Interrogating ‘Belonging’ in Belonging, Being and Becoming: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

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ABSTRACT In this article, the authors interrogate the use of ‘belonging’ in Belonging, Being and Becoming: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF), Australia’s first national curriculum for early childhood education and care settings and, from the authors’ interrogation, possibilities are offered for thinking about and working with the EYLF in critical and transformative ways. In order to scaffold their interrogation, the authors develop a cartography of understandings of belonging drawn from diverse disciplinary and theoretical perspectives. The cartography highlights multiple, interconnected dimensions (ways of belonging) and analytical axes (dynamics and politics of belonging). The analysis indicates direct or implicit reference in the EYLF to many dimensions of belonging, but an apparent silence about the politics of belonging. The authors argue that the silences should not be interpreted as apolitical, but rather as a strategic response to political pressures shaping the EYLF’s development.

Introduction
Over the past two decades, curriculum and learning frameworks for early childhood education and care settings have become a ubiquitous feature of the globalised early childhood education policymat.[1] Their proliferation has been accompanied by an emerging literature of analysis and critique – both of the frameworks themselves and of the political and policy contexts that have shaped their development (see, for example, Alvestad & Pramling-Samuelsson, 1999; Carr & May, 2000; Broström, 2003; Soler & Miller, 2003; Einarsdóttir, 2006; Pramling-Samuelsson et al, 2006; Nuttall & Edwards, 2007; Williams & Charles, 2008; Sumision et al, 2009). This literature, in our view, is making a useful and welcome contribution to strengthening early childhood curriculum analysis and critique as a field of scholarly enquiry. This article seeks to make a conceptual and methodological contribution to that growing corpus of literature. It takes as its starting point the premise that the questions asked of curriculum and the contexts of curricular development and implementation are fundamental to curriculum scholarship – a view held by ‘mainstream’ (for example, Dillon, 2009) and critical (for example, Popkewitz, 2009; Apple, 2010) curriculum theorists alike. For the former, key questions of curriculum centre on ‘who, whom, what, where, when, why, how, what results’ (Dillon, 2009, p. 347). For the latter, questions of rationalities, discourses and silences are key. Hence, critical curriculum theorists ask: Which discourses ‘count’? What rationalities underpin these discourses? Where/what are the silences? What are their effects and implications?

In this article, we interrogate the use of ‘belonging’ in Belonging, Being and Becoming: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF; Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009), Australia’s first national framework for guiding early
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childhood curriculum and pedagogy, with the intent of identifying possibilities for thinking about and working with the EYLF in critical and transformative ways. Informed primarily by critical perspectives and following Probyn (1996), we ask: What work does ‘belonging’ do in the EYLF? Does it do more than contribute to an appealing alliteration? Does it disrupt, or serve to further entrench, romanticised notions about the inclusiveness of early childhood curriculum and practice? Does it invoke questions about who belongs, on what basis, and about who gets to decide? Does it generate rich and culturally diverse understandings of belonging? In short, what roles and purposes does, and can, ‘belonging’ serve as a central motif of the EYLF? We believe that these and related questions warrant sustained, in-depth empirical investigation. Our aim in this article is to propose and trial a conceptual scaffold to support such investigations and critical and transformative work in early childhood settings.

The article proceeds in two moves. First, we draw on theorisations and conceptualisations from a range of disciplines to map understandings about belonging. Second, using that cartography as an analytical tool, we interrogate the ways in which ‘belonging’ is used in the EYLF, the silences surrounding it, and the latent possibilities for putting belonging to work in ways that transcend what, in many respects, is the politically conservative and cautious nature of the EYLF. Before proceeding, however, we establish the policy and political context for our interrogation of belonging by briefly explaining our positioning in relation to the EYLF and the genesis of the motif ‘belonging, being and becoming’.

Policy and Political Context of the Development of the EYLF

As we have explained in more detail elsewhere (Sumsion et al, 2009), the EYLF was developed in four stages, beginning with a literature review of curriculum and learning frameworks for early childhood education (Wilks et al, 2008), followed by a commissioned background paper outlining possible directions for the EYLF (Edwards et al, 2008). The final two stages involved the development and trial of a draft version of the EYLF and support documents for early childhood professionals and families for submission to the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for consideration, and subsequent amendment by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The competitive tender for the final stages was awarded to a national consortium, of which the first author (Jennifer) was co-leader. The consortium worked closely with, and reported to, the COAG’s EYLF working party, comprising representatives from relevant portfolios of all Australian governments – federal, state and territory. In keeping with standard practice in Australia for work undertaken with and for government, the consortium was subject to strict confidentiality requirements. It would not be unreasonable to conclude, however, given the extremely compressed timeline [2] for the EYLF’s development and trial and the inevitably complex political negotiations associated with the COAG’s initiatives (Moon & Sharman, 2003), that any early and easily reached points of agreement were eagerly seized upon, with little opportunity for subsequent in-depth, critical scrutiny.

The continuity of the motif ‘belonging, being and becoming’ across the two publicly released drafts and the version of the EYLF that was finally adopted indicates that it was one of those early points of agreement. The motif had a number of advantages. Crucially, it encapsulated salient themes from early childhood research and professional literature in a way that was widely accessible and acceptable, and consistent with government priorities. Moreover, feedback from national consultations [3] and the trialling of the penultimate draft of the EYLF in 28 diverse case-study sites across Australia indicated that it resonated – emotionally, culturally and professionally – with the vast majority of those who gave feedback.[4] The near universal support for the motif boded well for the EYLF’s acceptance by professional and policy constituencies apprehensive about the possibility of a ‘push-down’ curriculum that might overshadow the values and priorities traditionally seen as strengths of early childhood education. But it also meant that on the relatively rare occasions they were raised publicly, questions about whether ‘belonging, being and becoming’ was anything more than an enticing, but essentially meaningless, slogan were accorded seemingly scant attention. While it would be naive and dangerous to underestimate the force of popular or strategic appeal in the cultural politics of curriculum development, in our view, neither provide a robust foundation for a national curriculum nor sufficient impetus for pedagogical change.
From the consortium’s perspective, a large part of the appeal of the ‘belonging, being and becoming’ motif resided in its elasticity. Put simply, it had sufficient flexibility to be developed subsequently, and more rigorously, from multiple theoretical perspectives (Sumison et al, 2009). For the consortium, then, the motif constituted a ‘foothold’, in that it kept alive the vision that the EYLF should offer possibilities for sustained intellectual and political work of the kind advocated by critical curriculum theorists. In the political climate of the EYLF’s development, it proved impossible to publicly countenance those possibilities (Sumison et al, 2009; Millei & Sumison, this issue). With the national implementation of the EYLF now well under way, we believe that critical interrogation of the EYLF to make visible its latent possibilities is both timely and imperative if it is to live up to the hopes and aspirations invested in it.

In this article, as foreshadowed, we begin to interrogate the work and possibilities of ‘belonging’. We see this endeavour as ongoing – this article as an initial step. As previously noted, in order to scaffold our interrogation, we undertook a mapping process in order to develop a cartography of ‘belonging’.

A Cartography of ‘Belonging’

In this context, by ‘cartography’ we mean a mapping of the conceptual landscapes in which understandings about belonging are located (Cosgrove, 2005). Our intent is to represent some of the contours of those landscapes by articulating – in the sense of both explaining and connecting – various ways of thinking about belonging. Like Klinghoffer (2006, p. 3), we see mapping as ‘a process of inquiry and revelation, and not just a methodology of classification and depiction’. While mindful that categorisations of belonging can ‘obscure more than they uncover and distort more than they clarify’ (Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004, p. 1), we were cautiously optimistic about the generative possibilities arising from their ‘juxtaposition, recombination, and destabilization’ (Jones, 2007, cited in Schein, 2009, p. 814). We were also acutely aware that developing the cartography would be culturally and ethically challenging, as well as conceptually complex. We considered it essential, for example, to acknowledge, rather than silence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on belonging. At the same time, however, we believe that as white Australians, we have no right to speak on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Grappling with those tensions, we took the following steps in developing the cartography.

Searching the Literature

The first step involved assembling a rich and diverse set of conceptual and theoretical resources to support our exploration of belonging. Our search for such resources reinforced that belonging is not only prominent in the EYLF; it is also highly visible in broader contemporary discourses. Yet, surprisingly, it appears to have been the subject of relatively little focused conceptual examination. We undertook a search of eight databases for relevant journal articles using the term ‘belonging’ as a subject, title, and/or keyword.[5] From the 831 ‘hits’ obtained from our database searches, we identified 15 articles that included an explicit explanation and theorisation of belonging. Next, using the Google Books search engine, we identified a total of 3866 English-language books that contained the term ‘belonging’ in their title. Examination of the publishers’ blurbs and, where available, a downloaded version of the introductory chapter, indicated that the relevance to belonging decreased as the search continued. Out of the first 100 books, the last 29 had only a lexical link to belonging (for example, Catalogue of the Library belonging to Mr. Thomas W. Field) rather than a conceptual focus. Consequently, we concluded our search at 100. Where belonging was a focus, it generally appeared not to be well defined or explicated but, rather, used, for the most part, as a taken-for-granted concept.

Selecting Key Sources

The second step in our mapping process involved selecting, from the literature identified through these searches and using the following criteria, key sources as the basis for our cartography. As foreshadowed, we chose sources in which belonging was the focus of substantial theoretical,
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collective and/or empirical investigation and examination. We also gave priority to sources that
collectively employed diverse theoretical lenses and methodologies and reflected diverse
disciplinary perspectives. Finally, heeding Connell’s (2007) arguments about the domination of the
‘global north’, we made a point of including perspectives from both the ‘global south’ and ‘global
north’ – even though we consider these terms highly problematic.

Our rationale for using these criteria was as follows. First, we were mindful that ‘belonging’ is
a term with a broad ‘conceptual reach’ (Probyn, 1996, p. 5). It has a multiplicity of connections with
other related phenomena that can enrich understandings of belonging, but a tendency in the
literature to conflate belonging with other phenomena has resulted in limited examination of
belonging in its own right. Second, we believe that all theoretical perspectives have limitations if
used in isolation, and that interconnections between different theorisations of belonging need to be
teased out and made visible. Third, we were sympathetic to Connell’s (2007) call for ‘new
configurations of knowledge’ (p. xiv) and knowledge production derived from ‘global dialogue’ (p.
xiii) between different cultural, ontological and intellectual traditions, including those often
rendered peripheral by the dominance of the ‘global north’.

Collectively, and in no particular order, the following sources best satisfied our criteria. The
detail provided conveys a sense of the diversity and scope of the literature examined:

1. Historian Peter Read’s Belonging: Australians, place and Aboriginal ownership (Cambridge
   University Press, 2000), a reflexive, interdisciplinary, primarily interview-based investigation of
   Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians’ conceptions of belonging in a land of
   which Aboriginal Australians are its traditional, often dispossessed, custodians. Alongside Read
   Studies, which she describes as a philosophical anthropological examination of the notion of
   ‘belonging to country’ for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

2. Cultural theorist Elspeth Probyn’s Outside Belongings (Routledge, 1996), a personal and
   theoretical exploration of processes of belonging from feminist post-structuralist perspectives,
   contextualised within an anglophone immigrant’s ‘lived reality’ in francophone Montreal.

3. A set of five themed articles entitled ‘Geographies of Belonging’ within Volume 41, Number 4
   of the scholarly journal Environment and Planning A (2009), guest edited by human geographers
   Kathleen Mee & Sarah Wright. Contributors report on conceptual and empirical investigations
   of belonging in diverse sites in Australia and the USA. In addition, we referred to a chapter,
   cited by Mee & Wright in their editorial, by Israeli cultural geographer Tovi Fenster (2005),
   based on interviews with middle-class, dominant culture and ethnic/religious minority
   residents of Jerusalem and London.

   Childhood Years, comprising a conceptual overview by British academics Martin Woodhead &
   Liz Brooker, and contributions from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Central America and
   Australia.

5. An edited book by Flemming Christiansen & Ulf Hedetoft entitled The Politics of Multiple
   Belonging: ethnicity and nationalism in Europe and East Asia (Ashgate, 2004), with contributors
   from fields including, but not limited to, sociology, political science, Chinese studies and
   Japanese history.

6. An article by Italian sociologist Gabriele Pollini (2005) in the International Review of Sociology, in
   which he proposes a framework for conceptualising place attachment and socio-territorial
   belonging, and reports on an empirical study of the perceptions and experiences of socio-
   territorial belonging among residents of various regions of Italy.

7. An edited book by United Kingdom-based sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis and colleagues, entitled
   The Situated Politics of Belonging (Sage, 2006) and focusing on multiculturalism,
   cosmopolitanism, racism, sexism, human rights and military interventions, with contributors
   from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, the Middle East and the United Kingdom. In addition, we
   made extensive use of an article by Yuval-Davis (2006) in a ‘sister publication’ to the edited
   book, namely a themed issue of the scholarly journal Patterns of Prejudice (Volume 40, Number
   3), entitled Boundaries, Identities and Borders: exploring the cultural production of belonging.

8. Cultural theorists Ulrike Hanna Meinhof & Dariusz Galasiński’s The Language of Belonging
   (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), an empirical investigation of the discourses of belonging of three-
generational families living on Polish–German borders, where each generation faced the necessity of adapting to radically different and changing socio-political contexts arising from the dramatic political changes in twentieth-century Europe.

Throughout the remainder of this article, we refer to this set of key resources as the ‘source literature’.

**Constructing an Analytical Tool**

The third step in constructing the cartography entailed a close reading and content analysis of the source literature to identify specific constructs associated with belonging. Working back and forth across the sources, we then developed descriptors of these constructs. Like the authors whose work we were scrutinising, we soon reached the conclusion that ‘people can “belong” in many different ways and to many different objects of attachments’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199), and that any conceptualisation of belonging must recognise its many diffuse elements and be contextually relevant (Read, 2000).

Yet how to convert this understanding into a useful analytical tool with which to interrogate belonging in the EYLF was far from clear, especially given a tendency in the literature to elide classificatory terms. Read (2000, pp. 154-156), for example, briefly introduces, but does not develop, the notion of ‘multiple axes’ of belonging. Instead, he proceeds to use, seemingly interchangeably, terms such as ‘dimensions’, ‘grammar’, ‘components’ and ‘concepts’ of belonging. Similarly, Probyn (1996) uses terms such as ‘modes’, ‘modalities’, ‘lines’, ‘forms’, and ‘ways’ of belonging apparently interchangeably, while Fenster (2005) refers to, but does not distinguish between, ‘formations’ and ‘dimensions’ of belonging. We do not want to labour the point about this seeming conceptual confusion. Nor do we want to engage in the kind of unnecessary category distinction that Read (2000) and Probyn (1996), in particular, eschew. We think it important, however, to highlight the conceptual work still to be done in relation to belonging and the need for terms that provide analytic purchase across diverse discursive contexts.

In this respect, Yuval-Davis’s (2006) analytical framework is particularly helpful. Yuval-Davis refers to three interrelated ‘analytical levels’ of belonging: social locations (level 1); identifications and emotional attachments (level 2); and ethical and political values (level 3). She distinguishes these levels from the ‘politics of belonging’, which she encapsulates as ‘the dirty work of boundary maintenance’ (Crowley, 1999, quoted in Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 204). While we see Yuval-Davis’s analytical distinction between ways of belonging and the politics of belonging as crucial, we are less comfortable with the seeming hierarchical connotation implied in her three levels. Moreover, we think there is scope to tease out and expand the analytic possibilities of the politics of belonging beyond ‘boundary maintenance’. Like Mouffe (2005), we consider politics to involve the mobilisation of institutions and practices with the intent of creating order in a pluralistic world – one in which conflicting views and we/they demarcations are inevitable, multiple and ongoing. Accordingly, politics can be seen as the expression of, and experimentation with, particular structures and processes of power relations, including ‘different types of we/they relations’ (Mouffe, 2005, p. 19). Maintaining existing demarcations, boundaries and relations is one of many aspects of the politics of belonging.

For the purpose of this article, we use the terms ‘dimensions’ and ‘axes’ of belonging. Dimensions recognise that one can belong in different places and times in different and multiple ways (Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004), as we outline in Appendix 1. Belonging, however, is not a passive ontological state (Mee, 2009). If dimensions are about ways of experiencing belonging, axes are about the dynamics of belonging (Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004). Axes draw attention to how belonging is cultivated and enacted by whom and for what purposes – in other words, to the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). We return to the notion of axes as an analytical construct later in the article. In the next section, we expand on what we see as dimensions of belonging.

**Dimensions of Belonging**

Through mapping and synthesising the understandings and reported experiences of belonging in our source literature, we identified 10 overlapping dimensions that contribute to the multilayered
nature of belonging. We have labelled these dimensions: ‘emotional’, ‘social’, ‘cultural’, ‘spatial’, ‘temporal’, ‘physical’, ‘spiritual’, ‘moral/ethical’, ‘political’ and ‘legal’ (explained further in Appendix 1). In contrast to Christiansen & Hedetoft (2004, p. 10), who see dimensions of belonging as ‘nested’ within each other, seemingly much like Russian dolls, we reject suggestions that they can be sequenced developmentally or systematically ordered. Rather, we recognise a multiplicity of interconnected belongings (Vandenbroeck, 2008).

Appendix 1 elaborates on these dimensions. The order in which they are presented has no significance, other than reflecting our efforts to preserve the flow of our explanation by loosely grouping dimensions that seemed to us, from our white Anglo-Australian perspectives, to be particularly closely connected. We acknowledge that the linear representation may inadvertently convey a subtextual impression of a hierarchy; however, textual constraints limit other representational possibilities for the purposes of this article. Hopefully, Figure 1, which visually illustrates the overlapping and non-hierarchical nature of the dimensions, counteracts the unintended linearity of Appendix 1. We encourage others to reorder and rework these dimensions, and to delete and/or add dimensions to better reflect their perspectives and contexts, for the cartography, as portrayed in Appendix 1 and Figure 1, is intended to be both dynamic and responsive.

In summary, Appendix 1 provides descriptors, developed from the source literature, of each of our identified overlapping dimensions or ways of belonging. Any representation that focuses on dimensions alone, however, could convey that belonging is a more or less static state. In order to emphasise that belonging is both a dynamic and political process, we turn now to axes of belonging.

Axes of Belonging

Criss-crossing the dimensions of belonging outlined in Appendix 1, we suggest, are multiple ‘axes’ of belonging. We have chosen the term ‘axes’ because they are fundamental to a variety of conceptual and analytical structures. They can be used, for example, in locating difference (left/right political axes); recognising sameness (axes of symmetry in mirror images); assigning positions (perpendicular/horizontal axes in a Cartesian coordinate system); and modelling movements (the rotation of a sphere, such as the earth, around its axis). In this article, by ‘axes’, we mean ‘lines of analysis’ (Probyn, 1996) that provide a scaffold for critically analysing the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006); in other words, how belonging ‘operates’ within and across the dimensions described in Appendix 1. We consider this a crucial analytic function, for as Yuval-Davis (2006) notes, processes of belonging/not belonging are rarely articulated, except when belonging is under threat. These analytical axes reflect our understanding that belonging is ‘always provisional and in process’ (Mee, 2009, p. 844) and that not all claims to, or enactments of, belonging are necessarily valid or desirable (Schein, 2009). Membership of a neo-Nazi or other racist organisation, for instance, may confer on its members a sense of belonging, albeit on ethically indefensible grounds, given the adverse consequences for other individuals and for society more broadly.

While concurring with Yuval-Davis (2006) that the politics of belonging involves ‘boundary maintenance’, we see benefits in identifying other/constitutive processes that might be incorporated under this rubric. Our content analysis of the source literature – the basis for the dimensions and descriptors of belonging outlined in Appendix 1 – identified many conceptual possibilities. In the interests of manageability and given that our cartography is very much provisional, for the purposes of this article we have synthesised these possibilities into three intersecting axes: ‘categorisation’, ‘resistance and desire’, and ‘performativity’. As illustrated in Figure 1, they provide a scaffold for analysis across the dimensions of belonging. In the following paragraphs, we elaborate on these axes and the kinds of analyses they can support, beginning with the axis of ‘categorisation’.

Categorisation

This axis is associated with processes of categorisation that assume or ascribe ‘belongingness’ (Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004, p. 1). Categorisation requires judgements about ‘one’s rightful
place’ (Mee, 2009, p. 843) and actions that are appropriate in that place (Cresswell, 1996, cited in Mee, 2009). It invokes questions of who belongs, to what and on which – and whose – terms (Schein, 2009). In effect, categorisations ascribe particular positionings on ‘grids of power relations’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199). With their focus on ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, processes of categorisation are strongly implicated in inclusion and exclusion in numerous national, local, cultural, social and personal agendas.

Because categories of belonging tend to be essentialised and dichotomised, they are often seen as universally applicable and deterministic (Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004). Indeed, many externally imposed categories (such as those associated with ethnicity, nationality, class and gender) can have significant social, economic and political purchase through the status, entitlements and resources they afford or deny. As Schein (2009, p. 813) points out, even where individuals’ own sense of belonging ‘may be fluid and multiple’, externally imposed categories are likely to have already established some limits to their belonging. Importantly, though, individual and collective positionings within power-relation grids are generally not fixed, but rather potentially contestable and fluid (Yuval-Davis, 2006) – a notion taken up in our discussion of the next axis. Questions associated with the categorisation axis are likely to include: Who are the arbiters of who and what belongs? On what grounds are judgements made? How are conflicting claims and judgements about belonging adjudicated? Who are included and who are excluded? How are the boundaries articulated? How permeable are they? (Yuval-Davis et al, 2006; Mee & Wright, 2009). The next axis, ‘resistance and desire’, invites similarly searching questions.

Resistance and Desire

Foucault (1978) reminds us that wherever power relations exist – as they most certainly do in processes of categorisation – there is always the possibility of resistance. In relation to belonging, resistance could involve contesting, disrupting and/or subverting imposed categories of belonging and positioning to which they give rise. Probyn (1996), like Yuval-Davis (2006), invokes Foucault’s notion of power relations. She maintains that ‘we live within a grid or network of different points, we live through the desire to make them connect differently’ (Probyn, 1996, p. 13). That desire, Probyn contends, ‘sets into motion different possibilities’ (p. 13) by producing ‘new relations and relationships amongst individuals, groups, things etc – a current that short-circuits the categorical order of things’ (p. 14). Hence, desire can be thought of as ‘a method of doing things, of getting places’ (p. 41). Like resistance, desire offers ‘immense political possibilities’ (p. 9).

Resistance and desire, therefore, are closely interlinked and both play out in day-to-day events and circumstances. They may be evident, for example, in acts of self-identification, where people endeavour to choose, themselves, ‘where they belong, ignoring the prescriptions (and sometimes proscriptions) and predefined frameworks of belonging’ (Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004, p. 14). They can also be evident in complex and strategic processes of negotiation, which may involve, for example, rejecting or reshaping the past, adopting or abandoning rituals, and forming new alliances (Read, 2000). Questions associated with this axis can include: How do power relations create openings and closures with respect to belonging? What liminal spaces are produced by the tensions between inclusion and exclusion? How do lines of division become places of encounter? What border crossings become possible? Who works to reconfigure the boundaries? What enables people to resist established categories? Who manages to choose for themselves where and to what they belong? How do they imagine and achieve belonging, yet resist containment? (Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004; Mee & Wright, 2009; Schein, 2009). For further questions to scaffold critical examinations of the dynamics of belonging, we turn now to the third axis: ‘performativity’.

Performativity

This axis, as its name implies, focuses on processes involved in ‘performing’ belonging. Influenced by Butler’s (1993) notion of ‘performativity’ as the production of selves, it encompasses repeated enactments of conventions, norms and practices that inscribe belonging in a specific context and historical moment. These enactments and self-inscriptions (Probyn, 1996) are integral to identity narratives or ‘the stories people tell about themselves and others about who they are (and who
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they are not)’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). Through these narratives, people produce themselves as subjects within discourses. Performativity, in the sense we conceptualise it in this axis, is primarily about enacting these subject positionings with their implicit power relations and categories of belonging, rather than contesting them. Thus, boundary maintenance and reproduction are a specific focus of performativity, albeit always complicated by the ‘continuous process of making and remaking ourselves – and ourselves in relation to others’ (Brunt, 1989, quoted in Probyn, 1996, p. 144), which is endemic to belonging. Questions prompted by this axis include: Which everyday practices contribute to belonging? What narratives of belonging do they enact? What resources are mobilised to maintain categories of belonging? Who has access to these resources and what tactics do they use? (Mee & Wright, 2009; Stratford, 2009).

So far in this article, we have suggested that belonging can usefully be thought of in terms of dimensions and axes. Figure 1 endeavours to portray visually and metaphorically the interconnectedness of the dimensions and axes that form the basis of our cartography of belonging.

Figure 1. Dimensions and axes of belonging.

As explained earlier in this article, our representation is only tentative, and we acknowledge its limitations in conveying the complexity of the interconnections. Our main interest, however, lies not in the utility of the representation, but rather, following Deleuze (1995), in the uses to which the cartography can be put. Before we use the cartography to interrogate the work done by belonging in the EYLF, we pause briefly to reflect on what we see as its strengths and limitations.

**Brief Reflections on the Cartography**

We see the main strength of the cartography as providing useful entry points from which to begin an examination of belonging, as long as the caveats about the categorisation discussed earlier are heeded and the categories – in this case, dimensions and axes – are seen as fluid, interconnected and overlapping. We think it compares well with other, for the most part implicit, frameworks encountered in our search of the literature. It has potential, for example, for a more fine-grained and richer analysis than the typology implicit in Fenster’s (2005) focus on a sense of belonging, everyday practices of belonging and formal structures of belonging. To our mind, it offers more conceptual flexibility than Hedetoft’s (2004) typology that specifically links ‘parameters’ of belonging (sources, feelings, ascriptions and constructions, and fluidities) with particular sites of belonging (from local through to global). Moreover, it extends Yuval-Davis’s (2006) analytical framework by expanding on ways of belonging and processes mobilised in the politics of belonging. More importantly, however, we believe that leaving the cartography open-ended opens up
multiple possibilities. For example, it allows scope to draw on further literature to enrich and extend the descriptors of the dimensions of belonging currently included in the cartography, and provides opportunities to incorporate additional dimensions. It also permits the substitution or addition of alternative analytical axes salient in other theoretical and knowledge traditions – such as those found in critical community development literature that challenge notions of reciprocity and the mutual benefit of ‘belonging’ to a community (Ledwith, 2005).

Crucially, we believe that the cartography has the flexibility to acknowledge, highlight and, in the hands of those more qualified than us to do so, build on diverse cultural perspectives of belonging, including those of Aboriginals, Torres Strait Islanders and other indigenous peoples. In its present form, limited in part by our selection of source literature and our positioning as white Australians, the cartography only gestures at Aboriginals’ and Torres Strait Islanders’ rich and complex perspectives and experiences of belonging/not belonging, and inadequately portrays the belongingness associated with deep relatedness to ancestors, to the environment and all within it, and to the past, present and future, as described by Martin (2005). We contend that the richer and more diverse the perspectives represented in the cartography, or derivations of it, are, the more valuable it is likely to be in scaffolding critical examinations of belonging and endeavours to transform society in line with social justice principles. In the next section, we outline how we used the cartography to interrogate ‘belonging’ in the EYLF.

Interrogating ’Belonging’ in the EYLF

Our interrogation consisted of two parts. First, we drew on the cartography to identify evidence of dimensions and axes of belonging in the EYLF. Following Probyn (1996), we then asked: What work does belonging do in the EYLF?

Dimensions and Axes of Belonging

We commenced our analysis with a close reading of the EYLF and, using content analysis techniques (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), identified each reference to ‘belonging’. The units of analysis were the surrounding ‘statements’ (sentences/paragraphs) that encapsulated the meaning of belonging in each reference. In total, 20 statements were identified. Each statement was then categorised according to which (if any) of the 10 dimensions and three axes in our cartography it most readily aligned. Although based on the descriptors outlined in Appendix 1 and the explanation of the axes, given the overlapping and interconnected nature of the dimensions and axes, we acknowledge that some categorisations may appear somewhat ‘subjective’ or arbitrary.

Our analysis indicated that all statements of belonging ‘fitted’ into one of the dimensions, suggesting, in turn, that the dimensions are broadly encompassing. Statements referring to social dimensions of belonging were most evident (six statements), followed by references to cultural belonging (four statements) and emotional belonging (three statements). One or two statements were identified for each of the other dimensions, except for spiritual and legal belonging, for which no statements were identified. We found no statements relevant to any of the three axes of belonging.

Appendix 2 contains a sample statement for each dimension of belonging identified in the EYLF. The page numbers refer to the pages of the EYLF from which the statements are taken. The analysis was subsequently broadened to include statements in the EYLF that did not contain the term ‘belonging’, but nevertheless indirectly implied a dimension of belonging. This phase of the analysis identified many additional statements, including an implicit reference to spiritual belonging:

Holistic approaches to teaching and learning recognise the connectedness of mind, body and spirit. When early childhood educators take a holistic approach they pay attention to children’s physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing as well as cognitive aspects of learning. (Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009, p. 14)
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Notably, there were several implicit references to the political dimension of belonging, including a reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

> Early childhood educators guided by the Framework will reinforce in their daily practice the principles laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention). The Convention states that all children have the right to an education that lays a foundation for the rest of their lives, maximises their ability, and respects their family, cultural and other identities and languages. The Convention also recognises children’s right to play and be active participants in all matters affecting their lives. (Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009, p. 5)

Once again, however, we could find no implicit references to legal dimensions of belonging or to analytical axes representing the dynamics and politics of belonging. What does this mean, therefore, in terms of the work done by belonging in the EYLF? While some might conclude that it relegates belonging to little more than a romantic platitude or a normalising force, we argue that the belonging motif constitutes an important, if somewhat latent, resource.

**What Work Does ‘Belonging’ Do in the EYLF?**

From anecdotal observations and from our respective perspectives, it seems that the focus on belonging is fulfilling a number of functions. Here we touch on three: enticing engagement; opening up alternatives; and providing reassurance while inviting critical interrogation.

First, and perhaps most importantly, belonging ‘speaks’ to people. Because it resonates emotionally, it entices them into the EYLF and offers the possibility of sustained engagement. Woodhead & Brooker (2008, p. 3) refer to belonging as a kind of ‘fundamental psycho-social “glue” ... that connects people to each other’. Inherent in the focus on belonging in the EYLF, one could argue, is the allure of a relational and collective endeavour that speaks, almost seductively, to a deep-seated desire for connectedness. We, personally, have experienced and responded to that allure. Like Probyn (1996), we have been motivated by the desire to explore belonging conceptually and, in this article, have begun what we intend will be an ongoing inquiry. The focus on belonging seems likely to mobilise others’ desires in equally productive, but diverse, ways, and may lead to other ongoing investigations and fruitful engagement – for example, by practitioners, children and families about what belonging might mean for them; how it can be fostered; and how endeavours to do so can raise ethical issues around inclusion and exclusion.

Second, the focus on belonging opens up alternatives, as the following examples illustrate – one relates to policy and the other relates to culture. Mee & Wright (2009) refer to a widely articulated desire, stemming from dissatisfaction with ways in which terms such as ‘social inclusion’ are being mobilised in contemporary debates, for alternatives to current instrumentalist social inclusion agendas. Belonging in the EYLF can hopefully play a part in disrupting the ubiquitous focus on human capital development primarily as an obligation to rectify perceived deficits, and in recasting social inclusion agendas around belonging as a fundamental human right. As Mee (2009, p. 843) notes, belonging ‘opens wider possibilities for investigating how people make a place in the world’. And, we would add, how people make their places open to ‘others’. The EYLF offers multiple entry points for such investigations.

The focus on belonging also opens up the possibility of cultural alternatives to dominant Western traditions, as is evident in the EYLF’s explicit and welcome statements of respect for ancestral Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, beliefs and values. In the past, these knowledges, beliefs and values have largely been rendered silent in curricula (Martin, 2005). Whether the implementation of the EYLF will go beyond a rhetoric of respect for traditional knowledge, beliefs and values remains to be seen. Yet, at least in conveying an openness to other than Western forms of knowledge and ways of thinking, the EYLF is signalling support for attempts to move beyond the constraints of normative ways of knowing and belonging.

Third, the belonging focus provides reassurance while inviting interrogation. Probyn (1996) warns against naive optimism, reminding us that it is not simply a matter of people wanting to belong or wanting others to experience a sense of belonging. For, as she emphasises, belonging ‘is not an individual action ... it is always conducted within limits’ (Probyn, 1996, p. 24). Yet our analysis of the EYLF suggests little attention to the limits and ethics of belonging, as the absence of
references to the politics of belonging attests. Hence, the focus on belonging potentially obscures the possibility of not belonging and risks romanticising belonging.

Perhaps a more nuanced interpretation is that the EYLF is silent about the politics of belonging, not because it is unimportant, but because of the limits to what it was possible to say openly about belonging/not belonging in the political and policy context at the time of its development. A significant feature of that context was a requirement for the use of unrelentingly positive language in documents such as the EYLF.[7] Such requirements leave little official space for the language of problematisation and critique.[8] An alternative reading of the EYLF is that ‘belonging’ is coded and mobilised in ways that provide political reassurance and avoid inflaming political sensitivities, while, at the same time, imperceptibly but deliberately creating space for critical interrogations. Put colloquially, we contend that belonging is coded in ways that enabled it to ‘fly below the political radar’, while inviting from practitioners a much more radical response than the words themselves might suggest.

It is encouraging, therefore, that anecdotal and emerging written reports from practitioners suggest that many are taking up the invitations implicit in the EYLF. At Dragonfly Creek Children’s Centre (a pseudonym), for example, where practitioners encourage discussions about belonging, children have initiated or chosen to join in discussions with other children about social justice issues. Such discussions have focused, for instance, on the practice in Australia of ‘acknowledgement of country’ at the commencement of gatherings, as a statement of respect for Aboriginal people and recognition of their traditional custodianship of the land on which the gathering is taking place; the (un)fairness of bans on same-sex marriages; the importance of religion in some peoples’ lives; and cultural and religious stereotyping and discrimination, including ‘Islamophobia’ (Giugni, 2010).

As this example illustrates, the absence of references to the politics of belonging can be interpreted as a coded invitation to fill the void. Deleuze conveys a sense of the rich possibilities arising from what sometimes needs to be left unsaid:

As for what is really said ... because one phrase denies the existence of others, forbidding, contradicting or repressing them to such an extent that each phrase remains pregnant with everything left unsaid. This virtual or latent content multiplies meaning and opens itself up to interpretation, creating a 'hidden discourse' that ... is a source of great richness. (Deleuze, 1999, p. 2)

An important aspect of the work of belonging in the EYLF, therefore, lies in leaving itself open to, and indeed inviting, constant and creative renegotiation – in a Deleuzean sense, to ‘intrinsically transformative’ becoming (Deleuze, 1995, p. 186).

Concluding Thoughts

We set ourselves two tasks in this article: to develop a cartography of belonging, and to use the cartography to analyse and interrogate the work done by the belonging motif in the EYLF. As Klinghoffer (2006) notes, cartographies have an agenda. Our agenda was driven by our nagging sense of ambivalence about the prominence of belonging in the EYLF and our need to form a considered view about whether it constituted more than a pleasantly alliterative platitude; and if it did, to gain a sense of its possibilities. Accordingly, we sought to map understandings of belonging in ways that emphasised its many manifestations and dynamics; hence our focus on articulating dimensions and axes of belonging. While motivated by the EYLF, we anticipate that the cartography may have broader relevance.

Mitchell (2005, p. 51) contends that a mapping of any landscape tells ‘what is possible, what must be overcome, what is to be struggled for and against’. Through the processes outlined in this article, we have learned much about the possibilities of belonging in the EYLF and about the work that remains to be done. It seems likely that there will always be political struggles over what work powerful notions like belonging can and should do in an early childhood education and care curriculum framework. As we have tried to show in this article, a cartography can offer rich theoretical, analytic, interpretative and strategic resources to inform those struggles and, more importantly, potentially generative ways of addressing the challenges that underpin them.
Interrogating ‘Belonging’

To conclude, we believe that the centrality of the notion of ‘belonging’ in the EYLF holds potential for radical transformations of early childhood settings. If the EYLF is taken up in ways that foster critical reflexivity and close attention to the politics, as well as the dimensions, of belonging, then early childhood settings are likely to become places where the desires for belonging of those who have been historically, and are currently, excluded are more readily recognised. By becoming more welcoming places for all, early childhood settings can make a substantial contribution to the building of a more socially just society. We hope this article will generate a great deal of further discussion and action towards realising this transformation.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

[2] The consortium was notified that it was the successful tenderer in September 2008 and given a ‘delivery’ date of early May 2009 for the submission of its recommended version of the EYLF to the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
[3] The national consultation included meetings with several key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups across Australia. Case-study sites for the trial of the EYLF included early childhood centres in a remote Aboriginal community and a Torres Strait Island community. It is likely that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also participated in other consultations. A Wiradjuri woman was a member of the consortium. Critical friends of the consortium included several early childhood educators from different Aboriginal nations across Australia.
[4] In contrast to the consultations on the majority of initiatives that formed part of the COAG’s national quality reform agenda in early childhood education and care, the reports of the EYLF consultations were not released.
[5] We searched the EBSCO Host, Informaworld, A+Education, Wiley, Springerlink, SAGE, Informit and PsycINFO databases. Some articles were listed in more than one database, hence there are some duplications in the combined total of 831 listings.
[6] We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for this point.
[7] Personal communication from an anonymous senior bureaucrat.
[8] Spaces that encouraged problematisation and critique in the first publicly released draft of the EYLF, including implicit references to the politics of belonging, were closed down in subsequent versions.

References


Jennifer Sumsion & Sandie Wong


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APPENDIX 1
Dimensions of belonging with descriptors

Emotional
Emotional dimensions of belonging emphasise the personal and relational. Most of the source literature refers to feelings of intimacy, affinity, love, care and commitment that contribute, in turn, to a sense of comfort, ease, security and well-being (Read, 2000). Emotional belonging is also associated with acceptance: feeling liked, recognised, respected and ‘suitable’ – ‘the right person to be in this place’ (Broström, 2002, quoted in Woodhead & Brooker, 2008, p. 4) and ‘a sense of ease ... with who we are in-ourselves’ (Miller, 2003, p. 216). Hedetoft (2004, p. 27) points out that emotional belonging is often seen as innocent, transparent, unreflective, organic and a relatively uncomplicated form of belonging, grounded in ‘natural embeddedness and unthinking attachment’, and thus an ‘alluringly attractive’ notion. In contrast, Probyn (1996, p. 8) sees emotional belonging as much less comfortable – rather as a ‘longing’ and yearning ‘for more than what is’; a longing that will never be fully satisfied because of ‘the impossibility of ever really and truly belonging’. For Probyn (1996, p. 40), then, belonging is ‘always tainted with deep insecurities’ or, as described by Miller (2003, p. 216), veiling a ‘desperate fear of illegitimacy and alienation’ and an almost existential despair. Central to most of the source literature is a focus on individuals’ ‘emotional investments and desires for attachment’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 145) and ‘heart maps’ (p. 149).

Social
Social belonging is associated with group membership, affinity and attachments beyond the emotional attachments in close networks of family and friends. It entails ‘feeling part of community; caring and being cared for; contributing to one’s community’ (Awaratani et al, 2008, quoted in Bernard van Leer Foundation Programme Staff, 2008, p. 30). Central to social belonging is recognition and acceptance by the group or community, and participation in its practices, rituals, activities and gatherings, or, as Rapport & Dawson (1999, quoted in Tomba, 2004, p. 93) put it, ‘shared constructions of patterns of regular doings’. Social belonging is likely to involve fluency in a local or common language, as well as shared narratives, symbolism and networks (Read, 2000), loyalty, solidarity and associated obligations (Pollini, 2005), and a shared feeling of being ‘part of something larger than ourselves’ (Clinton, 2008, p. 32). It is also likely to involve the projection of shared values onto individual members, especially those whom the group perceives as its leaders (Pollini, 2005).

Cultural
Cultural belonging is associated with one’s positioning as part of a particular group with common horizons based on shared ideas, knowledge, practices, typographies, discourse networks, histories and genealogies (Hedetoft, 2004; Meinhof & Galaisinski, 2005; Pollini, 2005). Collectively, these resources provide understandings about how to interpret and act in particular contexts (Read, 2000). For example, cultural belonging could be based on, but not limited to, ethnicity, intellectual engagement, economic interests or professional identities. Cultural groupings are generally readily identifiable through metanarratives generated by the group and public discourses that have emerged around the group (Tomba, 2004; Meinhof & Galaisinski, 2005). In some instances, these meta-elements and broader public recognition distinguish cultural belonging from social belonging. This distinction is problematic, however, in contexts such as Australia, where there is a history of colonisation and where the after-effects of the long-term residual damage (such as displacement from traditional spaces/places, loss of languages) of the colonialist impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be intensely experienced and affect abilities to enact traditional meanings around belongingness.[6]

Spatial
Belonging can be integrally connected with place: a place one calls home; a place one leaves and returns to; a place in which one would like to die and be laid to rest (Read, 2000). This kind of spatial belonging is closely connected to emotional and temporal belonging. Fenster (2005, p. 243) provides a different perspective on spatial belonging as the ‘everyday belonging’ that can arise from intensive use of a local environment; intimate knowledge of a place and how it is ordered; and ‘ritualised use’ of a space. It can also encompass a sense of ‘ecological participation’ in that place, through complex systems of interdependence and symbiosis (Pollini, 2005). Similarly, Mee & Wright (2009, p. 772) refer to ‘feelings of being in place’. Read (2000, p. 85) refers to knowing the language of, and listening to, that place; hearing and responding to the land when it sings, cries out and feels ‘respected or violated, cared for or abandoned’; when it calls for ‘visitors to identify themselves’; and when it promises to ‘care for its children’.

Temporal
Interrogating ‘Belonging’

Integral to temporal belonging is a sense of connection of past, present and future (Fenster, 2003). Temporal belonging, like spatial belonging, is closely related to place, space and landscape. It is heavily overlaid and ingrained, however, with memories and historical connections. It can be associated with long residence, generational roots, childhood memories and connections to earliest experiences (Read, 2000). There may be a sense of seeing one’s accumulated life experiences and memories ‘embedded in the landscape’ (Read, 2000, p. 244); or one’s cultural history reflected in historical monuments to, and commemorations of, culturally significant events (Czaplicka, 2004; Fenster, 2005). Temporal belonging can sometimes be imbued with nostalgia (Pollini, 2005). For many migrants, Read (2000, p. 148) suggests, ‘the ultimate question’ of belonging is not spatial (‘home versus homeland’) but temporal (‘the relationship between the old and the new’).

**Physical**
Physical belonging encompasses physical affinity with the landscape and a deep, sensual appreciation of its sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures (Probyn, 1996; Read, 2000; Hedetoft, 2004) – an affinity so intense that it may be experienced corporally as ‘an ache for the land’ (Read, 2000, p. 157). It may also involve embodied knowledge of the physical environment, developed, for example, through repetitive physical practices carried out in that environment over a sustained period of time (Fenster, 2005). Embodied knowledge, and a sense of belonging, can also arise from an act of great physical intensity and significance undertaken in that environment, such as giving birth (Read, 2000). The corporeality of this dimension distinguishes it from the emotional, temporal and spatial dimensions described above, although all are interlinked.

**Spiritual**
Spiritual dimensions are associated with ‘more-than-human’ ways of experiencing belonging (Mee & Wright, 2009, p. 774) – for example, through connectedness and communication with spiritual ancestors and deities through spiritual law and rituals and through ancient traditions (Read, 2000). Spiritual belonging emphasises the sacred. Connections with the sacred may be through religious artefacts and attachments and, especially for indigenous peoples, through the land, which is imbued with the ‘presence of the creators, the spiritual guardians and of the dead’ (Read, 2000, p. 85).

**Moral/ethical**
Belonging can be experienced as a moral and/or ethical obligation with deep-seated responsibilities to people, places and other entities, and to their future. These obligations may be associated with a ‘particular heredity, history or locality’ (Miller, 2003, p. 222). They can also be experienced as an often hard-earned entitlement: a ‘right to belong’ through achievement, hard labour, sacrifice, tragedies and the shedding of blood – for example, in fighting for one’s country (Read, 2000, p. 44). Less dramatically, a sense of moral/ethical belonging can come through one’s contribution in participating, raising children or, more generally, ‘being a good citizen’ (Read, 2000, p. 156). In Australia, Read (2000) contends, non-indigenous peoples’ claims to moral/ethical rights to the possession of land – as a kind of parallel belonging – have long been a response to Aboriginal peoples’ spiritual possession of the land.

**Political**
Citizenship and the right to participation are integral to political belonging. Often seen as a ‘state-dependent form of identity’ (Hedetoft, 2004, p. 25), citizenship involves arguments about who has the right to membership of one’s nation – and about who authentically belongs and who does not (Hedetoft, 2004; Fenster, 2005). In such arguments, familiarity can be reinterpreted as nationality and unfamiliarity as alien (Hedetoft, 2004). In democracies, the right to participation that comes with citizenship involves the right to be part of conversations and decision making about the future of one’s community, society or nation. Hence, political belonging is closely connected to legal belonging. Through the notion of global citizenship, with its connotations of responsibility and participation that transcend national borders, political belonging also has connections with moral dimensions of belonging.

**Legal**
Legal belonging is about ownership (‘belonging to’), rather than membership (‘belonging with’) (Schein, 2009). Legal belonging can reflect democratic political principles – for example, the right to own land, to hold citizenship or to have access to resources. The ‘right to say “it’s mine”‘ (Read, 2000, p. 141) invoked by legal belonging is also implicated, for instance, in patriarchal (ownership of women and children) and (neo)colonialist (ownership of subjugated territories) discourses, as well as globalisation (ownership of the world’s resources) and consumerist discourses (ownership of ‘things’) (Hedetoft, 2004; Fenster, 2005). The emphasis on ownership, rather than on citizenship and participation, differentiates legal belonging from political belonging. Despite its emphasis on ‘belonging to’ and ‘ownership of’, legal belonging has connections to other forms of belonging – for example, when ownership of an item of symbolic or instrumental value is a prerequisite for, or entitles, membership of a particular social group. Legal belonging is also connected with the traditional, pre-colonial law of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other indigenous peoples, including initiation into cultural and spiritual ‘lore’, further illustrating the interconnectedness of different dimensions of belonging.
APPENDIX 2
Dimensions of belonging identified in the EYLF

Emotional
‘In early childhood settings, children develop a sense of belonging when they feel accepted, develop attachments and trust those that care for them’ (p. 20).

Social
‘Experiences of relationships and participation in communities contribute to children’s belonging, being and becoming. From birth, children experience living and learning with others in a range of communities. These might include families, local communities or early childhood settings’ (p. 25).

Spatial
‘In a supportive active learning environment, children who are confident and involved learners are increasingly able to take responsibility for their own learning, personal regulation and contribution to the social environment. Connections and continuity between learning experiences in different settings make learning more meaningful and increase children’s feelings of belonging’ (p. 33).

Temporal
‘Children bring family and community ways of being, belonging and becoming to their early childhood settings. By building on these experiences, educators help all children to feel secure, confident and included and to experience continuity in how to be and how to learn’ (p. 16).

Physical
‘[Children] demonstrate a sense of belonging and comfort in their environments’ (p. 26).

Moral
‘Over time, the variety and complexity of ways in which children connect and participate with others increases. Babies participate through smiling, crying, imitating, and making sounds to show their level of interest in relating to or participating with others. Toddlers participate and connect with other toddlers through such gestures as offering their teddy to a distressed child or welcoming a new child enthusiastically. Older children show interest in how others regard them and understandings about friendships. They develop understandings that their actions or responses affect how others feel or experience belonging’ (p. 25).

Cultural
‘Children are born belonging to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities’ (p. 13).

Political
‘Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation’ (p. 26).

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009; original emphasis).

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