassell's resilience domains, **positive values**, was referred to in both positive and negative ways. Despite the pressure to keep difficult emotions to oneself, girls in particular showed engagement with the feelings of others and referred in drawings and interviews to helping younger children. But the common occurrence of bullying called into question the presence of positive values as a basis for building resilience. Children in both Homes referred to a range of experiences related to bullying: as a victim, a witness, a perpetrator and in terms of staff responses. Those who were victims of bullying felt particularly strongly about the lack of staff intervention as a result of which they had learned not to trust the staff and to keep their suffering to themselves. Although this sense of enforced acceptance of adversity can be conceptualised in terms of avoiding conflict and achieving harmony among the wider group (Liao, 2001), it also contravenes article 19 of the UNCRC that speaks to children's right to be protected from all forms of violence. With the power differential between younger and older child residents and between child residents and adult staff so deeply embedded, children adopted coping mechanisms relying on internalization that are considered part of character formation in Confucian cultures (Lee, 1998).

Matched against Daniel and Wassell's resilience domains the picture of resilience among the children in the two Homes appears rather gloomy. But as Tsui (2004:502) has argued, indigenous research is not simply about testing the applicability of Western models. Despite the strength of children's experiences that suggested significant threats to the achievement of their rights (despite being, perhaps rather quietly, promulgated by the government), they had clearly found strategies to 'survive' in the short and medium term. The children themselves showed a certain amount of pride in being able to manage the hurt and anger they felt as a result of experiences prior to admission or difficult experiences of institutional life. This in itself demonstrates a form of resilience, but it is not clear, from this snapshot study, what is the potential for children in residential care homes, or the staff, to develop 'robust' resilience (Dominelli, 2012) that would focus on preventing or minimizing the effects of future adversity. Some children certainly described the processes by which they had learned to protect themselves from hurt, by avoiding certain individuals, or identifying responses to adverse circumstances allowing them to regain emotional equilibrium. What was not visible was any form of transformative resilience (Dominelli, 2012). It is hard to imagine children in residential care forming a collective to challenge the status quo and claiming their rights. But the differences between the smaller Home A, operated by an NGO and the larger Home B, operated by the State, suggest that raising awareness of children's rights has begun, even if, so far, this has had limited effectiveness.

There are, of course, those who argue that rights based approaches are unlikely to lead to the required shifts in policy and practice to achieve greater degrees of happiness for children in residential care. As Steckley and Smith, 2011: 187) argue

in relation to the Anglophone world, the rights discourse is consistent with the wider neoliberal positioning of the individual, and they stress, very powerfully, that:

> *for many young people in residential child care, their dependencies have all too often been neglected or exploited, making it difficult for them to depend on adults in developmentally appropriate ways. This struggle is compounded by adult reactions that exaggerate or suppress dependencies based on fear, convenience or personal or organisational interests (Ward 2007). All this plays out within an overarching discourse that valorises independence, distorting conceptions of how healthy relationships are achieved and often positioning children's independence, rather than their growth and flourishing, as the primary purpose of care.*

This argument chimes with the children's experiences of residential care in this study, yet we hear loudly and clearly that the children have a deep desire to be listened to and protected by their adult carers. The study has offered the first 'snapshot' of children's views about children's rights in residential care homes in Taiwan. There is little certainty about longer term outcomes for children in residential care and the impact of the emotional distance between children and staff cannot be accurately predicted, a point to which I return in making recommendations for future research. However, with research aims that focused on foregrounding children's views and experiences it is possible to contribute the experiences revealed in this study as a starting point for future research.

Methodological Outcomes

The design of this study was intended to enable the collection of the richest possible data from children in two different residential care homes. Careful introductions and explanations to staff members succeeded in gaining access to the two Homes where I found children enthusiastic to participate in research that offered them an opportunity to be heard. In Home B, the larger State Home, it was clear that I needed to fit into existing schedules and children's participation was permitted but neither strongly supported nor actively facilitated. In contrast Home A actively supported the research and made my job as a researcher much easier. Yet, despite the challenges at Home B, the inclusion of children from this Home gave me valuable insights in contrasting practices at small and large, NGO and State run residential facilities. With an original research design that involved participatory group activities and individual interviews, I had hoped to achieve a balance between methods that minimized power differentials between me as the researcher and the children, and methods that allowed me to explore the children's deeper experiences of residential care. A challenge I experienced was the high level of interest from children and I felt that I must honour all their expressions of interest. I therefore found myself working with a larger sample of 50 than the sample of 30 I had originally planned. This had ongoing implications as each stage of data collection, management and analysis took considerably longer than I first envisaged. However, the participatory drawing and individual interviews yielded extremely rich data combining visual representations of children's emotions and relationships, with stories of life's daily challenges, hopes, adversities and achievements. The participatory drawings had the advantage of allowing children to discuss their experiences among themselves, lending confidence to younger children. They also quickly revealed the advantages

of allowing children to express themselves in ways other than speech. The interviews provided a unique opportunity, not only for me as the researcher to enter parts of their worlds that they had not revealed to adults in their lives, but also for the children for whom the interviews offered an opportunity to express themselves and be heard by an adult.

Practical Outcomes:

In terms of practical outcomes, this study raises a number of issues to be addressed if government policy of implementing children's rights is to be effective. When I began this study, the Taiwan government had declared its intention to follow United Nations' guidance on children's rights, and this intention has now been formalised in the Child Welfare and Rights Act, 2014. While it is likely that this will provide a firmer base for NGOs sympathetic to the notion of children's rights, experience from other countries, East and West, North and South, rich and poor suggests that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child continues to act as a stimulus to improve the lives of children rather than an instrument for the rapid resolution of long held injustices in children's lives. This has implications for the ways in which adults can be educated about children's rights (Reynaert, Bouverne-de Bie and Vandevelde, 2010). The telling evidence from this study, that displaying posters about children's rights can evidently have no impact, tells us that the road to achieving improvements in the quality of life, or happiness, of children in residential care is likely to be a long one, and care needs to be taken to adopt strategies that can engage policy makers, practitioners and the general public:

In specific terms, attention could be paid to the extension of official guidelines that are followed by those appointed to review standards in residential care homes during bi-annual visits. These currently focus on physical infrastructures and health and safety arrangements but do not cover affective aspects of care and children's well-being. It is common practice in Taiwan to engage scholars, and experienced practitioners in such review visits and this offers an opportunity to target new research findings at policy making, practice and scholarly audiences together. Another common practice among NGOs in Taiwan is the use of celebrities to support and encourage charitable giving and volunteering to support vulnerable children. This offers an opportunity to explore the potential support of celebrities to promote children's rights, which would help to encourage a shift from supporting children to survive, to supporting children to thrive. Taking advantage of the climate of political support for adopting the UNCRC, findings from this study, together with other, albeit limited, studies of residential care could usefully be drawn to the attention of local and national policy makers and scholars in relevant areas, promoting wider public debate of children's rights. This could help to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality and to allay fears that children's rights may be a threat to family harmony. Similarly, schools offer fertile ground for publicizing materials not only on the UNCRC but on the relationship between children's rights, children's happiness and the development of children's resilience. And finally, NGOs that have begun to engage with children's rights could be encouraged to become leaders in providing training for social work and social care staff to encourage exploration of the benefits as well as the perceived threat of children's rights.

7.4 Original Contributions to Knowledge

This is the first research study of children's experiences of daily life and rights in residential care homes in Taiwan, based on children's own perspectives and voices. Its contribution to knowledge lies in a new qualitative dimension to the understanding of children's lives in residential care homes in Taiwan, contrasting with existing research focussing largely on staff as respondents (Wang, 2005; Lin, 2000; Huang, 2002; Lo, 2003; Yu, 2003).

This novel opportunity for children to express themselves has been made possible by the decision of the Taiwanese government to align with the UNCRC despite its political status outside the United Nations. The study represents some first steps in the use of this new space to explore children's views of children's rights in residential care homes and in turn has opened up a space for further research and debate about children's rights in Taiwan and other Asian societies influenced by Confucian familism. As organisations such as the Taiwan Child Welfare League Foundation have argued, children's rights and Confucianism do not have to be seen as mutually exclusive:

> *there doesn't have to be a contradiction between granting children their rights and maintaining Asian values…..There is basically nothing un-Asian about using respect and enlightenment to pursue the very best outcome (Feng, 2001).*

In the process of carrying out the research, as a young Taiwanese woman I have faced significant challenges that reflect the tensions between my own cultural background, my observations and developing interest in the situation of children in

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residential care homes in Taiwan, and my exposure to Western models of higher education in the UK. These place heavy emphasis on critical thinking, critical analysis and critical self-reflection. My claim to originality here lies in the documentation of my own path that has the potential to assist other doctoral students from societies where Confucian familist values may have discouraged such criticality.

In bridging the worlds of Confucianism and Western psychological models, I have explicitly framed the study around the notion of 'happiness', a term that is more widely understood in Eastern traditions than 'subjective well-being', although the twenty first century has seen the birth of Happiness Studies as an international academic endeavour witnessed by the launch of the Journal of Happiness Studies in 2000. Associated with greater philosophical depth, and ideas of balance and harmony (Lu and Gilmour; 2001; Uchida et al, 2004), my use of happiness brings an original perspective to Western readers who may be seeking to understand issues of residential care in Confucian cultures, the development of resilience in different cultural contexts, or simply have an interest in developing broader cultural insights into children and families' lives around the world.

Of particular interest in relation to the use of happiness as a conceptual framework is the finding that the children themselves associated resilience with personal strength, the ability to deal with problems and to achieve a sense of harmony without the direct support of adults. This finding contrasts with Western theoretical models of resilience building in children that focus on the central role of parents, or adult staff in the case of care homes, in supporting the development of resilience in children. Although five of Daniel and Wassell's (2002) six domains (that identify ways in which

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adults can support vulnerable children to develop resilience), were clearly identified by the children in this study, they did not associate the development of friendships, talents and interests, social competencies, or a secure base with support from residential care staff. And only one child who had experienced abandonment by her parents felt that staff had helped her to overcome her experiences and develop a sense of positive values. The children felt particularly alone in being left to overcome experiences of bullying.

It was then unsurprising that children's drawings revealed 'love' as a fundamental right, something that in individual interviews many children described as lacking both in their birth families and in residential care. This underlines the importance of listening to children who tell us loudly and clearly that they wish to be cared for and cared about as individuals whose own ideas matter. This particular finding echoes the findings of research in post war Mozambique where children separated from their birth families and placed in 'strange' environments expressed the desire to be loved (Charnley, 2006). The importance ascribed to 'love' by a number of children in this study has the potential to shift the terms of current debates in philosophy on a child's right to be loved (Liao, 2006, 2012; Cowden, 2012) to include children's own views and arguments.

In more general terms, this study has further developed understanding of the relationship between children's rights, children's happiness (or well-being) and notions of resilience. What is clear is that the use of a children's rights perspective, or 'rights talk', can create opportunities for children to express themselves in different ways and to contribute to critical debates about the UNCRC. In discussing the future

of children's rights Freeman (2006) provides an analysis of the shortcomings and contradictions contained in the Convention, although he does not address the challenges of implementing children's rights in cultural contexts that are explicitly unsympathetic to the idea that children should have freedom of expression. He argues that the Convention is a beginning, but requires further concentration on neglected groups of children 'by revising, reforming, and innovating the rights with which we wish to endow children' (Freeman, 2006: 90). In focussing on a neglected group of children this study contributes to the development of debate in Taiwan and other Confucian cultural settings about the value of listening to children and treating their views with seriousness.

7.5 Critical Reflections on the Research

7.5.1 Strengths, Limitations and Challenges

Strengths

A significant strength of the research lies in its originality of topic and the use of research methods that, in the context of research with children in Taiwan, have been innovative. The study has benefitted from my position as someone who shares the cultural expectations of children in Taiwan, but has also benefitted from the necessary process of stepping outside my own culture to explore different perspectives on children and childhood. While this has presented some significant challenges for me as an individual and as a researcher, it has allowed a unique engagement with the issues addressed in this research. An important area of learning for me has been the importance of research ethics. Currently there are no equivalent national ethical requirements for research undertaken with children in

Taiwan. As discussed in chapter 4 Text Box 4.2, it is not unusual when conducting research with children in Taiwan to ignore the question of children's consent. In following the ethical approval procedure required by Durham University I explored the latest evidence and argument about questions of children's consent and this in itself opened my eyes to different ways of thinking about the capacity of children, even very young children, to understand and express their own views. When seeking consent from each child before the participatory group activities and semi-structured interviews the children expressed surprise at being asked to give their consent. But crucially they expressed their pleasure, verbally or through their facial expressions, at being asked. This process in itself served to introduce and cultivate their sense of rights as one focus of the study. This led to a specific challenge in that all 29 children in Home A wanted to take part in individual interviews and I felt obliged to honour their wish. By treating children's consent to participation seriously, and seeing the benefits of doing so, I have developed my own capacity to show respect for child participants and honour the notion of 'rights' in practice. But I have also learned the need to plan ahead for the possibility that sampling based on volunteering may generate a larger sample than originally conceived.

Using an institutional ethnographic approach gave me the opportunity to enter the worlds of the children beyond mere glimpses. I used participant observation as a way of getting a feel for institutional life in the two homes and in order to be able to contextualise children's experiences of life in the homes. The use of participatory group activities using visual methods, and children's own explanations of their drawings supplemented by individual interviews enabled me to gain very rich data. Institutional ethnography emphasizes flexibility, allowing the approach to be both

microscopic and holistic. Switching between microscopic and macroscopic lenses the children enjoyed the flexibility to elaborate their thoughts and opinions via different platforms including drawings and individual interviews where they had a chance to feel valued as individuals. By investigating the children's own standpoints, I was able to investigate their experiences, their understanding of children's rights and their perspectives on whether, and how, their rights are upheld.

While this first attempt to understand children's experiences of residential care was not without its limitations, for example I was constrained in the amount of time allocated for group activities, particularly in Home B, it has opened up a rich seam for future research. It was clear that the children enjoyed the experience of being involved in this study and for many it represented a first opportunity to receive individual attention.

Limitations and Challenges

As alluded to in the previous section, while the heads of the Homes were motivated to collaborate in this study in order to enhance their own evaluations required by sponsoring organisations, time allocated for work with the children was strictly controlled by staff. In the larger, state run, Home B it was difficult to gain cooperation from the residential staff. They seemed to be unwilling to disclose the details of children's daily living and how the Homes were practically run to me as an outsider. Apart from the requested sessions, I was only invited to observe routine activities in the Home for half a day, and to attend a camp that lasted over three days and two nights. By contrast Home A gave me free access and this enabled me to get to know the children better. It must be remembered however that with approximately150

children, it was always going to be a greater challenge getting to know children in Home B, than the 29 children in Home A.

The aim of the thesis was to understand children's lives in residential care homes in some depth and to investigate their knowledge and thoughts on children's rights to make connections with their lived experiences. The use of ethnographic methods enabled me to understand the meanings that children attributed to their own lives in two residential care settings. But while the findings of the study cannot be generalized in an unquestioning way, it was striking that apart from the children in the larger, state run, home expressing the view that discipline was tighter, the children in both homes generated similar pictures in terms of happiness, the development of resilience and understanding of children's rights. Making use of thick description (Geertz, 1973), I argue that I have created opportunities for future researchers to explore similar questions in similar ways in different settings in Taiwan and beyond.

7.5.2 Personal Experience of Conducting this Research Study

Researching this particular topic I have gained a wealth of knowledge in both theory and practice. The insights I have gained from the literature has deepened my understanding of children's rights and residential care. My understanding of, and skills in, research design and methods have developed through extensive discussion with peers and in working with child participants. The learning curve has been steep but I have developed confidence in myself as a social science researcher. Coming from an academic background in Taiwan, I was not familiar with the education system in the United Kingdom that encourages student discussion, debate, and

ownership of thoughts. During the PhD training period, one of the biggest challenges for me was to learn how to discuss research issues with supervisors using a 'critical' framework. Used to accepting the opinions and ideas of others without questioning, it was not easy to critically analyse literature and data to formulate my own ideas and express them clearly and logically. During this sometimes painful but also fruitful journey, I also experienced and learned self-reflection, looking inwardly throughout the research process to identify my own role in the research, discovering new strengths, new challenges and ways of overcoming them. I had opportunities to participate and share my research results in conferences and workshops in the UK and internationally. For instance, I presented my study at a seminar on: 'Participative Methods for Research with Children and Youth' at Sheffield University (see Appendix J), at the 2010 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development: 'The Agenda' in Hong Kong, and ISA World Congress of Sociology in Gothenburg, Sweden in July 2010. These precious academic experiences allowed me to meet and exchange experiences with researchers with similar interests from all over the world. But it was the achievement of working alongside the children in residential care homes in Taiwan that was most confidence inspiring, reaffirming my enjoyment of communicating and working with children, and extending my understanding of the links between children's rights and happiness.

As a Taiwanese student studying in the UK, another enormous challenge was developing the ability to command English as a foreign language. The linguistic aspects of my PhD training have enabled me to access academic knowledge and participate in its continuing development at the international level. I am now in a

better position to publish my research in English in international journals and share my research with a much wider community.

Before commencing the PhD research project, my personal and professional background led to my interest in children's issues generally and motivated me to explore these in more depth. The experience of undertaking the PhD has led me to argue even more firmly that adults should listen to the voices of children. The challenges of achieving this ambition in a strictly hierarchical society like Taiwan are many, but my research has shown that children themselves are ready to support adults charged with their care to understand how they might have more positive experiences of residential care when their families are unable to care for them. The research presented in this thesis forms one small part of the quest that the Taiwan government has initiated for the children of Taiwan. The recommendations that follow are designed to allow others to further this quest and make a positive contribution to the lives of Taiwanese children.

7.6 Recommendations

This empirical research has provided a basis for the development of policy, practice and further research in understanding questions of children's rights in residential care homes in Taiwan. The following recommendations reflect the findings and interpretations of the study presented in this thesis:

7.6.1 Policy

There is a need to address the ambiguities being created by contemporary forces of globalization that are disturbing and challenging the solidity of family life and social values in Taiwan. To create and establish a child-centred welfare system for children, particularly those in residential care homes, policy makers should invest in identifying aspects of Confucian philosophy that recognize the value of respect for children and ways of bringing these to the fore. This would permit a reconsideration of children's rights as having a positive role to play in the development of Taiwanese society rather than being seen as a threat to traditional values of family and society in Taiwan.

7.6.2 Practice

This study has revealed significant sources of unhappiness among children in a large, state run home, and a small NGO-run home. Lack of privacy is one significant source of unhappiness, relating to private space and to privacy of communication. But the underlying concern of children is that they do not feel listened to. The key recommendation, therefore, is that ways must be found to encourage residential care staff to listen to children and enable them to express their views. This would allow for greater understanding of the sources of children's happiness and unhappiness and form the basis of interventions to develop children's resilience and improve their well-being. As the children in my research clearly showed, they wish to live in an environment in which they feel 'loved', cared for and cared about.

Organisations running residential care facilities could usefully provide training to support residential care staff to understand the implications of displaying traditional

attitudes towards children in times of rapid social change and the value of developing communication skills with children that are more likely to enable children to feel valued and 'loved'. This recommendation has further implications for research that follow.

7.6.3 Research

There are several ways in which this research can be used to develop further research that will assist in developing understanding of the ways in which globalization is affecting childhood and the ways in which children are viewed and treated in Taiwanese society. The tensions between government policy to recognize and implement children's rights and the fears that this will erode long held Confucian understanding of the place of children offer fertile ground for researchers. These include:

- a similar study carried out by a male researcher that may uncover deeper insights into the worlds of boys in residential care. Although the boys in this study did open up to me, they did not do this as readily as the girls.
- a complementary study of the views and attitudes of residential care staff to children's rights that would permit a clearer understanding of how staff themselves could be supported to have a greater awareness of factors contributing to children's well-being, their happiness and unhappiness, and ways of building resilience in children.
- studies giving more detailed attention to questions of the rights of children based on gender, age, disability and other relevant social divisions.
- a longitudinal study to develop a better understanding of the outcomes of

residential care for children.

- a study of the role of social workers in negotiating placements for children separated from their parents, and their roles in supporting both children and families would be of interest in the wider cultural context that places such high value on family harmony.

There is also an exciting space that has recently opened up in academic debate (Liao, 2006, 2012; Cowden, 2012) about needs and rights and the human right of children to be loved. The philosophical framework of this debate reminds us of the importance of linking theoretical perspectives and practical implications in pursuing research that is intended to enhance the well-being of children. More detailed empirical study of how such a debate affects children who find themselves deprived of adult care and protection will help us to gain a greater understanding of how children's happiness, or well-being, can be enhanced.

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Appendices

Durham University
School of Applied Social Sciences

RESEARCH ETHICS AND RISK ASSESSMENT FORM A
All research projects must be assessed for ethical issues and risks to the researcher(s).[29] Form A starts this process and must be submitted by the principal investigator[30] for *all* projects that staff or students of the School intend to undertake. The form must be approved before any data collection begins. It is your responsibility to follow an appropriate code of ethical practice, such as those of the British Sociological Association or Social Research Association[31], and to acquaint yourself with safety issues by consulting an appropriate reference such as *Social Research Update*: Safety in Social Research.[32] Data should be handled in a manner compliant with the Data Protection Act. Researchers undertaking studies in an NHS or social services setting must abide by the *Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care.*[33]

Section I Project outline

Name of investigator: **Wan-Yu Chiu**
Dissertation/project title: **Children's Rights in Children's Home in Taiwan**
Degree and year (students only): **PhD 2nd Year**
Estimated start date: **January.2009**   *Estimated end date:* **June.2009**
Summary (up to 250 words describing main research questions, methods and brief details of any participants)

This research intends to explore and understand children's experiences in residential care homes in Taiwan. The main focus is 'the rights' of children in children's homes and what it looks like from the children's points of view and how these are experienced. In order to understand the children's points of view and listen to them, this research will use a qualitative approach. Data will be collected through in a multi-method approach, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews and groups of participatory activity in two selected children's homes. Given the age range of children in children's homes, the research will focus on children between 8 and 18 years of age. The researcher will spend three months in each children's home. At the beginning of the research, the

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[29] See University of Durham School of Applied Social Sciences *Research Ethics and Risk Assessment Policy and Procedures*, March 2005

[30] In the case of student research, the principal investigator is always the student.

[31] http://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethical+Practice.htm
http://www.the-sra.org.uk/ethical.htm

[32] http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU29.html

[33] http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/01/47/57/04014757.pdf

researcher will first use participant observation and integrate into the children's daily lives. The children need to get used to the researcher's presence. Semi-structured interviews will then follow. The purpose of the interviews is to focus on children's individual experiences. The researcher expects to carry out approximately 15 interviews with children in each children's home. Finally, three small groups (2 in government children's home, and 1 in an NGO children's home.) of children will be involved in participatory activity including participatory art techniques. The aim of these groups is to access children's collective to complement the individual accounts gained in the interview. It is expected that in both homes, each participant group will consist of approximately 8-10 children.

Section 2 Ethics checklist (*please answer each question by ticking as appropriate*)

	Yes	No
1. Does the study involve participants who are vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children under 16, people with learning disabilities)?	■	☐
2. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent (e.g. covert observation of people in *non-public* places)?	☐	■
3. Could the study cause harm, discomfort, stress, anxiety or any other negative consequence beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	■	▨
4. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	☐	■
5. Will the project involve the participation of patients, users or staff through the NHS or a social services department? (State Home and NGO Home)	☐	■
6. Are appropriate steps being taken to protect anonymity and confidentiality? (in accordance with an appropriate Statement of Ethical Practice).	■	☐

If you have answered **'yes' to any of questions 1-5**, you must complete Form B and attach Form A as a cover sheet. Both Form A and Form B must be submitted for approval (see Section 5). Now go to Section 3.

Section 3 Risk assessment checklist

	Yes	No
1. Does the study involve practical work such as interviewing that requires the researcher(s) to travel to and from locations outside the University?	■	☐
2. Does the study involve accessing non-public sites that require permission to enter?	■	☐
3. Are there any identifiable hazards involved in carrying out the study, such as lone working in isolated settings?	☐	■

If you have answered **'yes' to any of questions 1-3**, you must consult the University's Health and Safety Manual Section F1 at: http://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/healthandsafety/manual/f1.pdf You must complete two forms available in appendices 2 and 3 at this web site: *Fieldwork – risk assessment* and *Fieldwork health declaration*. These forms must be submitted with Form A.
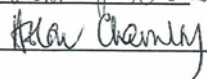
Section 4 Signature

2

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Forms must be submitted for review and approval as follows:

Type of project	Default Approver
Students on Social Work programmes	Social Work Ethics Committee
All other students undertaking dissertations on taught courses	Your dissertation supervisor
All other students undertaking project work as part of taught modules	Your module convenor or workshop leader
Research students	Director of Postgraduate Research
Staff	Chair of Research Committee

Signature of applicant:_____ **Wan-Yu Chiu**   Date: 17.12.08

Signature of designated approver (as above):_____   Date: 17.12.08

Section 5 Next steps

1. If *only* Form A is required, students must submit the signed completed form to the programme secretary or Research Secretary and staff must submit these to the School Research Secretary. A record of submission and approval is maintained for the purposes of reporting ethical approval of all projects to the Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Ethics Sub-Committee. Nothing further is required from the applicant.
2. If the Fieldwork forms are required, attach and submit these with Form A for approval.
3. If Form B is required, attach Form A as a cover sheet and follow the instructions on Form B.

3

Durham University

School of Applied Social Sciences

RESEARCH ETHICS AND RISK ASSESSMENT FORM B

Form A must be attached to this form as a cover sheet. *Form B* must be completed if you have answered 'Yes' to any of questions 1 to 5 in Section 2 of Form A. If your project requires approval from an NHS or Social Services ethics committee, you should submit a draft application to your designated approver prior to submission to the appropriate ethics committee. Once approval has been granted, including meeting any conditions, you must submit the approved form together with evidence of this approval with Form B. If you are submitting an NHS or Social Services ethics form, you only need to complete Sections 1, 2 and 5 of Form B. This form must be approved before data collection begins.

Section 1

1. Name of Principal Investigator: **Wan-Yu Chiu**

2. Does the research require ethical approval from the NHS or a Social Services Authority?

   Yes ☐   No ■ **(No ethical approval process in Taiwan, but this application follows social work ethnical principles (see attached) in Taiwan.)**

3. Might the proposed research meet the definition of a clinical trial? It may do so if it involves studying the effects on participants of drugs, devices, diets, behavioural strategies such as exercise or counseling, or other 'clinical' procedures.

   Yes ☐   No ■

If 'Yes', a copy of this form must be sent to the **Insurance Officer**, Treasurer's Department. Tel: 0191 334 6968. Insurance approval will be necessary before the project can start and evidence of approval must be attached with this form.

Section 2: Checklist of attachments

For all applicants tick the documents you are attaching with this form:

Form A .... ■
A *draft* NHS or Social Services Ethics Form (if applicable) **(N/A)** .... ☐
Information sheet for participants (if individual consent is to be obtained)................................ ■
Consent form (if individual consent is to be obtained)... ■
Fieldwork Risk Assessment (if applicable)... ■
Fieldwork Health Declaration (if applicable)... ■
Confirmation of insurance cover (if applicable; see question 11) .... ☐

For students only:

Letter of invitation to participants .... ■
Letter of invitation to leaders/managers *(permission granted – see attached letters)*........................ ■
Leaflet/Flyer for all relevant parties attached *(Poster to invite participation in interviews/participatory activities will be developed and approved during observation period)*.. ☐
Consent form .... ■
Questionnaire .... ☐
Interview guide *(to be developed, piloted, completed and approved during period of observation)*.... ☐
Written confirmation from all agencies involved in the study that they agree to participate .... ■

1

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Section 3 Project details

1. How many research participants will be involved in the study? **Around 60 Children.**

2. How will they be selected? (e.g. age, sex, other selection criteria or sampling procedure)

   From two selected children's homes in Taiwan.

   The participants will all be under 18 years old.

   Both boys and girls will participate.

   Priority will be given to children who have spent the longest time in the homes

3. Are there any people who will be excluded? If so state the criteria to be used

   Children under ten (the two selected homes take children between 10 and 18)

   Children who have been in the home for less than six months

   Who are the participants? (e.g. social services clients, NHS patients, users of a specific service)

   Children from two children's homes in Taiwan:

4. Who will explain the investigation to the participant(s)?

   Wan Yu Chiu

5. How and where will consent be recorded?

   Consent for participation in interviews and participatory activities will be recorded in written form prior to the research.

6. What steps will be taken to safeguard the confidentiality of records and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.?

   Research data will be transcribed to a personal laptop with password protected and will only be used by the researcher exclusively for this study. It will be kept in a secure place.

7. Will non-anonymised questionnaires, tapes or video recordings be destroyed at the end of the project?

   Yes ■ Go to qu. 11   No ☐ Go to qu. 9   Not Applicable ☐ Go to qu. 11

8. What further use do you intend to make of the material and how and where will this be stored?

   None

10. Will consent be requested for this future use?   Yes ☐   No ☐ ..... Not Applicable ■

Section 4: Risk or discomfort to participants

11. What discomfort, danger or interference with normal activities could be experienced by participants? State probability, seriousness, and precautions to minimise each risk.

Risk/Discomfort	Probability	Seriousness	Precautions
Medium Children may become upset taking about their experiences	Low	Medium	1. Participants will be informed that they can withdraw at any stage 2. Ensure that a trusted member of staff avoid able to with the child.

Section 5 Signatures

Principal Investigator: **Wan-Yu Chiu** ....Date: 16.1.09

Supervisor/tutor (students only): Helen Charnley.......................... Date: 16.1.09

Next steps

This form with all attachments and Form A at the front should be submitted for approval as follows:

Type of project	Default Approver
Students on Social Work programmes	Social Work Ethics Committee
All other students undertaking dissertations on taught courses	Chair of Research Committee
All other students undertaking project work as part of taught modules	Chair of Research Committee
Research students	Director of Postgraduate Research
Staff	Chair of Research Committee

3

University of Durham **Fieldwork - Risk Assessment**

DEPARTMENT	LOCATION
School of Applied Social Sciences	Taiwan
ACTIVITY	**PERSONS AT RISK**
1. Observation 2.Interview 3. Participatory activity	30 Children

DURATION OF ACTIVITY   22January- End July 2009

POTENTIAL HAZARDS: Children may find some questions emotionally difficult.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES: Children may become upset.

EXISTING CONTROLS:

1. Questions will be posed to ensure minimum distress to children.

2. Interviews and participatory activity will only be carried out after informed consent has been granted.

RATING (SEVERITY X LIKELIHOOD) WITH EXISTING CONTROLS

HIGH ☐

Severity ....2............. X Likelihood ......1........... = Risk Rating ....2.........MEDIUM ■

LOW ☐

CONTROLS REQUIRED:

Where a child become upset talking about their experiences:

1. The interview/activity will be suspended until the child is comfortable to resume and where appropriate.

2. Emotional support will be provided by the researcher/ appropriate member of staff.

3. Where any conflict interest arises I will consult my supervisor(s) immediately.

RATING (SEVERITY X LIKELIHOOD) WITH NEWCONTROLS

HIGH ☐

Severity ....1............ X Likelihood ....1......... = Risk Rating ......1.......MEDIUM ☐

LOW ■

ASSESSOR

NAME...Wan-Yu Chiu............................ JOB TITLE ...Researcher....

SIGNATURE ......Wan-Yu Chiu............. DATE... 13 Dec 2008......................

Helen Charnley   16.1.09

University of Durham

Fieldwork Health Declaration

During your course you will undertake one or more periods of fieldwork study, involving visits to locations some of which will require a reasonable degree of physical health and fitness. In order to ensure that each fieldwork study operates with due regard for health and safety - in addition to being rewarding for those involved - all students who expect to participate in fieldwork must declare any medical condition or incapacity which could prevent them from fully participating in the expected activities, or which may endanger the health and safety of themselves and others.

As a condition of joining the study, you must complete the form below after first becoming familiar with the details and expectations of the proposed field activities. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence and used only for determining the suitability of a fieldwork activity.

Please note that answering YES to any of Part B does not automatically exclude you from a fieldwork activity and every effort will be made to provide alternative arrangements where these are necessary, but it is essential that you provide full information. Where YES is answered, or the Part C declaration is not signed, the matter will be referred for a further medical opinion.

PART A

Department of ___Applied of Social Sciences___

Field Course to ___End January___ Start and End dates ___July___

Name of Student ___Wan-Yu. Chiu___ Name of Fieldwork Leader ___Wan-Yu. Chiu___

PART B

Do you have a medical condition, allergy or intolerance that may restrict your taking part in the expected fieldwork activities?

YES/NO

DETAILS _____

Do you have any physical injury or incapacity that may restrict your taking part in the expected fieldwork activities?

YES/NO

DETAILS _____

Do you take medication to control any of the above conditions?

YES/NO

DETAILS _____

PART C

I declare that I am not knowingly suffering from any medical condition or disability that could prevent me from participating fully in the fieldwork activities.

My last tetanus booster was on ___N/K___

Signed ___Wan-yr. C___ Date ___20. Dec. 2008.___

Wan-Yu Chiu
School of Applied Social Sciences
Durham University
Elvet Riverside II
Durham DH1 3JT
UK
Email: w.y.chiu@durham.ac.uk

'CHILDREN's RIGHTS IN CHILDREN'S HOMES IN TAIWAN'

INFORMATION (English Version)

The nature of the Research

My name is Wan-Yu Chiu and I am currently undertaking PhD research at Durham University in the UK. I am carrying out research on children in children's homes in Taiwan. This research is supervised by Ms Helen Charnley, the director of postgraduate research and Mr Simon Hackett, head of the School of Applied Social Sciences, Durham University.

Purpose of the Research

This research intends to explore and analyse children's experiences in residential care homes; the focus is on 'the rights' of children in children's homes and what it looks like from the children's points of view. The study will also attempt to make a contribution to the literature through participatory research about children in children's homes in Taiwan.

The role of Research and Methods

During the research the researcher will mainly work in the homes. The researcher will immerse herself into the homes over a three month period. This research will use a qualitative approach in order to explore the relevant issues and will take place in three phases, step by step: 1. Participant observation: in order to integrate into children's daily lives, to allow them get used to the researcher's appearance. 2. Semi-structured interviews: the researcher will focus on children's subjective experience and inspire them to express their individual stories. 3. Participatory activity: the groups of children will be involved in this participatory activity. The aim of the groups is to give children themselves a voice; participatory art techniques will be used.

Ethical Considerations

This PhD is being conducted within the School of Applied Social Sciences, Durham University and has been approved by the School's Research Ethics Advisory Committee. All information shared will be kept confidential. All data used for the purpose of the thesis, and any further publications will be fully anonymised. Interviews will be digitally tape recorded, and all data will be securely stored. Data collected will be analyzed using a personal computer and presented in the PhD thesis and in some future reports, presentations and publications. In line with child protection practice, if any information comes to light during data collection that leads the researcher to believe that a child is at risk of important harm, and that this risk

has not been addressed with the case as described, the researcher would be obliged to pass this information through to the relevant contact.

Thank you for your time! For any further questions please contact

Helen Charnley

Director of Postgraduate Research

School of Applied Social Sciences

Durham University

Elvet Riverside II

Durham DH1 3JT

UK

Email: h.m.charnley@durham.ac.uk

Mr Simon Hackett

Head of School of Applied Social Sciences

School of Applied Social Sciences

Durham University

32 Old Elvet

Durham

DH1 3HN

UK

Email: simon.hackett@durham.ac.uk

邀請信

猜猜我是誰？

我是邱琬瑜姊姊，在英國德倫大學唸社會工作博士班，對於生活 XXX 的你們一直是我很關心的。特別是你們生活在育幼中心的"權利"也是我想要進一步瞭解的，尤其是你們的寶貴經驗。你們的聲音可以協助我完成此篇研究，最重要的是透過這篇研究，可以讓更多人瞭解你們的心聲。謝謝你們。

有什麼有趣的活動呢？

第一階段會有男生、女生各約 15 人分組而成的團體。團體中，你們可以盡情發揮你們的看法，踴躍表達出你們的心聲，大家一起分享討論。第二階段則是一對一個別互動，分享彼此的生活經驗。參加者請放心，你們和我說的事會保密，我不會再跟別人說。

歡迎 7 歲以上～18 歲以下的院童踴躍的報名參加，請記得喔～這研究的目的是希望可以更瞭解你們權利進而改善生活並擁有更好的生活品質喔～

謝謝你

如果你有以上任何問題，請不要客氣來找我喔～～～
Email:wanyuchiu@googlemail.com
手機：0952335990
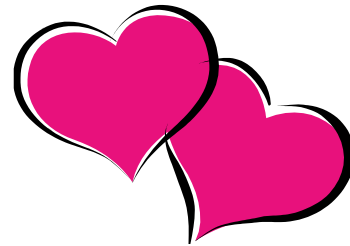
琬瑜姊姊 20090612

Appendix D
Consent Form to Heads

Wan-Yu Chiu
School of Applied Social Sciences
Durham University
Elvet Riverside II
Durham DH1 3JT
UK
Email: w.y.chiu@durham.ac.uk

Consent Form for Heads of Children's Homes (English Version)

Title of Research: Children's Rights in Children's Homes in Taiwan

Please read the information sheet before you complete this form (ticking the boxes as appropriate)

Statement of the Head

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the purpose of this study. ☑
2. I understand that any information shared for the purpose of this study will be kept confidential. ☑
3. I understand that the fieldwork will be digitally tape recorded, but the data will be securely stored. ☑
4. I agree the home to take part in this research ☑

Signed: *Ling-Ru Chang*   Date: *Dec 8 '2008*

Statement of Principal Researcher

1. I have explained the research to the Head. ☑
2. I have discussed what the study is likely to involve, the benefits and risks and any particular concerns of those involved. ☑
3. I have provided an Information Sheet. ☑

Signed: *Wan-yu. Chu*   Date: 13

If you have any queries regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me:
Mobile: 0952335990
Email: wanyuchiu@googlemail.com

If I am not available, please leave messages and I will get back to you.

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Wan-Yu Chiu
School of Applied Social Sciences
Durham University
Elvet Riverside II
Durham DH1 3JT
UK
Email: w.v.chiu@durham.ac.uk

Consent Form for Heads of Children's Homes (English Version)

Title of Research: Children's Rights in Children's Homes in Taiwan

Please read the information sheet before you complete this form (ticking the boxes as appropriate)

<u>Statement of the Head</u>
1. I confirm that I have read and understood the purpose of this study. ☑
2. I understand that any information shared for the purpose of this study will be kept confidential. ☑
3. I understand that the fieldwork will be digitally tape recorded, but the data will be securely stored. ☑
4. I agree the home to take part in this research ☑

Signed: *Charng-Shi Ma.*   Date: *Dec 8 2008*

<u>Statement of Principal Researcher</u>
1. I have explained the research to the Head. ☑
2. I have discussed what the study is likely to involve, the benefits and risks and any particular concerns of those involved. ☑
3. I have provided an Information Sheet. ☑

Signed: *Wan-yu Chiu*   Date: *18 Dec 2008*

If you have any queries regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me:
Mobile: 0952335990
Email: wanyuchiu@googlemail.com

If I am not available, please leave messages and I will get back to you.

院童的兒童權利

參與同意書

一、院童部份

我瞭解並看過了邀請信，我知道我將會參與團體和訪談。我知道我有權利不一定要回答任何問題。

我同意參加這個研究 □

（請在框框中打勾）

簽名：

年齡：

日期：

二、照顧者部份

（保育老師、社工或監護人）：

簽名：

日期：

和院童的關係：

如果你有以上任何問題，請不要客氣來找我喔～～

琬瑜姊姊 0952335990 Email:wanyuchiu@googlemail.com

Wan-Yu Chiu
School of Applied Social Sciences
Durham University
Elvet Riverside II
Durham DH1 3JT
UK
Email: w.y.chiu@durham.ac.uk

Consent Form for Children (English Version)
Title of Research: Children's Rights in Children's Homes in Taiwan

To: Dear xxx

PART A TO BE COMPLETED BY CHILDREN

I have read and understand the accompanying letter and information sheet. I know what the study is about and the part I will be involved in. I know that I do not have to answer all of the questions and that I can decide not to continue at any time.

I agree to take part in this study and would like to take part in (please tick one or more of the following)

1. An individual interview □
2. A participatory group activity □

Signature:

Age:

Date:

PART B TO BE COMPLETED BY THE GUARDIAN/ CARER

Signature:

Date:

Relationship to child:

If you have any queries regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Mobile: 0952335990

If I am not available, please leave messages and I will get back to you.

Email: wanyuchiu@googlemail.com

Appendix F

The Ethic Code of Social Workers

社會工作倫理守則:
The ethic code of Social workers

一、秉持愛心、耐心及專業知能為案主服務。
I. Work for the service user with love, caring, patience and provide professional knowledge.
二、不分性別、年齡、宗教、種族等，本著平等精神，服務案主。
II. Treat service users equally without discrimination on the basis of gender, age, religion , race and so on.
三、應尊重案主的隱私權，對在專業關係中獲得的資料，克盡保密責任。
III. Respect the privacy of the service user; Keep all information confidential.
四、應尊重並培養案主自我決定的能力，以維護案主權利。
IV. Respect and cultivate service users' ability to make decisions themselves in order to protect their rights.
五、應以案主之最佳利益為優先考量。
V. Make sure the best interests of the service user are the first priority.
六、絕不與案主產生非專業的關係，不圖謀私人利益或以私事請託。
VI. Never engage in unprofessional relations with service users; never seek personal benefits.
七、應以尊重、禮貌、誠懇的態度對待同仁。
VII. Respect colleagues.
八、應信任同仁的合作，維護同仁的權益說明。
VIII. Trust and work together with colleagues and safeguard colleagues' interests and rights.
九、應在必要時協助同仁服務其案主。
IX. Assist colleagues to help service users when needed.
十、應以誠懇態度與其他專業人員溝通協調，共同致力於服務工作。
X. Communicate and coordinate with other professional social workers.
十一、應信守服務機構的規則，履行機構賦予的權責。
XI. Follow organizational rules and duties.
十二、應公私分明，不以私人言行代表機構。
XII. Make a clear distinction between public and private interests; never use personal words and actions to represent organizations.
十三、應致力於機構政策、服務程序及服務效能的改善
XIII. Be committed to improve policies, procedures and service efficiency.
十四、應嚴格約束自己及同仁之行為，以維護專業形象。
XIV. Ensure own and colleagues actions uphold professional images.
十五、應持續充實專業知能，以提昇服務品質。
XV. Expand professional knowledge constantly to enhance work quality.
十六、應積極發揮專業功能，致力提昇社會工作專業地位。
XVI. Be proactive in making full use of professional functions and be committed to improve the professional status of social work.
十七、應將專業的服務擴大普及於社會大眾，造福社會。

XVII. Make sure professional services are accessible to the people and contribute positively to society.

十八、應以負責態度，維護社會正義，改善社會環境，增進整體社會福利。

XVIII. Take responsibility for safeguarding social justice, to better social environment and increase the whole society's welfare.
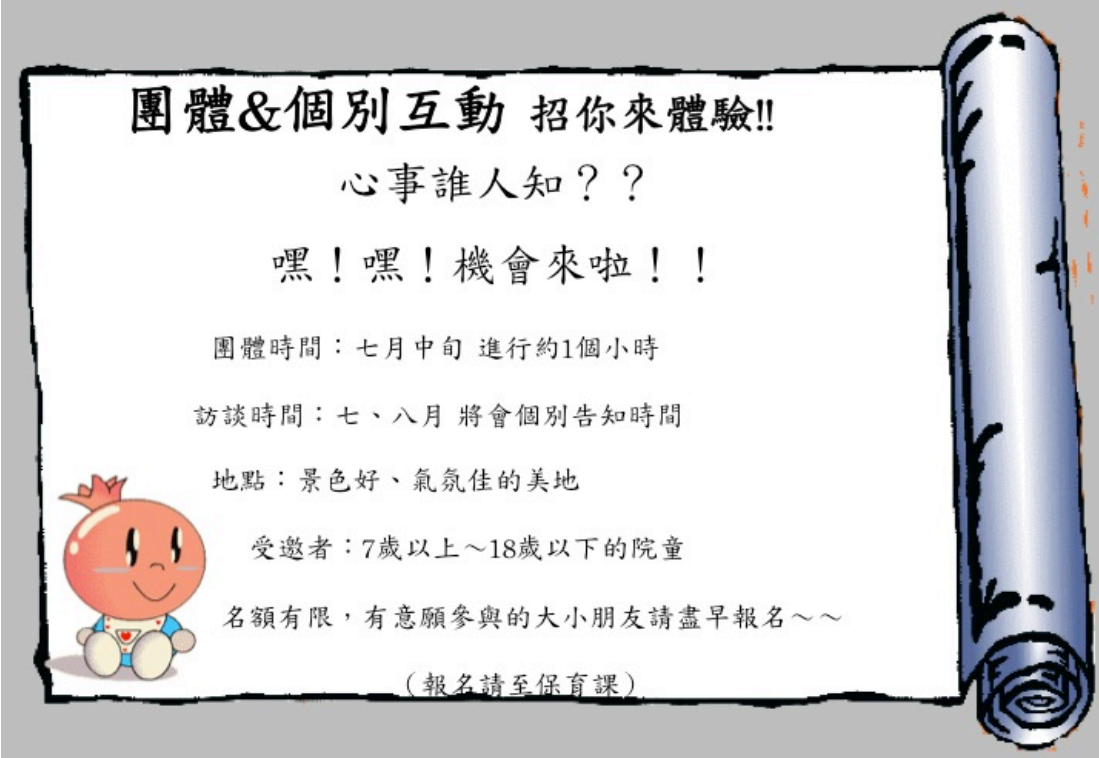
Appendix H

Interview Guide

Semi-structured Interview with Children

Topic Guide:

1. What did you think the participatory group activities?

2. Tell me the experience of how you feel staying in the residential care home?

3. Do you know what children's rights are?

4. What do you think children's rights?

5. Can you tell me about your experiences relating to children's rights in the residential care homes?

6. Have you been discussing your issues with the residential care staff?

   If yes, have residential care staff been involved in your issues?

Living in Residential Care
Hearing the Voices of Taiwanese Children

Wan-Yu Chiu PhD Student
wanyuchiu@googlemail.com
School of Applied Social Sciences
Durham University

Agenda for this presentation

- Background
- What are my aims?
- What are my methods?
- Ethical issues
- Data Collection
  -Participant Observation
  -Participatory Group Activity
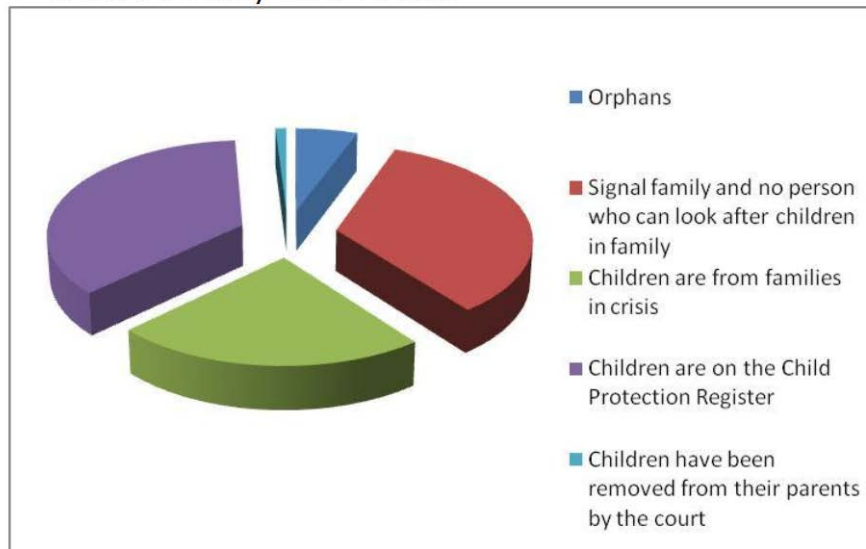- Problems
- Questions & Discussion
- References

Background

▸ **Taiwan: A Small Island in East Asia**

# Background

Where do they come from?

- Orphans
- Signal family and no person who can look after children in family
- Children are from families in crisis
- Children are on the Child Protection Register
- Children have been removed from their parents by the court

Source: Children's Bureau Ministry of the Interior (CBI), 2009

What are my aims?

▸ To examine and understand children's experiences in residential care homes.

▸ To explore the factors affecting the children's rights in residential care homes.

What are my methods?

1. Participant Observation
2. Participatory Group Activity
3. Semi- Structured Interviews
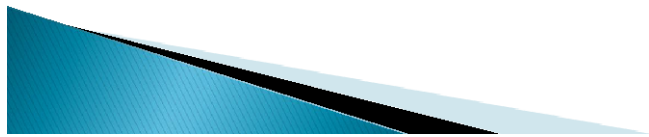
Ethical issues

- **UK/ Durham University**

- **Taiwan/ Taiwanese Culture**

- **My Approach**

Data Collection

▸ **Participant Observation**

-Getting to know the children.

-Learning to trust

(Mauthner, 1997; Kirby, 2004; Sinclair, 2004)

Data Collection

Participant Observation- Daily Life

-Getting to know the children.

-Learning to trust

Data Collection

Participatory Group Activities

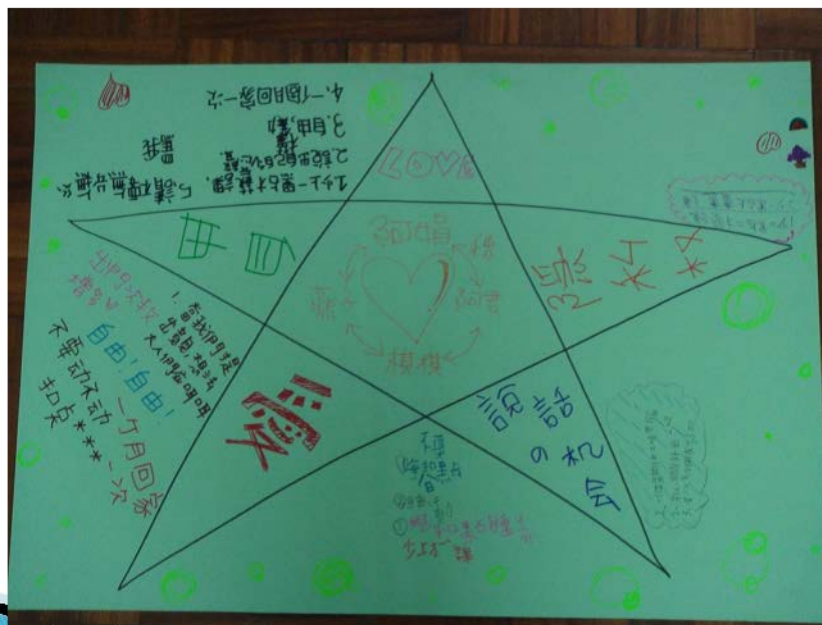Opportunities for children to express their feelings and ideas visually and vocally.

Group discussion

Small group drawing

Data Collection

Expressing their rights...

Problems

- Difficult to cope with a wide age group.

- Dominance of boys in any group.

- Time management.

- Difficult personalities

# Questions & Discussion

References

▸ Christensen, P. & James, A. (2000) Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices. London: Falmer Press.

▸ Goodenough, T., Williamson, E., Kent, J. & Ashcroft, R. (2003) 'What Did You Think About That?' Researching Children's perceptions of participation in a Longitudinal Genetic Epidemiological Study. Children & Society (17), pp. 113-125.

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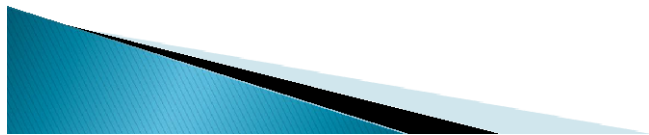
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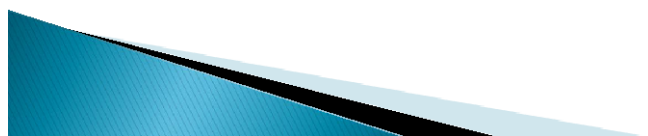
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Living in Residential Care
Hearing the Voices of Taiwanese Children
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Background
- Approximately 2000 children live in residential care in Taiwan, the result of child abuse, parental and youth offending.
- Little is known about their wellbeing.

Theoretical Issues
- Children's Rights
- Happiness
- Resilience

Design & Methods
- 2 children's homes: 1 public & 1 private
- Participant observation
- Participatory group activities
- 50 interviews with children aged 7-18

Ethical Issues
- Children's participation was subject to their own informed consent as well as the heads of the homes.

Findings
- Highly structured and regulated environments.
- Positive attention paid to children's physical needs & formal education.
- Less attention to questions of emotional wellbeing
- 'Need' & 'Right' to be listened to.

Contribution
The findings of this study will be used to:
- inform the development of child welfare policy and practice in Taiwan.
- contribute to debates about developing resilience in children living in different cultural contexts.

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