

**Young people's preferences for social interaction in terms of
homophily and inclusion: A critical analysis with reference
to respect and democratic decision-making**

Submitted by Georgios Koutsouris to the University of Exeter
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Abstract

This thesis examines young people's preferences for social interaction with others perceived to be similar and different, and school staff's interpretations of the young people's social behaviour. The issue is explored with reference to a tension between social inclusion, the principle of embracing difference, and homophily, the sociological concept that similarity breeds connection. The idea of examining the two notions together was given by an analogy from aesthetics: as inclusion is understood as an ethical obligation to embrace difference, it may come into tension with people's actual preferences for social interaction that can be represented by homophily. The project, influenced by personal construct psychology, focused on participants' perceptions of similarity and difference. The tension was explored empirically using scenarios to conduct in depth semi-structured interviews with young people with Asperger syndrome, visual impairment and without disabilities, and school staff from mainstream and special settings. As the tension was expected to have an ethical dimension, the methods were influenced by research in moral psychology. According to the findings, homophily was consistent with the experiences of the participants in the study, and inclusion was considered to be an ethical obligation. The data also suggested that homophily and inclusion can come into a tension. This tension is evident in education, as students with disabilities or other differences might express a preference to be among similar others. School staff then would face the tension of respecting their preferences or enforcing inclusion, something that young people stressed would show lack of respect. As homophily can also conceal discrimination, the tension was not easily resolved. The matter is related to school policies about difference but, since it cannot be fully resolved by them, it can be related to a particular ethos that would

recognise the role of open dialogue. Theoretically, the homophily/inclusion tension is one between individuality and commonality. It can challenge our understanding of what the ethical obligation to inclusion actually entails, and what treating the students respectfully should mean. Overall, it questions the justice of inclusion and opens a debate about participatory decision-making and democratic school management. The practical significance of the study can be located in the implications of the tension in the everyday school life. The particular approach to inclusion that the study suggests can be translated into appropriate training activities for the management of difference at school level. It can also inform school policies of inclusion and difference to acknowledge students' preferences and tensions of values.

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1. Introduction

And as he was passing along he saw a man who was blind from his birth, whereupon his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned – this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, it was neither for any sin of this man, nor of his parents: but that the works of God may be manifested in him.

John IX, 1-4

1.1. Disability, difference and the rhetoric of inclusion

Disability challenges the way people think about themselves and the others around them. It calls into question one's understandings of humanness (Koch, 2001) and their self perception (Lindgren, 2004). It is also a constant reminder of human morbidity and mortality (Watson, 2000). The question as to why disability exists in the world does not have a single answer; yet, it is more important to ask ourselves why we – like the disciples in the starting quote – feel the need to raise this question.

An answer can be that disability raises moral issues; it is not by chance that the disciples related disability to sin. Consequently, we feel that people with disabilities ought to be treated ethically. This moral sensitivity can be attributed to emotional reactions driven by compassion that might conceal a *fear for contamination* (Watson, 2000); or to respect for the difficulties that people with disabilities can experience (Cigman, 2007b); or to a moral obligation to the other rooted in philosophical or metaphysical ideas (Levinas, 2000).

Disability is a factor of difference. The social model of disability denies the role of impairment – of the body – to the formation of disability which is seen to be caused merely by social factors and entrenched stereotypes (Oliver, 1990; Barton, 2000; Barnes & Mercer, 2005). So, disability should not be seen as a

factor of difference, but as aspect of human diversity. This perspective on disability creates a paradox (Koch, 2001). The experience and the difficulties associated with it cannot be fully explained as the product of social factors (Terzi, 2005b), since disability is caused by the interaction of an impairment with the societal ideas that are attached to it (Norwich, 2010). Yet, the basic aim of the social model is to challenge dominant discourses and raise people's consciousness (Hacking, 1999).

As disability is a factor of difference, it is associated with all the difficulties and complexities that difference raises. It is also related to an ethical demand for inclusion in education, and more broadly in society. Inclusion is considered to be an ethical obligation to the other (Allan, 2005) and a demand for social justice and participation (Slee, 2011; Thomas, 2013). This ethical obligation is often translated into a demand for inclusion for all (Tremain 2005), as the only way to respond ethically to difference. Full participation in society and its institutions is considered to be an expression of respect to the other (Cigman, 2007b).

However, inclusion is mainly dealt with as a values rather than a political problem (Armstrong, 2005; Pirrie & Head, 2007). It is largely defined in terms of what is just and ethical and is approached as a *work in progress* (Allan, 2005) – a process rather than a final product (Pirrie & Head, 2007). The result is that the practical currency of the term is not sufficiently explored. Instead of giving answers and providing directions, the disparate definitions of inclusion open new debates (Hyde & Power, 2006; Cigman, 2007a; Armstrong et al, 2010).

The fragmentation and confusion that characterises the inclusion discourse, the so called *aura* of inclusion (Pirrie & Head, 2007), do not only generate fruitful discussions. The rhetoric of inclusion can also lead to the

disappearance of disability and difference from the current educational debates and to their substitution with the politically correct, but neutral notion of diversity (MacKay, 2002). Yet, the recognition of difference is also related to the provision for the young people that face difficulties as a result of their disabilities or other differences, so a denial to recognise difference can in turn affect the extent of this provision (MacKay, 2002; Norwich, 2008).

The rhetoric of inclusion and a dedication to the 'spurious notion of inclusion for all' (Cigman, 2007b, p. 792) can have a negative effect on provision. The ethical obligation to inclusion is often based on the assumption that respect can only be understood in terms of avoiding the humiliation and stigma that any kind of recognition of difference can bring (Cigman, 2007b). From this perspective, the recognition of young people's differences, namely of their individuality, is only negatively perceived. However, the recognition of young people's individuality can secure access to appropriate provision (Norwich, 2008). It is also an acknowledgement of their right to choose the lives they value (Terzi, 2005b).

1.2.The analogy from aesthetics: inclusion and homophily

For my Master's dissertation (in Special Educational Needs, 2010-11, University of Exeter), I explored an analogy between the aesthetic principle of *dynamic balance* and inclusion in social relations. This analogy forms the basis of this thesis as it triggered the idea that inclusion is a principle that describes an ethical obligation to interact socially with different people. As such, inclusion can come into tension with people's actual wishes, especially when they are expressed as preference to be among others perceived to be similar.

Dynamic balance was a common structural technique of the ancient Greek and Byzantine art (Kordis, 2009). It describes a way in which disparate elements within an aesthetic form complement each other towards a state of balance, promoting the idea of unity in diversity (Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005). My argument is that it is possible to use ideas about the aesthetic principle of dynamic balance to explore another way of thinking about inclusion. Yet, can parallels be drawn between ethics and aesthetics? Dworkin (2011), building on Hume's philosophy, argues that what is beautiful and what is good are both interpretations. In addition, works of art can carry ethical values or reprehensible ideas, and this is particularly evident in works of propaganda (Gaut, 1998). So, as aesthetic value has an ethical dimension, works of art can also be judged in ethical terms. Ethics and aesthetics intersect.

In the field of aesthetics, balance is seen as an aim in aesthetic composition (Kordis, 2009). Dynamic balance is a way to achieve balance based on diversity. Yet, the structural phenomenon of *symmetry* can create an instant impression of balance based on repetition of the same elements (Arnheim, 1966; Gombrich, 1979). In the social realm, *social cohesion* might be seen as a kind of social balance. However, increasing diversity often causes social conflict and homogeneous social structures can prove to be more cohesive (Gordon-Murray & Waitt, 2009). So, on the one hand there are people and social groups that share common characteristics, whereas on the other there is the ideal of a society with balanced internal oppositions. The latter describes inclusion, while the former *homophily*, the sociological concept that similarity breeds connection (McPherson et al, 2001; Kossinets & Watts, 2009).

An analogy can then be drawn between the aesthetic principle of dynamic balance and inclusion in social relations. Symmetry can have similarities with homophily (as they are both based on sameness), whereas dynamic balance with inclusion (they are based on diversity). Therefore, dynamic balance, taken as an idea broader than aesthetics (Kordis, 2009), can imply a celebration of diversity in both contexts. Inclusion can in turn be described as *a dynamic balance between different people*.

The analogy from aesthetics introduces ideas about social inclusion that go beyond the usual appreciation of diversity as it highlights homophily and the attraction to the similar that is rarely examined in relation to the notion of inclusion (Nangle et al., 2002; Frostad & Pijl, 2007). Homophily is rooted in well established social psychological theories: the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Byrne et al., 1986) and the social identity theory (Turner et al., 1987). It can reinforce people's own perspectives on the world and their self-esteem (McPherson et al., 2001), but it might also conceal discrimination or internalised feelings of oppression (Tappan, 2006). The examination of homophily and inclusion can reveal a tension between preferences for social interaction with similar others (*individuality*) and the moral imperative of including all people (*commonality*). This tension has implications for educational practice.

Within education, this tension can be found in the plethora of the everyday decisions that students have to make. Such decisions would involve an ethical weighting between choices that would be in line with individual preferences, and choices that would promote social inclusion, given that they may be contrary to each other. This idea is particularly relevant to students with disabilities or other differences in terms of how their preferences for social interaction with similar others can come into tension with the principle of

including all people. The tension is also related to the management of difference at class or school level by members of staff.

The ethical obligation to inclusion is often translated into a demand for inclusion for all (Tremain, 2005). So, homophily is presented as the opposite to inclusion, and tends to be ignored since it is not considered to be an expression of respect to the other. Yet, even though we share the same concepts for principles like *respect*, we do not necessarily share criteria for their application (Dworkin, 2010). Respect is often perceived in terms of avoiding the humiliation and stigma of difference (Cigman, 2007b). As the recognition of difference is related to educational provision, respect can also be understood as providing students with educational and life opportunities (MacKay, 2002; Norwich, 2008). The acknowledgment of students' right to make their own choices and contribute to decision-making is an expression of respect as well (Terzi, 2005b).

So, the homophily/inclusion tension raises the issue of democratic decision-making in the school community. A democratic school is a place where everything is open to discussion (Harber & Trafford, 1999). This does not mean that all people in a school have the same power or share the same values, but that there is space for negotiation (Mouffe, 1999). Since people understand the same values in different ways, tensions of values cannot be fully resolved (Norwich, 2008; Dworkin, 2010). In addition, any achieved balance would be uneasy (Berlin, 2003), as it would require compromises (Goodhart, 2004).

Overall, the homophily/inclusion tension is constructive as it can challenge our understanding of what the ethical obligation to inclusion entails, and what treating the students respectfully means (Cigman, 2007b). As it is also related to the management of difference at class and school level, the examination of this tension questions the moral value of inclusion for all

(Cigman, 2007b; Pirrie & Head, 2007), and opens a debate about participatory decision-making and democratic school management. On the whole, it raises the issue of justice of inclusion: if inclusion is mainly conceived normatively, then it will be unable to provide responses to practical issues. This way of thinking about inclusion can have professional development implications, as it can be translated into appropriate training for school staff.

The interdisciplinary combination of different perspectives from aesthetics, sociology, social psychology, disability studies and education is an attempt to what is called *bridge-building* (Dyson & Howes, 2009), where the aim is to explore the common ground that distinct perspectives might share. Different approaches can also illuminate new aspects of the subjects under examination. So, the analogy from aesthetics introduces homophily and the role of similarity in social interaction that is often neglected; homophily can in turn prove to be a useful way to examine the issues that inclusion raises.

1.3.Thesis structure

This section outlines the thesis structure. The **introductory chapter** introduces the examined tension between inclusion and homophily, and presents the rationale of the study.

The **literature chapter** sets the theoretical basis on which the study was conducted. It is organised into seven sections. The first section focuses on *disability and difference*. Here disability is explored as an aspect of difference. The section goes through various approaches to disability, with particular reference to identity, the use of language and relevant classifications. The next section (*me and the other*) explores perspectives on the issues of self and identity, symbolic interactionism, identity politics and human classifications.

These matters underpin theoretically various aspects and the philosophical position of the study, and form the basis of the concept of homophily. In the section that follows (*ethics, moral judgement and choice*) moral judgement is presented as central to the methodological approach taken in the study, which is influenced by the scenario-based research of moral psychology. This section also provides the grounds for the main argument of the thesis, the tension between individuality (personal choice) and commonality (the common good) that has an ethical dimension. The section about *inclusion* examines various approaches to inclusion with reference to normative understandings. The question that is particularly raised is: what is the justice of inclusion? The next section examines *homophily*. It explores the theoretical background of the concept (sociology, social psychology), the two dimensions of homophily (choice and discrimination/oppression) and its role in education. The section about *dynamic balance* discusses the aesthetic principle of dynamic balance, so that an analogy between aesthetics and ethics can be drawn in the next section, *the analogy from aesthetics*. An analogy from aesthetics is presented here, and its role in introducing the idea of examining inclusion together with homophily. Homophily and inclusion are brought together and the section leads to the empirical part of the thesis. The chapter concludes with the aims of the study.

The **methodology chapter** outlines the philosophical and methodological approach taken in the study, and presents the way the project was designed and conducted. There is particular reference to the scenarios used that are integral to the research design. Issues and challenges related to the analysis of the research findings are discussed, as well as ethical considerations and procedures.

The study's empirical findings are examined in the **findings chapter** in two parts. *Part one* presents findings about the tension between homophily and inclusion, as this tension was experienced and described by the participant groups in scenario-based and actual social situations. *Part two* presents findings as regards various issues related to the discussed tension.

The **discussion chapter** begins with a summary of the findings and a discussion about how the data illuminated the issues raised by the research aims. The various topics are examined in detail in separate sections comparatively (when applicable) for the participant groups. The chapter includes a section in which methodological issues are explored, as well as ideas for future research. The concluding section briefly summarises the findings, and the practical and theoretical significance of the study.

Finally, the **appendix** provides a list of supporting documents and tables, organised into four sections: access, participants, data collection and analysis.

2. Review of the literature

The literature chapter has seven main sections: *Disability and difference; Me and the other; Ethics, moral judgement, and choice; The notion of inclusion; The concept of homophily; The aesthetic principle of dynamic balance; The analogy from aesthetics*. These sections set the theoretical and empirical background of the study. The section that refers to the aesthetic principle of dynamic balance (section 2.6) is presented here so an analogy can be drawn between social relations and aesthetics in the last section (2.7).

2.1.Disability and difference

2.1.1.The notion of disability

The website of the World Health Organisation defines disability as an umbrella term that covers a variety of impairments and limitations, but also refers to restrictions in participation. Therefore, from this perspective, disability is a complex notion with two distinct but inseparable and interacting aspects: bodily function, and social participation. In line with this understanding, Polychronopoulou (2008) describes a person with a disability as someone who has a difficulty that, in turn, restricts their chances for social inclusion and invites societal stereotypes, while creating feelings of anxiety to the person that experiences this difficulty. Extending this idea, she adds that being a woman or a person of colour, suffering from poverty, being part of a minority, expressing different ideas from the mainstream society, if they limit one's opportunities for social participation, can become a disability. The complexity of the issue is evident in the polarised way that disability is often approached. Although bodily

or activity limitations and societal factors are intertwined, they have also influenced distinct approaches.

The so called *medical model* of disability (Oliver, 1990) is accused of 'defining disability as a negative variation from the physical norm that necessarily disadvantages the physically distinct subject's life and life quality' (Koch, 2001, p. 370). This way of thinking about disability focuses on individual limitations, and assumes that disability is caused exclusively by within-the-person factors and without any contribution from the social environment (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009). It is called the medical model because it was considered that medical or other relevant practitioners often hold this particular view of disability. The term *individual model* is also used to describe the contribution of individual factors to disability, but with no reference to the medical profession. In addition to the assumption that only individual limitations can cause disability, the medical model is seen to refer to normative standards, heavily challenged by the *social model* of disability (Barnes & Mercer, 2005).

The social model represents 'the perspective of those who define disability in terms of a social discrimination that limits the opportunities of persons of difference' (Koch, 2001, p. 370). Difference has often been defined as a deviation from a value standard or norm. The social model defies this understanding of difference. According to a social model point of view, disability is irrelevant to personal limitations, but is caused exclusively by social factors (Barton, 2000). Therefore, since society is the one that disables people, it is the responsibility of all of us to remove the barriers to the final aim of full inclusion. Barton (2000) writes that 'disabled people experience the tyranny of normality' (p. 57). This is why, for the social model, difference is defined not through normative comparisons about able-bodiedness, but it is rather seen as a factor of

human diversity. So, having a disability is seen as a bodily variation. These ideas form the basis of disability activism. Saleh (1999) notes that people with disabilities 'did not want sympathy or charity; they wanted to be heard and, above all, to be included' (p. 207). Despite its limitations, the social model has had a progressive impact on policy and practice. It has attempted to change the focus from the individual to society and remove the stigma of difference. The focus on individual deficits that an individual or medical model approach overemphasises can lead 'to a view of disabled people as a category of rejects, as people flawed in some aspect of their humanity' (Brisenden, 2000, p. 20). However, Koch (2001) stresses, the division between individual and social factors creates a *disability paradox*.

The disability paradox refers to the seemingly paradoxical denial of the individual factors by the supporters of the social model, and the social factors by the followers of the medical/individual model, in terms of what causes disability. This polarised way of examining the issue has created controversy, especially evident in cases where people attempted to take more holistic approaches. Shakespeare writes that 'disability results from the interplay of individual and contextual factors. In other words, people are disabled by society and by their bodies' (cited in Koch, 2008). This statement – written by a person that declares his disability – was considered to be a betrayal of the basic idea of the social model, that is, the idea that disability is a social construction (Koch, 2008). Shakespeare (2008) argues that the social model is not an incomplete way to describe disability but a wrong way, because neglecting the reality of impairment 'fails to capture the complexity of disabled people's lives' (p. 18). On the basis of this idea lies the tension between reality and social construction. Yet, as Hacking (1999) notes, arguments about social construction often serve

to raise consciousness, so the supporters of the social model may deny individual factors and create artificial tensions, in an attempt to reduce disability's stigma and negative stereotypes. Koch (2008) stresses the importance of distinguishing between the natural (the impairment) and the artificial (the social construct) since it can affect the way difference is understood and treated. Yet, the fact that they can be distinguished does not mean that they are not interacting.

The complexity of disability can also be approached from a *bio-psycho-social model* perspective. This holistic approach refers to the interplay between individual and social factors, in terms of how disability is conceptualised (Devecchi, 2007). Norwich (2010) argues that the bio-psycho-social model of disability 'is a useful way of going beyond the unnecessary polarisation between medical (individual) and social models' (p. 13).

From a different perspective, Runswick-Cole & Hodge (2009) write about the *affirmation model* of disability. This model does not offer a causation explanation like the models discussed so far, but it focuses on the experience of disability. 'Living with impairment can give fresh perspectives and enable lives which are interesting, positive and empowering' (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009, p. 199). This approach to disability has mainly been adopted by authors with disabilities.

2.1.2. The experience of disability

Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines as people with disabilities 'those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with

others' (UN, 2006). This same definition is also adopted by the European Union in the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (European Commission, 2010), and recognises the role that impairment as well as society play in the experience of disability. So, as an understanding, it comes into tension with the ideas of the more strong form of the social model of disability (Oliver, 1990; Barton, 2000; Barnes & Mercer, 2005).

Shakespeare (2006) writes that the social model of disability, focusing on oppression, exclusion and barriers imposed by the social environment, has often played an important psychological role for people with disabilities, as it can be a powerful way to deny the relevance and negativity of impairment. From a social model perspective, impairment is seen as a functional limitation, whereas disability as referring to social barriers and oppression. This is why, Morris (2001) stresses, people need to separate the characteristics of their bodies and minds from the way they react to these characteristics or, in other words, *impairment* should be used as a value-free word, whereas *disability* as a synonym for oppression. Yet, she also admits that this can often prove to be difficult, as 'it is not always obvious what restrictions are caused by impairment and what by disability' (Morris, 2001, p. 9), and the experience of impairment can be for many particularly distressing. So, the social model in its strong form does not seem to capture the complexity of the experience of disability, since for many people their physical or mental issues can play an important role in their lives and self-perception (Shakespeare, 2012). This is because, on the one hand, impairment can cause difficulties and discomfort and, on the other, individual experience cannot be separated from the social context (Shakespeare, 2006).

Impairment can be associated with difficulties, and physical or psychological suffering and pain. While for some people impairment-related difficulties can be minimal or even empowering, for others the experience of disability can be hindering and detrimental. Lutz & Bowers (2005) distinguish between primary (that, for instance, affect mobility, cognition or communication) and secondary impairment effects (such as the need for increased vigilance). They also refer to the impact that the trajectory of impairment can have on everyday life, as in some cases it can restrict planning or spontaneity; and to the type and timing of the onset, especially as to whether one was born with an impairment or this was acquired during the lifetime, a factor that might also play a crucial role in the experience of disability (Lutz & Bowers, 2005).

Nevertheless, disability and impairment are far more than a health issue, as 'there can be no impairment without society' (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 34). Shakespeare (2006) makes three basic points to support this assertion: First, in order to experience disabling barriers, one ought to have an impairment. If there is no link between the two, then disability can describe any form of social restriction. Second, impairments can be caused (and sustained or exacerbated) by the social environment, for example by poverty, war or other social constraints. Third, the definition of impairment is already a social judgment, pertinent to the expectations and arrangements of a particular society. This is particularly evident in the case of dyslexia that reflects a socially determined demand for literacy (Shakespeare, 2006). This argument can also be discussed with reference to the UK Equality Act (HM Government, 2011) that defines disability as an impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on one's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Impairment is a prerequisite to fall within the Act's definition of disability, but what counts as one

is not always easy to define, as it is often a social judgement ('it may sometimes be necessary to decide whether a person has an impairment', HM Government, 2011, p. 8). The same applies to the understanding of what counts as 'normal' activities that the presence of impairment can restrict. From this perspective, impairment can only be experienced in a social context, and few restrictions are only social in nature. What is more, once impairment is removed, disability becomes another way to refer to social exclusion (Shakespeare, 2012). Regarding this study, disability and impairment are used interchangeably, since they are considered to be in a dialectical interplay.

Morris (2001), taking a pessimist approach, notes that there is little or no room for recognising the negative aspects of impairment without undermining the value of disabled people's lives. Yet:

'It is not necessary to claim that all impairments are negative, or that impairment is only and always negative. But for many, impairment is not neutral, because it involves intrinsic disadvantage. Disabling barriers make impairment more difficult, but even in the absence of barriers impairment can be problematic' (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 43).

Therefore, the particular difficulties of impairment are central to the way people experience their disability and difference, and are equally important to the social barriers and stereotypes that are externally imposed. This acknowledgement does not imply that the lives of people with disabilities have not value, but that experiencing disability and impairment can often be particularly challenging. This is further explored in the following section.

2.1.3. Disability and the self

Disability, whether experienced in a positive and empowering way or as a stigma, can have an effect on the way people understand themselves and the

others around them. Koch (2001) writes that 'in a broader frame, the physical disability/social difference debate reflects a growing dialogue about definitions of humanness and personhood' (p. 371). Therefore, this interaction of reality and social construction that disability appears to be reflects society's stance not only towards people with disabilities, but also towards the idea of the human existence itself. Whether a personal experience or an issue of critical reflection, disability can challenge the way people think of themselves.

It seems that non-disabled people often relate disability to stereotypical beliefs about dependency and helplessness. A reason could be that disability may be experienced as a constant reminder of human morbidity and mortality. These emotional reactions to disability often express a concealed *fear of contamination* (Watson, 2000). The rise of the consumer society with its focus on the body can also create feelings of anxiety in those who do not fall under the mainstream cultural norms (Watson, 2000). Yet, the experience of disability does not exhaust itself to a discussion about societal prejudices and stereotypes. As Lindgren (2004) argues, 'a body in trouble demands [no less than] a strategic rethinking of self-identity' (p. 146).

Asch (2004) notes that disability with the exception of some hereditary genetic conditions is not usually shared by people's biological family or broader social group. If we consider disability as a factor that can lead to the formation of a minority identity, then unlike other aspects of difference like race or religion people with disabilities may feel a lack of belonging. Such feelings combined with difficulties related to *a body in trouble* challenge the stability and continuity of self, perhaps leading to a crisis of self-identity. Lindgren (2004) describes disease and disability as 'an alien invader within the self' (p. 148) that reshapes the equilibrium between body and identity. This invasion within the self can be

experienced in different ways: with hostility (the idea of an 'alien intruder'), as coexistence (the 'evil twin'), or incorporation (a present and a past self). As a result, the self-concept appears to be in constant flux (Lindgren, 2004).

Koch (2001) – building on Nussbaum's ideas – attempts to present disability in a more positive way:

'If self conscious, self sufficient autonomy [...] is at best a temporary phase in the normal life course, then *disability* becomes not a negative deviation from the norm but as normal as childhood and old age [...] Disability becomes, in this construction, a matter of degree and timing, not an aberration' (p. 371).

From this point of view, autonomy is not considered to be a permanent characteristic of the human existence. The idea of a temporary autonomy in the constantly changing human life can be seen to challenge normative understandings of disability as a deficit. In that sense, disability and dependency may not necessarily lead to negative self-perception.

2.1.4.Feminist approach to disability

Garland-Thomson (2004) notes that disability and feminist studies are issues of identity. She argues that 'feminist theory investigates how culture saturates the particularities of bodies with meanings and probes the consequences of those meanings' (Garland-Thomson, 2004, p. 75). So, feminist theory focuses on the interplay of cultural ideas with the reality of the experience of the (female) body, in terms of the meanings attached to it. This is why, she notes, feminist theory and disability studies can benefit each other.

Thomas (1999) notes that experience bears the mark of time, place and social positioning, and is always mediated and situated. Feminist disability theory describes disability as 'a pervasive cultural system that stigmatizes certain kinds of bodily variations' (Garland-Thomson, 2004, pp. 76-77). In other

words, the disabled figure can be seen to act as a synecdoche for all forms that do not fall under the cultural normative standards. From this point of view, femaleness and disability can both be understood as 'defective departures from a valued standard' (Garland-Thomson, 2004, p. 78); they can be examined as experiences of the body, but only through the lens of particular societal ideas.

Feminist theory examines disability: as 'a system for interpreting and disciplining bodily variations'; as 'a relationship between bodies and their environments'; as 'a set of practices that produce both the able-bodied and the disabled'; and as 'a way of describing the inherent instability of the embodied self' (Garland-Thomson, 2004, p. 77). Challenging normative standards and the traditional power relations, feminist theory approaches disability on the one hand in terms of society's meanings, prejudices and stereotypes, but on the other hand through the experience of the body. So, feminist theory can come into tension with the ideas that form the basis of the social model of disability, since the former takes into account both social and individual factors.

The social model of disability denies the contribution of impairment – of the body – in terms of what causes disability, but claims that society with its structures is the one that disables people. In line with this idea, Asch (2004) argues that 'instead of speaking of impairments at all, we should speak of environments' (p. 21). Despite the fact that Asch writes from a feminist perspective as well, other feminist authors adopt a more holistic view to this matter. As Thomas (1999) stresses:

'Feminists have argued that starting out from personal experience challenges conventional distinctions between the *private* and the *public/social* [since] all facets of personal experience of living with disability and impairment effects should be acknowledged, explored and made the subject of disability politics' (p. 80).

The reality of impairment – the *personal experience of living with disability* – is therefore a way of exploring through the personal the socio-cultural. In a similar way, Lindgren (2004) notes how knowledge produced by *bodies in trouble* can contribute to the understanding, along with issues of identity, of the role of the cultural meanings attached to the body.

2.1.5. Language and disability

The issue of the language of disability – labels and terms that attempt to express the complexities of the disability discourse – is often associated with the negative connotations of older terms and with a demand for more effective language use for the future. Language choices that can stigmatise or devalue people with disabilities have been described as *bad mouthing* (Corbett, 1996; Norwich, 1999). Corbett (1996), when referring to the impact of the language in terms of disability, writes that ‘unless we consciously hear our own words, we are unable and unwilling to question what feelings are revealed beneath ill-considered mouthing’ (p. 3).

To illustrate the matters related to the language of disability we could use the example of the educational term *special educational needs* (SEN). Despite any arguments that the SEN term could be seen to have outlived its usefulness (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009; Norwich, 2010), the concept was introduced in 1978 to replace terms like *handicapped* and *ineducable*, ‘as a more positive and provision-oriented term to re-focus attention on required provision rather than concentrate on children’s deficits’ (Norwich, 2008, p.48). Yet, it appears that through a ‘labelling cycle’ phenomenon (Norwich, 1999) labels that were considered positive in the past after some time of use can be seen as outdated, or even as completely unnecessary.

However, Norwich (2010) argues that within the field of special education labels and categories can be useful, because they can contribute to the formation of positive identities with respect to students with disabilities and their parents, they have knowledge and understanding associated with them, and perhaps most importantly they can secure access to resources. Constructive use of labels should involve balancing between reducing stigmatisation, and appropriately accommodating individual needs (Norwich, 2010).

The language of needs and its most characteristic representative, the SEN term, is criticised by Runswick-Cole & Hodge (2009). Adopting a social model of disability approach, they have accused the language of needs for overemphasising individual limitations or within-the-child factors, while neglecting the social factors that can set barriers to learning. So, they suggest a change from the language of needs to a language of rights. Since rights attract more positive connotations compared with needs, they expect that 'a change in the use of language may impact on the policy and practice of education' (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009, p. 201).

The debate between needs and rights reveals the complexities of the language issues in disability discourse. The tension between the social and individual perspectives to disability is evident behind the various language suggestions and choices. Society's prejudices and stereotypes, fear of stigma, conflicting interests and disability activism interact with each other in a difficult to achieve balance, forming what Corbett (1996) calls different 'language cultures'.

2.1.6.Kinds and degrees of disability

Davis (2005) writes that ‘the class of things that can be characterized as disabilities is large and diverse: when things are identified primarily by what they are not, this is often the case’ (p. 156). Disability does not refer to a set of stable or strictly determined characteristics, but can take a variety of forms. Traditionally, disability is described in terms of areas of difficulties (like physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities), or within an educational context in terms of education-oriented terms (like special educational needs). Yet, there can be other ways of distinguishing between different kinds or degrees of disability.

The idea of visible and invisible disability employs social interaction as a criterion for distinguishing between disabilities. As Davis (2005) argues, ‘the visibility or invisibility of a disability is something that is determined by the ease of its perception by others, not by its impact on the persons with the disabilities’ (p. 203). This does not mean that invisible disabilities have no impact on the lives of the persons who experience them. The visibility and invisibility of disability seems to be related to certain *invisible* impairments (for example depression or dyslexia) in relation to specific cultural and societal ideas about disability (Davis, 2005). In most cases, the degree and context of social interaction with the impaired person would determine the visibility or invisibility of his/her impairment. Davis (2005) challenges the idea that invisible disabilities makes it possible for the people who experience them to escape the social stigma that more visible disabilities may invite. She argues that rejection and stigmatisation are still possible and that assistance and accommodation would be even more difficult to be secured, because of the invisibility of disability.

From a different perspective, Nussbaum (2009) – writing about equal entitlement to voting and jury service – distinguishes between three cases/types

of disability, in terms of ability for self-advocacy. In the first case, individuals with disabilities are both cognitively and physically capable of decision-making, but stigma and social arrangements set barriers to their full participation. In the second case, people with disabilities are not capable of expressing their views on their own (for instance they could lack the ability to speak), but they can communicate their preferences to a guardian, or to a person they trust. In the third case, people have profound disabilities that restrict their ability to communicate their views, and therefore need someone to decide and act on their behalf. If equal participation to society is an entitlement for every individual, then the necessary arrangements to this end are a matter of respect and social justice. While the first case can be a matter of practical decisions to accommodate greater diversity, the second seems to ask more flexibility in accepting alternative solutions. As Nussbaum (2009) argues, between cases one and two the difference is rather one of degree. The third case, which seems to be the most complex, appears to demand a strategic rethinking of ideas on justice and humanness.

2.2.Me and the other

Section 2.2 explores perspectives on the issues of self and identity, symbolic interactionism, theories of identity formation, identity politics and human classifications. These matters underpin theoretically the philosophical position and other aspects of the study, like social interaction and homophily.

2.2.1.Self and identity

The concepts of self and identity are two complex notions that can be examined from a variety of approaches. Branaman (2010) writes that the self 'tends to refer to what individuals mean when they say "I": that sense of who I am, distinct from others, as I exist in the world' (p. 151). Therefore self is defined in terms of *the other* which is always present, for 'we can never be alone with a self' (Plummer, 2000, p. 195). Identity can be a synonym of self or part of the elements that shape self-concept; for example, from a social theory perspective, self is seen as constructed by a set of social identities that interact in a complex and unique way (Stets & Burke, 2000; Branaman, 2010). In line with this understanding, Spencer-Oatey (2007) writes that identity is an 'analytic fiction' rather than a fixed entity defined with accuracy.

Ideas about identity and self are rooted in Enlightenment thinking. Nevertheless, the modernist concept of a rational and unitary self that the Enlightenment thinking promoted has been challenged by Foucault's postmodern ideas about power relations and emancipation (Callero, 2003; Branaman, 2010). From this perspective, the notions of rationality, reason and independent consciousness have been rejected as ideas promoting the existing power relations, whereas the self has been described not as an agent 'but as a mechanism of control' (Callero, 2003, p. 118). However, if the self is seen as

entirely dependent upon discourse and embedded within traditional systems of knowledge, then challenging these assumptions would mean the deconstruction of the self itself, what has been described as the *death of self* (Callero, 2003). On the other hand, certain issues – like for example agency and politics – might not be fruitfully examined without some concept of identity (Branaman, 2010). So, portraying the self as merely the product of discourse could be seen as a limitation of the Foucauldian tradition that, Best argues, ‘failed to grasp the individualizing possibilities created by modernity’ (cited in Callero, 2003, p. 118).

In opposition to Foucault’s approach to self, other theories within postmodernism adopt a more fluid and fragmented conception of self that assumes that the self is in need of constant revision in order to be able to respond to a fast changing world (Branaman, 2010). In accordance with these theories, the notion of *reflexive self* is based on a combination of Enlightenment ideas about agency, with a postmodern challenge of the traditional assumptions concerning the essentialist character of self (Callero, 2003; Branaman 2010). As Callero writes, ‘the self conceived in this way allows for agency, creative action, and the possibility of emancipatory political movements’ (p. 120). In other words, the reflexive self, though not independent from the dominant systems of knowledge and power, can allow acts of resistance, as part of a self-regulating process. Issues of self and agency can also be examined from a social constructionist point of view; Callero (2003) describes the self as a ‘joined accomplishment’: the self is partly a social construct (the self as “me”) and partly a dynamic and creative response (the self as “I”).

From another perspective, Spencer-Oatey (2007), building on Simon’s ideas, presents a *self-aspect model of identity*. According to this model, self-concept is constructed from people’s perceptions about their own attributes or

characteristics in terms of personality traits, abilities, physical features, behavioural patterns, ideologies, social roles, language affiliations, group membership etc. The author also notes three basic functions of identity: identity provides people with a sense of belonging and a sense of distinctiveness; identity helps people locate themselves in the social world; and identity can enhance people's self-respect and self-esteem.

2.2.2.Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of theoretical and empirical strands within the discipline of social psychology (Snow, 2001). It is also related to issues of self and identity (Plummer, 2000; Callero, 2003). Symbolic interactionism is theoretically rooted in the philosophy of Pragmatism (Plummer, 2000).

Herbert Blumer first used the term in 1937 to describe both a theoretical perspective and an empirical method (Manning & Smith, 2010). Symbolic interactionism emphasises the meanings that members of social groups attribute to each other's behaviour. As a theory it was elaborated in parallel with behaviourism, but in opposition to the stimulus-response model favoured by behaviourists Blumer introduced a stimulus-interpretation-response pattern (Manning & Smith, 2010). From Blumer's perspective, symbolic interactionism has three core principles: people's actions against things and other people are based on the meanings they have for them; these meanings are products of social interaction; and meanings are negotiated, modified and managed by the people who encounter them through an interpretive process (Snow, 2001; Manning & Smith, 2010). Plummer (2000) extended the principles of symbolic interactionism to four: human worlds are not only material, but also semiotic; the

world is in constant flux, and thus meanings can never be fixed; social interaction and collective behaviour are central to meaning construction; and symbolic interactionism is a grounded approach, engaged with the empirical world. Building on Blumer's ideas, Snow (2001) proposes four broader principles of symbolic interactionism: the principle of interactive determination, the principle of symbolisation, the principle of emergence (potential for social change), and the principle of human agency. The focus of all approaches is on meaning construction, social interaction, collective behaviour, the fluid character of the social world, and agency.

In terms of the relation of symbolic interactionism to the concept of identity, Plummer (2000) writes that human beings have 'a symbol-producing capacity which enables them to produce a history, a culture, and very intricate webs of ambiguous communication' (p. 194). Therefore, he argues that the notion of the self can be approached through meaning construction. As meaning emerges through social interaction, the self is formulated as part of the process of negotiation of this meaning. Individuals are part of broader social groups that are involved in a constant production of meaning, and 'societies are a vast matrix of social worlds constituted through the symbolic interaction of self and others' (Plummer, 2000, p. 195). Symbolic interactionism focuses on the formation of the self in terms of the presence of the other. In other words, the self cannot be defined by itself without reference to the other. This idea can affect the way difference is understood; from this point of view, otherness is not a threat but a road to self-definition.

Nevertheless, the production of meaning is not a passive process. Despite the fact that the structure/agency duality has been challenged since the one presupposes the other, Snow (2001) argues for a structure/agency tension,

evident in both meaning production and identity formation. From the stand point of symbolic interactionism:

‘Social actors take into account the structural and cultural constraints (e.g., roles, social expectations, norms, values) that impinge on situations in which they find themselves in the course of developing their respective lines of action’ (Snow, 2001, p. 374).

In line with this understanding, Callero (2003) argues that both private and public experience interact and reinforce each other in order to produce concepts of self. Thus, the personal and the collective, as well as agency and structure, are in a dialectical interplay.

2.2.3. Identity theory vs. social identity theory

Identity theory from sociology and social identity theory from social psychology are two perspectives on the social basis of identity formation. Despite their differences these two theories can also be examined in parallel (Hogg et al, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000). Both theories describe the self as differentiated into multiple identities (Hogg et al, 1995; Callero, 2003), and also to be reflexive ‘in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications’ (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 224). Identity is formed through this process.

Identity theory, established by Stryker, is strongly associated with the theoretical ideas of symbolic interactionism (Hogg et al, 1995; Callero, 2003). In line with it, Stryker has argued that identities are distinct parts of the self that are defined by the production of meaning with reference to role expectations (Callero, 2003). However, in opposition to the symbolic interactionist concept of society as an undifferentiated whole, Hogg et al (1995) stress that identity

theory regards the self as 'a multifaceted and organised construct' (p. 256) that reflects a complex but organised society. Through an *identification* process, people that act within this structured social context name one another and themselves in terms of the roles they recognise that they possess; this naming refers to expectations as regards future behaviour (Stets & Burke, 2000; Callero, 2003). Thus, for identity theory 'the core of an identity is the categorisation of a role, and the incorporation, into the self, of the meanings and expectations associated with that role and its performance' (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). These expectations form guidelines of normative behaviour associated with certain roles.

Social identity theory that was established by Tajfel in collaboration with Turner focuses on group membership (Turner et al, 1987; Hogg et al, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000). People that feel they belong to a social category can define themselves in terms of the characteristics of this category. This self-definition is part of their identity, which is constituted by a number of distinct but interacting group memberships with varied importance (Hogg et al, 1995). Social identity theory invokes two underlying processes that operate in identity formation: *categorisation* and *self-enhancement*. Categorisation refers to 'an accentuation of the perceived similarities between the self and other in-group members, and an accentuation of the perceived differences between the self and out-group members' (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). So, as people assign themselves in categories, group boundaries are sharpened and normative perceptions and stereotypes can be formed. Categorisation is in turn reinforced by self-enhancement: stereotypes and in-group norms largely favour the in-group in such a way that any comparison with out-group members will result in an enhancement of self-esteem (Hogg et al, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000).

In sum, identity theory examines role-related behaviour while social identity theory focuses on intergroup relations. In other words, if identity theory explores the question *what one does*, then social identity theory attempts to answer the question *who one is* (Stets & Burke, 2000). Nevertheless, 'being and doing are both central features of one's identity' (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 234). So, despite any differences that might originate in their different disciplinary background, sociology for identity theory and psychology for social identity theory, both explore the dynamic relationship between social structure and individual behaviour (Hogg et al, 1995).

2.2.4. Identity politics

Branaman (2010) writes that the notion of identity is useful for the understanding of issues of agency, politics and social change. She defines agency as 'the ability of an individual to take an action or have a thought that is not determined by his or her social context or biography' (p. 146), and politics as 'the struggle over social arrangements and priorities'. Through the combination of ideas around identity and politics with respect to agency and social change, *identity politics* came into existence (Anspach, 1979).

Anspach first used the term identity politics in 1979 (Anspach, 1979; Bernstein, 2005) to describe the newly emerging political activism of people with disabilities, and former mental illness patients. Anspach (1979) distinguishes between three types of political movements in terms of their foci: instrumental politics refer to conflicting interests among social groups; expressive politics are seen as a vehicle for *catharsis*; and symbolic politics express a demand for affirmation of values, life style or moral stances. Nevertheless, he argues that disability activism though related to symbolic politics cannot be adequately

described by this concept, because it 'primarily concerns not status, life style, or morality, but rather identity or being' (Anspach, 1979, p. 766). Therefore, this type of political movement – which is not limited to disability activism – refers to the interface between politics and the self.

As Bernstein (2005) notes, the term *identity politics* has been broadly used to describe a variety of political and social movements like multiculturalism, the feminist movement, civil rights, lesbian and gay movements, as well as separatist movements in Canada and Spain, postcolonial conflicts in Africa and Asia, and ethnic movements in the formerly communist countries of Eastern Europe. The term has also been used to illustrate any sociological approach of the theoretical relationship between identity and political practice. Bernstein (2005) refers to three basic approaches to the issue of identity politics: From a neo-Marxist approach, class inequality is seen as the only source of oppression, and psychological and cultural factors that could work as catalysts for social change are neglected. By contrast, social movements that emerged in the 1960's and 1970's appear to be more concerned with cultural values and identity, thus expressing a demand for cultural politics. Finally, the rise of postmodernism offers a new perspective, one that challenges the traditional power relations but also the premises of the idea of identity politics itself. Postmodernism has accused identity politics for its weakness to challenge dominant discourses, for ignorance of the intersection of identities, and for failing to recognize diversity within groups. Bernstein (2005) argues that for postmodernism 'rather than being too cultural, identity politics is not cultural enough' (p. 56).

The cultural aspect of identity politics has been questioned from other perspectives as well. Gitlin challenges the relation between identity and culture

when he writes that identity politics is ‘the recognition of a collective hurt, followed by the mistaking of group position for a culture, followed by the mistaking of a culture for a politics’ (cited in Bernstein, 2005, p. 50). It has been argued that identity groups understand their identities and the cultures associated with them in essentialist rather than socially constructed terms. From this point of view, the relation between identity and culture lacks a clear basis. Nevertheless, such assumptions may not reflect ontological stances, but they rather operate as mechanisms to enhance group positions (Bernstein, 2005).

Despite many controversies, identity politics can be seen as the expression of ‘a struggle over the social meanings attached to attributes’ (Anspach, 1979, p. 773). This demand for social change serves to elevate the self-concept of those who advocate for it.

2.2.5. Identity and human classifications

Self-concept is in a constant interaction with the metaphysical assumptions that people hold for their existence, and the existence of others around them. In line with this idea, researchers have focused on the effect that human classifications can have on the people classified (Haslam, 2002; Hacking, 2007). Such classifications are evident in every aspect of everyday life but particularly are present in disability and psychiatric labels. The basic issue that these classifications raise is whether they reflect reality, or they are social constructions that ‘serve professional ends, project societal preoccupations, rest on cultural assumptions, vary across time and space, and interact reciprocally with public perceptions’ (Haslam, 2002, p. 203).

Hacking (1999), in discussing classifications, distinguishes between *interactive* and *indifferent* kinds. He argues that the classifications of the social

sciences are interactive in the sense that they can interact with what is classified. By contrast, the classifications and the concepts of the natural sciences are indifferent, because they make no difference to the properties classified. In terms of interactive kinds, he writes that human classifications are *moving targets*: new classifications 'make up' new kinds of people, but through a 'looping effect' the people classified can interact with the classifications imposed on them (Hacking, 2007). Autism can be a practical example of an interactive kind. When Leo Kanner introduced the term autism in 1943, he created a new kind in that it was the first time individuals with such characteristics could be aware of themselves in this way. This was the stage of 'making up people'. Over the years, the people classified as autistic interacted with the category, and produced not only the self-concept of a person with autism, but the concepts of people with high functioning autism (Hacking, 2007). This was the result of a looping effect.

Hacking (2007) also attempts to depict the system associated with human classifications: A *classification* or category is imposed on *individuals* that could in turn identify themselves in such a way. *Institutions* are there to establish the classifications, and to produce *knowledge* about the people classified which is promoted by *experts*. Classifications can then invite *stereotypes* which may lead to the belief that the classifications describe concrete facts. Human classifications can be expressions of a wish to help or to control those classified. Yet, the looping effect empowers 'the classified people [to] enhance and adjust what is true of them' (Hacking, 2007, p. 289).

The discussion about human classifications reveals a tension between reality and social construction. From an educational perspective, Davis (2008)

relates essentialist ideas about human kinds to Hacking's classification of indifferent kinds:

'The less a learner category can aspire to the status of an indifferent kind, the more the learners concerned should be regarded as belonging on a continuum with their fellow students, and treated accordingly' (p. 453).

For Davis (2008), thinking of learner classifications as essential rather than socially constructed can be a threat to the purposes of education. The same tension between reality and social construction is described by Haslam (2002) who proposes an organisational system of mental illness to show that psychiatric categories operate in a highly relevant continuum between construction and reality (genetic basis). Nevertheless, as Hacking (1999) writes, 'a primary use of social constructionism has been [not necessarily for refusing reality but] for raising consciousness' (p. 6). From this perspective, the challenging of human kinds aims to reveal how a classification can have an effect on the self-perception of the people classified, and also how the classified people can internalise and transform the labels attached to them.

2.3.Ethics, moral judgement, and choice

Having examined various approaches to the way we understand ourselves and the others, I explore now issues of ethics, justice and choice. Interpersonal relationships and the management of difference can raise moral issues. The moral obligation to embrace difference (a matter of justice) may come into tension with individual choice.

2.3.1.The nature of morality

Ethical beliefs refer to how life should be lived and how people should be and do (Berlin, 2003). Extending this, Turiel (2002) writes that moral prescriptions are not culturally determined or legitimated by agreement, but they are impartial in the sense that they are beyond individual inclinations. Morality and ethics are rooted in values that transcend the societal and the personal – they are ‘bigger than the individual’ (Singer, 1993, p. 10). Turiel (2002) also makes a distinction between morality and convention. He stresses that, though conventions refer to social uniformities and rules, moral actions pertain primarily to concepts of harm (physical or psychological) or of welfare, and also to violations of fairness and justice. However, Haidt (2012) argues that morality is more than avoiding harm and maximising fairness; morality can be seen as a broader notion that applies to all aspects of human conduct, an idea reflecting an understanding of ethics pertinent not to individual human beings but rather to relationships. Accordingly, Berlin (2003) writes that:

‘Ethical thought consists of the systemic examination of the relations of human beings to each other, the conceptions, interests and ideals from which human ways of treating one another spring, and the systems of value on which such ends of life are based’ (pp. 1-2).

A similar idea of morality as a radical relationship with the other has been stressed by Levinas (2000). According to his ideas, ethics describe 'an anarchical [or pre-ontological] assignation of the particular subject to morality by the appeal of the other' (Ciaramelli, 1991, p. 85).

It should be stressed that ethics and morality, even though they often used interchangeably, do not have the same meaning. Dworkin (2011), for instance, describes their difference as one between being good (ethics) and living well (morality). In that sense, ethics is about how an individual can lead a good life, whereas morality pertains to interpersonal relationships.

2.3.2.Theories of ethics

Different understandings of morality have, in turn, influenced a variety of theories on ethics. Moral theories aim to give an account of right conduct and to provide criteria for moral evaluation (Driver, 2007). The source of morality has been sought either in the divine power of God – 'ethics [as] a God-given system of law' (Singer, 1993, p. 7); or in the human nature itself: 'morality [as] a result of human nature, one of the outgrowths of our sociality' (Driver, 2007, p. 22).

On the basis of the way that different secular theories of ethics define right, we can distinguish between teleological and deontological theories. On the one hand, deontological theories define right actions independently of the products, good or bad, that may produce (Driver, 2007). As Singer (1993) writes a deontological understanding of ethics is one of a system of rules. An example of a deontological theory is the *social contract theory* that describes ethics as an agreement among rational human beings (Sen, 2006). On the other, teleological theories examine the rightness of an action from its consequences. Singer (1993) notes that consequentialists 'start not with moral rules but with goals

[and] they assess actions by the extent to which they further these goals' (p. 3). *Utilitarianism*, for example, defines right and wrong in terms of the consequences that an action can have on the well-being of all affected by it (Singer, 1993; Driver, 2007); therefore, right is the action that produces the most overall good.

What deontological and teleological theories appear to have in common is that they are both grounded in reason:

'Most renditions of moral or ethical theory have their roots in Enlightenment thinking, when the decentering of the authority of God and monarch placed human individuals at the center of the social world, and thus provided the possibility for an ethics that would be based upon human reason and agency' (Popke, 2003, p. 301).

In other words, 'to act rationally is to act ethically' (Singer, 1993, p. 318). Nevertheless, approaches to ethics that overemphasise the role of reason have been accused of leaving little space for emotions (Haidt, 2012). In addition, moral theories that demand impartiality – like teleological and deontological theories do – seem to put weight merely on the agents' actions rather than on the agents themselves (Driver, 2007).

Virtue ethics (Nussbaum, 1999), *intuitionism* (Haidt, 2012) and *care ethics* (Driver, 2007) are theoretical approaches to ethics that focus on the agents rather than their actions, while examining the role of sentiment (together with reason) in the moral domain. Nussbaum (1999) argues that '*virtue ethics* is a way of reducing reason's exorbitant demands and pretensions to authority; it is a way of grounding morality in other features of human nature' (p. 195). These features, she notes, can be – along with reason – belief, will, intention, emotion, inclination, desire and appetite. The holistic approach of *virtue ethics* aims to stress the importance of the role that agent as well as context can play

in the way people judge and understand moral issues (Nussbaum, 1999). *Intuitionism* is the doctrine that moral principles are accessible to people by reference to their intuitions, and it focuses particularly on the effects of context (Driver, 2007). Finally, *ethics of care* is a feminist approach to morality that challenges the idea of the autonomous agent and depicts morality as ‘a system that reflects and accommodates the dependencies and vulnerabilities that are a part of [people’s] real lives’ (Driver, 2007, p. 159).

2.3.3.Moral judgement

Driver (2007) writes that ‘the basis for moral judgment is sentiment [...] but this sentiment is corrected by the exercise of reason’ (p. 161). Nevertheless, the nature of the role that reason and sentiment can play in moral judgement is under debate (Haidt, 2012). As Turiel (2002) writes, in the first half of the twentieth century the psychological explanations of morality and moral judgment have been mainly sought in conceptions of character, habits and conscience. Such an approach regarded morality as ‘an emotionally based accommodation to the social system’ (Turiel, 2002, p. 96). However, in the second half of the twentieth century, Lawrence Kohlberg, building on Piaget’s theory of cognitive and moral development, described morality as a process of construction – ‘through their social experiences, children construct ways of thinking about right and wrong’ (Turiel, 2002, p. 102). For Kohlberg, morality is built on ways of thinking that involve understandings of welfare, justice, equity and rights which are grounded in reason, as well as on ways of thinking based on emotional responses to the social environment (Turiel, 2002).

Kohlberg (1981) proposed a system of moral development which consisted of six stages, hierarchically classified into three levels. The first level,

the *preconventional level*, is divided into stage 1 *the punishment and obedience orientation*, and stage 2 *the instrument relativist orientation*. Both stages reflect an understanding of morality as a system of exchange that aims to satisfy one's needs (Turiel, 2002). The second level, the *conventional level*, is divided into stage 3 *the interpersonal concordance or good boy – nice girl orientation*, and stage 4 *society maintaining orientation*. In these stages, morality is defined by the need to maintain the expectations of others along with social order, irrespective of any personal gains (Kohlberg, 1981). The third – and, as described, most mature – level, the *postconventional, autonomous, or principled level*, is divided into stage 5 *the social contract orientation*, and stage 6 *the universal ethical principle orientation*. Stages 5 and 6 exhibit a 'prior to society perspective' (Turiel, 2002, p. 104), in the sense that morality is defined as a product of personal negotiation and agreement. However, while stage 5 is based on the social contract and thus reflects community values, in stage 6 morality is defined with reference to universal ethical principles.

Despite its significant influence, Kohlberg's theory of moral development has been heavily criticised (Driver, 2007; Haidt, 2012). As Turiel (2008a) writes, Kohlberg was accused for relying on interviews about hypothetical rather than real-life scenarios, for focusing on reasoning and underestimating the role of emotions, and for adopting an understanding of morality that could lack solid basis (focusing on reason rather than on sentiment, and on judgement rather than on action). From a different perspective, Carol Gilligan has claimed – not without controversy – that the majority of men are more likely to gain higher maturity scores on Kohlberg's system, because they tend to make justice-oriented judgements which are captured at stages 4 or 5 (Haviv & Leman, 2002; Driver, 2007). On the other hand, she has noted that the majority of women

tend to make care-oriented judgements which are captured at stage 3. Despite the empirical findings suggesting that there is little or no connection between moral judgement and gender (Haviv & Leman, 2002; Turiel, 2008b), Gilligan's claims have put into question the assumption that progression in Kohlberg's moral developmental stages can be an indicator of actual progression in moral maturity. Her argument can generally be seen to challenge the underlying principles of Kohlberg's system, and especially the idea of the primacy of autonomous agency as described at the upper stages; an idea that reflects a contractarian understanding of morality – one of a system of ethics grounded in the social contract (Driver, 2007). Nussbaum (2003) writes that most theories in this tradition 'imagine society as a contract for mutual exchange [and] the contracting parties as rough equals, none able to dominate the others, and none asymmetrically dependent upon the others [but] life, of course is not like that' (p. 51). Thus the hierarchy of stages and underlying assumptions of Kohlberg's system can be criticised for ignoring inequalities of power.

Haidt (2012) has accused Kohlberg's theory for overreliance on reason. He argues that, under Kohlberg's influence, moral psychologists have studied 'reasoning-why' (the process of understanding how a judgment has been reached), rather than 'seeing-that' (responses to stimuli from the physical or social environment). For him, moral reasoning is not the cause but the consequence of moral judgement: 'we do moral reasoning not to reconstruct the actual reasons why *we ourselves* came to a judgement; we reason to find the best possible reasons why *somebody else ought to join us* in our judgement' (Haidt, 2012, p. 44). So, he has proposed a *social intuitionist model* of moral judgement that attempts to approach morality from the perspective of intuition (Haidt, 2001; 2012).

Haidt's social intuitionist model of moral judgement is based on the assumption that intuition and reasoning are both kinds of cognition, and that sentiment is a kind of information processing (Haidt, 2012). Unlike reason, intuition is seen to occur quickly and effortlessly, so that 'the outcome but not the process [can be] accessible to consciousness' (Haidt, 2001). The model is composed of four links that correspond to four different processes. *The intuitive judgment link* refers to the effortless and automatic way in which intuitions appear in consciousness. *The post hoc reasoning link* refers to the effortful engaging with moral reasoning after a moral judgment is made, as one's attempt to support this judgement. *The reasoned persuasion link* describes how moral reasoning can affect other people, triggering new intuitions. Finally, *the social persuasion link* describes how a moral judgement can affect other people's intuitions, even if no reasoned persuasion – as presented in the previous link – has been used. In addition to these links, Haidt (2001) adds two more links that depict the role of reason in moral judgement. *The reasoned judgement link* describes how reason can override an initial intuition, and *the private reflection link* illustrates how thinking about a situation can activate new intuitions, that may contradict the initial intuitive judgement. Therefore, the social intuitionist model, though focusing on intuition and sentiment, acknowledges the role of reason in moral judgment.

2.3.4.Rights and justice

Haidt (2012) describes Kohlberg's moral theory as one that promotes the ideal of Western individuality. Nevertheless, Turiel (2002) challenges the stereotypical distinction between Western moral systems, seemingly based on rights and individual freedoms, and non-Western more traditional and duty-

based cultures; as he writes, dependence and interdependence can be found in the Western societies, as well as differentiation and autonomy in the non-Western ones. For Turiel (2002), it is more important to consider the issue of power relations within a culture, that is to say, whether certain cultural practices are controlled and dominated by particular groups. This is why, he argues, traditions and cultural practices should be objects of evaluation since they can 'serve the needs and goals of some groups at the expense of others' (Turiel, 2002, p. 190). The acknowledgement and respect of the weaker voices in society – voices of groups with less power or status, like women or people with disabilities – is a matter of justice and rights. Though the basis of this argument is the idea of the autonomous moral agent, the inclusion of the perspectives of everyone in society entails that this approach 'is not simply one that can be characterised as individualistic because of the concern with the needs, capabilities, and rights of persons' (Turiel, 2002, p. 192).

Human rights can also be examined on the premises that they are ethical demands (Sen, 2004). Sen (2004) proposes a theory of human rights based on the underlying assumption that rights are claims with ethical weight. However, he refuses that rights are rooted in universal (impartial) ethical values or in particular political conceptions. 'The force of a claim for a human right would be seriously undermined if it were possible to show that they are unlikely to survive open public scrutiny' (Sen, 2004, p. 349). Thus, he suggests that rights should be open to critical and informed public assessment 'coming from far as well as near' (Sen, 2004, p. 321). Sen's system of rights, based on public reasoning within and across national borders, can be connected with Turiel's ethical demand for including and respecting all voices in society.

A central feature of Sen's theory of rights is the notion of freedom: 'while rights involve claims, [...] freedoms in contrast are primarily descriptive characteristics of the conditions of persons' (Sen, 2004, p. 328). He argues that for a freedom to be considered as a human right there are some 'threshold conditions' of *importance* and *social influenceability* that need to be judged on the grounds of public discussion. Hence, not all freedoms can fulfil the conditions to be acknowledged as rights. *Opportunity and process* are the two distinguished aspects of freedom. Opportunity is pertinent to the idea of *capability* – 'the opportunity to achieve valuable combinations of human functioning: what a person is able to do or be' (Sen, 2004, p. 332). Opportunities and capabilities have to be supplemented by processes (the other aspect of freedom) that are fair. Promoting people's capabilities is seen as a matter of social justice (Nussbaum, 2003; Terzi, 2005a).

Theories of justice are based on different understandings about how equality can be achieved. For Rawls (1999) justice is about equal distribution of goods and resources, whereas for Sen (2004) is about equality of capability. This is a distinction between a *transcendental* and a *comparative* approach to social justice. A transcendental approach focuses 'on identifying perfectly just societal arrangements' (Sen, 2006, p. 216), while a comparative approach concentrates 'instead on ranking alternative societal arrangements – whether some arrangement is less just or more just than another' (Sen, 2006, p. 216). Rawls's approach to justice belongs to the first case, as he explores the nature of an ideal just society in its entirety from a contractarian ethical perspective (Sen, 2004). However, Nussbaum (2001) challenges the ethical significance of perspectives based on the social contract, as she deems them incapable of capturing the complexity of the relations of power:

'Instead of picturing one another as rough equals making a bargain, we may be better off thinking of one another as people with varying degrees of capacity and disability, in a variety of different relationships of interdependency with one another' (p. 7).

Rawls's approach to justice was also questioned by Sen who argued that Rawls's system of goods distribution excludes inequalities among individuals, especially evident as regards people with disabilities (Terzi, 2010). Sen (2004) in turn proposes a capability approach to social justice: in other words, it is a matter of justice to ensure that people are able to pursue the things they value. The capability approach considers human heterogeneity and is sensitive to individual differences. It is a comparative approach to justice in the sense that new and more just social arrangements are expected to be an improvement to the previous situation, and 'the identification of fully just arrangements is neither necessary nor sufficient' (Sen, 2004, p. 217). The capability approach to social justice is intertwined with choice (Nussbaum, 2000), and promotes individuality.

2.3.5.Choice

From the perspective of capabilities, justice is interrelated with choice. However, justice (a social good of particular ethical significance) and personal choice might also come into tension. Dagovitz (2004) stresses that 'the value of individual choice is a key component of comprehensive liberalism [and thus] autonomy necessarily involves an individual's ability to make choices' (p. 167). Yet, this can raise the issue as to what extent personal choice should be respected, since individual preferences may be in conflict with the welfare of society as a whole. Rawls argues that individual choice is inviolable (Nussbaum, 2001). This idea can be questioned.

At the beginning of his influential book, *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls (1999) when referring to the role of social justice notes that each person possesses an inviolability of their individual rights that society should not override:

‘Justice denies that a loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others. It does not allow that the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many’ (p. 3).

Rawls’s argument applies not only to an understanding about the role and nature of social justice, but it can also be an answer to the question as to whether choice can override what is perceived to be a greater common good. Yet, the basis of this argument is that all people should be treated equally – in this case, in exactly the same way. This principle raises questions about Rawls’s theory, as treating people equally does not necessarily mean that they should be treated the same. As discussed, another way to examine issues of equality and justice is the notion of capability, ‘a person’s freedom to achieve valuable functionings’ (Terzi, 2005b, p. 204). From this perspective, the focus is not on the functionings themselves, but on the capability of people to choose freely between functionings (Nussbaum, 2000). As a result, the underlying idea is that treating people equally should not necessarily mean treating them the same, but ensuring that they will be capable of choosing freely the functionings they have reason to value. From this point of view, choice is a central idea of the capability approach. As Nussbaum (2000) puts it:

‘[Capability] in its focus on the environment of choice, it is highly attentive to the goal of functioning [...]. On the other hand, it does not push people into functioning: once the stage is fully set, the choice is theirs’ (p. 236).

The tension between individual choice and what is perceived to be a greater social good is also discussed by Norwich (2008). Building on Dahl’s (1982) analysis, Norwich (2008) refers to a tension between autonomy and

control that characterises modern democratic societies: 'in plural democracy individuals and organisations [...] ought to have some autonomy, but at the same time also be controlled, as they have the potential to increase injustice, to foster egoism and even weaken democracy' (p. 13). As he notes, one of the ways that Dahl's autonomy/control dilemma can be presented is as a tension between uniformity and diversity, or otherwise between commonality and difference. Commonality and difference, like homophily (a preference to be among similar others) and inclusion (the moral obligation to embrace difference), are bearers of dissimilar ethical values and attract different moral connotations. They can come into tension as difference can raise issues of justice, equality, respect and democracy, whereas commonality is associated with ideas with less ethical weight (individual preference). This tension is also examined by Goodhart (2004) as one between solidarity and diversity.

Goodhart (2004) examines solidarity and diversity in terms of the changes in the British society – especially demographic changes that took place in the last fifty years. Solidarity is described as a synonym of homophily; as Goodhart (2004) writes, 'we feel more comfortable with, and are readier to share with and sacrifice for, those with whom we have shared histories and similar values. To put it bluntly – most of us prefer our own kind' (p. 24). Nevertheless, the notion of solidarity comes into tension with diversity, which is about equal respect for people, irrespective of their values and ways of life (Goodhart, 2004). Solidarity and diversity, autonomy and control, and homophily and inclusion are all expressions of the same tension between individuality and a greater good of particular ethical significance; the question is whether and how the two sides can be held in balance. Norwich (2008), discussing Isaiah Berlin's position, notes that since people's value systems are not necessarily

compatible with each other then 'there are no final solutions where tensions and conflicts are resolved once and for all' (p. 14). Possible resolutions would involve balancing between the conflicting sides, but any balance would be uneasy, and would demand certain compromises (Norwich, 2008). As Berlin (2003) writes, [conflicts can] 'be minimised by promoting and preserving an uneasy equilibrium, which is constantly threatened and in constant need of repair – that alone, I repeat, is the precondition for decent societies and morally acceptable behaviour, otherwise we are bound to lose our way' (p. 19).

In the sections to follow, the concepts of inclusion and homophily are initially explored separately (sections 2.4 and 2.5). Building on an analogy from aesthetics, the two notions are then brought and discussed together in section 2.7, as expressions of personal choice/individuality (homophily) and moral obligation/commonality (inclusion).

2.4.The notion of inclusion

Inclusion is a significant purpose in educational and broader social policy agendas and a moral imperative (Grossman, 2008). However, there is no agreement on its meanings and inclusion is the subject of many interpretations (Hyde & Power, 2006; Armstrong et al, 2010). For instance, it can be presented from a critical disability position as a moral obligation and an ideological problem (Tremain, 2005), or, as evident in international and national policy, it is used in a theoretically neutralised way to express a demand for participation for all (UNESCO, 2009). The variety of approaches to inclusion can lead not only to fruitful discussions, but also to fragmentation and confusion. As Cigman (2007a) writes, 'it is inexcusable for the inclusion debate to remain as it is, mired in confusion' (p. XVII). Despite many controversies, inclusion in education and social inclusion can express an ethical commitment to develop people's moral sensitivity towards the other.

2.4.1.Social inclusion

Social inclusion, is an idea 'that suffers from lack of shared understanding about what it means' (Grossman, 2008, p. 36). The European commission defines social inclusion in terms of full participation, well-being and access to fundamental rights (EUROSTAT, 2010). This understanding is in line with Terzi (2005a) who writes that all people should have 'the substantive opportunities [...] to choose the life they have reason to value' (p. 450), because this is a matter of social justice. Nevertheless, the concept of social inclusion seems to be less familiar than the complex principles to which it is often related, and as such its meaning and role appears even murkier (Collins, 2003).

Abrams et al (2005) write that 'in short, much of social life is about who we include, who we exclude, and how we all feel about it' (p. 2). Social inclusion refers to all those who are marginalised or excluded from society. Socially excluded are people 'who are effectively prevented from participating in the benefits of citizenship or membership of society owing to a combination of barriers, of which poverty is merely one' (Collins, 2003, p. 22). Being a member of a low-status minority group or having poor educational opportunities are all factors that may lead to social exclusion (Collins, 2003).

Collins (2003) writes that social inclusion has social justice aims, but at the same time it does not seek equal distribution of resources for all citizens, but rather a minimum of welfare for certain marginalised groups. In his words, 'there is a perfectionist element in the idea of social inclusion, in that there is a conception of the essential elements of *well-being*. These essential elements of *well-being* include material goods such as food and shelter, but also include opportunities to participate in meaningful ways in social life' (p. 23). In addition to material goods, there are also non-material goods: education, work, cultural activities and participation in politics – meaningful ways of social participation. The principle of social inclusion demands that all people should be raised to a certain minimum in terms of these material/non-material goods (Collins, 2003).

Social inclusion is also related to the idea of social cohesion. According to Mok & Ku (2010), both social inclusion and social cohesion are considered to be prerequisites of social quality. Similar to social inclusion, the notion of social cohesion seems to lack a shared understanding (Mok & Ku, 2010). The Oxford dictionary defines cohesion as *the action or fact of forming a united whole*. By extending this idea, it can be argued that social cohesion refers to the harmonious coexistence of different people at a societal level. This is a relevant

understanding to that of social inclusion that describes 'how societies deal with difference' (Grossman, 2008, p. 36).

Social inclusion and cohesion have also been related to social order. Collins (2003) writes that 'the aim of social inclusion is precisely to establish conditions and opportunities that induce all citizens to participate in society and to come to value its institutions and potentials' (p. 24). Therefore, social inclusion is not only an expression of a demand for social justice and participation for all, but also for social order (Collins, 2003). From this point of view, social inclusion is seen to be an essential element to achieve a stable and safe society: if all people participated fully in society, that is to say, if all people were fully included, then they would be less likely to become alienated from the community and to threaten the social rules and structures (Collins, 2003).

2.4.2. Inclusion in education

In the 1990s, the concept of inclusion has tended to succeed the older term *integration*. Since then inclusion and integration are often used interchangeably within education, for it is considered that they have the same or similar meanings (Vislie, 2003; Frederickson & Cline, 2009). Yet, as Frederickson & Cline (2009) note, some people have made a distinction between these two notions (Norwich, 2013) – integration could be seen as a process of assimilation, where students have to change in order to 'fit in' regular schools, while inclusion is a process of accommodation, where the school has to be constantly involved in a process of changing in order to be prepared to accommodate a greater diversity of students.

The idea of inclusion as a process or a journey away from segregation (Frederickson & Cline, 2009) seems to be opposite to an understanding of it as

a state, namely, a matter of placement. According to the Salamanca Statement, 'the fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have' (UNESCO, 1994, p. 11). From this perspective, inclusion is presented to be a placement issue that can be resolved by placing all students in mainstream educational settings. The idea that placement is the mere prerequisite of successful inclusion has received criticism, as it oversimplifies the complexities that inclusion as a concept and as policy has: 'inclusion should mean much more than the mere physical presence of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools' (Topping & Maloney, 2005, p. 5).

Placement factors may not be the only factors for inclusion, but any inclusive process needs at least diversity, that is, different people being together in the same place, in order to be activated. So, inclusion can be a matter of placement and a journey away from segregation at the same time. An example of this illustrates the concept of *co-location* or *best of both worlds approach*:

'[...] If inclusion is about providing for the best education for pupils with SEN it should involve special schools and ordinary schools working more closely together' (Farrell, 2006, p. 86).

A co-operation of special and mainstream schools, that work more closely together to achieve inclusion, represents an understanding of it as both a state (a matter of placement) and a process (a journey). Students from both settings can be geographically together, while their co-operation is part of a process.

However, the role of placement in relation to inclusion is under debate. Hyde & Power (2006) argue that inclusion is an attitude and not a placement choice. Booth et al (1997) relate inclusion to social participation, but they limit this to participation in mainstream education. Challenging the second part of the

argument, Warnock stresses that inclusion is about belonging and learning engagement for all students irrespective of placement factors: 'what is needed is that all children should be included within a common educational project, not that they should be included under one roof' (Warnock et al., 2010, p. 33).

The idea of inclusion as participation is also discussed by Bayliss (1995) who argues that interdependence is a distinctive feature of quality social interactions that can lead to inclusion in the school class – 'true equality of participation requires interdependence between peers, where meaningful relationships arise out of joint activity' (p.131). In other words, qualities of interactional dynamics can be indicators of successful inclusion. In line with this, Rix et al (2006) note that 'positive teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs are reflected in the quality of their interactional patterns with all pupils' (p. 4).

2.4.3. Inclusion, rights and justice

Inclusion is central to a broader discussion concerning human rights, equity, social justice and democracy. As stated in the Salamanca Statement, 'every person with a disability has a right to express their wishes with regard to their education, as far as this can be ascertained' (UNESCO, 1994, p. 6). So, inclusion is seen to be an educational right. Runswick-Cole & Hodge (2009) also argue for a terminology change, from the language of needs to a language of rights. They stress that an educational rights discourse is a key to constructing an inclusive environment. Rights, equity and respect are also occasionally the foci of UK-based Ofsted reports about school inclusion: 'inclusion has many forms but one principle, the right of a person to have the same opportunities and respect as anyone else' (Ofsted, 2009, p. 8). This is in

line with a demand for equal opportunities and access. Ollerton (2001) describes inclusion as 'an equality of opportunity issue' (p. 40), a matter that can be translated into a demand for 'curricular and physical access for all pupils' (Topping & Maloney, 2005, p. 5).

Inclusion is also about social justice and democracy. Terzi (2005a) argues that an equal entitlement to education for all learners is a matter of justice. She uses the capability approach – a framework to assess inequality – to show that 'social arrangements should be evaluated in the space of capability [that is to say] in the space of the real freedoms people have to promote and achieve their own wellbeing' (p. 445). From this perspective, the equal educational entitlement of all learners, a crucial factor for their future well-being, is a matter of social justice. Grossman (2008) in turn stresses that there is 'a moral link between inclusion and democratic citizenship education' (p. 39); inclusion and democracy are rooted in similar ethical value positions.

From a different perspective, inclusion is examined as a western policy rooted in a particular culture, history and politics (Armstrong et al, 2010). Yet, the western product of inclusion has been exported to many countries around the globe, especially to countries of the South, 'to produce culturally appropriate sustainable inclusive education programmes' (Peters, 2007, p. 122). This exportation of ideas can raise questions on the applicability of a concept formed in a particular cultural context to a different one (Miles & Singal, 2005). Armstrong et al. (2010) note that although the exportation of inclusion is framed in terms of a demand for social justice, it can also serve as an alibi for 'external manipulation of educational policy by external funding agencies pursuing agendas arising in the developed world' (p. 7).

2.4.4. Inclusion as an ethical project

Inclusion and valuing diversity are interrelated ideas. Modern societies are built on the differences that gender, religion, ethnicity and disability among others create. Inclusion is part of a manifesto about the appreciation of diversity. Increasing diversity is present across education that mirror society. It is indicative that an inclusive school is considered to be one that accepts all students whatever their background (Florian, 2005). Armstrong et al (2010) stress that 'inclusive education should be understood in the context of an approach to the *problems* of social diversity' (p.19).

Yet, the relation of inclusion to an idea of appreciation of diversity has been challenged, especially from a postmodernist perspective. Benjamin (2002) writes that an understanding of inclusion as valuing diversity is 'on its way to becoming a cliché: nothing but a euphemism for the enduring reproduction of oppressive social relations and consequent material inequalities' (cited in Allan, 2004, p. 418). From this point of view, inclusion – which is seen as a bearer of ethical principles and values – is expected to have a role in defying or changing the traditional power relations, while expressing a demand for emancipation, equity and justice. In other words, inclusion is seen to be an ethical project (Allan, 2005; Slee, 2011).

Allan (2005) argues that inclusion should be seen as an ethical task that each one of us is responsible to undertake. She stresses that 'inclusion starts with the premise that an individual has a *right* to belong to society and its institutions, which therefore implies that others have obligations to ensure that this happens' (p. 282). This idea is in line with the philosophical position of Levinas who argues that we are morally obligated to the other, and this moral responsibility exists before our ability to choose freely (Ciaramelli, 1991;

Levinas, 2000). The success of the ethical project of inclusion depends on the degree to which we recognise our responsibility and obligation to the other. The overall goal is to achieve inclusion for all (Allan, 2005).

From a slightly different position, Slee (2011) focuses on the globally growing problem of poverty, as a witness of inequality and injustice in society. As he writes, 'there are worlds within worlds; [...] poverty, social exclusion and profound suffering walk amongst us' (Slee, 2011, p. 22). The idea of inclusion as an ethical project that is based on an active responsibility to the other seems to apply here as well. The phrase that 'inclusive education is everybody's business' (Slee, 2011, p. 83) is the expression of an ethical commitment to the underlying purpose of inclusion.

The ethical project of inclusion is built on universal ideas of human rights, equity and justice. Nevertheless, as Sennett (1999) writes, 'simply sharing a belief is not enough to generate social inclusion. We may all believe in universal human rights or in democracy, but these convictions are empty if they lack corresponding practices' (p. 1). Sennett (1999) focuses on social inclusion and argues that it could be achieved by recognising our need to depend on other people. This recognition would in turn make us capable of holding others accountable – as expressed in French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's phrase 'because someone is counting on me, I am accountable before another' (cited in Sennett, 1999, p. 8) – thus forming a mutual bond or commitment that keeps society united. From this point of view, an understanding of inclusion as an ethical project, based on rights and justice, may not be enough to illuminate all the aspects of this complex notion.

2.4.5. Universal and moderate inclusion

As discussed, inclusion is considered to be in line with a discourse on ethics, rights, equity and justice. In other words, inclusion is mainly conceived as an ideological, not a practical, matter. Having examined various approaches to inclusion, we could also explore whether ideas about *realism* and *idealism* have a role in the inclusion debate.

Idealism is 'the doctrine that whatever exists, or at any rate whatever can be known to exist, must be in some sense mental' (Russell, 1998, p. 19). On the other hand, realism dictates that the information we receive through our senses should be seen as a sign 'of the existence of something independent of us and our perceptions' (Russell, 1998, p. 13). These two different views of the nature of the world seem completely opposing; either the world is a personal construct, or it exists independently of us. Traditionally, idealists are considered to focus on principles, while realists on facts (James, 2008). Nevertheless, as James (2008) writes 'no one can live an hour without both facts and principles, so it is a difference rather of emphasis' (p. 13).

Cigman (2007b) argues that there are two different ways to approach the issue of inclusion in theory and practice, a *universal* and a *moderate* way. Each way has its supporters:

'The universalist exhibits [...] a reluctance to conceptualise individual differences and a desire to talk instead about human diversity as the condition of which we are all a part. The moderate, on the other hand, exhibits a distinguishing tendency, which draws attention to individual differences' (Cigman, 2007b, p. 783).

Universal inclusionists understand inclusion from an idealistic – ontologically speaking – point of view. Difference and disability are seen as socially constructed and, therefore, as unrelated to individual difficulties and needs.

Therefore, from this perspective, inclusion expresses universal ideas of equity and justice that are translated into a demand for inclusion for all. This is a common position within disability studies (Tremain 2005). On the other hand, the supporters of a moderate stance to inclusion seem to face human difference with both principles and facts in mind. This more realistic point of view connects difference and disability with actual difficulties and needs. Moderate inclusion (Cigman, 2007a, 2007b) is relevant to the practice-based concept of responsible inclusion (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995). Responsible inclusion describes a school-based educational model, in which the development of an inclusive philosophy is the result of transaction and discussion within the school, with respect to the individual needs of each student. So, responsible inclusion can be seen as a realist approach to implementing inclusion.

2.4.6. Inclusion and affirmative action, or positive discrimination

Inclusion, being understood as a demand for equity in education as well as in society, can be examined as part of a more general anti-discriminatory movement. As such, inclusion can be connected to the debate concerning *affirmative action*, or *positive* or *reverse discrimination*. Affirmative action, as a set of choices and practices to fight discriminatory behaviour, is often accused of achieving the exact opposite result (Singer, 1993; Crosby et al, 2003). If inclusion is the aim behind such anti-discriminatory actions, then any controversies related to them challenge the principles that form the basis of the concept of inclusion – especially, equality.

Affirmative action is about giving 'preferential treatment to members of disadvantaged groups [and therefore] it may be the best hope of reducing long-standing inequalities; yet it appears to offend against the principle of equality

itself' (Singer, 1993, p. 45). As Singer (1993) stresses, the aim of affirmative action is to ensure equality for protected groups, like people with disabilities, women or other minority group members. Yet, the pursuit of equality can be highly controversial, since in most cases it cannot be reduced to equal treatment (Collins, 2003). This idea is also related to the capability approach (Sen, 2005) in which equality is understood to be about capabilities, the freedoms people have to achieve valuable objectives. From the perspective of capabilities, equality cannot be about equal treatment. Collins (2003) writes that since equal treatment describes a procedure rather than an outcome, it can often obscure the achievement of a particular outcome – in that case, the achievement of social inclusion. This is why deviating from equal treatment may be necessary to ensure equality in terms of results, resources, or opportunities (Collins, 2003). So, preferential treatment for certain groups, despite being in conflict with the equal treatment principle, can be justified on the grounds of a broader understanding of equality. Nevertheless, as Singer (1993) notes, 'to achieve real equality, it might be said, members of minority groups and women must win their places on their merits' (p. 50). So, different understandings of equality influence different approaches to the issue.

Crosby et al (2003), when examining affirmative action, focus on two aspects: diversity and merit. In terms of diversity, they argue that affirmative action can increase diversity in workforces and educational settings. In the particular case of higher education, Crosby et al (2003) stress that diversity can be beneficial because it positively affects learning, prepares students for a diverse society, increases intergroup relationships, and in the long term can increase social stability. Yet, 'an endorsement of diversity does not mean that people find acceptable any means of achieving it' (Crosby et al, 2003, p. 100).

Similar to Singer's perspective, they argue that true diversity can be achieved through the impartial treatment of all people who should be judged merely on their merits.

The debate on affirmative action questions equality – as an underlying principle of inclusion – in terms of what it really should represent. It also reveals the controversies of the theoretical underpinnings of the notion of inclusion, controversies that in turn are reflected in inclusion itself.

2.4.7. What is the justice of inclusion?

Overall, this discussion raises the issue of justice of inclusion. Inclusion is considered to be a demand for full participation in society and education, a champion of social justice, and an ethical responsibility. In other words, inclusion is mainly conceived and pursued from an ideological point of view, while the practical currency of the term is neglected or insufficiently explored (Armstrong, 2005; Pirrie & Head, 2007). Therefore, inclusion is largely approached as a moral and not a political problem. This is the so-called 'aura' of the inclusion concept:

'When it comes to inclusion, examples of good practice are of limited hermeneutic and predictive value, as it is not so much the end-product that is important, but the process – the working towards' (Pirrie & Head, 2007, p. 26).

In other words, the final aim of inclusion cannot be clearly defined. This puts into question the ethical significance of inclusion in terms of its value for the groups of people that are identified in relation to it. Within the context of education, inclusion is directly related to the provision for students that face difficulties as a result of their differences (disability-related, cultural, social etc). However, the rhetoric of inclusion leads to an increasing disappearance of

disability and difference in the current debates, and to their substitution with the politically correct notion of diversity (MacKay, 2002). The recognition of difference in a positive, non-demeaning way can secure access to appropriate provision, and provide young people with opportunities for social participation. Failure to recognise difference would deprive these young people from educational and life opportunities, and would in turn alienate them from their communities making their disabilities or other differences distant and threatening. In that sense, 'failure to recognise and failure to provide also lead to a failure to acknowledge disability [and difference] as part of normal diversity' (MacKay, 2002, p. 159).

This can undermine the role of inclusion in relation to social justice. The inability of inclusion to address critical issues, like the one of educational provision, also results from the disparity of its current definitions. Instead of giving answers and directions, they open new debates (Hyde & Power, 2006; Cigman, 2007a). Another reason could be that inclusion is often conceptualised with the use of concepts like *socially just* or *ethically appropriate* that are called *thin* concepts. Thin concepts are abstract moral concepts like *right*, *wrong* or *just*; on the other hand, thick concepts provide more concrete descriptions of moral actions (Dworkin, 2011). As noted, 'we use thin concepts as conclusions, to report overall moral judgements, but without offering much, if anything, by way of a case to ground those judgments' (Dworkin, 2011, p. 182). As a result, inclusion, largely defined in terms of what is just or ethically appropriate, fails to give substance to the complex notion it attempts to depict.

2.5.The concept of homophily

This section presents the concept, aspects and theoretical background (sociology, social psychology) of homophily.

2.5.1.The concept and origins of homophily

Homophily is a sociological term to describe a preference for social interaction with similar others, in terms of network connections. It was first used by Lazarsfeld and Merton in their 1954 study on the tendencies for friendship formation among the residents of two small towns, Hilltown and Crafttown (McPherson et al, 2001; Cooke, 2008). The idea of the homophily principle can be condensed in the British proverb *birds of a feather flock together* or, in other words, those of similar characteristics tend to congregate in homogenous groups. McPherson et al (2001) describe homophily as ‘the principle that a contact between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people’ (p. 416). Reagans (2005) notes that ‘the term homophily was created to indicate the presence of a strong tie between socially similar people’ (p. 1374). Kossinets & Watts (2009) also refer to the notion of homophily as ‘the observed tendency of *like to associate with like*’ (p. 405). Theoretically, homophily is rooted in many theories and various disciplinary approaches, like the social psychological social identity theory and the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Nangle et al, 2002). This can raise the issue on what kinds of similarity is homophily based.

Lazarsfeld and Merton have distinguished between two types of homophily: *status homophily* and *value homophily* (McPherson, et al 2001; Cooke, 2008). Status homophily describes associations formed on the basis of perceived status equivalency, while value homophily refers to associations built

on common values, attitudes and beliefs. In the case of status homophily, similarity is perceived in terms of socio-demographic dimensions, like race, ethnicity, gender and age, or acquired characteristics like religion, education, occupation or patterns of behaviour (McPherson, et al 2001). On the other hand, value homophily relates to internal, psychological processes. From a different perspective, McPherson, et al (2001) 'distinguish between homophily effects that are created by [contextual factors] as *baseline homophily* and homophily measured as explicitly over and above the opportunity set as *inbreeding homophily*' (p. 419). Baseline homophily is the result of the opportunities that the social structures offer for social interactions with similar and different people, whereas inbreeding homophily focuses on preference for similar others that extends beyond any contextual opportunities. Yet, the term *inbreeding* is particularly used to describe an interaction between agency (personal choice) and context (social structure). Challenging the older classification of *induced* and *choice homophily*, Kossinets & Watts (2009) write that the idea of inbreeding homophily is broader than choice homophily; inbreeding homophily describes not only preference for similarity in excess of the opportunity pool, 'but also includes some amount of induced [or baseline] homophily for precisely the reason that group homogeneity may be an outcome of some *inbreeding* process over and above what is determined by the overall demographic distribution' (Kossinets & Watts, 2009, p. 408). In other words, behind any given structure (context) lies a complex combination of invisible individual choices and decisions (agency).

A tension between agency and structure is central to the homophily discourse. Reagans (2005), writing about the importance of the context in network formation, stresses that 'some situations produce dynamics that

enhance the tendency for similar people to be attracted to each other, while other situations produce dynamics that work against the baseline level of attraction' (p. 1382). So, context has a central role in the formation of homophilous ties, not only in terms of baseline (contextually based) homophily but most importantly of inbreeding (the result of an interplay between agency and context). The interaction between individual choice and contextual factors is also the focus of Kossinets & Watts (2009); as baseline and inbreeding homophily are interrelated phenomena, both mechanisms operate at the same time and cannot be examined separately. Homophily operates in a continuum of interactions between social structures and personal preferences.

Within education, the social phenomenon of homophily can have an effect on the classroom interactional dynamics. Nangle et al (2002) write that 'homophily [...] clearly operates within children's friendships and larger peer networks' (p. 425). As inclusion is considered to be part of a movement towards the appreciation of diversity (Armstrong et al, 2010), homophily with its focus on similarity and sameness can be seen as a threat to the aims of inclusive education (Frostad & Pijl, 2007). It is indicative that students with special educational needs (SEN) often have difficulties in building social relations with their non-SEN peers, and as a consequence they might develop strong homophilous ties (Frostad & Pijl, 2007). Researchers relate the social skills of students with special educational needs with their social position in inclusive classrooms; they argue that these students lack the social qualities to form ties with their 'normally developing' peers, either because of their behaviour, their looks or intellectual ability (Frostad & Pijl, 2007). From another perspective, Nangle et al (2002) present homophilic behaviour as a means for young people to gain self-validation from associations with others who are similar to

themselves. Either way, students both with and without special educational needs might prefer to an extent to be among those of their peers they perceive to be similar.

In accordance with the homophily principle is the concept of *community of practice*. According to Wenger et al (2002), 'communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis' (p. 4). So, the basis of a community of practice is knowledge sharing and joint goals. The people that form a community of practice are socially attracted to each other because they find value in their interactions. As Wenger et al (2002) note, this value accrues in the personal satisfaction that people feel being around others that can understand them. Communities of practice might also develop a sense of identity.

The notion that opposites attract (a well-known lay theory) has been supported in studies on dyadic interactions (Dryer & Horowitz, 1997) and team membership (Kristof-Brown et al, 2005). Similarly, Tropp & Bianchi (2006) relate the appreciation of diversity with an increasing interest for inter-group social interactions. Yet, the homophily principle is in turn rooted in well established theories, like the *similarity-attraction hypothesis* and the *social identity theory* from social psychology.

2.5.2. The similarity-attraction hypothesis

At the heart of the idea of homophily lies the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Nangle et al, 2002; Hackman & Katz, 2010) which can be seen as the theoretical expression of the general statement that we tend to like those who are like us. Within the field of social psychology and for the majority of early

studies, the relationship between similarity and attraction is examined with a focus on similarity in terms of attitudes, beliefs and values (Herbst et al, 2003; Klohnen & Luo, 2003). So, the similarity-attraction hypothesis is mostly related to the concept of value homophily.

Formulated by Byrne in the 1960's (Byrne et al, 1986), the similarity-attraction hypothesis states that 'similar attitudes promote attraction; dissimilar attitudes in contrast, lead to a repulsion' (Singh & Ho, 2000, p. 197). However, according to Singh & Ho (2000), there can be three distinct hypotheses regarding the relation between similarity in terms of attitudes and attraction: either dissimilar and similar attitudes have equal weight (attraction hypothesis), either dissimilar attitudes take on all the weight (repulsion hypothesis), or dissimilar attitudes are weighted more than similar (asymmetry hypothesis). The repulsion hypothesis – which was supported by Rosenbaum in 1986 – led to discussions about the validity of the well established attraction hypothesis (Singh & Ho, 2000; Chen & Kenrick, 2002; Herbst et al, 2003). As a response to Rosenbaum's arguments, Byrne et al (1986) proposed an updated version of the original theory. They introduced the idea of a two-stage process of relationship formation:

'In the first stage, people may rely on negative factors such as dissimilar attitudes, the expression of negative personal evaluations, and physical unattractiveness to exclude others from further consideration as potential friends, dates, lovers, or spouses. In the second stage, responding to a reduced field of eligibles, people may rely increasingly on positive factors (similar attitudes, etc.) to select the final candidates for interpersonal closeness' (Byrne et al, 1986, p.1170).

Consequently, they adopted a more holistic approach in terms of the role of similar and dissimilar attitudes in different stages of relationship formation. In

the same way, Singh & Ho (2000) note that the effects of similarity and difference in social interaction are subjected to personal negotiation.

It has been proposed that similar attitudes lead to attraction because 'individuals have a fundamental need for a logical and consistent view of the world' (Montoya et al, 2008, p. 891). So, similar attitudes can serve as reinforcements; people who agree with us validate our ideas and reinforce the consistency of our world; these people are associated with positive feelings that lead to attraction (Klohn & Luo, 2003; Montoya et al, 2008). The opposite applies to people who disagree with us: because they create inconsistency in our world, they are associated with feelings of anxiety, confusion and insecurity that in turn lead to a lack of attraction or repulsion (Klohn & Luo, 2003; Montoya et al, 2008). Similarity refers not only to actual similarity but also what is perceived – people *believing* that others think like them. Perceived similarity has the same effect as actual similarity, serving as reinforcement that may lead to attraction (Montoya et al, 2008).

The similarity-attraction hypothesis has been examined in terms of a range of kinds of similarity: e.g. group membership (Chen & Kenrick, 2002) similar and dissimilar attitudes (Byrne et al, 1986; Singh & Ho, 2000), ideas around an ideal self as the driving force behind the similarity-attraction relationship (Herbst et al, 2003), or personality traits (Klohn & Luo, 2003; Montoya et al, 2008). However, the degree of similarity and difference is not often discussed, like for example the effects of visibility and invisibility of difference in social interaction.

2.5.3.Social identity theory and homophily

A preference for similar others can also be examined with reference to social identity theory and the notion of identity. The social identity theory 'starts from the assumption that social identity is derived primarily from group memberships' (Brown, 2000, p. 747). Therefore, social identity – the acknowledgment of belonging to a social group or category – is formed through a process of *self-categorisation* (Hogg et al, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000). According to Stets & Burke (2000), individuals who hold a social identification see themselves as members of a social group or category; through a social comparison process, people who perceive such a group identity categorise other people who have a similar identity to their own as in-group, and people who have different identities as out-group. Similarity and difference is understood in terms of attitudes, values, beliefs, behavioural patterns, speech styles, affective reactions and other properties (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Between homophily, the similarity-attraction hypothesis and the social identity theory there are theoretical similarities. Discussing social identity theory, Karasawa (1995) writes that 'it is a widely shared view that people are motivated to maintain or enhance a positive self-image by comparing themselves with others in a manner that favors the self' (p. 329). In other words, he argues that in-group identification can serve as an enhancement of people's self esteem. Spencer-Oatey (2007) writes that high self-esteem is not simply the result of independent reflection, but rather an outcome of respect and acceptance from others that have similar identities. Ideas about self-esteem and group identification can also be related to the psychological processes behind the similarity-attraction hypothesis. High self-esteem and positive feelings, the product of in-group identification with people that have similar identities, may

lead to attraction. By contrast, low self-esteem and negative feelings, the result of comparison with out-group people that have different identities, can lead to lack of attraction or repulsion. In addition, in-group identification with similar people often leads to feelings of superiority over other dissimilar groups (Hackman & Katz, 2010), a phenomenon called in-group bias (Brown, 2000). Therefore, from this point of view, social identity theory supports the idea that similarity breeds connection.

However, the ideas of social identity theory have been challenged. As Brown (2000) writes, there is a possibility that in-group bias and self-esteem may not be as associated, especially because of issues of self-esteem assessment. Stets & Burke (2000) also note that later researchers often separate self-categorisation from self-esteem, in order to better investigate their relationship. From another point of view, social identity theory is accused of focusing on collective identity, while neglecting individual factors. Spencer-Oatey (2007) argues that even though some characteristics that play a role in identity formation are seen as having a collective dimension (like for example ethnicity or religion) people can also negotiate them in a personal way. Homophily is mainly described to be an expression of individual preference; yet, it could also result from group identification.

2.5.4. The idea of social homogeneity

The principle of homophily is in line with the idea of social homogeneity (Hackman & Katz, 2010). Accordingly, a preference for similar others is an expression of preference for homogeneous over heterogeneous social structures. Social homogeneity can be assessed in terms of various dimensions like demographic characteristics, values and beliefs, behavioural patterns and

group membership (McPherson et al, 2001; Hackman & Katz, 2010). Holtug & Manson (2010) argue that social homogeneity can be equated with social cohesion, as well as with a demand for belonging. Social homogeneity is also described as a synonym of unity, stability and conformity – as opposed to multiculturalism and diversity – in society (Hartmann & Gerteis, 2005). Despite the fact that homogeneous structures are seen as harmonious, this harmony is static; unity through homogeneity lacks the dynamic aspect of diversity.

On the other hand, heterogeneous structures can be described as disparate or chaotic. Yet, diverse elements can complement each other in a dynamic way. Hartmann & Gerteis (2005) use the example of musical harmony to show how social diversity can be a means of reaching social harmony; in a similar way, social harmony requires a diversity of people whose differences complement each other:

‘Harmony [in music terms] is not based on the homogeneity of musical pitches but in fact requires a variety of notes that fit together and complement one another’ (p. 220).

Turning back to the notion of homophily, it can be noted that homogeneous social structures provide little opportunities for interactions with different others. So, even though homophily is a matter of preference, in some instances it is the only option. Although a distinction between choice and context can be arbitrary as they are in a constant interaction with each other (Snow, 2001; Kossinets & Watts, 2009), paradoxically homogeneity can restrict the preferential character of homophily. On the other hand, heterogeneous structures offer opportunities for social interaction even with similar others.

2.5.5. Homophily: choice or discrimination?

Moody (2001), when referring to issues of racial integration and segregation in American schools, writes that:

‘While racially heterogeneous schools may be formally integrated, they are substantively segregated if students interact most often with others of their own race. The lived experience of students in such settings is of racial division, not integration’ (pp. 679-680).

The explanation he gives for this situation is partly the organisational structures of schools that do not adequately promote cross-race interactions, and partly racial homophily. In terms of the latter, we could examine whether preference for similar others is an expression of choice as it has been presented so far, or whether it can mask practices of discrimination.

Kossinets & Watts (2009) state that ‘people form ties with similar others because, rightly or wrongly, they prefer to’ (p. 406). This preference relates to practical issues of communication (Brass, 2009; Kossinets & Watts, 2009), and can serve to reinforce anything we perceive as our position in terms of the others and the world (McPherson et al, 2001; Nangle et al, 2002). The element of choice behind the homophily principle can be examined as part of the broader liberal theory that presents individuals as autonomous beings, capable of making choices for their own lives (Dagovitz, 2004). Accordingly, Rawls (1999) stresses that ‘each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override’ (p. 3). Thus, if we assume that homophily is a matter of personal choice and social inclusion a greater social good, then, according to the previous idea and despite the moral imperative of inclusion, people would still be entitled to express preference for interacting with similar others.

On the other hand, it appears that the boundaries between homophily and discrimination are not clear. It is indicative that, as McPherson et al (2001) note, early studies on homophily focused on prejudice and relevant attitudes in newly desegregated schools and public places. Therefore, even though homophily has been presented as a matter of personal choice, it can also be seen as a way of masking concealed racism, discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes, or fear for anything that is perceived as different. This is particularly evident within the field of education. Nangle et al (2002) write that 'children form stereotypes and other negative biases toward peers belonging to different peer groups and behave in ways that serve to maintain their group status' (p. 426). From this point of view, homophily contributes in the formation of prejudices and stereotypes. This can be a reason why it has been described as working against inclusive education (Frostad & Pijl, 2007).

Homophily seems to teeter between choice and discrimination. Yet, in the majority of relevant studies, the term has been used with a positive connotation. Perhaps, there is no single answer to the question as to whether homophily is an expression of choice or discrimination, partly because this question seems to be part of a broader issue related to the way people negotiate similarity and difference.

2.5.6. Homophily and power dynamics

A preference for similar others may not necessarily be an act of discrimination, but it seems that power dynamics can have an effect on people's preferences for social interaction. As far as homophily is concerned, inequalities of power in social relations can serve not only as contextual factors, but most importantly they can influence decision-making and personal preferences, as

context and agency interact (Kossinets & Watts, 2009). Power inequalities can often be so embedded in social relations and in people's way of thinking and understanding of themselves and the world that they can be internalised, 'in that [their] effects are mistaken for reality' (Rowlands, 1995, p. 102). From this point of view, the origins of homophily can also be sought in the phenomenon of *internalised oppression*, and the relative one of *internalised domination* (Tappan, 2006).

Internalised oppression describes a 'survival' mechanism according to which 'people who are systematically denied power and influence in the dominant society internalise the messages they receive about what they are supposed to be like, and [...] may come to believe the messages to be true' (Rowlands, 1995, p. 102). On the other hand, internalise domination describes the opposite phenomenon – the acceptance and incorporation of prejudices against others and superiority for themselves by members of a dominant group (Tappan, 2006). Both phenomena could be seen as the driving force behind the formation of homophilous ties, as people may prefer to interact socially with others who share the same feelings of inferiority or superiority with themselves, or with people they perceive as equals.

Internalised oppression and domination characterise social relations that involve inequalities in power, like for example – as feminist writers have stressed – male-female relationships (Rowlands, 1995; Tappan, 2006). Tappan (2006) writes that so far both phenomena have been mostly examined in terms of their internal, psychological dimension, while their social and cultural aspect has been neglected. He has adopted the pessimistic view that 'the internalised image suggests that oppression and domination become deep, internal psychological qualities [...] that are extremely difficult (if not impossible) to

resist, interrupt or abandon once they are in place' (p. 2122). He argues that internalised oppression/domination can be better understood as forms of mediated action, because 'any solution to the problems of privilege and oppression must focus as much on structural/systemic change as it does on personal transformation' (Tappan, 2006, p. 2117). Yet, although the author maintains that he has taken a holistic approach, his basic assumption is that change should have more collective than personal character. This notion can be seen to underestimate individual people's will for change and personal progress. Internalised messages, no matter how deep and incorporated they may be, can be the subject of critical reflection, as the very idea of education suggests.

2.6.The aesthetic principle of dynamic balance

Section 2.6 refers to the aesthetic principle of dynamic balance that is in turn used in the next section (2.7) to suggest a way to rethink inclusion in terms of homophily and respect of individuality. *Dynamic balance* – also *asymmetry* (Locher et al, 1998) or *broken symmetry* (Cutting, 2002) – is a term used in aesthetic theory to describe a ‘way in which disparate elements of an image produce visual forces that compensate for each other’ (Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005, p. 165). Dynamic balance is a way to achieve balance in diversity.

2.6.1.Why balance?

Arnheim (1974) writes that ‘man strives for equilibrium in all phases of his physical and mental existence’ (p. 36). Balance is considered to be an indispensable factor in aesthetic composition (Locher et al, 2001; Kordis, 2009). Balance refers to structural elements (Kordis, 2009) or other factors like shape, direction, location (Arnheim, 1966), colour, value, detail and subject matter (Groves, 2007) that in a well balanced composition ‘are mutually determined by each other in such a way that no change seems possible and the whole assumes the character of *necessity* in all its parts’ (Arnheim, 1966, p. 76). Groves (2007) argues that a balanced composition *feels* right and has ‘a certain synergy of all its parts’ (p. 36), what Kordis (2009) in turn describes as unity of energy. Arnheim (1966) notes that ‘balance represents the state of distribution in which all elements [of an aesthetic composition] have come to rest’ (p. 76); this internal ‘tidying up’ aims to give to the aesthetic form the simplicity that is needed for an unobstructed interaction with the viewer (Kordis, 2009). In order to fulfil this purpose the form would have to meet the necessary requirements

and demonstrate the appropriate qualities. The basic quality to this end would be balance, 'the internal rest of the aesthetic form' (Kordis, 2009, p. 147).

On the other hand, Arnheim (1966) describes an unbalanced composition as paralysed. 'An unbalanced composition looks accidental, transitory, and therefore invalid [as its elements show] a tendency to change place or shape in order to better fit the total structure' (Arnheim, 1966, p. 76); it gives then the impression that an external force retains its elements in their places. Kordis (2009) argues that if the elements of an aesthetic form are in an internal fight with each other, then an unobstructed interaction with the viewer may not be possible; an unbalanced composition would exhaust itself with the internal negotiation of its own elements, and this process would result in the loss of the simplicity that is necessary for the successful interaction with the viewer (Kordis, 2009). This is why, Arnheim (1974) writes, under conditions of imbalance, 'the artistic statement becomes incomprehensible' (p. 20).

2.6.2.Symmetry and asymmetry

Although balance is desirable since 'it unifies the structural elements of a visual display into a cohesive narrative statement' (Locher et al, 1998, p. 142) there is more than one way to achieve it (Arnheim, 1974). There are at least two different ways to reach balance and through it harmony – the simplest one appears to be the structural phenomenon of *symmetry* (Locher et al, 1998; Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005). Symmetry 'mirrors the arrangement on one side of the central axis on the other side' and, so, it creates an immediate impression of balance (Gombrich, 1979, p. 126). A practical example of symmetry can be the repetitive patterns of wallpaper that achieve a sort of balance that we could call *symmetrical balance* or 'balance by homogeneity' (Arnheim, 1974, p. 29). Yet,

this kind of balance, in comparison to dynamic balance, is described as atonal (Arnheim, 1974), static (Gombrich, 1982; Kordis, 2009), boring, monotonous (Gombrich, 1979; Cutting, 2002), or as lacking interest (Locher et al, 1998; Cutting, 2002; Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005).

On the other hand, *dynamic* or *asymmetrical balance* 'is an organisational structure in which individual elements are not arranged symmetrically but balance is achieved because the visual forces of these elements compensate for each other' (Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005, p. 166). To understand the concept in practical terms, we could imagine that a form in dynamic balance would portray the qualities and the tension of a coiled spring (Cutting, 2002). When an aesthetic form stands in dynamic balance the opposite visual forces within the form itself counterbalance each other towards a state of balance (Kordis, 2009). If symmetrical balance can be described as a kind of balance based on homogeneity and repetition (Arnheim, 1974), then dynamic balance would be a kind of balance based on heterogeneity and diversity (Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005).

2.6.3.The aesthetic principle of rhythm

As discussed, dynamic balance is 'one way in which unity can be rendered in diversity' (Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005, p. 166). In this case, diverse elements refer to opposite visual forces within a form that counterbalance each other towards a state of balance and harmony. According to Arnheim (1974), 'natural objects often possess strong visual dynamics because their shapes are the traces of the physical forces that created the objects' (p. 416). We could expect that this same principle would underlie the structural laws of aesthetic composition. However, aesthetic forms are not necessarily representations of

the natural objects they visualise; they are rarely produced by the forces that we perceive in their shapes (Arnheim, 1974) and they have a reality and rules of their own. These are the laws of perceptual organisation (Arnheim, 1966; Kordis, 2009) which seem to be in relation to different philosophical and cultural ideas, as Kordis (2009) argues building on the example of the Byzantine aesthetic language.

If the aesthetic form has a reality and rules of its own, then its structural organisation and the role of the visual forces within it would have to be explained in relation to the aesthetic philosophy that is expressed through the form. Kordis (2009) has attempted to interpret the aesthetic principles of the Byzantine painting through the lens of the overall theory/philosophy and purposes of the Byzantine culture. He expresses the opinion that the Byzantine aesthetic language shares a common characteristic with the ancient Greek aesthetic tradition, the principle of *rhythm* (*rhythmos*) – a condition in which the aesthetic composition stands in dynamic balance. Ancient Greek rhythm can be achieved when opposite visual forces within an aesthetic form counterbalance each other in a dynamic way (Kordis, 2009); these forces can be visualised as axes that cross themselves in a criss-cross ('X') shape, as presented in figures 1, 2 and 3.

Rhythm with its dynamic pattern, which is built on diverse elements, breathes life and interest into the aesthetic form (Cutting, 2002; Kordis, 2009). Cutting (2002), relating discrepancies of symmetry to interest, notes the technique of *contrapposto* which is considered to be a practical example of dynamic balance and rhythm. *Contrapposto* (an Italian term, translated as *counterpoise* by Janson & Janson, 2004) describes 'the positioning of the human figure in painting or sculpture with hips and legs in a direction different

than the shoulders and arms' (also in 'X' shape) (Cutting, 2002, p. 1170). It is a common structural technique used in ancient Greek statues and serves to enhance a lifelike impression (Janson & Janson, 2004) and a feeling of motion (Cutting, 2002). An example of *contrapposto* could be the statue of *Doryphoros* (Spear Bearer, 450-440 BC) by Polykleitos (fig. 1).



Figure 1: Doryphoros

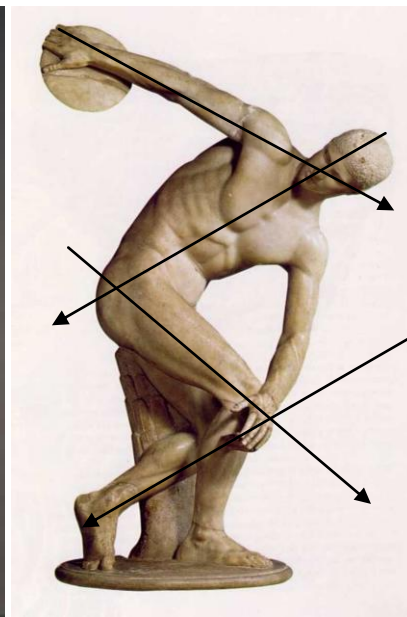


Figure 2: Discobolos

As Janson & Janson (2004) note, in the *Doryphoros* the halves of the body are differentiated and this differentiation can be observed in every muscle as 'everything is a harmony of complementary opposites' (p. 1031).

Discussing the technique of *contrapposto*, Cutting (2002) claims that the bilateral symmetry of the human body (symmetrical balance) can look 'static, immobile and quite uninteresting' (p. 1170); perhaps this could be why techniques like *contrapposto* were used to break the symmetry in a quite natural way to human motion, and to promote interest (Cutting, 2002). However, as discussed, aesthetic forms are not necessarily imitating natural motion, but they can have a reality and rules of their own (Arnheim, 1966; Kordis, 2009). Rhythm can be seen as an example of a structural technique that aims to achieve a

successful management of energy, namely of movement and immobility, within an aesthetic form (Kordis, 2009), as an expression of the ancient Greek way of thinking. The Greek statues of the Classical Antiquity, combining movement and immobility, seem to express the contrasting philosophical idea of an 'eternal present' or a 'momentary eternity' (Kordis, 2009). So, dynamic balance (rhythm) is not only about combining diverse elements in terms of structuring an aesthetic form, but also refers to the combination of different and seemingly opposing philosophical ideas. An ancient Greek statue that is expressing the contrasting idea of an 'instant eternity' through an extreme *contrapposto* is the *Discobolos*, by Myron (The Discus Thrower, middle 5th century BC) (fig. 2). In the *Discobolos*, movement (the instant) and immobility (the eternal) exist at the same time; rhythm combines them in a harmonious way, despite their opposition. This is why, Janson & Janson (2004) stress that 'only by [representing] the body at rest could the sculptor gain the freedom to show it in motion' (p. 1031).

Byzantine painting also shares some principles with the ancient Greek aesthetic tradition, like the aesthetic principle of rhythm (Kordis, 2009). Similar to the ancient Greek aesthetic language, harmony and balance in the Byzantine pictorial system are the result of opposite elements that counterbalance each other – like axes crossing themselves in an 'X' shape – towards a state of dynamic balance. As a consequence, movement and immobility do not delete each other but co-exist (Kordis, 2009). An example of the Byzantine rhythm illustrates the icon of *St John the Theologian dictating to his student, Prochoros*, by the Byzantine painter Manouil Panselinos (around 1290 AD, Karyes Monastery of Athos) (fig. 3).

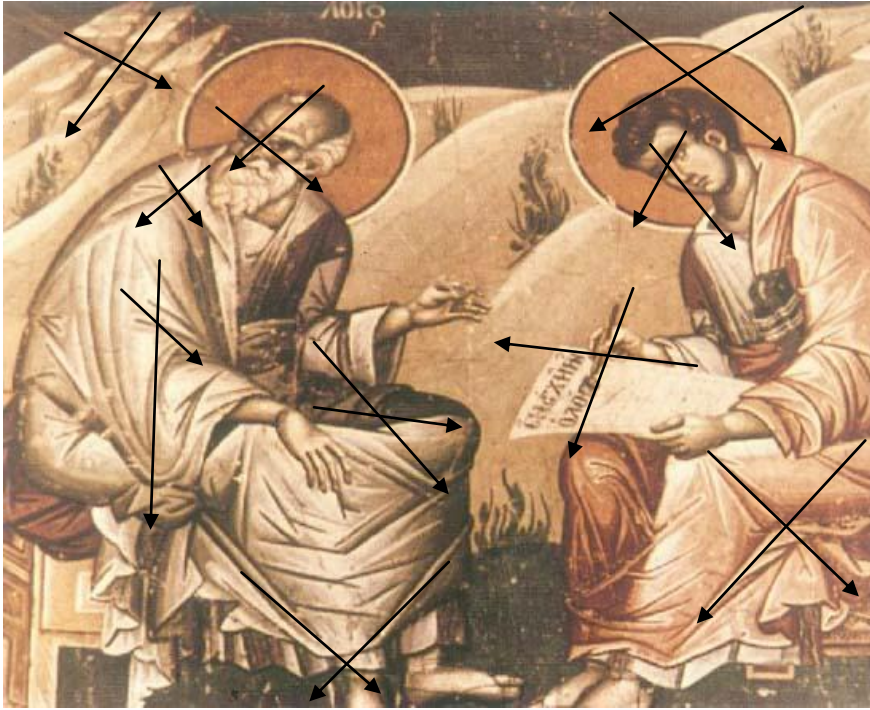


Figure 3: St John the Theologian dictating to his student, Prochoros

The opposite visual forces within a composition – visualised as axes in ‘X’ shape – are most of the time well hidden in the structure of the figures, the objects, or the landscape (Kordis, 2009), as we can observe in the icon above (fig. 3). As a result of dynamic balance and rhythm different elements within the icon are unified in a harmonious but also dynamic way. Rhythm and dynamic balance are considered to be common structural techniques of the Byzantine pictorial system (Kordis, 2009).

Rhythm gives to aesthetic forms the characteristics that balance and asymmetry instill to a piece of art, like liveliness (Cutting, 2002; Kordis, 2009) and unity of energy (Groves, 2007; Kordis, 2009). In terms of the latter, Kordis (2009) writes that the different elements of a form, while keeping their own existence intact, lose their personal purpose of being and they adjust themselves to a common factor, a common rhythm, which stems from the ‘X’ shape of the axes, that is to say, the opposite forces within the form itself.

Hence, rhythm unifies and gives coherence to an otherwise disparate image. This process towards rhythm, balance and harmony leads the aesthetic form away from complexity and internal oppositions to simplicity and, therefore, to the accomplishment of its purpose, which is the unobstructed interaction with the viewer (Kordis, 2009). So, rhythm is one way of combing different and disparate elements into a balanced and harmonious whole. It is a structural technique, but also a notion rooted in a particular culture; as such it can be related to what Hamilton (1964) notes referring to the Greek civilization and way of thinking: 'the Greeks always saw things as parts of a whole' (p. 184).

In conclusion, the aesthetic principle of rhythm can be an indicator that dynamic balance is not a random structural technique, but rather an intentional element of aesthetic composition related to particular cultural and philosophical ideas (Kordis, 2009). The argument that works of art are not necessarily imitating nature but can have a reality and rules of their own supports this argument (Arnheim, 1966; Kordis, 2009). As a consequence, we could claim that dynamic balance – a way in which unity can be achieved in variety (Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005) – is an idea broader than aesthetics that reflects a particular philosophy of thinking about the role of diversity. Understood as such, the ideas associated with the notion of dynamic balance can also be applied to other spheres.

2.6.4. Dynamic balance in non-representational images

Researchers have also attempted to measure dynamic balance in non-representational images – not actual works of art – using quantitative methods (Locher et al, 1998; Locher et al, 2001; Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005). From this perspective, Wilson & Chatterjee (2005) relate dynamic balance, which

according to them can be seen as an objective and measurable quantity, to preference for form – a subjective judgment. Their argument is based on the assumption that in aesthetics cultural differences can influence preference for content, but preference for form is more likely to be affected by structural features, such as dynamic balance. To this end they have introduced a test that assesses preference for balance.

The test includes a number of constructed images that present different levels of balance – balance has been quantitatively measured with a systematic method of pixel count. Participants are then asked to rate the pictures, in terms of balance and personal preference. The results suggest that objective parameters of balance correlate highly with subjective preferences (Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005), or that people show preference for balanced compositions. These are some examples of the images being used with a range of balance scores, taken from the authors' website:

<http://wernicke.ccn.upenn.edu/~chatterjee/neuroaesthetics.htm>.

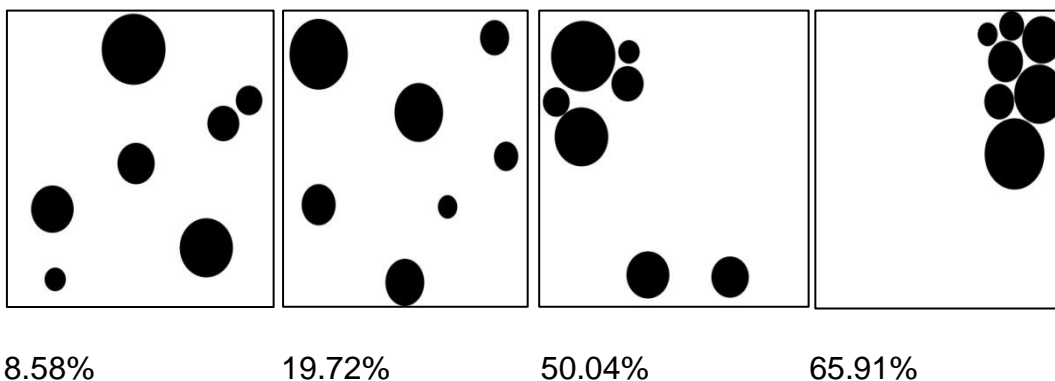


Figure 4: Balance scores (examples)

These scores represent different degrees of balance and imbalance. 'A measure of 0% reflects perfect balance around a particular axis, with equal areas occupied by the elements in both halves, and 100% reflects total imbalance with all the elements either in the left or the right half of the square'

(Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005, p.168). Thus, symmetrical balance would score 0% and dynamic or asymmetrical one would score above that – nonetheless, an upper limit could only be defined empirically.

Although this seems to be a different way of examining dynamic balance, Wilson & Chatterjee (2005) also focus on the idea of unity in diversity, since they stress that ‘dynamic balance gives coherence to an otherwise chaotic image’ (p. 166) and, in turn, they relate this idea to aesthetic preference. Therefore, it appears that dynamic balance as a structural element can be observed in both aesthetic forms (works of art) and non-representational images, while having similar functionality and meaning. However, it should be noted that dynamic balance explored through rhythm can be connected with cultural and philosophical ideas that extend beyond a discussion about structural organisation and aesthetic preference.

2.7.The analogy from aesthetics

To this point, this review has examined: various perspectives on disability and difference; approaches to the concepts of self and identity; issues of ethics, justice and choice; the notion of inclusion; the sociological concept of homophily; and the aesthetic principle of dynamic balance. In the following and last section of this review, an analogy between ethics and aesthetics is drawn to explore another way of thinking about inclusion. This analogy particularly highlights the role of homophily in relation to inclusion. As inclusion is understood as an ethical obligation to embrace difference, it may come into tension with people's actual preferences for social interaction that can be represented by homophily (that is, preference for similar others). This tension has an ethical dimension. The section concludes with the aims of the study.

2.7.1.Ethics and aesthetics

For my Master's dissertation (in Special Educational Needs, 2010-11, University of Exeter), I explored an analogy between the aesthetic principle of dynamic balance and inclusion in social relations to examine another way of thinking about inclusion. Nevertheless, can parallels be drawn between ethics in social relations and aesthetics? Building on Hume's philosophy, Dworkin (2011) argues that 'the meaning and value of a work of art do depend on the proper reasons for evaluating and interpreting it [since] art, like morality, connects with the ethical hub' (p. 203); in other words, what is beautiful and what is good are both interpretations. Gaut (1998) has extended this argument: a work of art may be judged as aesthetically good in the sense of beauty, elegance or grace, but also as aesthetically bad if it manifests ethically reprehensible attitudes, for example in the form of propaganda. Therefore, ethics and aesthetics intersect;

aesthetic value has an ethical dimension, works of art carry ethical ideas and so can be judged in ethical terms.

In aesthetics, the notion of harmony (that originated in music) is considered to be about beauty, elegance, and grace. Yet, Arnheim (1974) writes that 'musical theory is not concerned with which sounds go nicely together, but with the problem of giving adequate shape to an intended content' (p. 349). In that sense what is more important in a musical and by extension in any aesthetic composition is *balance*, 'the need for everything to add up to a unified whole' (Arnheim, 1974, p. 349). As already discussed, balance is seen as an aim in aesthetic composition as it gives coherence to an otherwise chaotic image (Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005), and facilitates an unobstructed interaction with the viewer (Kordis, 2009). As one way of reaching balance and harmony, dynamic balance is seen to correspond to 'the old formula of unity in variety, that is, to the desire of organizing a maximum of dynamic richness in well-balanced form' (Arnheim, 1966, p. 45). However, it is not the only possible way to achieve harmony, as the structural phenomenon of symmetry can be seen to create an instant impression of balance by repetition and duplication (Arnheim, 1966; Gombrich, 1979). These different directions could be seen to imply a dissimilar way of thinking and/or a diverse aesthetic philosophy. On the one hand, there is symmetry, which describes the exact reflection of a form on both sides of a central axis (Gombrich, 1979). On the other hand, there is asymmetry, which involves unequal weight on either side of a balancing centre counterbalanced by different elements within the form itself (Locher et al, 1998; Groves, 2007). Hence, if symmetrical balance is a kind of balance based on homogeneity and sameness (Arnheim, 1974), then dynamic or asymmetrical

balance can be seen as a sort of balance based on heterogeneity and diversity (Wilson & Chatterjee, 2005).

By analogy, in the social sphere, *social cohesion* might be examined as a kind of social balance based on factors such as race, social class, social capital or sexuality (Muntaner & Lynch, 1999; Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Gordon-Murray & Waitt, 2009). Forrest & Kearns (2001) write that social cohesion emphasises the need for a shared morality, social order, harmonious economic and social development, social networks and a sense of personal identity; by contrast, lack of social cohesion characterises a society with disparate moral values, social disorder, extreme social inequalities and low level of social interaction among people – factors that might also affect their identities. Social cohesion can also be related to mental and emotional well-being, health (Muntaner & Lynch, 1999) or a demand for social order:

‘If everyone participates fully in society they are less likely to become alienated from the community [and the outcome would be] not merely justice for individuals but also a stable social order’ (Collins, 2003, p. 24).

However, there is more than one way to pursue cohesive social structures. Gordon-Murray & Waitt (2009) examine social cohesion in terms of tolerance, respect for difference and co-operation between groups, but they also refer to cases where increasing diversity has caused social conflict, and homogeneous social structures have proved to be more cohesive. Therefore, similar to aesthetics, there are at least two possible ways for society to reach social balance. On the one hand, there is sameness, people and social groups with common characteristics, that reflects the value of a homogeneous society. On the other, there is diversity where differences related to race, gender, religion, beliefs, language, ethnicity, disability etc. form a human mosaic, and so the

ideal of a society with balanced internal oppositions. The first direction involves a process of valuing the same, while the second an appreciation of diversity. Both directions could lead to a kind of social balance but the qualities of this balance would be different. The latter can be seen to portray inclusion, while the former portrays homophily.

2.7.2. Another way of thinking about inclusion

We could now draw an analogy between the aesthetic principle of dynamic balance and inclusion in social relations. Homophily and symmetry on the one hand, and inclusion and asymmetry on the other have some similarities. Even though from different contexts, homophily and symmetry both involve a process of valuing sameness. If symmetry is based on the repetition of the same elements along the central axis of an aesthetic composition (Gombrich, 1979), homophily is about the pursuit of the similar in social relations (McPherson et al, 2001). By contrast, both inclusion and asymmetry (dynamic balance) could be seen as a way of combining different elements in a harmonious but also dynamic pattern. If asymmetry is about opposite visual forces within an aesthetic form that complement each other in a dynamic way (Kordis, 2009), inclusion is the successful result of the integration of different people (Polychronopoulou, 2008). Consequently, dynamic balance, taken as a philosophical idea broader than aesthetics, can now be seen to imply a celebration of diversity in both contexts. From this perspective, inclusion could be described as *a dynamic balance between different people*. Taking this idea further, inclusion can be seen to combine all people and their differences into a well-balanced but still dynamic whole, where everybody without exception would have their unique and indispensable position.

In aesthetics, symmetry and asymmetry (dynamic balance) have been presented so far as distinct ways of achieving balance and harmony in aesthetic compositions. Nevertheless, as Chatterjee (2008) writes, 'symmetry and asymmetry are two closely related phenomena [...] that they must be viewed as two aspects of the same concept' (p. 101). Similarly, McManus (2005) stresses that 'asymmetry probably results most effectively in beauty when the underlying symmetry upon which it is built is still apparent' (p. 157). Lewis & Lewis (2009) also refer to *radial balance*, which is created when 'all elements revolve around a central point' (p. 59). So, radial balance can be seen as a kind of balance that combines the stability of symmetry with the life and interest that asymmetry breathes into works of art. Consequently, symmetry and asymmetry, two seemingly different ways of achieving balance and harmony, can intersect and feed off each other.

In the social realm, the notions of inclusion and homophily, like the concepts of diversity and sameness, seem to be in tension. Yet, diversity and sameness can be seen as coexisting or even as defining each other. As Desmond (2003) writes, 'a plurality seems to exhibit a certain unity across difference or diversity [but] in order to apply to a diversity this sameness must be other to each and every instance of the things considered by this diversity' (p. 26) – thus, diversity and sameness are in a complex dialectical interplay. This philosophical idea can be related to the notion of dynamic balance, a way in which unity can be rendered in diversity. It can also be taken to imply that social balance can also be achieved from the interplay of sameness (homophily) and diversity (inclusion).

2.7.3. Homophily and inclusion in education

An understanding of inclusion as dynamic balance leads to the idea that different students in a school class or different people at a broader societal level can coexist harmoniously because they complement each other. From this perspective, difference becomes strength – not weakness – for social relations. This way of thinking is distinct from other dominant ideas about inclusion, like the emancipatory approach of the critical disability position (Tremain, 2005), or the neutralised understanding of inclusion that national and international policy often adopts (UNESCO, 2009). However, the analogy from aesthetics can be seen to introduce ideas about school inclusion that go beyond the usual appreciation of diversity.

The dynamic balance analogy also highlights homophily and the attraction to the similar that has tended to be ignored in analyses of inclusion. Although homophily can conceal discrimination or internalised feelings of oppression, it is an empirically evident aspect of social interaction (McPherson et al., 2001; Nangle et al., 2002; Frostad & Pijl, 2007). A parallel examination of inclusion and homophily can reveal a tension between the moral imperative of inclusion and individual preferences for social interaction with similar others – in other words between how social relations should operate and how they actually, or under certain conditions, operate. This tension can have implications for educational practice.

Within the context of education, the tension between homophily (preference for similar others) and inclusion (embracing difference) can be found in the plethora of the everyday decisions that students and members of school staff have to make. These decisions can be responses to various issues, from peer relationships and classroom management, to matters of social

inclusion and justice at an institutional level. Students may face this tension in friendship formation, teachers in the consistency of their class management principles, and senior/head teachers in deciding on institutional issues of accommodating difference. Such decisions would involve an ethical weighting between choices that would be in line with individual preferences, and choices that would promote social inclusion, given that they may be contrary to each other. Final decisions would reflect personal values, institutional ethos and adherence to school policies, as well as power dynamics. This idea is particularly relevant to students with disabilities or other backgrounds when they are a minority in their class or school, in terms of how their preferences for social interaction with similar others may come into tension with the imperative of including all people.

In examining inclusion in relation to homophily, questions can be raised about educational policies of inclusion that are written in abstract terms and neglect tensions and young people's individual preferences. This perspective can also challenge our understanding of what the ethical obligation to inclusion actually entails. Inclusion is seen to be a moral imperative (Grossman, 2008), a right (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009), and an ethical project (Allan, 2005); these ideas are often translated into a demand for inclusion for all, as the only way to respond ethically to difference (Tremain 2005). Cigman (2007b), building on the work of Margalit (1996), stresses that the ethical demand for inclusion for all arises out of a concern for respect and avoidance of humiliation: 'people may disagree about what it means to show or withhold respect, but that all human beings are entitled to unconditional respect is [...] the basic concern driving this debate' (p. 784). From this perspective, homophily tends to be ignored or is presented as the opposite to inclusion. In addition, homophily is rooted in ideas

with seemingly less ethical weight – unlike inclusion, it is not considered to be an expression of respect to the other. The ethical obligation to inclusion can also lead to its enforcement, regardless of people’s genuine preferences. Therefore, homophily and inclusion can come into a tension as they represent different values, choice (homophily) and an ethical obligation (inclusion). In educational terms, the homophily/inclusion tension is constructive; it can remind us that students who are different often experience actual difficulties and that a preference to be among others they see as similar can be related to their difficulties. Equally important, it can be an expression of personal choice.

2.7.4. The empirical aims of the study

Overall, the study attempts an interdisciplinary combination of different perspectives from aesthetics, sociology, social psychology, disability studies, and education that Dyson & Howes (2009) call *bridge-building*, ‘where the explicit aim is to clarify misunderstandings between different perspectives and to explore the common ground that they might share’ (p. 159). In other words, different approaches can complement each other, since they can illuminate new aspects of the subjects under examination. This is how the various elements of the literature review were related to each other and discussed:

- **Disability and difference.** Disability is a complex notion with two inseparable and interacting aspects, bodily function and social participation. It has often been approached from a social model perspective as resulting only from the social environment, with an aim of raising consciousness and challenging dominant discourses. Yet, this is an incomplete way to approach disability, since it disregards bodily experiences and difficulties. The experience of disability can affect people’s lives, and challenge the way they

understand themselves and the world. This is also reflected in the language associated with disability, especially in the form of labels, and the classifications used to distinguish between disabilities, such as the distinction between visible and invisible impairments that is particularly related to social interaction. Visibility and invisibility is defined by the kind and degree of social interaction, and can in turn affect people's preferences.

- **Me and the other.** Identity is a complex notion that describes how people understand themselves in terms of the world and the others around them. One can develop a sense of identity through a variety of ways, e.g. through meaning construction during social interaction (symbolic interactionism), the incorporation of the meanings and expectations associated with a social role (identity theory), or perceived group membership (social identity theory). When people's identities come into tension with the social and political context, a kind of political movement can emerge – identity politics – that refers to the interface between politics and self. This is particularly evident as disability activism, and it is an expression of a demand for social change. Yet, there are other forms of resistance to the dominant discourses, as well. People that are described as different can in turn internalise and transform the ideas and language (hence, the identities) attached to them.
- **Ethics, moral judgement, and choice.** Interpersonal relationships raise moral issues, and there can be a distinction between morality as regards maximising justice and an understanding pertinent to human relationships. Different understandings about morality reflect different theories of ethics. Moral psychology research explores the psychological processes behind moral judgement, focusing on the interaction between reason and sentiment. Understandings about ethics and morality are relevant to theories about

human rights and justice that are based on different approaches on how equality can be achieved. This discussion raises the question as to what extent personal choice should be respected when it comes into tension with what is considered to be the common good. This tension between *individuality* and *commonality* has been examined as one between *autonomy* and *control*, and *solidarity* and *diversity*. It is suggested that the individuality/commonality tension can also be explored with reference to social interaction as one between *homophily*, a preference to be among similar others, and *social inclusion*, the principle of embracing all people.

- **Inclusion.** Inclusion in education and more broadly in society is a troubling and fragmented notion. As *social inclusion*, it is related to the practical and ideological complexities of the ideas on which it is based, that is justice, equality, social cohesion and order. As *inclusion in education*, it has many and often conflicting interpretations that extend from placement and participation, to valuing diversity. It is also described to be about human rights and respect, with some people presenting it to be an ethical project. Yet, others question the moral value of a demand for inclusion for all, as it fails to acknowledge people's individuality, and, in turn, they suggest more responsible approaches that would recognise individual differences. This raises the question as to how inclusion can be about justice, if it fails to acknowledge individuality and is too ideological to resolve practical matters.
- **Homophily.** Homophily describes a preference to interact socially with others perceived as similar. It can be examined through the lens of the similarity-attraction hypothesis and the social identity theory, and contradicts the lay theory that opposites attract. Similarity can refer to demographic characteristics, values, attitudes or status equivalency, and it can be actual

as well as perceived. Homophily can be the product of contextual factors, or an outcome of the interaction between preference (agency) and context. Yet, it can also result from internalised oppression, and conceal discrimination and fear of the different.

- **Dynamic balance and the analogy from aesthetics.** Dynamic balance describes a way in which different elements in an aesthetic form counterbalance each other to achieve balance and harmony. Yet, it is not just a structural element, but expresses a certain philosophical position about the value of diversity. This is particularly evident in the way dynamic balance was used in the ancient Greek and Byzantine Art as rhythm. Dynamic balance is a useful way to examine inclusion because it reflects philosophical ideas about the appreciation of diversity that extend beyond aesthetics, and introduces the attraction to the similar (through its counterpart, symmetry) that has tended to be ignored in analyses of inclusion. So, dynamic balance triggered the idea that inclusion, being a principle that describes an ethical obligation to interact socially with different people, can come into tension with people's actual wishes, especially when they are expressed as preference to be among others perceived as similar.
- **Summary.** In sum, this analogy from aesthetics introduces homophily as an unusual way to examine social inclusion, as it can draw our attention to aspects of social interaction that are often neglected. Yet, homophily and inclusion can come into a tension as they represent respectively a personal preference and an ethical obligation. This is a tension between individuality and commonality, and as such it raises moral issues relevant to the tension between personal choice and the common good; so, it is a matter of values. Inclusion is an ethical obligation to ensure participation for all, hence also for

people seen as different or people with disabilities. This is related to how similarity and difference are perceived – to how people understand themselves and the world – and it is also intertwined with the complexities, ideas, and experiences associated with disability. Therefore, arising from an aesthetic analogy, the homophily/inclusion tension is pertinent to all previously discussed issues: disability, identity, morality and ethics, choice, social interaction, similarity and difference. Homophily creates also an additional complexity as it teeters between choice and discrimination. In education, this tension can challenge understandings about respect (ensuring inclusion for all, or acknowledging individual choice), and is related to how young peoples' preferences and issues of difference are handled. Thus, it is a practical as well as an ideological matter.

From this discussion, the following questions can be raised:

- How young people perceive similarity and difference in themselves and the others around them?
- How school staff interpret young people's preferences for social interaction?
- Is homophily consistent with the experiences of both groups?
- Do both groups perceive inclusion to be an ethical obligation?
- Do they recognise an ethical dimension in the tension between homophily and inclusion?
- What is the role of choice in relation to the moral imperative of inclusion?
- How this potential tension is handled by educational institutions?

I explored these issues with reference to the preferences of young people with and without disabilities for social interaction (individual level), and school staff's interpretations of the young people's social behaviour (institutional level).

2.7.4.1. Individual level

My purpose was:

1. To explore interaction preferences that young people with and without various disabilities have with others perceived to be similar and different from them in a range of contexts. The focus will be on two types of preference: a less aware, immediate type and a deliberate, reflective one (further discussed in section 3.4.1). This aim will be examined with reference to the social psychology similarity-attraction theory (homophily), in terms of the lay theory that opposites attract, and the moral imperative of social inclusion.
 - a. To explore how young people with and without disabilities think and feel in terms of others perceived to be similar and different.
 - b. To examine whether the experiences of young people with and without disabilities are consistent with the principle that similar people and/or opposites attract in their social interactions.
 - c. To examine the perceived reasons for their interactional preferences.
 - d. To examine how young people with and without disabilities evaluate their interactional preferences in terms of ethical values, and whether some expressions of interactional preferences can carry more ethical weight than others.
 - e. To examine perceived ethical implications in the tension between homophily and inclusion.
 - f. To examine whether and why young people with and without disabilities believe that choice is important in their social interactions.

2.7.4.2. Institutional level

My purpose was:

2. To explore whether and how distinct educational institutions in a range of contexts accommodate the preferences of young people with and without various disabilities for social interaction with others they perceive to be similar and different from them. The focus will be on decision-making and relevant policies. This aim will be examined with reference to the social psychology similarity-attraction theory (homophily), in terms of the lay theory that opposites attract, and the moral imperative of social inclusion.
 - a. To examine whether and why similarity-attraction (homophily) can be seen as an issue in educational settings.
 - b. To examine whether homophily is considered to be an expression of choice or discrimination.
 - c. To examine any potential tensions between the ethically driven aim of inclusion, and the preferences of young people with and without disabilities for social interaction with similar others, at institutional level.
 - d. To examine the criteria for ethical decisions related to the management of difference.
 - e. To examine whether the interactional preferences of young people with and without disabilities are seen as relevant criteria for decision-making at institutional level.
 - f. To examine institutional policies and practices of accommodating similarity and difference.

3. Methodology chapter

This chapter illustrates the philosophical and methodological approach taken in the study, and presents the way the project was designed and conducted. The analysis of the findings and issues of ethics are also discussed.

3.1.Introduction

This study examined a potential tension between homophily and inclusion, in terms of the preferences for social interaction that young people with and without disabilities have for others who are considered to be similar and different from themselves.

Inclusion has been described as a moral imperative (Grossman, 2008), as an ethical project that fights for justice and equity in society (Allan, 2005). However, the idea of inclusion has often been translated into a demand for inclusion for all, as the only way of being dedicated to the ethical principles of justice and equity (Tremain 2005).

On the other hand, based on the similarity-attraction hypothesis from social psychology (Nangle et al, 2002) or on theories of identity and self-esteem enhancement, the notion of homophily seems to contradict the everyday theory that opposites attract, expressing the idea that similar people tend to congregate in homogeneous groups (McPherson et al, 2001). Homophily with its focus on sameness teeters between choice and discrimination, and has been described as a threat to the aims of inclusive education (Frostad & Pijl, 2007).

Examining the two concepts together, we could argue that homophily focuses on aspects of social interaction that are often neglected; yet, it can give us new perspectives on understanding issues around sameness and difference, and most importantly new ways of approaching inclusion. A tension between

inclusion and valuing difference, on one hand, and homophily and valuing sameness, on the other, depicts a tension between personal preferences for being among similar others and inclusive principles in education. This tension has an ethical dimension.

This study explored whether a tension between homophily and inclusion is evident in social relations, whether this tension was seen to have an ethical dimension and what the implications of this tension might be in educational practice. For this purpose, the perspectives of young people with and without disabilities, and members of school staff were sought to illuminate the issues under examination. The homophily/inclusion tension was also explored in relation to young people's understandings of the importance of choice, and in terms of its implications in the management of difference at institutional level.

3.2.Philosophical position

The project was conducted from an interpretive approach to illuminate the issues under examination. Hammersley (2013) notes that this kind of tradition draws from a variety of theoretical perspectives that differ sharply from one another; these differences refer to how research should be pursued, to epistemological and ontological assumptions, and to dissimilar understandings about research purposes. A reason is that interpretive research has emerged out of resistance to the dominance of scientific methods: it focuses on studying the real world, gives voice to the participants themselves while seeking different perspectives, highlights the danger of central concepts being lost with quantification, and underlines the importance of context and interpretation (Hammersley, 2013). This, Hammersley (2013) argues, is often translated into research that adopts flexible designs; uses relatively unstructured kinds of data;

recognises the particular role of researcher in shaping the research outcomes (subjectivity); investigates natural settings; focuses on small-scale but in-depth projects; and employs verbal rather than statistical analysis of data.

Denzin & Lincoln (2013) present this research tradition as a set of interpretive activities that do not privilege a single methodological approach or distinct methods. The researcher is described as a bricoleur that attempts to produce a bricolage, 'a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation' (p. 8). The bricoleur's solution is an emerging construction, an attempt to create an image and discover meaning in disparate elements. Overall, Denzin & Lincoln (2013) note that interpretive research is largely concerned with: challenging positivist and postpositivist approaches while being open to poststructural and postmodern possibilities, capturing an individual's point of view, exploring the constraints of everyday life, and securing rich and detailed descriptions of the social world.

The philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research are various (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Hammersley, 2013). Yet, 'this approach emphasises the world of experience as it is lived, felt and undergone by people acting in social situations (Robson, 2011, p. 24). Following this theoretical tradition, my purpose was to illuminate and understand the issues explored. This study was conducted on the premises that, as regards social relations, reality and social construction are in a constant interaction with each other; therefore, the access to reality is socially mediated and intersubjective (Hacking, 1999; 2007). Accordingly, this project focused on participants' perspectives, values, and view of the world. This idea applies particularly to understandings of similarity and difference which are central to the homophily/inclusion tension. For this reason, the study delved into participants' perceptions of similarity and difference.

3.3.Methodological approach

This section presents the methodological approach taken in the study. Personal construct psychology informed theoretically the way the project was conceived. The scenario-based research of moral psychology influenced the scenario construction, and Layder's (1998) adaptive theory approach guided the relation between theory and empirical findings.

3.3.1.Personal construct psychology

To explore the perceptions of the participants (young people and members of school staff) I drew on personal construct psychology (Kelly, 1955), that focuses on the way that individuals construe the world. This approach informed the way the study was conceived and designed. According to the theory, each person holds a unique view of the world which is seen to be built on past experiences and future expectations, a view that can be expressed through *constructs*. Kelly (1955) developed eleven corollaries to describe the framework of his theory, among them the *construction corollary*. In his work, construing is defined as 'placing an interpretation' (Kelly, 1955, p. 50). Therefore, from this perspective, the centre of attention is people's own interpretations of the world. Accordingly, this project was conducted with reference to the way that young people with and without disabilities construe and interpret their own preferences for social interaction in terms of others they perceive to be similar and different from them. The same approach was taken to explore school staff's understandings of the young people's social behaviour. The theory of personal constructs is also based on the idea of two contrasting poles (Kelly, 1955). This resembles the parallel examination of similarity and difference in the study; they are opposing but interrelated.

The ideas of personal construct psychology only partly informed the approach taken in the study. Kelly (1955) describes the process of construction as a personal process, in which the focus is on how an individual sees the world while everyone else steps back. However, during the study, I sought to interact with the participants during the data collection, and the research findings are shaped by this interaction. This is a different approach from the one that personal construct psychology suggests, that is, to focus exclusively on the participants' experiences, but it was deemed necessary for the purposes and nature of the project: as the issues discussed were complex and the focus very particular (the homophily/inclusion tension), I needed to have some control over the discussion in the form of predesigned scenarios and interview questions.

3.3.2.Moral psychology

The ethical dimension that the tension between homophily and inclusion was expected to have was examined with reference to moral psychology (Kohlberg, 1981; Turiel, 2008b; Haidt, 2012). In the field of moral psychology, ethical tensions are often explored with scenarios of moral dilemmas, such as those used by Laurence Kohlberg to develop his theory of moral judgement. Kohlberg (1981) introduced six stages of moral reasoning that are considered to represent different stages of moral maturity: from fear of punishment and obedience as the driving forces behind moral actions, to dedication to universal ethical principles and human rights. Kohlberg presented individuals with hypothetical moral scenarios, as part of an interviewing process. The participants' responses were scored according to a specific manual and the scores were used to identify the stage of moral development of the respondent. These stages are described as being associated with cognitive development

and, therefore, as consistent across different scenarios.

Kohlberg's model of moral reasoning has been questioned for overreliance on reason (Haidt, 2012), for ignoring power inequalities (Nussbaum, 2003), and for relying on hypothetical rather than real life scenarios (Haviv & Leman, 2002). The debate between hypothetical and real life scenarios – as to which is the more useful way to examine moral judgement – is based on the assumption that there is a discrepancy between judgment in philosophical dilemmas and judgement in experienced dilemmas (Haviv & Leman, 2002; Myyry & Helkama, 2002). Research with real life scenarios reveals that judgements about experienced moral conflicts tend to be captured at lower stages of Kohlberg's system, whereas stage consistency diminishes across different types of moral dilemmas (Haviv & Leman, 2002). These researchers argue that 'the effects of consequences on judgment when one is faced with making a decision (a personal dilemma) is stronger than the effects [...] one considers other people to have when they are faced with moral conflicts (an impersonal dilemma)' (Haviv & Leman, 2002, p. 132).

Nevertheless, Turiel (2008b) stresses that hypothetical scenarios of moral dilemmas are useful as they can reveal how people reason and reflect upon social situations. He also notes that hypothetical situations can be more precisely specified and presented, in comparison to actual events that are complex and difficult to interpret. Drawing on these ideas, I constructed eight scenarios to depict a tension between homophily and inclusion as clearly as possible, with a minimum of distracting contextual effects. Real-life scenarios that would depict this tension were expected to be too complex to be useful for the purposes of the study. Turiel (2008b) argues that 'the differences between hypothetical and real life situations in types of reasoning are minimal' (p. 137).

However, to help the participants reflect on their own life the interview questions were designed to refer to the scenarios as well as to the participants' personal experiences. This was decided in order to facilitate the discussion, but also to address a potential difference in the responses to the questions *what should one do* (third person) and *what should I do* (personal perspective), as noted by Haviv & Leman (2002).

Turiel (2002; 2008b), analysing people's moral judgment and social behaviour, also makes a distinction between morality and convention. He argues that judgement about moral issues is based on avoiding harm and maximising fairness, while social conventions are judged as contingent on rules and authority (Turiel, 2008b). Social situations often include an intersection of moral and conventional features, and people are able to separate and coordinate their judgments about how themselves, and other people, should act. This idea can draw our attention to the role of context in any effort to interpret people's moral judgment in different social situations.

3.3.3. An adaptive theory approach

From a methodological point of view, the approach taken in this inquiry is both inductive (data driven) and deductive (theory driven), in the sense that there was an initial theory (derived from the literature and previous conceptual analysis) that guided the way the data were collected, but at the same time this theory was revised and informed by the research findings. This is what Layder (1998) calls *an adaptive theory approach*:

'The word *adaptive* is meant to convey that the theory both adapts to, or is shaped by, incoming evidence while the data itself is simultaneously filtered through, and is adapted by, the prior theoretical materials [...] that are relevant

to their analysis' (p. 5).

This approach regards theorising as an ever-developing process, an organic and continuous part of research, rather than a discrete and static application that takes place at the beginning (as conceptual framework) or the end (analysis and conclusion) of a project. Even though as an approach is largely related to grounded theory since data plays a determinant role, it is stripped of grounded theory's empiricist restrictions. The difference between grounded and adaptive theory is that the latter allows a dialogue between prior theory and emerging empirical findings. From an adaptive theory perspective, theory contains two fundamental properties: first, there is an initial theoretical scaffold which reflexively adapts in relation to newly emerging empirical data; secondly, this scaffold is capable of adjusting and reconfiguring itself under the light of new information, so it should never be considered as immutable (Layder, 1998). Through this process, theory becomes 'alive, emergent and continually unfolding according to the changing circumstances of the research and social life' (p. 150). However, Layder (1998) draws our attention to two possible dangers pertinent to this approach. On the one hand, we could underestimate the importance of our theory whereas, on the other, we might be tempted to believe that our theory is immutable.

From an adaptive theory approach, theory should be open to responses from the data that could even seriously challenge its basic assumptions, thus asking for a fundamental reorganisation or abandonment. Yet, reformulations of theory can be radical as well as less significant (Bessant & Francis, 2005). Layder (1998) writes that the process of theory adaption could be about the filling of the details of an existing category or concept. Others note that it can be about a better understanding of the theory (Bessant & Francis, 2005).

3.4. Research design

The study was designed at two levels: individual (young people) and institutional (school staff). The scenarios used are integral to the research design and cover a range of contexts. Following an adaptive theory approach, the study began with an initial theory.

3.4.1. Two levels: individual and institutional

The study consisted of two distinct, but also interrelated levels: an *individual* and an *institutional* level. The individual level referred to young people with and without disabilities and their preferences for social interaction with similar and different others. At this level, the focus was between a less aware/immediate type of preference on the one hand, and a deliberate/more reflective on the other. From a psychological perspective, Crisp & Meleady (2012) argue that 'while humans are evolutionarily disposed to think heuristically about category boundaries, they also possess the computational mechanics that allow a bypassing of this system when it is necessary to update and revise these representations' (p. 854). Therefore, the exploration of an immediate and a reflective preference was deemed necessary to elicit the perspectives of the young people.

On the other hand, the institutional level referred to members of school staff and their interpretations of the young people's social behaviour. In terms of this level, the focus was on decision-making and the management of inclusion and difference at institutional level. Moody (2001), discussing racial homophily, gives an account of how school policies and organisation can affect young people's preferences for social interaction.

3.4.2.The scenarios range of contexts

The preferences of the young people were examined with scenarios of moral dilemmas across a range of contexts. A basic contextual distinction was between educational and out of school contexts. Other contextual variations referred to types of social interaction which could be formal (e.g. a tension between teacher and students) or informal (e.g. expressing a different opinion from one's parents). At institutional level, the scenarios examined classroom and whole school issues; this distinction facilitated the investigation of the role of teachers in the homophily/inclusion tension, alongside the school level handling of the issues explored. The importance of exploring a variety of contexts is highlighted by Turiel (2008b) who argues that the intersection of conventional (rules, social order) and moral (welfare, fairness) events in social interaction demands that people's judgement should be explored in different behavioural contexts.

3.4.3.The initial theory

Following an adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998), I started with an attempt to explain the social phenomena examined – in this case the tension between social inclusion and homophily. This attempt had the form of a theory, that is, some initial assumptions that informed the data collection (the scenarios and interview questions), the analysis and interpretation of the findings. The initial theory derived from the literature and previous conceptual analysis and was directly related to the research aims (2.7.4). As the project was conducted at two levels with separate aims, there was a separate theory derived from each level; these theories were distinct but also interrelated. In accordance with the individual level aims (2.7.4.1) this is the initial theory for the young people:

Young people with and without disabilities could express a preference to be among similar others (aims 1a, b, c) and this preference may come into tension with the moral imperative of including different people (aims 1d, e). This tension would be related to their understanding of individual choice (aim 1f).

Similarly, in accordance with the institutional level aims (2.7.4.2) this is the initial theory for school staff:

Members of school staff could interpret the preferences of the young people with and without disabilities to be among similar others as a danger to social inclusion, and they might perceive to be their ethical obligation the promotion (or enforcement) of inclusion (aims 2a, b, c). Their stances would be reflected on decision-making (aims 2d, e) at classroom and whole school/policy level (aim 2f).

The initial theory was not considered immutable but at later stages of the project – mainly during the analysis (section 5.12.1) – was brought together with the emerging data and accordingly adapted (Layder, 1998).

3.5.Participants

At individual level, the focus was on the views of young people with and without disabilities. Even though disability and impairment have different meanings and connotations, for practical reasons the terms were mostly used interchangeably in the study. *Young people* in this study referred to an age range of 15-25 years old. Therefore, in educational terms, young people were secondary school, college or university students. In non-educational terms, they

were employed or unemployed.

More specifically, as far as the young people with disabilities are concerned, the basic criterion of distinguishing between disabilities – apart from the physical or cognitive aspect of it – was the visibility or invisibility of impairment, which can be determined by ‘the ease of its perception by others’ (Davis, 2005, p. 203). Impairments can be visible or invisible to the eyes of the others, irrespective of the severity of the difficulties that can cause. This criterion was consistent with the purposes of the study that focused on participants’ perceptions of similarity and difference. The visibility and invisibility of disability can have an effect on people’s reactions to difference and to their preferences for social interaction – an issue also raised by the young people themselves, and discussed in more detail in the discussion chapter (section 5.3).

Robson (2011) writes that the selection of participants in flexible research projects can serve ‘in generating conceptual categories’ (p. 148); this is called *theoretical sampling* and it is a kind of purposive selection internal to the design of the study. Young people with physical and cognitive impairments, on the one hand, and with visible and invisible disabilities, on the other, were represented in the project, as well as young people without disabilities. Young people with and without disabilities represented distinct conceptual categories. The scenarios and interview questions were not relevant to young people with learning difficulties (cognitive disabilities), as the social situations examined were complex and required a certain depth of self-reflection. For this reason, as far as visible disabilities were concerned, young people with visual (and motor) impairments were deemed an appropriate choice. On the other hand, young people identified with Asperger syndrome were representatives of an invisible cognitive disability. The particular choice of the participants’ range of

impairments derived also from my research interests.

As far as young people without disabilities are concerned, in the study were young people with and without previous experience of disability. This factor can be particularly crucial in terms of negotiating similarity and difference, as Stalker & Connors (2004) note when discussing perceptions of difference with reference to children that have disabled siblings.

At an institutional level, the focus was on members of school staff such as head teachers, teachers, teaching assistants (T/As), special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) and school administrators from special and mainstream educational settings. Staff from different settings represented distinct conceptual categories. In terms of administrators, the criterion for selecting participants was that their work position was related to the management of social inclusion. All participants had at least some working experience. Since the age range of the young people in the study was 15-25 years old, school staff worked with young people within this age range. They were all employed in special or mainstream secondary schools and colleges.

3.6. Selection of participants

The study was conducted in the South West of England. Forty people participated in the project: twenty-seven young people with and without disabilities, and thirteen members of school staff. Based on theoretical sampling considerations discussed in the section above each participant group should have at least some representatives. The different groups of participants are depicted in the table below; participants used in (formal) pilot are included, as the (formal) pilot was considered to be an integral part of the main study. The formal and informal pilot projects are discussed in section 3.9:

Groups of participants	Total	(formal) Pilot	Main research
Young people with Asperger syndrome	10	2	8
Young people with visual impairment	9	–	9
Young people without disabilities	8	–	8
School staff	13	3	10
Total	40	5	35

Table 1: Participants

In the study there were ten young people identified with Asperger syndrome, nine with visual impairment (three of them also had cerebral palsy), and eight young people without disabilities. The age range was 15 to 25 years old. Table 2 gives details of age, gender and occupation:

Young people	Age range	Total	Study	Work	Work & study	Male	Female
Young people with Asperger syndrome	15-25	10	6	2	2	8	2
Young people with visual impairment	16-25	9	7	1	1	8	1
Young people without disabilities	15-23	8	3	4	1	5	3

Table 2: Young people

As regards the young people, more students than non-students participated as well as more male than female participants. Three out of eight young people without a disability had previous experience of disability.

At institutional level (members of school staff), in the study there were thirteen people: seven from special and six from mainstream settings. I interviewed teachers, teaching assistants (T/As) and administrators. I did not achieve to secure access to head teachers and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs):

School staff	Teachers	Administrators	Teaching assistants	Male	Female
Special settings	6	1	–	6	1
Mainstream settings	1	1	4	–	6

Table 3: School staff

Participants were accessed through their educational institutions (for school staff and students), through their workplaces (for young people, non-students) and disability support services (for young people with disabilities). A letter of access adjusted accordingly was sent (via email) to mainstream and special secondary schools and colleges, and disability support services in the Southwest of England by myself or through the partnership office of the University of Exeter (see appendix 6.a). Finally, in the project there were students and staff from a special and a mainstream secondary school and college; and young people (students and non-students) from a support centre for young people identified with Asperger syndrome. Access was also gained to the employees of a local public house (young people, non-students).

I faced many difficulties and delays in finding and securing participants. This is why I tried many different avenues in order to gain access to an acceptable range and number of participants. I contacted a number of workplaces (8), schools (6) and disability services (5), and I explored a range of options through my supervisors, university staff and services (e.g., I explored the possibility of interviewing university tutors and groups of students).

3.7.Methods and tools: the scenarios

The potential ethical tension between homophily and inclusion was explored through scenarios of moral dilemmas, brief stories originated in the work of Kohlberg (1981) in developing his theory of moral development. Robson (2011) notes that the use of scenarios is recognised to be particularly useful in the study of potentially difficult or complex research topics. As this study sought to explore young people's perceptions of similarity and difference and their ethical values, a clear and vivid way to introduce the issues and stimulate the

discussion was deemed necessary. In addition, at institutional level an abstract discussion was considered to be difficult to keep its focus, while having a certain depth. The idea of using pictures that could depict the tension was rejected, as it would have made the discussion very open to be kept on track. On the other hand, the use of scenarios was deemed preferable as they have the advantage to provide the participants with a context (controlled by the researcher), but leave them free to present and discuss their own ideas as well. Scenarios can also help the participants' to distance themselves from sensitive topics, like experiences of exclusion or bullying especially for young people with disabilities, and seem to reduce a social desirability effect, particularly relevant to school staff that may avoid to discuss openly their personal opinions on politically correct issues, like inclusion (Robson, 2011). Nonetheless, at the same time, a scenario-based discussion allows the exploration of one's personal experiences.

The eight scenarios of the study referred to a variety of contexts and situations, and were used as a stimulus for discussion at the beginning of the interviewing process. The tables below present the range of scenarios used at individual and institutional level (the role of context is explored in section 3.4.2):

Individual level (A)

Context	Educational	Out of school
Formal	The presentation scenario* (A1)	The job centre scenario (A2)
Informal	The radio show scenario (A3)	The party scenario (A4)

Table 4: Individual level scenarios

Institutional level (B)

Context	Classroom level	Whole school level
Educational	The presentation scenario* (B1)	The Greentown debate scenario (B2) The special sports team scenario (B3) The playground scenario (B4)

Table 5: Institutional level scenarios

**A similar scenario accompanied by different questions*

All scenarios were constructed to describe an unresolved tension between homophily and inclusion, building on the ideas and relations of the initial theory further presented in section 3.4.3: *Homophily and inclusion can come into a tension which has an ethical dimension and is intertwined with understandings of personal choice (young people), relations of power and decision-making (school staff)*. In order to stimulate the discussion, all scenarios contain some controversial issues; thus they should not be seen as examples of ethical behaviour or good conduct, an issue also raised by the participants.

3.7.1. The scenarios used

What follows is a brief account of what each of the scenarios presents:

The presentation scenario (A1)

In a secondary mainstream class, Mr Brown, the history teacher, asked the students to choose the classmates they wanted to work with to prepare a presentation on World War Two. Andrew and Julie, both with Asperger syndrome, agreed to work together on the project and strongly refused to co-operate with anyone else. But, Mr Brown felt he should ask a low-achieving, non-disabled student to join them in the task.

Scenario A1 presents a formal classroom situation, a group allocation tension between teacher and students. The students' part represents homophily and choice, while the teacher represents the moral imperative of including everybody. The uncertainty as to whether the students' behaviour is connected to their impairment-related difficulties is presented as such to create controversy, reinforced by the inequality of power between the two sides. Mr Brown's decision to select a low-achieving student implies that he acted like this for the purposes of social inclusion and not to support Andrew and Julie's

academic achievement. The scenario was intended for young people, especially (but not exclusively) for young people identified with Asperger syndrome.

The job centre scenario (A2)

After finishing his college education in a mainstream institution, John is now looking for a job. Being visually impaired, he visited a job centre near his hometown, well known for its disability support services. The centre could arrange for him a number of interviews for various jobs in the community. But when John expressed the preference to work only alongside other visually impaired people, the job advisor strongly discouraged him, and advised him to be more daring with his life.

Scenario A2 describes a formal out of school situation, a tentative discussion in a job centre. John represents homophily and choice, while the job advisor represents social inclusion. The job advisor's advice to John *to be more daring with his life* was designed as such to create controversy, in terms of what the advisor actually means and in relation to his position of power. In addition, whether John's preference is related to his impairment remains purposively uncertain. The scenario was intended for young people, especially (but not exclusively) for young people with visual impairment.

The radio show scenario (A3)

William presents a weekly music show at the radio station of the mainstream college he attends. He asked the teacher in charge of the station to provide him with a second producer, so he could add to his show live phone interviews. Two students were interested: Marion who happened to be William's best friend, and Susan who had a physical disability. William thought that both were equally good, but, despite his initial preference for Marion, he felt he should pick Susan.

Scenario A3 describes an informal school situation. William has to make a choice between Marion, his best friend (homophily), and Susan who has a disability (inclusion). William's stance towards disability (positive discrimination) can be seen as controversial since, despite his preference for his friend, he feels morally obligated to choose the disabled person. Yet, he may also have chosen Susan for other reasons – for instance it might not be seen as socially acceptable to choose your friend over someone with a disability. The scenario was intended for young people, especially (but not exclusively) for young people without disabilities.

The party scenario (A4)

Jeremy has his 16th birthday at the end of the month and he will have a party at his house. He decided to invite all his classmates except David, who is blind. When his mother told him to rethink it, Jeremy answered that he came to this decision irrespective of David's disability, because he felt very different from him, and also believed that David would feel the same way.

Scenario A4 refers to an informal out of school situation, inviting for a birthday party. Jeremy has decided not to invite his blind classmate as he feels very different from him (homophily), while his mother represents the perspective of social inclusion. Whether Jeremy feels like that because he and David are not friends or for other reasons remains purposively uncertain. Perhaps not without controversy, social inclusion is represented by an authoritative figure, the mother. The scenario was intended for young people, especially (but not exclusively) for young people without disabilities.

The presentation scenario (B1)

In a secondary mainstream class, Mr Brown, the history teacher, asked the students to choose the classmates they wanted to work with to prepare a presentation on World War Two. Andrew and Julie, both being visually impaired, agreed to work together on the project and strongly refused to co-operate with anyone else. But, Mr Brown felt he should ask a low-achieving, non-disabled student to join them in the task.

Scenario B1 is a variation of scenario A1 and refers to a classroom group allocation tension. The difference with scenario A1 is that the students are visually impaired and not identified with Asperger syndrome. The reason for this change is that in this form the scenario was expected to be closer to the actual experiences of school staff (it can be rare to have two students with Asperger syndrome in the same class). This scenario was intended for school staff, especially (but not exclusively) for teachers and teaching assistants.

The Greentown debate scenario (B2)

At Greentown College a group of students with disabilities believed that the college should have a special place dedicated exclusively to students with various disabilities. This centre would offer opportunities for social interaction among students with disabilities. The majority of the teachers at Greentown agreed to support the students' initiative. But, the college principal stated that he didn't want such a special place for students with disabilities on campus, because it could work against the aims of social inclusion that the college aspired. He decided, then, the matter not to be discussed again.

Scenario B2 was adapted from Ellis (2002). The context and the story were altered. It was the first scenario constructed and served as a template for all the others. The scenario depicts a tension between homophily, as represented by the demand for a special place exclusively for students with disabilities, and the understanding of social inclusion (geographical integration) that the principal holds. The polarised way of presenting the issue was designed as such to create controversy, in relation also to the principal's position of power. This scenario was intended for school staff, especially (but not exclusively) for head teachers and administrators.

The special sports team scenario (B3)

In a mainstream secondary school, Mrs Warren, one of two PE teachers of the school, proposed to the head teacher the creation of a 'special' sports team, which would be for students with disabilities. To support her proposal, Mrs Warren conveyed to the head teacher the opinions of many students with disabilities that seemed to be very enthusiastic about the project. But when Mr Jones, the other PE teacher, was informed, he strongly refused to support the idea, because he considered it to be a pure act of discrimination.

Scenario B3 presents a whole school tension, a disagreement between the two PE teachers of a school. One of them sees special arrangements for students with disabilities in sports as opportunities and has the support of some of the students that prefer to be among similar others, whereas the other thinks that any kind of special arrangement can potentially be a threat to social inclusion. Mr Jones's description of Mrs Warren's proposal *as a pure act of discrimination* is the controversy that fuels the discussion. The scenario is also similar to the debate between Olympic and Paralympic games, and it focuses on how a

disagreement between teachers can be handled at whole school level. It was intended for school staff, especially (but not exclusively) for teachers and teaching assistants.

The playground scenario (B4)

A mainstream secondary school has a small number of students with Asperger syndrome. Every day, during the lunch break, these students tended to gather in a small isolated garden near the playground, where they were interacting peacefully. Mrs Evans, the school head teacher, noticed this everyday gathering and asked the students why they didn't mingle with their classmates. They answered her that the noise of the others was tiring, and that they were really enjoying their time together. But, Mrs Evans decided that from that point on the small garden would have to remain locked.

Scenario B4 refers to a whole school tension. A head teacher decides to lock a small garden for the purposes of social inclusion, despite the preferences of a small group of students identified with Asperger syndrome (homophily). The controversial part is that the reasons of the head teacher remain unexplained; she does not discuss the issue with the students and she imposes her power, even though the students do not cause any problem with their behaviour. Whether her reason is that the students have the same impairment and that they shouldn't exclude themselves remains purposively uncertain. The scenario explores also the power relations between school staff and students. This scenario was intended for school staff, especially (but not exclusively) for head teachers and administrators.

3.8.Methods and tools: interview questions

The scenarios presented above were used as a stimulus for discussion during in-depth semi-structured interviews. As discussed, building on the theoretical ideas of personal construct psychology (Kelly, 1955) the focus of this project was on the perspectives of the participants: of young people with and without disabilities at individual level, and members of school staff at institutional level. As such, the interview method was considered to be the most useful to elicit their views. For the purposes of the study, semi-structured (rather than structured or unstructured) interviews were deemed appropriate as they give participants the chance to express their own views on the issues explored, while at the same time the researcher can retain some control over the discussion. In terms of the latter, even though the scenarios had the minimum possibility of distracting contextual effects, individually adjusted probing was considered necessary for the discussion to be kept on track. For this reason, semi-structured interviews were deemed preferable as they can allow some balancing between control (scenarios and questions) and flexibility (individually adjusted probing) on the part of the researcher (Robson, 2011).

The interview questions were designed according to the initial theory of the study (section 3.4.3), and in accordance with the research aims. As there were separate research aims for the individual and institutional level of the study (section 2.7.4.1, 2.7.4.2), there were also two separate structures for the interview questions. So an individual level structure informed the questions for the scenarios A1, A2, A3 and A4; similarly, an institutional level structure informed the questions for the scenarios B1, B2, B3 and B4. Within each level the questions across the scenarios were structurally similar, but not the same. The questions are both scenario-based (outside perspective) and personal

(inside perspective). The two distinct perspectives were designed to accommodate a potential difference between personal and third-person perspective judgement (Haviv & Leman, 2002; Turiel, 2008b), an issue already discussed in section 3.3.2. They also served to explore personal views in a more distant, less threatening way as these are explored in relation to the scenarios and not directly.

This is the individual level interview structure (for the young people):

A. Individual level

- | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Immediate preference | | } Outside perspective |
| 2. Similarity and difference | | |
| 3. Homophily and inclusion (the tension) | | |
| 4. Ethical implications | | |
| 5. Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension) | | |
| 6. Interactional preferences | } Inside perspective | |
| 7. The role of choice | | |
| 8. Reflective preference | | |

The interview began and ended with the same question (*Was it right or wrong for...*) that explored the immediate and reflective responses of the young people to the scenario, as they could reconsider their opinions after the discussion (Crisp & Meleady, 2012). In this way the tension was not introduced directly, as the topics could be difficult to discuss. Further, the questions explored perceptions of similarity and difference, the homophily/inclusion tension in terms of its evidence and its ethical significance and implications, preferences for social interaction and the role of choice.

This is the institutional level interview structure (for members of staff):

B. Institutional level

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. | Homophily and inclusion (the tension) | } | Outside
perspective |
| 2. | Similarity and difference | | |
| 3. | Ethical implications | | |
| 4. | Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension) | | |
| 5. | Issues of power | | |
| 6. | Decision-making | } | Inside
perspective |
| 7. | Personal experience of the tension | | |
| 8. | Policy issues | | |

The interview began with a question about the tension in the scenario, since members of school staff were expected to be able to respond to the topic directly. Further, the questions explored perceptions of similarity and difference, the ethical dimension and personal experiences of the homophily/inclusion tension, issues of power and implications of the tension in decision-making and policy. The focus of this level's questions was on the social behaviour of the young people, as perceived by school staff.

For both structures, the hierarchy of the questions was based on what was considered to be the more intuitive connection (the one leads to the other). For the interview questions analytically for each scenario see appendix 8.a.2.

3.9.Operational procedures: pilot

The scenarios and the subsequent interview questions were piloted before and again at the beginning of the main study. The pilot had two phases: an informal phase that took place in November 2012 with participants from the

University of Exeter, and a formal phase that took place in December 2012 (to pilot the scenarios for the young people) and February 2013 (to pilot the scenarios for members of school staff). The formal phase of the pilot took place in the field, with actual participants. The following table presents how many times each scenario was piloted in both phases:

Scenario	Number of times piloted
A1	2
A2	2
A3	2
A4	1
B1	1
B2	1
B3	2
B4	1

Table 6: Pilot (scenarios)

The informal pilot was part of a presentation of the project in the special educational needs and disability (SEND) research group of the University of Exeter. The session was for postgraduate students and members of staff. As part of an activity, interviews were simulated. People were randomly allocated to groups of three, and they undertook the roles of the interviewer, the interviewee and the note-taker. Six scenarios (out of eight) were piloted this way. At the end of each interview, the note-taker asked a list of process questions that referred to the way that the scenarios and interview questions were designed (appendix 8.a.3). At the end of the activity a discussion followed. All interviews were audio recorded. The data led to improvements to the scenarios and interview questions (see below, table 7).

The formal pilot was an integral part of the main study, something not uncommon in flexible research designs (Robson, 2011). Two scenarios for the young people, as well as three for school staff were piloted in this phase with

actual participants – to ensure that all scenarios were piloted at least once. The interviews took place in exactly the same way as any other interview for this project, with the difference that at the end a list of process questions was asked (the same as in previous phase), such as: *Do you think that the questions are examining the issues that the scenario raises?* The participants were made aware that the main interview was over, and what was sought now was their opinion on the scenario and the questions. The data from the main part of these interviews were used in the study, as this phase was seen as part of a successive refinement of the scenarios and interview questions. The changes made throughout this phase were very minor; they mostly involved rephrasing of questions to avoid misunderstandings. These are some indicative changes made in the scenarios and questions during the two phases of the pilot – changes in one scenario or question might lead to changes in all scenarios and questions, as they followed a similar structure:

Pilot phases	Scenarios	Interview questions
Informal (SEND meeting) November 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenario A3 and A4 were partly rephrased to express ideas more clearly. Minor changes were made in all scenarios to avoid misinterpretations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question 2b was erased in all individual scenarios, because of repetition. Minor changes were made in many questions to avoid misinterpretations.
Formal (young people) December 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes were made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Put pressure</i> was changed to <i>encourage</i> in question 5 in all scenarios, in order not to alter the focus of the question. The following questions were added to all scenarios, as they could facilitate the interpretation of the participants' responses: <i>Do you think that the scenario succeeds in raising some issues? What kind of issues?</i>
Formal (school staff) February 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes were made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question 2 was rewritten in all institutional scenarios from the students' perspective. The previous question caused misunderstandings. Scenario B3: Question 4 was rewritten to better capture ethical tensions and power dynamics (teacher vs. students, rather than teacher vs. teacher). Also, it was rewritten in order to resemble question 4 in all other institutional scenarios.

Table 7: Pilot (indicative changes)

3.10.Operational procedures: main study

The main study took place between February 2013 and May 2013. I attempted to have a first meeting with the young people with and without disabilities to make their acquaintance before interviewing them. For practical reasons, this did not prove possible for the majority of cases. In terms of members of school staff, the scenarios and interview questions were sent to them in advance via their institutions, so they could consider their perspectives; their views on the issues were expected to be more or less developed. The young people had not read the scenarios and questions beforehand, so their initial as well as their reflective reactions could be explored. For some exceptions see next section (3.11).

Interviews were conducted one to one, since the project focused on participants' personal views. Each participant was interviewed once, as their perspectives on the issues explored were not expected to change radically over time. All participants completed a form with their demographic characteristics (see appendix 7.a, 7.b). At the beginning of the interviewing process, the participants were given a vignette with a scenario in a written form. The participants had the option to choose the scenario that they preferred, since a topic of discussion of their preference could make them feel more relaxed and stimulate their interest. When the time was limited or the participant indecisive, I chose the scenario having in mind the participants' characteristics and the range of the scenarios – four scenarios for the young people, and four for the school staff. I then provided the participants with some time (approximately 5 minutes) to read and reflect on the scenario. In the case of the young people, I also read the scenario aloud to highlight points of particular interest. The interview was semi-structured; I strictly followed the sequence of the pre-

designed questions for each scenario, but I was also flexible in the form of individually adjusted probing to allow participants to express their views while keeping the discussion on track. The style of the interview was argumentative, in that the participants were asked for reasons for not accepting different perspectives; this interviewing style can help the participants to check the consistency of their views and ideas (Norwich, 2008). The interviews were audio recorded with the participants' oral permission. Interviews lasted up to forty minutes. Table 8 provides the timetable of the study's fieldwork – pilot is also included:

Fieldwork timetable: pilot phases and main study	
September 2012	Preparation for data collection
October 2012	Preparation for data collection
November 2012	Informal pilot (SEND meeting)
December 2012	Formal pilot (young people)
January 2013	–
February 2013	Formal pilot (school staff) – Data collection (main study)
March 2013	Data collection (main study)
April 2013	Data collection (main study)
May 2013	Data collection (main study)
June 2013	–

Table 8: Fieldwork timetable

3.11.Considerations for specific groups

Arrangements for specific groups of participants were put in place during the data collection. In terms of participants with visual impairment, the scenarios and interview questions were sent to them via their schools by email prior to their interview, so that the young people could read the scenarios and questions by themselves and in the most appropriate way, for example using screen reader, larger font, or otherwise. This was in order to secure equal access to the material, although it would have been preferable for the young people not to read the scenarios before the interviews so that their initial reactions could be explored. However, the majority of the young people did not read the scenarios

or questions beforehand (only two out of nine read them beforehand), so I either read the scenario aloud to them or had the scenario available in electronic form (flash drive) to be used with any computer with screen reader. In addition, as the vignette was written in a large font, some of the young people could read it by themselves.

Young people with Asperger syndrome were expected to be able to participate as any other young person of their age. Nevertheless, as some of them had difficulties in processing large amounts of information, I gave them more time to read and reflect on the vignette. In addition, some people experienced information overload during their interview (for example participant C2) and I gave them some cool-off time. In one case (participant C3), I decided to change the scenario during the interview as I felt that it was not suitable or interesting for the participant. After the change the participant was able to discuss the new scenario without further problems – he could either relate to it better, or he just needed more time to feel relaxed with the interviewing process. This excerpt shows the transition between the two scenarios:

Q: *Have you experienced something like this?*

C3: I don't know. I don't think so to be honest, I'm not sure really.

Q: *Would you like to take a look at a different story? Maybe you don't find this story interesting [...]*

C3: Ok, yeah. [Interviewee reads another scenario]

Q: *So what do you think about that?*

C3: Well that is completely unfair from David's perspective, all because he's blind.

Q: *So do you prefer to discuss that?*

C3: Yeah I think this is, well it's definitely more of a...

Q: *Ok let's start over with that, I'm going to ask you some questions again.*

C3: Ok.

Finally, as far as members of school staff are concerned, I gave them the option to request a copy of their interview transcript, to comment or make changes. No participant made use of this right. It was deemed practically difficult to give the same option to the young people; nevertheless, I was open to consider such a request. No young people asked to read or comment on the transcript of their interview.

3.12. The framework of the analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent, and then transcribed with the help of an independent transcriber due to time restrictions and language-related difficulties (English is not my first language). I thoroughly checked all the transcripts, making changes where appropriate – especially as regards punctuation.

For the analysis, the NVIVO software programme (version 10) was used. The transcripts were analysed separately for individual (young people) and institutional level (school staff). The text was analysed qualitatively for the identification of common themes across the interviews of the same level, using the constant comparative method (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Even though the two levels were distinct, there were structural similarities between them and also many common themes; like the theme 'inclusion forced' (young people), and 'inclusion forced' (school staff). In order to capture the complexity of the interviews, these were coded in multiple layers. So, excerpts were in most cases coded with more than one theme. The themes used were less descriptive, more interpretive, *grounded theory style* themes (Robson, 2011). They were influenced by the initial theory of the study – more particularly, by the conceptual themes that derived from the theory and are discussed below.

Following an adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998), the grounded themes, separately for each level (individual and institutional), were organised according to the initial theory that is directly related to the research aims and had also informed the scenario construction and interview structure for each level (section 3.4.3). Thus, the empirical findings collected with this particular theory in mind were brought together with the theory to check its consistency and illuminate its connections. In turn, the theory was open and flexible to accommodate the emerging data.

Tables 9 and 10 below depict the product of the dialogue between theory and data separately for the young people and school staff. In the two frameworks, the grounded themes (third column) were organised according to the conceptual themes (the theory) (first column) that derived from the literature and previous conceptual analysis and are of direct relevance to the study's research aims. The conceptual themes correspond with the topics/themes of the interview structure (section 3.8), although each framework has its own purposes. Where necessary, the middle column organised further the grounded themes into the conceptual framework, and in turn contributed to the development of the conceptual themes. Therefore, the initial theory informed and organised the grounded themes, and the grounded themes gave flesh, clear content and meaning to the initial theory. The scenario number is indicated (A1-A4 for the young people and B1-B4 for school staff), when the themes in this category are sub-categorised according to scenario to better facilitate presentation and discussion purposes.

This is an edited version of the analysis framework for the young people with a selection of themes for presentation purposes – the full version is available in appendix 9.b.1.:

The framework of the analysis for the young people (edited version)

Conceptual themes	Grounded themes	
Immediate preference	Recognition of the tension - immediate Picking a side - immediate A1 – A2 – A3 – A4	
Similarity and difference	Difference	Different people - challenge Different people - new ideas, experiences Visibility and invisibility of difference
	Similarity	Reasons for homophily: positive Homophily - easy communication Homophily - deep connection Homophily - common ground Homophily - understanding Homophily - comfort zone
		Reasons for homophily: negative Homophily resulting from oppression Homophily resulting from bullying Homophily resulting from fear
	Reflection on homophily	Homophily limits Experience of homophily Similar people - challenge
	Similarity and difference in terms of disability	Similarity and difference within disability Similarity and difference beyond disability Similarity and difference because of disability
Homophily and inclusion (the tension)	Understanding of the tension (scenario)	Want vs should (scenario) A1 – A2 – A3 – A4
	Experience of the tension (real life)	Want vs should (real life)
	Tension resolution	A tricky balance A1 – A2 – A3 – A4 Importance of discussion Want or should (not both) Balancing want and should
	Reflection on the tension	A hard choice A1 – A2 – A3 – A4 A complex issue
Ethical implications	Ethics and choice	Violation of choice What might people say
	Ethics and inclusion	Inclusion forced Inclusion - ethical obligation Disability - ethically charged
	Ethics and homophily	Homophily - being selfish, stubborn, elitist [...] Homophily - discrimination
Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)	Right and wrong at the same time A1 – A2 – A3 – A4	
Interactional preferences	Preference for similar people Preference for different people Preference for a mixture of people No difference between similar and different people	
The role of choice	Inclusion - choice Homophily - choice Choice is important	
Reflective preference	Recognition of the tension - reflective Picking a side - reflective A1 – A2 – A3 – A4	

Table 9: Analysis framework (young people) – edited version

For young people data, the analysis framework begins and ends with their immediate and reflective reactions to the scenarios which were indicative of their perspectives on the issues explored. Immediate and reflective responses were organised according to whether the young people recognised a homophily/inclusion tension in the scenarios, or they supported one of the two sides (homophily or inclusion) as more important than the other. Scenario A3 provoked also some unique responses that are presented and examined in the

findings chapter (section 4.1.1). The framework continues with perceptions of similarity and difference organised in three sections: difference; similarity; similarity and difference in terms of disability. The two aspects of homophily (positive and negative, under similarity) are further examined in the discussion chapter (section 5.12.1) as an example as to how the research findings led to the development of the initial theory. The framework also organises themes that illuminate understandings of the homophily/inclusion tension as one between *want* and *should* (descriptions of the tension in the scenarios, young people's actual experiences, possible resolutions, critical reflection), and themes that illustrate the ethical dimension of the tension (ethical implications, and the theme 'right and wrong at the same time'), preferences for social interaction with similar and different others, and the role of choice.

For members of staff, the analysis framework begins with understandings of the homophily/inclusion tension. The immediate/reflective response distinction is not applicable here (see section 3.8). The tension is described in three ways – examined in the findings (4.1.2) and the discussion chapter (5.1) – organised under understandings of the tension, possible resolutions and critical reflection. The framework continues with perceptions of similarity and difference (the two dimensions of homophily are also present here) and with the ethical dimension of the tension (ethical implications, and the theme 'right and wrong at the same time'). Themes about power dynamics, aspects of decision-making, policy issues, and school staff's personal experiences of the tension are also included. Overall, the focus of these level themes is on the perceptions of the social behaviour of the young people by members of school staff. This is an edited version of the analysis framework for the school staff with a selection of themes for presentation purposes – for the full version see appendix 9.b.2:

The framework of the analysis for school staff (edited version)

Conceptual themes	Grounded themes	
Homophily and inclusion (the tension)	Understanding of the tension (scenario)	Want vs should B1 – B2 – B3 – B4 General vs special Ideal vs compromise
	Tension resolution	Balancing want and should B1 – B2 – B3 – B4 Balancing general and special Balancing ideal and compromise
	Reflection on the tension	A complex issue B1 – B2 – B3 – B4 Practical difficulties related to the tension
Similarity and difference	Difference	Denial of difference Different people - new ideas, experiences Visibility and invisibility of difference
		Reflection on inclusion Inclusion - choice Questioning inclusion Definitions of inclusion
	Similarity	Reasons for homophily: positive Homophily - equal status Homophily - comfort zone Homophily - understanding Homophily - emotional need Homophily - common ground
		Reasons for homophily: negative Homophily - lack of confidence Homophily - lack of social skills Homophily resulting from bullying Homophily resulting from oppression
		Reflection on homophily Homophily limits Homophily - choice Homophily - the opposite of inclusion
	Similarity and difference in terms of disability	Similarity and difference within disability Similarity and difference beyond disability Similarity and difference because of disability
Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)	Right and wrong at the same time B1 – B2 – B3 – B4	
Ethical implications	Ethics and choice	Violation of choice Limitations, representation
	Ethics and inclusion	Inclusion forced Inclusion - ethical obligation Fear of being discriminatory
	Ethics and homophily	Homophily - being elitist, exclusive [...] Homophily - discrimination
Issues of power	Power dynamics - students Power dynamics - school hierarchy Power dynamics - staff and students	
Decision-making	Boundaries Student voice The role of parents The role of teachers A culture of discussion Disability affects decisions	
Personal experience of the tension	Real life tensions	
Policy issues	School ethos Policies - inclusion Policies - discrimination Policies - equal opportunities and diversity	

Table 10: Analysis framework (school staff) – edited version

Although the empirical findings showed that the initial theory is consistent, the grounded themes developed the framework and gave a better understanding of its categories and connections. In turn, the theory proved flexible to accommodate the data emerged. To what extent the initial theory was adapted is further examined in the discussion chapter (section 5.12.1).

In addition to the themes organised in the main frameworks, there were other themes that emerged from the data, such as themes about the experience of disability or sentiments. These themes illuminate and are related to the issues under examination, but they are not of direct relevance to particular research aims. They are organised in two frameworks separately for young people and school staff. These frameworks are available in appendix 9.b.3 and 9.b.4, along with the definitions of all the themes used for the analysis (appendix 9.c).

3.13.Challenges in the analysis

Even though the dialogue between the data and the initial theory led to two frameworks (for the young people and school staff) that proved consistent, the analysis of the transcripts did not come without challenges especially in terms of the interviews conducted with young people identified with Asperger syndrome. Newman et al (2010) discuss the difficulties of eliciting the views of young people with autism and Asperger syndrome in research projects that focus on understanding the participants' experiences. They attribute these difficulties to a *unique cognitive style* associated with this impairment: impaired abstraction, impaired theory of mind, deficit in empathy (Newman et al, 2010). Hence, they argue that 'for the researcher intending to conduct qualitative research with individuals who have autism, consideration needs to be given to the impact of this unique cognitive processing style on research methods employed' (Newman et al, 2010, p. 266).

In this study, the use of scenarios was considered to be a useful way to help the participants approach and reflect on the issues explored. In addition, the carefully designed interview questions and the individually adjusted probing

had the same purpose. Yet, in the analysis of the interviews of the young people themes like 'missing the point' or 'not following or lost' were present, whereas such themes were absent in the analysis of the school staff interviews. A reason could be that the social situations presented in the scenarios were complex for some of the young people to discuss. In turn, on my part, some of the responses of the young people could not be easily interpreted. Here are some examples – C7, a young man identified with Asperger syndrome, discussed scenario A1. This is the beginning of his interview:

Q: *Would it be right or wrong for Mr Brown, the teacher, to ask another student to join Andrew and Julie in the task?*

C7: *Wrong.*

Q: *Why?*

C7: *Because as they've both got Asperger's syndrome they'll probably have the same amount of intelligence as each other, but if it's a low achieving non-disabled student then they might have a little bit more just because it's low achieving student, they might just have a bit more intelligence than the Asperger's syndrome children.*

Q: *So why do you think Mr Brown wanted to add another student in their group?*

C7: *So that they could probably get a good grade.*

Q: [...] *Why Mr Brown didn't choose a high achieving student to help them more?*

C7: *Because then Andrew and Julie could have a chance from the low achieving because if it's a high one then it would probably be doing the work for them, and it would probably be a bit unfair, so they've got a chance.*

Q: *Why would it be unfair?*

C7: *Well 'cause, like I said, they could have [...] a better chance of doing the work themselves.*

At the beginning C7 described the teacher's wish to add a third person in Andrew and Julie's group as wrong, since Andrew and Julie are both identified with Asperger syndrome and they would be able to relate to each other: C7

picked the side of homophily and the excerpt was coded as 'picking a side - immediate' and 'homophily - equal status' (also 'stereotypes'). Yet, when he was asked to explain his reasoning he seemed rather confused and unable to give a clear and convincing answer. He attempted, not very successfully, to explain the teacher's preference focusing on the academic achievement of the students and he completely forgot his initial idea. The quote, from the question 'so *why do you think Mr Brown wanted to add another student...?*' to the end, was coded with the theme 'missing the point'. Overall, C7's understanding of the issue remained uncertain.

C3 is also a young man identified with Asperger syndrome. He discussed scenario A4, the party scenario. Although he seemed to have understood the deeper reasons behind the stance of Jeremy's mother (respect for the others, all people are equal), when he was asked to further explain his ideas he gave a superficial response – Jeremy's mother should have a personal liking for David, his son's visually impaired classmate. For this reason, the excerpt was coded with the theme 'missing the point':

Q: *Why do you think Jeremy and his mother have different opinions? Jeremy says 'I don't want to invite David', his mother says 'Well you have to re-think it.'*

C3: *Well his mum is more respectful of other people, and learnt that disabilities don't make that, really don't make that much of a difference, well they shouldn't do anyway.*

Q: *Why?*

C3: *She probably liked him, if she like knew him personally, whoever, possibly.*

In conclusion, despite some few challenging cases, the majority of the young people with Asperger syndrome could approach and discuss the issues in the scenarios as any other young person of their age, and this was also reflected on the analysis of their interviews. The matter is further examined in section 3.16 of this chapter.

3.14.Trustworthiness

This study aimed not to generalise its findings but rather to illuminate the issues under examination. Attention was paid to ensure that the voice of the participants was the one that was heard, and that I did not contaminate the findings with my own ideas, expectations or biases. However, at the same time, I interacted with the participants in the form of scenarios, interview and probe questions, and the result of this interaction was reflected on the research findings. In addition, the framework of the analysis was the product of a dialogue between the empirical findings and the initial theory. This theory exhibited my ideas and way of thinking and informed every attempt of interpretation throughout the study. This is why, the idea of trustworthiness in interpretive, flexible, research designs can be problematic (Robson, 2011).

Nonetheless, some strategies were followed to ensure the consistency of the study. On the one hand, the framework of the analysis proved to have internal consistency, since the majority of the themes used could be applied to a great number of interview transcripts across the two levels of the study, that is the individual (young people) and institutional (school staff) level. As a result, there were very few single (found only in one interview) themes. On the other hand, I asked my two supervisors to read two of my interview transcripts and discuss the analysis with me in two different ways: being unaware of my own analysis, and with my analysis on hand. The reason for this was to check that all the essential parts of the interview were coded (first way), and that they were coded in a transparent manner (second way). It was decided that potential disagreements would be settled with discussion and that I should be able to defend my ideas. The final decision for all changes was taken by me. Table 11 presents some indicative issues that were highlighted and discussed:

Analysis consistency check	Issue highlighted	Researcher's actions
First way: The reader was <i>unaware</i> of the researcher's analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C6: <i>...a book about Asperger's</i> • C6: <i>[...] their little circle has been invaded by an outsider</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was also coded as 'disability labels' • The theme 'different people - challenge' was introduced
Second way: The reader was <i>aware</i> of the researcher's analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A missing theme was identified: people may distinguish their own positions from positions they do not agree with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theme 'different perspectives' was added in both frameworks: young people and school staff

Table 11: Analysis consistency check (indicative changes)

Interview excerpts identified as interesting for the purposes of the analysis by the readers had already more or less been spotted. In the majority of the cases examined no changes were deemed necessary; overall, the framework was considered to be transparent and well-argued.

3.15. Ethical procedures

The study had official ethical clearance from the University of Exeter. The relevant form is available in appendix 7.c.1. Following the BERA (2011) guidelines, anonymity and confidentiality were applied to every aspect of this project. Instead of names a system of codes was used throughout the study. For the young people, the code was place-specific: the letter (W) referred to the special school that participated in the study, (B) to the mainstream one, (P) to the public house, and (C) to the disability support centre. Each participant was named with a combination of a letter that referred to the place through which they were contacted, and a unique number – for instance W7. For school staff, the letter (S) was used for staff working at special settings, and (M) at mainstream ones.

Written formal consent was sought from every participant before the interviewing process; an example of a signed form is available in appendix 7.c.2. In terms of the young people that were below 18 years old, the consent forms were signed by their parents (in one case) or by themselves with their

parents' knowledge and oral approval. During the interviews, the participants' consent for the audio recording was sought; all participants gave their oral permission. The participants had the right to withdraw from the project at any time. In this case, the data related to them would have been immediately destroyed. No participant made use of this right. All participants were sent a summary of the findings, and were encouraged to comment on it. No comments were received to this point.

My contacts in the mainstream and special school and the disability support centre that took part in the project requested to see the scenarios and questions for the young people before the interviews. I sent an electronic copy of them so that staff and parents could see the material, but I requested that these were not read by the young people in order to explore their initial reactions. An exception was made for young people with visual impairment for reasons of access (section 3.11). I also prepared a letter that contained information about the research that the mainstream school that participated in the study specifically requested for the students' parents (appendix 6.b).

3.16. General issues

This final section highlights general methodological issues that emerged during this research project. In terms of the young people involved in this study, it should be noted that the scenarios used could more easily be discussed by more articulate, more able young people. Even though every effort was made to present the tension between inclusion and homophily in the scenarios in a clear way and with the minimum possible of contextual distractions, it seems that the complexity of the issues – of the social situations presented there – caused difficulties to some of the young people. This is why the scenarios were not

considered to be relevant for young people with learning difficulties (cognitive disabilities). The difficulty some young people experienced in analysing and discussing the scenarios in depth was resolved with individually adjusted probing that proved to have an important role in the way the interviews were conducted for both the young people and members of school staff. Probing questions were used throughout the interviews to help the participants express more clearly their ideas and their reasoning, while at the same time to ensure that the discussion was on the right track, that is, within the purposes of the project.

In terms of the young people identified with Asperger syndrome, challenges related to the analysis of their interviews are already discussed (section 3.13). As a general comment, it could be noted that their way of thinking as presented in their interviews was not very *tight* – Kelly (1955) distinguishes between *tight*, clearly defined, and *loose*, vague construct systems – in the sense that they tended to change the subject of the discussion and draw unexpected conclusions. It might also be said that they lacked empathy which can be a crucial factor in understanding and relating the scenarios to one's own experiences, as it can be deduced from the following quote – C7, a young man identified with Asperger syndrome, discussed scenario A1:

Q: *If you were Andrew, would it be important for you to be able to choose who you want to work with? To say: I want to work only with Julie.*

C7: I don't know.

Q: *[...] Could you imagine yourself in the position of Andrew?*

C7: No because I hate school.

Yet, a young woman also identified with Asperger syndrome, described the issue from a different perspective:

Q: *What do you mean by 'insight in life'?*

C10: [...] we think more. And we feel more but we can't necessarily express it as well, as intuitively as most people perhaps...

The excerpt is part of a description of her experiences of having been identified with Asperger syndrome. For her, the syndrome was about a difficulty to express yourself as other people are able to do, not a difficulty to understand the others. Thus, the assumption that young people with Asperger syndrome lack empathy is problematic, or it should be examined on an individual basis. The majority of the young people identified with the syndrome that participated in the study could discuss the scenarios and interview questions as any other young person of their age.

In terms of members of school staff, in the study participated more special than mainstream school teachers (six to one). Mainstream settings were mostly represented by teaching assistants (four out of six representatives). In addition, the special school staff that took part in the study was more experienced, mid-career, staff, whereas the school staff from mainstream settings was mostly represented by younger professionals. This was particularly reflected on the discussion about policy issues; teachers and administrators could discuss questions about policies more constructively than teaching assistants, since it is an area beyond the latter's professional role, an issue further discussed in the discussion chapter (section 5.12.2.2). Finally, people that work in special settings may have a different stance towards the inclusion and homophily tension – they may be more open to consider individual needs – and, if they are more experienced as well, they may be able to express their ideas more clearly than the less experienced mainstream staff.

4. Findings chapter

This chapter presents the study's findings. To explore a tension between inclusion and homophily, I used four different scenarios for young people and four different scenarios for members of school staff, as a stimulus for discussion during in-depth semi-structured interviews. The scenarios were accompanied by interview questions organised under separate structures for each group of participants. The scenarios and interview questions were designed to explore the same issues; only the context varied.

The findings from these interviews are presented in two parts. The first part (4.1) presents findings about the tension between homophily and inclusion, as experienced by young people and school staff. The aim of this part is to show that the homophily/inclusion tension is consistent with the experiences of the participants (young people and school staff), and that different people describe the tension in very similar ways in different scenarios (contexts). This forms the basis of the analysis that is presented in the discussion chapter. The part is divided into three sections: *descriptions of the tension in the scenarios for young people*, *descriptions of the tension in the scenarios for school staff*, and *descriptions of the tension in non-scenario based situations for both groups*. The first two sections are presented according to scenario, separately for young people (4.1.1) and school staff (4.1.2); interview questions are used to facilitate the presentation structure. The third section (4.1.3) refers to actual (non-scenario based) social situations and integrates the two participant groups.

The second part (4.2) is about issues related to the inclusion/homophily tension, organised in eight sections. In this part, a variety of themes that illuminate the tension are presented comparatively, integrating the responses of the young people and school staff. The aim of this part is to illuminate crucial

issues that are related to the tension, such as understandings of similarity and difference, issues of disability, young people's preferences for social interaction, ethical implications, power relations, decision-making and policy matters that are further examined in the discussion chapter.

The division of the findings into two parts was deemed necessary to facilitate a functional presentation of the findings, and the tension's analysis. The quotes that will be discussed in the two parts were coded using multiple themes, so the single theme in display is the most relevant for presentation purposes. The scenarios, interview questions, the analysis frameworks, theme definitions, and examples of interviews are available in the appendix.

4.1.The homophily/inclusion tension

This section presents findings about the homophily/inclusion tension, as described and experienced by young people and school staff.

4.1.1.Young people: the tension in the scenario

Section 4.1.1 presents the way the young people described the homophily/inclusion tension in the individual level scenarios (A1-A4). It is organised according to scenarios. The aim is to show that for every scenario there was the same pattern of responses about the tension: immediate and reflective response, recognition of the tension as one between *want* and *should*, ethical dimension, possible resolutions, and reflection. The structure is based on the young people analysis framework (section 3.12). These elements are used to build the analysis presented in the discussion chapter. The definitions of the themes are available in appendix 9.c.1. Themes are subcategorised according to scenario. Each participant was interviewed with one scenario.

Scenario (A1): it was intended for the young people and refers to a formal classroom situation – a group allocation tension. It reads as such:

In a secondary mainstream class, Mr Brown, the history teacher, asked the students to choose the classmates they wanted to work with to prepare a presentation on World War Two. Andrew and Julie, both with Asperger syndrome, agreed to work together on the project and strongly refused to co-operate with anyone else. But, Mr Brown felt he should ask a low-achieving, non-disabled student to join them in the task.

The same question was asked at the beginning and at the end of the interview: *Would it be right or wrong for Mr Brown not to allow Andrew and Julie to form a group together? Why?* There were two kinds of initial responses to this question. The young people either picked a side pro homophily (wrong) or pro inclusion (right), or recognised the existence of a tension.

C2, a 21 years old man with Asperger syndrome, answered pro homophily since he interpreted Mr Brown's action as a form of discrimination against people with Asperger syndrome:

'Picking a side - immediate A1'

Q: *Would it be right or wrong for Mr Brown not to allow Andrew and Julie to form a group together?*

C2: Well I think it's perfectly ok they should form a group together. Just because they got Asperger syndrome doesn't mean that they are any different from anyone else. It is a bit of a label really.

Q: *So would it be right or wrong?*

C2: I think it would be wrong.

And W2, a 20 years old man with visual impairment, answered pro inclusion, because he thought that socialising with different people is important, as it can expand one's social horizon:

'Picking a side - immediate A1'

Q: So would it be right or wrong for Mr Brown to ask another student to join Andrew and Julie in the task?

W2: I think he's perfectly within his rights to... and I think it's good for someone who doesn't have the ability to expand their social horizon [...] if he didn't put a non-disabled person with them in any way I think he would be only encouraging the Asperger's behaviour and not trying to help them.

But C10, a 21 years old woman with Asperger syndrome, saw a tension between the preference of Andrew and Julie to work together and what they should do according to their teacher:

'Recognition of the tension - immediate A1'

Q: Would it be right or wrong for Mr Brown to ask another student to join Andrew and Julie in the task?

C10: Perhaps if it made them feel uncomfortable. But if the group had to be three minimum then I guess they'd have to work around it.

Q: Ok, so would it be right or wrong?

C10: I don't really know the full circumstances. It depends how disabled they are.

Q: And how could their disability have something to do with that?

C10: If it's somebody they feel uncomfortable around then they shouldn't be forced. But if they were comfortable with that non-disabled student then I think they should work around it.

When the same question was asked again at the end of the interview, some young people reconsidered their ideas (4 out of 6); like B1, a 16 years old man without a disability, who initially had described the tension vaguely but in his reflective answer picked a side pro inclusion, as he noted that different people are associated with new experiences:

'Recognition of the tension - immediate A1'

Q: *So, do you think it's right or wrong for the teacher to ask that?*

B1: I think it is right to ask, but they should be allowed to refuse...

'Picking a side - reflective A1'

Q: *Do you still believe that it would be right or wrong for Mr Brown to ask another student to join Andrew and Julie in the task?*

B1: [...] I think it would be right, because then it would [give] them a chance to be in a group together, but also with someone else there. And they could also incorporate him or her even, the low-achieving student, into their like talk – almost of what they are talking about and what they find funny [...]

On the other hand, other young people that had picked a side at the beginning, like C2, after the discussion recognised a tension – 4 out of 6 people (66%) recognised a tension in their reflective response in comparison to 2 out of 6 (33%) in their immediate:

'Recognition of the tension - reflective A1'

Q: *Do you still believe that it would be right or wrong for Mr Brown not to allow Andrew and Julie to form a group together?*

C2: *It depends about the context. So, if he put pressure on them, I think that's wrong. But, if encourage them, I think it is right. I think it is a bit difficult. So, if they don't want to work with anyone else, then I think they should be allowed to work in a pair.*

This tension was described as a tension between the students' preference to work by themselves and the teacher's wish for them to cooperate with other people. It was described in ethical terms: it would be '*right*' to encourage them but '*wrong*' to force them, and they '*should*' be allowed to work in pair.

Young people gave various descriptions of this tension which was conceptualised as one between their preference to cooperate with similar others (what they want to do), and social inclusion (what they should do):

'Want vs should (scenario) A1'

Q: ***And what about Andrew and Julie's preference to work only by themselves?***

W2: *I still think the same.*

Q: ***Which is...?***

W2: *I think it's important that they have the option to choose, that they're not forced, so they're not compelled because you don't want to compel someone, make someone feel forced to do something, and that goes against free will. [...] It's important to choose, but I think it's important that they understand why they should work with someone else as well. So I think they should be given the option and told and explained the reasons why.*

So for W2 (visually impaired), the tension had a strong ethical dimension as the teacher's actions may go '*against*' the students' preference, but at the same time the students '*should*' work with someone else as well.

The ethical dimension of the tension was highlighted more clearly when the teacher's intentions were described as right and wrong at the same time, as C6, a 17 years old man with Asperger syndrome, did. The theme 'right and wrong at the same time' (the ethical dimension of the tension) is a common response in all scenarios (see also the discussion chapter, section 5.12.2.1):

'Right and wrong at the same time A1'

Q: ***But the question is about Mr Brown...***

C6: *Right, Mr Brown...*

Q: ***And whether he is doing something good or bad...***

C6: *It's good in some ways and bad in the same sort of way. Mr Brown is expanding the circle, you know, making them tolerate each other, but he didn't exactly ask Andrew and Julie if they wanted to get this low ranking student in to their circle, that might cause a bit of friction. But Mr Brown, for all I know he might – he's right in some ways and wrong in different ways.*

W2 (visually impaired) discussed the ethical dimension of Mr Brown's actions in terms of some balancing that is needed between the two sides of the tension, as there are disability-related difficulties that should be taken into consideration. He proposed that the teacher should adopt a more gradual approach. If the students were introduced in advance, they could be prepared and, so, more open to cooperate. This way the tension could be resolved:

'Balancing want and should A1'

W2: *I think Mr Brown is... he's not totally correct because I don't think, because it's change and people with Asperger, they don't like change or rapid change, I don't think he's considering, I think if he's got a lesson with these two people in and he's just*

chucking in another person suddenly without warning, I think that's going to tip the boat a little bit. But I think if it was a gradual thing it would become ok, but I think it's not morally correct to say that he should be doing that just out of the blue because that's upsets the two people with Asperger's because you're interrupting their routine and they need routine as well. So I think it's not wrong, but it's not correct, I think it needs more panning out, more planning.

C10 (with Asperger syndrome) proposed a different resolution – Andrew and Julie could work with a third person, but a person of their approval:

'Balancing want and should A1'

Q: *So is there anything wrong in Mr Brown's preference?*

C10: I don't believe his intentions were wrong, but the way he did it was probably not the best.

Q: *So which could be a better way to do it?*

C10: Instead of picking the lowest achieving non-disabled student, find maybe a person in the class that they get on best with [...].

In addition, W2 suggested that discussion is a way to resolve such tensions. Both sides should explain their opinion and pay attention to the arguments of the other side:

'Getting both sides of the story A1'

Q: *Should Andrew and Julie persuade Mr Brown of their point of view?*

W2: Yeah, I think they should have a private discussion with him and express their views in a calm, mature manner, but I think that...

Q: *And why should they do that?*

W2: *I think it shows personal growth, I think it shows a bit of integrity and maturity. I think it's good to... [...] I think it just shows that you have a personal side, you're not just a mindless thing that just wants what it wants [...] I think if you can sit down and tell a person why you've come to these conclusions and then ask for their conclusions and their opinions, I think you then show [...] that you can sit down and have a civilised conversation with someone, or a civil disagreement.*

But B1 (without a disability) thought that Mr Brown's wish (social inclusion) and the students' preference (homophily) cannot be balanced or combined. Hence, it could be the one or the other:

'Want or should (not both) A1'

B1: *I do think it would be important to say I prefer not to work with them, but I mean I think if it gets like to the point where it's going quite heated dislike argument, then I think maybe Mr Brown should leave it and take away other students that want to work with someone else, or he should just say you all gonna have to work with them.*

The young people admitted the complexity of discussing the issue. It should be noted that W2 that raised the issue of empathy has a visual impairment, not Asperger syndrome:

'A complex issue A1'

Q: **Yes, but if you were Andrew and Julie and you had this preference, would it be important for you to be able to choose?**

W2: *Not really, I don't think so, it might do, I really don't know. I'm going to just say I don't know because...*

Q: **Can you imagine?**

W2: [...] *Well it's hard enough empathising with someone who is similar to yourself, you know, like someone who is not...*

Scenario (A2): it was intended for the young people and refers to a formal out of school situation – a tension in a job centre. It reads as such:

After finishing his college education in a mainstream institution, John is now looking for a job. Being visually impaired, he visited a job centre near his hometown, well known for its disability support services. The centre could arrange for him a number of interviews for various jobs in the community. But when John expressed the preference to work only alongside other visually impaired people, the job advisor strongly discouraged him, and advised him to be more daring with his life.

The same question was asked at the beginning and at the end of the interview: *Was it right or wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more daring with his life? Why?* There are two kinds of initial responses to this question. The young people either picked a side pro homophily (wrong) or inclusion (right), or recognised the existence of a tension.

C5, a 25 years old man with Asperger syndrome, answered pro inclusion as he thought that the job advisor's advice would help John to have wider options in his job search:

'Picking a side - immediate A2'

Q: *Was it right or wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more daring with his life?*

C5: *In a way I'd kind of say it's right 'cause otherwise it's limiting his options, if he's only going to want to work with visually impaired people he's limiting himself to where he can go and what he can do. So I think it's good to give him a wider sort of option.*

Q: **So was it right or wrong?**

C5: *I'd say it was probably right.*

And W1, an 18 years old man with visual impairment, answered pro homophily as he thought that working alongside other visually impaired people could help John to participate more fully:

'Picking a side - immediate A2'

Q: **Was it right or wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more daring with his life?**

W1: *Well I reckon he was wrong because if he was with people which [were] visually impaired as well then he could talk about, then he could participate in social activities because they would talk about the same kind of thing, maybe not on the same level, but at least on the same topics.*

But C1, an 18 years old woman with Asperger syndrome, described a tension between John's preference and the advisor's advice, as she could see the benefits from both sides:

'Recognition of the tension - immediate A2'

Q: **Was it right or wrong for the job advisor to give such an advice?**

C1: *Bit of both, I think.*

Q: **Why?**

C1: *Because, if people just work with maybe people with the same ability as them, then that's a bit... well, it's not normal, but you do the same thing over and over and over*

and over again, as if you be a little more daring and maybe work with people who are fully sighted or if you work with a mix of people, so you've got people who are fully sighted, half sighted, completely blind [...] Because, if they say no, it's not right, then it's telling somebody they should do the same thing over and over and over again. But yes, because I think people should do different things in life.

When the same question was asked again at the end of the interview, most young people expressed the same opinion (6 out of 7), like C5 did – but with some uncertainty after the discussion had taken place, and with a focus on John's preferences rather than on better working prospects this time:

'Picking a side - reflective A2'

Q: *Do you still believe that it was right or wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more daring with his life?*

C5: I would be inclined to say more wrong than right because of the way they've phrased it but...

Q: *If the phrasing was different?*

C5: I would still be inclined to say it's more wrong because they seem to be not taking his preferences.

On the other hand, W1 (visually impaired) that had picked a side at the beginning after the discussion and with some probing saw a tension. 4 out of 7 young people (57%) recognised a tension in their reflective response in comparison to 3 out of 7 (42%) in their immediate:

'Recognition of the tension - reflective A2'

Q: *Do you still believe that it was right or wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more daring with his life?*

W1: *I think, I still think that it was wrong because John has a right to choose what job he goes into and who his colleagues are.*

Q: *And what about cooperating with different people, with sighted people?*

W1: *[...] I understand that John wanted to work alongside people with visual impairments specifically, however if he worked alongside sighted people as well then he could cooperate with different people. Yeah so in a way, on one hand I think the job advisor was wrong not to take John's request into account, on the other hand however I think the job advisor was in one sense correct to tell John to be more daring because I think what the job advisor had in mind was to ask, to tell John to think about working alongside visually impaired people and both... and sighted people as well, which could make a difference to John's way of thinking.*

This tension was described as a tension between John's preference to work only alongside visually impaired people and the advisor's advice to cooperate with different people, which could make 'a difference to John's way of thinking'.

Young people gave various descriptions of this tension which was conceptualised as a tension between a preference to work alongside similar others (what John wants to do), and social inclusion (what John should do). P1, a 19 years old man without a disability, saw a tension between John's well-being which was associated with finding a job, and his preferences and comfort:

'Want vs should (scenario) A2'

Q: *Why did the job advisor and John hold different views?*

P1: *Because the job advisor is seeing it from a point of view of which they are going to be trying and getting him into a job. Whereas John is looking it as he wants to be comfortable in a job. The advisor doesn't really see that, just because they are advised*

to get him in a job, not to.... I know they kind of meant to be that... look after his well-being, but [...] if he wants the job he just have to go for something maybe a bit different, maybe a bit daring, maybe [not always] comforting.

Young people also depicted the tension between homophily and inclusion in ethical terms. C5 (with Asperger syndrome) with some probing described the job advisor's advice to John as right and wrong at the same time, though not very decisively (*'sort of right, bit morally wrong'*) possibly because he acknowledged the benefits from both sides:

'Right and wrong at the same time A2'

Q: *Let's go back to the scenario. Is there anything morally wrong in the job advisors advice?*

C5: Possibly in the sense that they're strongly discouraging him, they not actually, in that sense they're almost not taking his view into account, they're just basically saying, you know 'you've got to do this,' so in a way that is a bit morally wrong.

Q: *Is there anything morally right?*

C5: I think again advising him to, well be more daring with his life in a way is sort of right because you've got to obviously take challenges in order to get anywhere.

W6, an 18 years old man with visual impairment, expressed the same idea but in a more absolute way; the advisor was *'wrong to discourage'* John to express his preference to work only alongside other visually impaired people, but at the same time he should try and help him *'to get in the big world'*:

'Right and wrong at the same time A2'

Q: *So is the advisor wrong or not?*

W6: *In two ways he's, oh it's really difficult. He's wrong for discouraging him, he's wrong for doing that, but I think he's right by trying to make him feel more daring with his life cause he's trying to make the guy find a better initiative and he's trying to make, you know... [...] So yeah, he is wrong for discouraging him, but I think he's right in trying to help him with trying to get in the big world with everyone and mix with everyone.*

To resolve this tension, B4, a 17 years old man with a visual impairment, proposed a more gradual approach:

'Balancing want and should A2'

B4: *John could say going to a work place where there is already another visually impaired person working there, and then the rest of the team were not disabled, and then eventually take the other person away, if you know what I mean. So that John would feel more comfortable with the other people.*

Similarly, W1 (visually impaired) suggested that working alongside a mixture of people rather than only with visually impaired or non-disabled people would be a better option for John:

'Balancing want and should A2'

Q: *Should the job advisor encourage John to work with non-visually impaired people?*

W1: *Well it depends because if the, if he works in a place full of all sighted people then no, but if he encourages him to work alongside people who aren't visually impaired and people with a visual impairment in a work place then I think yes.*

W1 also added that taking into consideration both sides of the argument could resolve the tension between the advisor's advice and John's preference:

'Getting both sides of the story A2'

W1: [...] *If the jobs advisor respects John's preference then he might realise that maybe John has asked for a certain thing, and the job advisor should take John's opinion or specific request into account so that he can see it from both points of view; whereas at the moment the jobs advisor is only seeing it from one point of view, his own, which is wrong in my opinion because both sides of an argument should be taken in to consideration.*

Finally the young people stressed the difficulty of examining the issue:

'A complex issue A2'

Q: **So is there anything morally wrong in the job advisor's advice?**

W7: *I'm just thinking a minute. Yeah there is but I can't think of what it is, I know there is but I just can't hit the nail on the head.*

Scenario (A3): it was intended for the young people and refers to an informal school situation – choosing a co-producer for a college radio show:

William presents a weekly music show at the radio station of the mainstream college he attends. He asked the teacher in charge of the station to provide him with a second producer, so he could add to his show live phone interviews. Two students were interested: Marion who happened to be William's best friend, and Susan who had a physical disability. William thought that both were equally good, but, despite his initial preference for Marion, he felt he should pick Susan.

The same question was asked at the beginning and at the end of the interview: *Would it be right or wrong for William to pick Susan? Why?* Similarly to the previous scenarios, there were two kinds of initial responses to this question. The young people either picked a side pro homophily (wrong) or pro inclusion (right), or recognised the existence of a tension. Nevertheless, there was also a response unique to this scenario; some young people chose not to pick a side. In other words, they seemed to refuse to examine the two sides of the tension – that is inclusion and homophily – in parallel and, as a result, they judged the actions described as neither right nor wrong. A potential reason for this stance might be a strong sense of equality, that made these young people refuse to accept disability as a factor of difference that would affect people's preferences for social interaction. This reaction seemed to have been reinforced by this particular scenario which is about expressing a preference for a work position rather than for a personal relationship (see also the discussion chapter, section 5.12.2.1).

C8, an 18 years old man with Asperger syndrome, answered pro inclusion because William's action to pick the disabled girl would show that he is not prejudiced against disability:

'Picking a side - immediate A3'

Q: ***Would it be right or wrong for William to pick Susan?***

C8: *Be right.*

Q: ***Why?***

C8: *Well Susan isn't William's best friend and 'cause she also has a disability so allowing her to do it shows he's not biased against her.*

But P5, an 18 years old woman without a disability, did not pick a side as he thought that disability should not be a decisive factor in William's decision:

'Not picking a side - immediate (A3)'

Q: ***Would it be right or wrong for William to pick Susan?***

P5: *I don't think either really.*

Q: ***Why?***

P5: *Because... well it depends [on] his reasonings I guess why he picks her. I mean other than the fact she has a disability, I wouldn't see there to be a right or a wrong for him to pick her... just who he thinks is perfect for the job. And obviously the disability... he hasn't felt has affected negatively on what she can do, so I don't know, I don't see that being a right or wrong really...*

Nevertheless, when the same question was asked again at the end of the interview, P5 appeared less certain as she saw a tension between William's preference for his best friend and including a disabled person – a decision that would be positively judged by 'the rest of us'. Nonetheless, she still noted that Marion and Susan should be considered on equal terms:

'Recognition of the tension - reflective A3'

Q: ***Do you still believe that it would be right or wrong for William to pick Susan?***

P5: *[...] I suppose after looking at it and thinking about like his relationship with his best friend and also who'd be best for the job – they are both kind of equally right for the job – my opinion still feels the same: I completely feel that he is right if he's done it for the purpose of the criteria that I just said, you know, 'cause he thinks Susan is best for the job, that's fine, there's nothing to... you know. But it is wrong if it is for any other reason really [or because] she is a really bit different and... Yeah, I still kind of feel the same about it really. [...] I suppose the relationships between different people and how having*

a disability could affect a decision quite a lot, even though I personally don't think it should do really. I suppose mainly what I said first about how William might feel he has to pick Susan because what the rest of us might think about it. And we might think that he did the wrong thing by picking his best friend, even though she was his first preference.

1 out of 7 people (14%) recognised a tension in his/her reflective response in comparison to 0 out of 7 (0%) in their immediate, while 3 out of 7 people (42%) did not pick a side in their reflective response in comparison to 4 out 7 (57%) in their immediate. Overall, 2 out of 7 people did not change their views, such as P3 (without a disability) who consistently argued that disability and friendship should not be seen as relevant factors to William's decision:

'Not picking a side - reflective (A3)'

Q: *Do you still believe that it would be right or wrong for William to pick Susan?*

P3: I still think I don't think it matters. I think whatever he felt it wouldn't be wrong to pick Marion. I think on a professional level you would pick someone that you are not friends with but if Marion is the person for the job, pick Marion, if Susan is the person for the job, pick Susan. Pick a little if there was a blank canvas.

From a different perspective, C8, an 18 years old man with Asperger syndrome, recognised a tension between William's preference for his best friend and giving a chance to a person with a disability, a decision with more ethical weight as *'it can't always be your friend'*:

'Want vs should (scenario) A3'

C8: *Sometimes you have to pick someone else and it can't always be your best friend, it might be someone that's a bit more suitable, that's...*

Q: ***What do you mean by 'more suitable'?***

C8: *They might be better at something than your best friend is and it would be useful to have that.*

Q: ***Yeah. But Marion and Susan are equally good for the job, at least William thinks that. Why do you think he feels he should pick the girl with the physical disability?***

C8: *He might think he's treating her more fairly if he allows her to do it.*

Q: ***Do you refer to the girl with the disability?***

C8: *Yeah.*

Q: ***What do you mean by 'more fairly'?***

C8: *Well not leaving her out because she has a disability.*

C8 also saw an ethical tension in terms of different people's feelings:

'Right and wrong at the same time A3'

Q: ***So is there anything morally good in William's decision, or is there something morally bad?***

C8: *I think there's a bit of good and bad really, it would be a hard choice so either way there's going to be something negative about your choice, and something positive.*

Q: ***Would you like to explain to me what you mean by that?***

C8: *If he picked his best friend and not the other one it could seem that he's leaving the other one out and favouring his best friend. But as he did pick the other one and not his best friend, it could hurt his best friend a bit.*

Q: ***How can an action be at the same time good and bad, what do you think about that?***

C8: *It... Well it would affect other people differently, not everyone feels the same so whatever action, it's going to affect other people in different ways.*

Nevertheless, B3, a 15 years old man without a disability, described the issue as neither right nor wrong. For him it was not a matter of ethics or preferences, but a question of which fits better the job description – despite the fact that William thinks both are equally good for the job:

'Neither right nor wrong (A3)'

Q: *Would it be right or wrong for William to pick Susan?*

B3: *I don't think it is necessarily right or wrong. I mean, regardless of whether the other one is his best friend or whether the other one that he particularly want to choose has a disability, should be down to what the person is actually like and whether they are actually good in what he is looking for.*

Q: *But both were equally good...*

B3: *From what I read there, it looks like he chose Susan because she has a disability, but I would say that I mean even though he says they are just as good there must be some way that he can tell which one is slightly better for that particular position he's looking for. So rather than just choosing one because they've got a disability or because it happens to be his best friend, it should be a case of which one is better at that job and he must try and might find some way of separating them [...]*

And W8, a 20 years old man with a visual impairment, agreed as long as it is not a case of discrimination against people with disabilities:

'Neither right nor wrong (A3)'

Q: *Do you think that it would be right or wrong?*

W8: *There's no wrong or right answer, [...] it's just as long as he is not discriminating her because of her physical disability, just as long as he is choosing [Susan] because he... Just as long as he's not saying 'I don't want her because she is disabled.'*

Young people perceived William's decision as a hard one that cannot be easily made. C4, a 20 years old man with Asperger syndrome, described the difficulty of the situation – he would prefer to ask the opinion of the teacher in charge of the station rather than deciding all by himself – but also had a suggestion to overcome it:

'A hard choice A3'

Q: *What do you think about that situation?*

C4: *I would probably ask the teacher what to do, for their opinion, so when it comes down to Marion or Susan and I can't quite decide I would seek the opinion of the teacher and see what they thought.*

'Balancing want and should A3'

C4: *I'd probably give both of them a go, I would, to see which one does better, that's me.*

Similarly, P5 (without a disability) acknowledged the complexities of William's position, and how difficult it was to make a decision on '*such an open thing*':

'A hard choice A3'

Q: *So, you have a lot of experience working or being with people who are considered to be different. Given that would you like to discuss more the situation in the scenario?*

P5: *Gosh, I don't know... It's such an open thing. How I think they might get on well with? I suppose once again it comes down to what the actual person is like, and what [are] their opinions on it, and whether they are open to different things. And I felt like obviously William is, and... I don't know; it's difficult. I am trying to think as well as if I was in this situation. I really don't know who I'd go for...*

C8 referred to the same issue, but he focused particularly on the fact that William thought that Marion and Susan are equally good for the job. For the same reason, C4 characterised the decision as annoying:

'A complex issue A3'

Q: ***But if you are sure that both are equally good, both your friend and the other...***

C4: *Yeah that just makes the decision that much more annoying.*

He also referred to William's position as an unfair position that he would prefer to avoid, because he wouldn't know what to do:

'A complex issue A3'

Q: ***So should William sacrifice Marion and pick Susan or not?***

C4: *I really couldn't say.*

Q: ***Why do you feel that it's very difficult to answer?***

C4: *'Cause it's sort of an unfair position. I wouldn't like to do it, I wouldn't.*

Q: ***You don't know what to do?***

C4: *I wouldn't want to do it so I don't know what to do really.*

Scenario (A4): it was intended for the young people and refers to an informal out of school situation – inviting for a birthday party. It reads as such:

Jeremy has his 16th birthday at the end of the month and he will have a party at his house. He decided to invite all his classmates except David, who is blind. When his mother told him to rethink it, Jeremy answered that he came to this decision irrespective of David's disability, because he felt very different from him, and also believed that David would feel the same way.

The same question was asked at the beginning and at the end of the interview: *Was it right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David? Why?* Similar to the previous scenarios, there were two kinds of initial responses to this question. The young people either picked a side pro homophily (wrong) or pro inclusion (right), or recognised the existence of a tension.

B2, a 16 years old woman without a disability, answered pro inclusion, as she thought that Jeremy's decision not to invite David is an act of discrimination:

'Picking a side - immediate A4'

Q: ***Was it right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?***

B2: *Well, I would say it was wrong.*

Q: ***Why?***

B2: *Because it's discriminating against him; it's leaving him out of something that everybody else is participating in, because of something he can't control.*

Q: ***Which is?***

B2: *His blindness... It's like you know.... he hasn't any ability to change it but he is still being treated differently for that.*

And W9, a 25 years old man with visual impairment, answered pro homophily, but under the condition that David was informed and didn't want to attend the party anyway:

'Picking a side - immediate A4'

Q: *Was it right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?*

W9: *I think it would have been right if David didn't want to go, but he should have asked David instead of just assuming what he thought. So he should have maybe rang him up or sent a text and asked him.*

But W5, a 16 years old man also with visual impairment, saw a tension between what Jeremy and David want to do (they do not want to be together as they are not friends) and what it should be done (Jeremy should invite David because he is blind and should not be left out):

'Recognition of the tension - immediate A4'

Q: *Was it right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?*

W5: *I think it depends solely on the differences that he felt. I mean if the differences were disability related then I'd say in some ways it was wrong because he should have spoken to David or whoever the person was, and kind of discussed the issue and tried to get the issue resolved. However, in some ways it may have been right because he was taking into consideration David's thoughts and he was trying to make it kind of comfortable for everybody, trying to make the situation the best.*

It should be noted that, according to W5, personality differences might be an acceptable excuse for Jeremy not to invite David (*'it may have been right'*), while disability-related differences are ethically unacceptable (*'it was wrong'*).

When the same question was asked again at the end of the interview, W9 (visually impaired) – who had answered initially pro homophily – after the discussion answered pro inclusion as he thought that excluding David would be wrong, and any differences should be put aside for the occasion:

'Picking a side - reflective A4'

Q: *Do you still believe that it was right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?*

W9: [...] Yeah I think it was wrong of Jeremy just to exclude him, he should have just included him anyway and then if there were other reasons behind it, well you know if they maybe just talked about them or maybe not worried about them, it's only one party I suppose.

B2, who had answered initially pro inclusion, still had the same opinion. Nevertheless, this time she also described a tension between her personal preferences ('*what I want*') and social inclusion ('*what I should do*'), but at the same time she resolved this tension as she stated that inclusion for her – not necessarily for Jeremy – is more important:

'Picking a side - reflective A4'

Q: *Do you still believe that it was right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?*

B2: Yeah. I still think it was unfair to single him out, not invite him.

Q: *Despite the fact that you would want to make this choice freely?*

B2: Yes, because if it was my choice I would realise that while it might not necessarily be what I want, it's what I should do; so, I'd do it.

The same idea was expressed more clearly by P2, a 22 years old man without a disability, as a tension between Jeremy's preference to choose the people he wants to his party and the moral imperative of including everybody:

'Recognition of the tension - reflective A4'

Q: *Do you still believe that it was right/wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?*

P2: *As an individual I think it was within its right to decide who he wants to come to the party, however for the sake of the whole social structure we have here I think it was wrong that he didn't want him. So, I am split I am afraid between two answers.*

5 out of 7 people (71%) recognised a tension in their reflective response in comparison to 2 out of 7 (28%) in their immediate. 4 out of 7 changed their opinions. B2 described the same tension, but she emphasised the ethical dimension of it – Jeremy may not want to invite David, but ‘*morally*’ he should:

‘Want vs should (scenario) A4’

B2: *What you want is your preferences; I know I want to live in a mansion or whatever... But what you should do is maybe you should live in a small house and give money to charity. It's what you are morally obligated to do always, doesn't it?*

Q: ***And in terms of the scenario?***

B2: *In terms of the scenario, I think it is very applicable, because he probably doesn't want to invite David, but morally he should.*

Young people described an ethical tension between a personal preference to be among similar others and social inclusion. This tension for W5 (visually impaired) was between discrimination against disability, which is ‘*immoral*’, and personality differences and choice. So, depending on his intentions, Jeremy’s decision can be right and wrong at the same time:

‘Right and wrong at the same time A4’

Q: ***Do you still believe that it was right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David, and why?***

W5: *I would still say I'd stay by my previous answer, I think it was wrong in terms of it being ethical and immoral, you know, I don't believe in discrimination against disability. But again I think depending on the differences, it was right, because like you say if they had a personality clash then it was right because it would be uncomfortable for everybody else and it might be uncomfortable for David. And you know, with it being quite personal to Jeremy with it being obviously his 16th party [...], you know, at the end of the day all he wants to do is have fun so...*

C9, a 15 years old man with Asperger syndrome, referred to the same issues:

'Right and wrong at the same time A4'

Q: ***Do you still believe that it was right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?***

C9: *Well it's, like I said before, it can be right but it can be wrong. And because he didn't invite him it would work, it would counteract the same way because if he didn't invite him, he may have done it to be, as I said before, maybe a bit mean. Or he might have done it because he might have found it too difficult to be on the same wavelength as him.*

Also C3, an 18 years old man with Asperger syndrome:

'Right and wrong at the same time A4'

Q: ***So did Jeremy do something bad when he decided not to invite David?***

C3: *Well obviously it's his own decision to invite whoever, but it is still quite unfair to not invite just him just because he's blind really.*

In an attempt to resolve this tension, B2 (without a disability) suggested that Jeremy could exclude a couple more people from his party, in order not to be seen to discriminate against one:

'Balancing want and should A4'

Q: *If Jeremy and David don't get on well at personal level, should his mother encourage Jeremy to invite David?*

B2: I still think it would be unfair to not invite him and give him a chance... not give him a chance because he is blind, I mean if they don't get they don't get on, but maybe if he was gonna exclude him, exclude a couple more people as well, rather than him on his own, singled out as one person he doesn't like.

W9 (with visual impairment) noted that Jeremy and David would not have to socialise during the party. Other people such as P2 (without a disability) suggested the same:

'Balancing want and should A4'

Q: *Do you still believe that it was right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?*

W9: I think it was wrong because maybe I think Jeremy should have just invited him because he invited everyone else in the class and at least he wouldn't have felt too left out, and if he didn't get on with him then he didn't really have to socialise with him sort of directly, he could just say 'Oh thanks for coming to my party' and then he could go off and do his own thing. At least everyone would be invited then.

The resolutions that the young people suggested are indicative of the difficulty to keep in balance the two sides of the tension. This difficulty was expressed by B2 (without a disability):

'A tricky balance A4'

Q: *Do you think that being able to choose who you invite to your party is important?*

B2: *I think it is important yeah, but you have to be aware of other people's feelings and you have to be aware of that you don't want to single anyone out as not coming or... You have to [...] fairly try and please everyone; [...] I've always found that in the past when I've done it [to be] quite tricky to a certain extent when it comes to pleasing everyone. But try as best as you can I guess...*

A way to resolve this tension can be discussion, W9 (visually impaired) noted:

'Importance of discussion A4'

Q: *And if David feels really bad about that?*

W9: *If he feels bad about it then maybe he could explain to Jeremy and they could talk about it, but...*

A discussion that took into account both sides of the argument:

'Getting both sides of the story A4'

Q: *And if his decision is based on other differences, should he persuade his mother?*

W5: *I think there should be an understanding between the two of what the differences are, and providing the differences are kind of morally and ethically appropriate then yes in some circumstances he should.*

The '*ethically appropriate*' differences are most likely personality differences, and the two referred sides are Jeremy (homophily) and his mother (inclusion).

The young people also discussed the complexity of the whole issue. P4, a 23 years old man without a disability, expressed his uncertainty:

'A hard choice A4'

Q: ***Do you still believe that it was right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?***

P4: *Interesting... Now I think it was wrong not to invite him. But I still think there are cases where you can't be certain about it; if you don't have all the information it's hard to do it. But yeah ninety per cent of me says wrong, ten per cent says right, so...*

And W5 also noted that we cannot be fully sure of Jeremy's intentions:

'A complex issue A4'

Q: ***Should Jeremy persuade his mother of his point of view?***

W5: *I think again it depends on the issue really. A lot of it is all issue related, there's not really enough kind of description in what the key issue why... If Jeremy is not inviting David irrespective of his disability, then why? You know, and once you know that then you can decide whose point of view is...*

4.1.2.School staff: the tension in the scenario

Section 4.1.2 is about the way school staff described the homophily/inclusion tension in the institutional level scenarios (B1-B4). It is organised according to scenarios. The aim is to show that for every scenario there was the same pattern of responses about the tension: explanation of the situation in the scenario (from the perspective of homophily or inclusion), recognition of the tension (as one between *want* and *should*, *general* and *special*, or *ideal* and *compromises*), ethical dimension, possible resolutions, and reflection. The structure is based on the school staff analysis framework (section 3.12). These elements are used to build the analysis presented in the discussion chapter. The definitions of all themes are available in appendix 9.c.2.

Where applicable, the themes are subcategorised according to scenario. Each participant was interviewed with one scenario.

Scenario (B1): it was intended for school staff and refers to a tension between teacher and students in terms of group allocation; a variation of scenario (A1).

The scenario reads as such:

In a secondary mainstream class, Mr Brown, the history teacher, asked the students to choose the classmates they wanted to work with to prepare a presentation on World War Two. Andrew and Julie, both being visually impaired, agreed to work together on the project and strongly refused to co-operate with anyone else. But, Mr Brown felt he should ask a low-achieving, non-disabled student to join them in the task.

The first question that was asked was: *Why do you think Mr Brown felt he should not allow Andrew and Julie to form a group together?* There were various answers to this question. S4, a special schoolteacher (male), explained the situation from the perspective of inclusion:

‘Inclusion - ethical obligation’

Q: *Why do you think Mr Brown felt he should not allow Andrew and Julie to form a group together?*

S4: *[...] Well because of inclusion, we're meant to mix up the students, we shouldn't categorise them with their disabilities and if they're in a class of non-disabled students, then there should be a representative mix in each group.*

Q: *But the students wanted to do that by themselves...*

S4: *Well you then either decide to let them do that or you teach them a different way, because they are being exclusive within an inclusive setting and that's not a healthy*

way of looking to feel that they are being, they are categorising themselves in to this pigeon hole, this label of visually impaired and therefore nobody else can touch them. That's not healthy for them as a training for further on.

Even though he seemed open to take into consideration the students' preference, he described this preference, which could limit their social life and future, as '*non-healthy*' and '*exclusive*'. From a different perspective, M1, a mainstream teacher (female), interpreted Mr Brown's intentions as a false assumption that since the students are visually impaired they have to be low-achievers – or as an attempt to make the third student to appreciate the difficulties that students with disabilities can experience:

'Stereotypes'

Q: *Why do you think Mr Brown felt he should not allow Andrew and Julie to form a group together?*

M1: *Maybe he made the assumption that he wanted someone to work with them who was able to see, who was sighted, but was probably assuming that they... because of their disability that they were at a disadvantage to do the task together.*

Q: *So why do you think he wanted to add a third student?*

M1: *[...] Oh right, yes, on the other hand he might have wanted to add a third student to help the third student to appreciate the difficulties that other students have maybe.*

M4, a mainstream school teaching assistant (female), expressed a similar idea about disability stereotypes, but also noted that Andrew and Julie would feel more comfortable working together as they have the same impairment and that a third student would not be able '*to take part in the same way*':

'Homophily - comfort zone'

Q: *Why do you think Mr Brown, the teacher, felt he should not allow Andrew and Julie to form a group together?*

M4: I think in a way basically there are two ways of looking at this. On the one hand if two students have the same disability, especially being visually impaired, they feel more comfortable working together and so from that point of view they might achieve more by working together. [...] I don't think I agree with the fact that he felt he should ask a low achieving non-disabled student to join them in the task because if this student hasn't got the same impairment, even if he's low achieving he won't be able to take part in the same way. And on the other hand I don't think it's fair on him just because he's low achieving to not give him the chance to actually work with students who are probably better achieving who he could learn from, as opposed to automatically put people in this category, say 'Ok he's low achieving so I'm going to put him with disabled students' [...]

This idea (respecting young people's preferences for interacting socially with similar others vs categorising/excluding) was also expressed by S4 to have an ethical dimension. It would be questionable for the teacher to categorise the students according to their abilities (to make a decision based on that), but morally acceptable to respect their wish to work together if they were friends.

Disability can attract moral connotations:

'Right and wrong at the same time B1'

Q: *Is there anything morally wrong in Mr Brown's preference not to allow Andrew and Julie to work together, only together?*

S4: It depends if he's seeing the disability or not doesn't it? If he's seeing them both because they like to work together 'cause they're friends then you can't say that's a moral problem. If he's saying 'They're low ability, club them all together, join them all

together, because they've got a visual impairment then they're not very clever' or something, then you would have issues with his attitude.

This tension was also expressed as a tension between students' preference to work together and the teacher's moral obligation to socially include them:

'Want vs should B1'

Q: *But if Andrew and Julie feel safer together, only together, and Mr Brown refuses to see that is he morally wrong or not?*

S4: [...] I don't know, yes you could argue that's morally wrong, yeah. Because if they feel safe and comfortable together, like I said, a lot of kids do here feel safe and comfortable, then why upset them? Yeah. It depends what his point of view is, if he's trying to promote, if he's got one eye on helping them mix with other people, is it better to push them in that direction or just leave them alone? Now that's an interesting question, I'll have to think on that myself actually.

In addition, it was discussed as a tension between providing for everyone and providing according to individual needs:

'General vs special B1'

Q: *Ok, should Mr Brown encourage Andrew and Julie to cooperate with other students?*

M1: Yeah.

Q: *Why?*

M1: Because in order for them to have successful and fulfilling lives they will need to work with able bodied students and disabled students alike, like everyone else.

Q: *And how would this help them?*

M1: *Because it would help them to, they can sort of almost use the able bodied students to... You know they could, for instance in a group they could be doing the thinking and saying and someone else could be the scribe so... We don't have any information about how these students work... I mean presumably they use Braille so in the classroom are they able to have facilities that help them to produce Braille? In that case then it's really important that they do just work together so that they can read each other's work and then communicate it verbally to everyone else.*

For M1 (mainstream schoolteacher) the students' preference to work together should be respected only when it is directly related to their disability-related needs, in this case the use of Braille. The reason is that their preference can come into tension with the imperative of social inclusion. Therefore, the assumption is that in order to have successful and fulfilling lives the students need to be socially included.

Yet, there can be some balancing between the students' preference to work together and the teacher's wish for them to cooperate with other people:

'Balancing want and should B1'

Q: ***What do you do about that?***

M4: *Sometimes I've actually encouraged them to do so and say 'Come on, give it a try and, you know, you've got things to say and the students will have things to say as well', you know, I've not taken 'Oh no I don't want to do it'. I've just kind of tried to sort of push them gently to sort of try it. 'And if it doesn't work, you know, next time we won't do this'.*

S4 (special schoolteacher) admitted the complexity of the issue:

'A complex issue B1'

Q: **Ok, do you think that the scenario succeeds in raising some issues?**

S4: *Yeah it did for me actually.*

Q: **What kind of issues?**

S4: *Well in that when you said 'Is it a moral...' when you brought in the moral issue... is it morally right for the teacher to tell them to join in with somebody else or allow them to be on their own? Why shouldn't you allow them to be on their own? That's a good question, so morally. Also the question about who has the final say, I said my answer but I'd probably have to think about that a bit more. I do think teachers should have some more wisdom, whether he applies that or not could be dangerous, you know, it could be a dangerous area, maybe personality gets in the way or preferences. So yeah it's been interesting. Have you got an answer?*

He notes that it is not always possible to distinguish between value-driven decisions, and decisions affected by personal preferences or personality traits.

Scenario (B2): it was intended for school staff and refers to a tension between a principal and a group of college students, in terms of a special place exclusively for students with disabilities. The scenario reads as such:

At Greentown College a group of students with disabilities believed that the college should have a special place dedicated exclusively to students with various disabilities. This centre would offer opportunities for social interaction among students with disabilities. The majority of the teachers at Greentown agreed to support the students' initiative. But, the college principal stated that he didn't want such a special place for students with disabilities on campus, because it could work against the aims of social inclusion that the college aspired. He decided, then, the matter not to be discussed again.

The first question that was asked was: *Why do you think the college principal forcibly closed the matter?* There were various answers to this question. S2, a special schoolteacher (female), answered from the perspective of inclusion, while at the same time she questioned the principal's understanding of it:

'Inclusion - ethical obligation'

Q: *Why do you think the college principal forcibly closed the matter?*

S2: *Because he had the power to do so, firstly... (She laughs) Obviously he had a view of the college as being inclusive and he clearly felt that this was not upholding the principles of inclusion.*

Q: *What do you think his understanding of inclusion is?*

S2: *It sounds as though for him inclusion simply means disabled people and able-bodied people in the same place, though he clearly hasn't accepted that there may be different wishes and that inclusion also means the right to make their own decisions.*

Q: *Do you agree with him or not?*

S2: *No, I don't. (She laughs) [...] I mean yes, he's got the right to make that decision, but if it's a request that has come from the students, the students would want to use that facility, then the least he could do is discuss it with them and find out why they feel it's necessary. And if it is strictly against his principles he should explain those to the students and to the teachers who also supported it. It should be some sort of dialogue; it shouldn't be an autocratic system, that's clearly not inclusive.*

The principal based his decision on a placement understanding of inclusion, while S2 stressed that inclusion should also mean that students have the right to decide for themselves. For her, inclusion should be related to dialogue and democratic procedures (see also the discussion chapter, section 5.11).

However, although she stated that she does not agree with him, she seemed to support the hierarchy of decision-making in that college.

S5, a special school administrator (male), avoided giving a clear answer, but focused instead on the difficulties that the issue would cause:

'A complex issue B2'

Q: ***Why do you think the college principal forcibly closed the matter?***

S5: *Well I think it's a difficult situation actually, it's not straightforward. I suspect that it was a situation that threw up a lot of tensions and probably in the interests of just making a clear decision on it, cut the discussions because you are going to have very opposing views on something like this I would suggest.*

Further, he explained what he meant by '*tensions*' and '*opposing views*'. He described a tension between providing for all people, and providing according to individual needs (i.e. creating a special place for people with disabilities). He also saw an ethical tension in the principal's actions. Maybe he did the safest thing by avoiding a heated disagreement, but did not take into consideration the students' preferences:

'General vs special B2'

Q: ***What do you think?***

S5: *[...] I think my first reaction would be to close down the discussion because that would be the safest, but I don't think it would be the right decision personally. I think that people with disabilities should have the option, they don't obviously need to take it up, but they should have the option to have somewhere, a centre where they can get together to reinforce their own identity, to talk about issues specifically related to their challenges, to meet with other students on their own grounds as it were.*

Q: *Could that be a threat to social inclusion generally?*

S5: Yeah it could be seen as such, I accept that. My position would be that people with a... Right ok my position about special schools is that there is a place for special schools because for some young people there is the opportunity to become more secure in themselves, to become more confident, to build their self esteem, and to have services, by that I mean educational services or care services, which are geared towards their needs. And through that process they are more confident people and therefore more equipped to be integrated in to society as a whole. That's not everybody's viewpoint, I accept that, but that's kind of where I've come to over the years. So in a scenario like this at this college, I would say that because those young people are disadvantaged and have got particular and specific challenges, both educationally and socially, then there is a place for them to have a specific place for them to meet and to have their needs met.

S5's argument was extended to the role of special settings generally in the educational system. He argued that though not all people would agree – this is why he refers to opposing views – special settings can offer opportunities. Nevertheless, some balancing is required between what is provided generally and what is personally needed (the discussion was about a policy that would resolve the issue):

'Balancing general and special B2'

S5: I think that's what the equality and diversity is all about, it's about recognising the needs of the individual, not the individual above everybody else, but the individual within the community.

Q: *So do you think that's the policy that would resolve issues like that in schools and educational institutions?*

S5: Yeah the individual and the community, yeah, yeah.

Q: [...] I have the impression that equality and diversity can be interpreted in many ways and that sometimes can be problematic.

S5: Yes definitely, definitely. Yeah it can be taken on board sometimes as a mandate for [a] very assertive position, particularly from some particular groups. But it needs to be back, it needs to come back and be balanced with the idea of being a community and the needs of the community as well as the needs of the individual.

So, there needs to be balance between the needs of the many and the needs of the individual, or, between treating everybody the same (general provision) and accommodating individual needs (special provision). This balance is 'very fine'. This is further examined in the discussion chapter (5.8):

'Fine balance B2'

S5: [...] I think there is that very fine line between having provision which is geared towards particular needs and geared towards allowing for social interaction [...].

This tension was also described in terms of the students' preference to be among similar others, and the moral imperative of including all people:

'Want vs should B2'

Q: Do you think that the students have the right to ask for a special place or not?

S2: They have the right to ask. If it is something that they have decided that they want, of course they have the right to ask for it, they don't have the right to demand it, but they have the right to ask for it just as any other group of students. If the girls decided they wanted a girls-only common room, if the year seven said we don't like mixing with the older children we wanted a place where just we can be... They've all got the same right to ask for what they feel meets their needs. And he, the principal, still has the

same right to say in this school, in this college these are the facilities we have, these are the options we have, and therefore we cannot accommodate that request.

Q: *Do you think that it is a matter of resources or a matter of principle?*

S2: No, I think in this case it's not to do with the resources; there is nothing to indicate that. It sounds as though it's simply that he has a notion of what social inclusion is, and social inclusion to him means you are all in the same room, whether you want to be or not.

S2 saw a tension between the principal's ideas (inclusion) and the students' preference (homophily), but at the same time she expressed her disapproval of the principal's understanding of inclusion – '*he has a notion of what inclusion is*' – and she proposed discussion as a possible resolution:

'Getting all sides of the story B2'

Q: *The crucial point for you is the discussion or the decision?*

S2: It's the discussion, because the discussion is the inclusive bit. The decision... as the principle he has the right to make a decision about how the resources are allocated. [...] But if he's not had any discussion with anybody first place, then there is not a discussion, there is no... He is imposing his power on the situation.

She highlighted the inequality of power between the principal and the students – '*he is imposing his power*' – and noted that discussion is the '*inclusive bit*'.

Scenario (B3): it was intended for members of school staff and refers to a disagreement between the two PE teachers of a mainstream school in terms of the creation of a special sports team. The scenario reads as such:

In a mainstream secondary school, Mrs Warren, one of two PE teachers of the school, proposed to the head teacher the creation of a 'special' sports team, which would be for students with disabilities. To support her proposal, Mrs Warren conveyed to the head teacher the opinions of many students with disabilities that seemed to be very enthusiastic about the project. But when Mr Jones, the other PE teacher, was informed, he strongly refused to support the idea, because he considered it to be a pure act of discrimination.

The first question that was asked was: *Why do you think Mr Jones reacted negatively?* There were various answers to this question. M6, a mainstream school teaching assistant (female), answers from the perspective of inclusion:

'Inclusion - ethical obligation'

Q: *Why do you think Mr Jones, the other PE teacher, reacted negatively?*

M6: I think sometimes some of the teachers can act quite negatively because it's almost taking students away and promoting the idea that they are different to other students and that they have to have their own kind of sports thing for themselves and they can't actually take part in the normal sports activities within the school.

Q: *So do you think that Mr Jones reacted negatively to that?*

M6: I think so, yeah I think that he probably did react negatively because he felt that they were being pulled away from the students that are deemed as being able body and with no other issues.

M3, a mainstream school administrator (female), expressed the same idea, but she also described a tension between providing for everybody, and differentiating according to individual needs to facilitate participation:

'General vs special B3'

Q: *Why do you think Mr Jones, the other PE teacher, reacted negatively?*

M3: Probably 'cause he thought it wouldn't be... it's not a case of inclusion. Because if you separate a group of students out that obviously have a disability, whether that be physical or within the realms of autistic or anything like that, then what you're doing is creating, you're excluding them rather than including them, I would have thought that's why he thought that.

Q: *What do you mean by 'a case of inclusion'?*

M3: [...] Oh, what is inclusion? Where everyone is included within the activity, within, well in the case of say the school or the PE group it's that everyone is included and treated equally so therefore you're included within whatever the activity is. But then again it can be differentiated, therefore making it easier for that person or persons to be included within it.

S3, a special schoolteacher (male), described this tension in terms of an ideal (treating everybody equally) and the compromises that have to be made towards this direction (leaving space for special arrangements):

'Ideal vs compromise B3'

Q: *Why do you think Mr Jones, the other PE teacher, reacted negatively?*

S3: I think because in terms of equality he would be hoping that PE [could be] provided for everybody without having a special arrangement for certain people and he would regard the special provisions as a form of discrimination that they couldn't engage in the normal sporting activities and things like that. I think, you know, it would be a concern that the students weren't integrated fully.

Q: *Would there be any practical difficulties, if all students were to participate equally?*

S3: *Absolutely, yeah. I think certain disabilities would mean that they couldn't engage in the same way as others in activities and he might be able to have... you know play rugby in a wheelchair with all the wheelchair users, but you couldn't – if you are confined to a wheelchair – you couldn't participate in rugby. So actually rugby itself would exclude wheelchair users. So, that's the difficulty. I think Mr Jones has an ideal which is very commendable but it is the practical difficulties that undermine it.*

He also referred to the practical difficulties that are intertwined with this tension, namely disability-related difficulties, that should lead to the re-examination of the ideal from a more realistic perspective.

This tension was seen to have an ethical dimension. M6 described the proposal as both right and wrong – she was '*stuck in the middle*' – as she could see advantages and disadvantages from both sides:

'Right and wrong at the same time B3'

Q: ***Is there anything morally wrong in Mrs Warren's idea?***

M6: *I don't think there is, no.*

Q: ***Is there anything morally right?***

M6: *I don't... I'm pretty much stuck in the middle. I couldn't say whether it was right or wrong. [...] I'm a really particularly sporty person, I love my sport and I can see benefits either side. I can see that being able to allow these students to be able to have their own sports event is a good thing and a positive thing. I can also see the side of it where maybe excluding those kids from being within a team environment where there [are] able body students with no form of disabilities, you know, it's wrong to exclude them. But to me it's entirely up to the parents and to the students themselves whether they feel...*

M3 noted that dialogue and weighting of the pros and cons of the different sides is a way to overcome this tension – but also the students' parents needed to be involved, and the school policies to be consulted:

'Getting all sides of the story B3'

M3: [...] I think that possibly then what they need to do is they need to weigh up the pros and cons, they need to get the students enthusiastic about the project, they need to maybe get the views of other students that are in the PE lessons, they need to get the views of the parents, and actually look into it inside of the discrimination act, and which side they are going to fall on. So I mean it probably just, the whole thing needs looking into a lot deeper. So it's not... you can't, you have an idea and you run to it and she's proposed it to the head teacher, but then therefore then, what you're then going to do is look at the policies of the school or the codes of practice and everything like that to see whether actually yeah, then...

S6 (special schoolteacher) stressed particularly the hierarchy of power:

'Getting all sides of the story B3'

Q: So who should have the final word on the matter? [...]

S6: Probably the head teacher, as the manager of the establishment I think it would have to go to the head teacher in the end. Regardless of however many teachers – because there obviously would be, you know, one PE teacher has a different view to the other PE teacher and there would be supporters of this teacher in the teaching group and then similar, and the students themselves, they should be given an opportunity to put their point across. Similarly those with disabilities who wish not to be part of this team should also be given the opportunity to say, to express why they, or even just to decline the invitation to join. So ultimately the head teacher I think.

Finally, a possible resolution would require balancing between what is provided generally and what is personally needed. Yet, this balancing would be 'tricky' as things have to be fair for everybody:

'Fine balance B3'

Q: Let's go back to the scenario. What kind of policy would resolve the issue in the story? Policy or principle if you prefer it...

S3: I think you would want a kind of policy or principle that stated that everybody has a value and should be included as fully as they can be, but with a recognition that people are different and that those differences mean that their requirements vary and that provision has to be adjusted sometimes to fit those requirements at the same time. You would want those things to be held in balance, so that adjusting for one person didn't make things unfair for another, and that is the tricky thing all the time.

Scenario (B4): it was intended for school staff and refers to tension between a head teacher and a group of students with Asperger syndrome that tended to gather in a small isolated garden. It reads as such:

A mainstream secondary school has a small number of students with Asperger syndrome. Every day, during the lunch break, these students tended to gather in a small isolated garden near the playground, where they were interacting peacefully. Mrs Evans, the school head teacher, noticed this everyday gathering and asked the students why they didn't mingle with their classmates. They answered her that the noise of the others was tiring, and that they were really enjoying their time together. But, Mrs Evans decided that from that point on the small garden would have to remain locked.

The first question that was asked was: *Why do you think Mrs Evans decided to lock the small garden?* There are various answers to this question. M2, a mainstream school teaching assistant (female), answered from the perspective of inclusion. Socialisation with different people is important, almost obligatory in a mainstream setting – ‘*they needed to interact with everybody*’:

‘Inclusion - ethical obligation’

Q: *Why do you think Mrs Evans, the head teacher, decided to lock the small garden?*

M2: *She probably thought to enable those children to come out of their special group and thought they needed to interact with everybody else in the mainstream school and that was the only way that she could do it.*

Q: *And why she felt that this is something they need to do?*

M2: *She probably thought she was doing the right thing by encouraging those children to cope with the noise and everyday life because she probably thought that’s what’s going to happen outside of school, you know, you can’t protect yourself in a little environment all the time. There’s going to be situations in shops or out on the streets or if you’re enjoying yourself in a disco or something like that, so to encourage that.*

S1, a special schoolteacher (female), expressed the same idea, but particularly stressed that inclusion is forced upon these students despite their wishes, thus introducing a tension between the students’ preference to be among similar others and the head teacher’s wish to socially include them:

‘Inclusion forced’

Q: *Why do you think Mrs Evans decided to lock the small garden?*

S1: *Because I think the Asperger students were engaging in an attitude that she didn't wish and it seems like that she wanted them to participate more with their classmates even though everyday in a classroom they have to do this.*

This tension was described more clearly here:

'Want vs should B4'

Q: *How does the students' being by themselves differ from interacting with their other classmates for Mrs Evans?*

S1: *Well I think Mrs Evans has reached the assumption that this is wrong and she probably wants to include them, even though the Asperger students have decided 'no this what we want because the whole day is tiring and confusing in our brains and we can do this and we are not harming anyone, so this is great'. So there's a mix... [...] Mrs Evans is probably thinking about all of the students from her knowledge of being perhaps an ordinary person rather than through whom having Asperger's.*

S1 raised the issue of the difficulties that students with Asperger syndrome face in a mainstream environment which is the reason why the students in the scenario asked for some alone time in the small garden. Yet, she also raised the issue of Mrs Evans's knowledge of the particular challenges associated with the syndrome, and she questioned her empathy and sensitivity towards the students' difficulties.

This tension was also described to have an ethical dimension:

'Right and wrong at the same time B4'

Q: *Given all the things we have discussed so far, is there anything morally wrong in Mrs Evans's decision?*

M2: *I suppose yeah the locking, you're restricting a group of people going into an area, she hasn't actually said why, she hasn't said 'Oh because you're being too noisy in there,' or, you know, been disruptive, she hasn't actually said 'I need you to come out' or encouraged people to come out in to other areas to go to. So I think it's morally wrong that she hasn't actually got a reason why, so it looks like because of their Asperger's [...]*

Q: *If her actions actually helped the students to socialise more with a variety of other people, would there be something morally good in her decision?*

M2: *I suppose kind of long term if you see it like that and with hindsight into it you could see what's the outcome of it and then looking back you would say 'oh well actually she did good for those children, she encouraged them to go out' but I think witnessing, say we worked where she is, witnessing what they were doing you'd think 'Oh that's not the best way to do it, you need a weaning off process, maybe encouragement [...]' So in hindsight it looks as though it's morally good but I think the process of getting there, it wouldn't have been.*

M2 (teaching assistant), with some probing, saw the head teacher's actions as right and wrong at the same time. Acting against students' preferences without discussion and clear reasoning is morally wrong, but if her actions could help the students to be included, she would be right. Yet, this part was expressed with less certainty as the way she chose to achieve inclusion is questionable.

So, there needs to be discussion and some balancing between the students' preference to be together and the head teacher's wish to include them, as M5, a mainstream school teaching assistant (female), pointed out:

'Getting all sides of the story B4'

Q: *What would be the principle that would resolve the issue and that would give guidance to Mrs Evans to take her decision?*

M5: *What, after she's talked to a SENCO etc.? [...] Talking to the students, asking them to say why exactly they find it so important for them, perhaps talking to the parents of the children, talking to the tutors of those individual kids to see what they reckon.*

Q: *[...] so do you think that discussion would be the way to do it?*

M5: *Yes definitely.*

It should be noted that she stressed the role of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) of the school, as the first person that the head teacher should consult on this issue. Other proposed resolution:

'Balancing want and should B4'

Q: **What kind of compromise?**

M2: *Maybe they could do, you know, 'If we could spend so long in the garden, we will try and spend so much time out on the playground' or wherever she wants them to go. So they're not isolated all the time, so maybe they say one lunchtime they could go in the garden, next lunchtime they should be out and about so, you know, sort of encouraged that way.*

And any balancing would be fine, as it would be connected with the practical and ideological complexities of inclusion:

'Fine balance B4'

S1: *The dilemma that you have making school work for everybody in it all day, making it work for the head teacher, making it work for the Asperger's kids, and outside when you are taking it home to the parents, and all the other students. And this is a daily dilemma when we are forced to learn in one place, or encouraged to learn in one place.*

4.1.3. Young people and school staff: the tension in actual situations

In this section, I present descriptions of the homophily/inclusion tension in actual (not scenario-based) situations that both young people and school staff experienced, and also a particular situation as described by members of staff and students from the same special school. The aim of this section is to show that participants could recognise the homophily/inclusion tension not only in the scenario-based situations but also in their own experiences. The definitions of themes are available in appendix 9.c.

M6, a mainstream school teaching assistant (female), described a tension between a preference of one of her students to work with her friends and her decision not to accommodate this preference, as no other student would have this kind of choice:

‘Real life tensions’

M6: *I have experienced a scenario where I was at a residential and I was with a student and they wanted to be taken out of their group because they felt that the characters were too big and too strong, and they wanted to be in a group with their own little friends that they were used to.*

Q: **Was that accommodated somehow?**

M6: *It wasn't accommodated in the fact that she didn't get her way; she wasn't told 'yes ok we're going to take you from this group and we're going to put you with your friends.' She had support with her so she was able to complete the activity as best as she possibly could, because I don't feel that they should get their own way to go with their own students.*

Q: **Why?**

M6: *Does any other student get the right to say 'I'm going to go in this group'? No, so I don't feel she should, or he should either.*

Q: *All the students there had disabilities?*

M6: *No, this was a mixture, this was... yeah this was a complete mixture.*

Q: *Do you think that students with disabilities may experience more difficulties because of their disabilities?*

M6: *In some activities yes they could, but I think they would experience those difficulties whether they were in a group with all disabled children or whether they were in a group with a mixture, they've still got that issue at the end of the day so it doesn't matter where you put them.*

It should be noted that the student had the support she needed; yet, her preference to work with her friends – as she felt that the characters of the others ‘*were too big and too strong*’ – was not considered to be important because it was not directly related to a particular difficulty of hers, and came into tension with the principle of treating everybody equally. So, the tension here is between homophily and social inclusion, but also between providing for all and providing for the individual. The last paragraph indicates that M6 saw the issue as relatively unimportant.

Young people can experience a tension when it comes to cooperating with different people. C10, a 21 years old woman with Asperger syndrome, described a similar classroom situation:

‘Respect’

Q: *Andrew and Julie are expressing a preference to cooperate with somebody similar to themselves. Have you experienced a situation like this?*

C10: *[...] Yeah [...] If the group had had to be 3 at minimum then whoever gets, I notice that whoever does get picked with me and another Aspie is often either reluctant or is usually another loner for a different reason. If... they're usually reluctant if they're*

picked at random, and that's why they're reluctant, it makes us not want to cooperate with them because it comes across as disrespectful.

Q: *Why do you think they are reluctant?*

C10: *'Cause they probably would rather be with their own similar minded people rather than us, and we would rather be with each other.*

Q: *Who is the person that says that you have to cooperate?*

C10: *Usually the teacher or a teaching assistant...*

Q: *Is there any discussion beforehand?*

C10: *Not usually, they don't usually discuss it beforehand, they usually just put us in to groups like right away, like 'right we're doing this task' and it can get a bit rushed.*

Here the tension is between what the students would prefer to do – they prefer to be among '*similar minded people*' – and what they were asked or forced to do by people in authority – the teacher or the teaching assistants. It should be noted that the enforcement itself, or the particular choice of the third student ('*somebody reluctant*' or '*another loner*'), was seen as lack of respect. In addition, the two students with Asperger syndrome were not allowed to work only together, possibly because this was seen as categorising or excluding.

The idea of the similar minded one was discussed by both young people and school staff, especially in the case of a particular special school dedicated to visual impairment. This school attend diverse students in terms of their abilities and needs – what they have in common is a visual impairment. Therefore, students with high abilities and students with complex needs coexist in the same educational setting. Members of staff there observed and reported the following behaviour:

'Real life tensions'

Q: *If some students of your school wanted a special place only for themselves, what would you think about it?*

S2: [...] We've got a fairly vocal group of more able students who feel quite strongly that they should not be expected to mix with those with the more severe physical disabilities. And they are absolutely entitled to their opinion, but they are not entitled to any more special treatment than anybody else. So they have expressed that they want to not have to mix with these students and they've been told that in the main they won't be mixing with those students, because they are in discrete groups. And they are based in ability groups anyway to a certain extent. So the actual mixing that they have to do anyway is limited. But when we have a whole school function, everybody is expected to attend, because you are part of the whole school. And some ones I am afraid are quite difficult to accept... And as I say it is the more able, the more articulate that seems to have the problem. You know the ones that have more disabilities obviously have less opportunity to express their opinions anyway.

Q: *Did the school acknowledge that, or...?*

S2: It was acknowledged and those students were told that... well they were asked if they would simply try to cooperate with any functions that were for the whole school.

Q: [...] *Would you ever think this behaviour as discriminatory?*

S2: Yes, I think it is discriminatory actually. And they've been encourage to recognise that their perhaps being elitist in their thinking.

S2, a female teacher in this special school, described the preference of the more able, more articulate, students of the school not to mix with the less able of their classmates during school functions as 'elitism'. S1, a female teacher of the same school, had a slightly different opinion for the same issue. For her it was not some kind of discrimination, but it was still wrong:

S1: They just wanted to feel ordinary teenagers with VI, blindness, but just they wanted their teenage peer group, and I think there was a move to help them decide that that is not the right decision. But for me, no actually part of teen age years is actually backing against whatever the adults say you should do. And I've had three children; they are twenty six, twenty four and nearly twenty two. So it was very hard for me as a parent when they were going against what I wanted. But you can see the reason for it, in order to become more skilled and more independent. So... and also the teenagers here who [...] didn't want to be with children not speaking, or on wheelchairs because they would just [be] doing what most humans do they find like. And it's not necessarily racist, and it's not necessarily sexist, and it's not ageism, so... they just have a security in being with someone who is like them [...]

So it could be attributed to adolescence, or it would have to do with a preference of the students to be with someone they perceive to be like themselves. This idea was expressed more clearly by the young people themselves, that is, the more able students of this school that their tutors discussed about:

'Homophily - equal status'

W2: [...] In this place here we have students that [...] well they're not fully functioning, but because two students that hang around are in the same houses and they have similar disabilities, because they're on those levels they get on, whereas if I go up to one of the students that's like that, I haven't got a clue what's going on in their head or how to interact with them because [...] I'm on a different level than they are.

Q: Do you see any difference between people like you and people different from you?

W3: *Yeah there is a difference. [...] Most of the people here are more disabled than me, but there's only a very small majority that are like me. But there are, yeah, I've [been] with disabled people, I can like say 'hello' but I prefer to be with people like me.*

Q: Why?

W3: *'Cause then I'm on a level, they're like me, it's a bit hard to like really disabled people and I find it easy to talk to people on my level.*

Q: Do you prefer to interact socially with others who you think are like yourself, or do you prefer to interact with people who are different?

W5: *I think it depends on the... on what I'm doing really. I mean I don't have a problem interacting with anybody, I can interact with... As long as they're kind of at my level intelligence wise, I mean I know that sounds quite bad, but you know...*

'Homophily - understanding'

W5: *[...] throughout my secondary education [...] I was in a college of people like myself who have varying disabilities and therefore kind of all understood each other. I mean I think even with people who have disabilities there is a certain amount of misunderstanding about other's disabilities, but you're more kind of open to get to learn about other peoples' disabilities and to understand them.*

W2, W3 and W5 all have a visual impairment (W3 also has cerebral palsy). These young people had a preference to be among similar minded people, and this preference was expressed as a need for communication and understanding that extended beyond their common experiences of having the same impairment.

4.2. Issues around the homophily/inclusion tension

The second part of the findings chapter is about issues related to the homophily/inclusion tension, organised in eight sections. The aim of this part is to examine crucial issues that are related to the tension. A number of themes that illuminate various aspects of the tension are presented comparatively, integrating the scenarios and the two participant groups. This discussion prepares the ground for the analysis presented in the next chapter (chapter 5).

Table 12 provides the topics that are discussed. The first six sections come from the two analysis frameworks (main analysis frameworks) presented in section 3.12. Along with the previous section (4.1) this completes the presentation of findings from the main analysis frameworks for both young people and members of school staff. The section about *disability* presents findings organised in the other themes framework (appendix 9.b.3 and 9.b.4). Such themes are also included in the *social relationships* section. These themes are related to the issues under examination, but they are not of direct relevance to particular research aims. The same applies for the last section that illustrates themes that highlight aspects of the tension, but do not contribute directly to the aims of the study.

Conceptual themes	Grounded themes	
Similarity and difference (Both groups)	Similarity: Reasons for homophily	Various themes
	Difference	Various themes
	Similarity and difference in terms of disability	Various themes
The role of choice (Both groups)	Various themes	
Ethical implications of the tension (Both groups)	Various themes	
Power dynamics and decision-making (Both groups)	Various themes	
Policy issues (School staff)	Various themes	
Social relationships (Both groups)	Various themes	
Disability (Both groups)	Various themes	
Miscellaneous themes (Both groups)	Various themes	

Table 12: Findings part 2 (based on the framework of the analysis)

4.2.1. Similarity and difference

This section compares young people's perceptions of similar and different people with staff's interpretations and understanding of the young people's social behaviour.

4.2.1.1. Similarity

Ideas about similarity are explored through homophily – the expression of a preference to be among others perceived as similar – which was seen to have two dimensions, a positive and a negative one:

Reasons for homophily	Positive	Negative
Both groups	Common ground Understanding Comfort zone Equal status Confidence Security	Oppression Bullying
Young people	Easy communication Deep connection Participation Trust	Fear
School staff	Identity Emotional need	Victimisation Lack of confidence Lack of social skills

Table 13: Reasons for homophily

As illustrated in table 13 above, young people focused more on sentiments (e.g. fear or trust) and their experiences of homophily (e.g. deep connection or easy communication), whereas school staff attempted to analyse the reasons behind the young people's social behaviour (e.g. lack of confidence or emotional need). Most themes are common across the two groups. Homophily was mainly described to have a positive dimension. The two aspects of homophily are further discussed in the discussion chapter (section 5.5 and 5.12.1). I now explore the positive and negative aspects of homophily, illustrating examples from themes that were common as well as exclusive to the young people and members of staff:

4.2.1.1.1. Positive homophily (both)

Homophily was *positively* related by both young people and school staff to the following aspects: common ground, understanding, comfort zone, equal status, confidence and security. For example, C6, identified with Asperger syndrome, thought that Andrew and Julie prefer to work together because they have some kind of close relationship – something in common apart from having the same impairment:

‘Homophily - common ground’ (young people)

Q: *Why do you think Andrew and Julie want to work together and refused any other cooperation?*

C6: For all I know they could be boyfriend and girlfriend or, I don't know, maybe, or maybe I don't know, they are brother or sister or cousin or something [...]

Similarly, M1, a mainstream teacher, noted that Andrew and Julie have a preference to work together just because they might be friends:

‘Homophily - common ground’ (school staff)

M1: [...] it might be to do with how any child with specific needs is viewed in that school. Or it might be that they are just very good friends anyway, you know, I mean it might just be a coincidence that they're both visually impaired [...]

A preference for similar others can also be built on the understanding that people who experience the same difficulties can have for each other – as C3, who is identified with Asperger syndrome, explained:

‘Homophily - understanding’ (young people)

Q: Do you prefer to socialise with them?

C3: *Yeah it's a lot easier really 'cause they understand what sort of problem I've got, unlike with these other people who, which makes you feel like if you slip up or... [...]*

M1, a mainstream teacher, referred to the same idea; Andrew and July can understand each other as they have '*the same sort of needs*':

'Homophily - understanding' (school staff)

Q: Why do you think Andrew and Julie wanted to work only together and strongly refused any other cooperation?

M1: *It might be because of perceived, they might perceive that others are sort of hostile to them or don't really like to communicate with them, and that they want to avoid the situation of feeling left out and that they identify with somebody they know understands the way that they... that has the same sort of needs.*

Or homophily can be the more comfortable – less challenging – choice, W6, who is visually impaired, stressed:

'Homophily - comfort zone' (young people)

Q: Why do you think John expressed a preference to work only with other visually impaired people?

W6: *Yeah, like I said, I think it's just because he'll find it more comfortable because they've got a visual impairment and he's got a visual impairment, they're all in the same boat, they've all got the same problem so they can all relate to that [...]*

M2, a mainstream teaching assistant, agreed. Young people that have the same kind of needs ('*they didn't like the noisy atmosphere*') may feel more comfortable together:

'Homophily - comfort zone' (school staff)

Q: *And why they wanted to be only together?*

M2: Because they felt comfortable, you know, they felt comfortable with themselves as a group, themselves as people, and they knew that as a group they didn't like the noisy atmosphere [...]

People also seem to prefer to be among others they perceive as equals. B4, a young man with visual impairment, noted that John would be treated equally among other visually impaired people:

'Homophily - equal status' (young people)

Q: *Why John wanted to work alongside other people with visual impairment?*

B4: 'Cause he will be on the same level as everyone else, he'll be treated equally I suppose is what he would think. He'll be, yeah, treated equally amongst the whole group.

And M6, a mainstream teaching assistant, thought that among similar people one does not feel below or above anyone:

'Homophily - equal status' (school staff)

Q: *If you have a disability and you're in a group with other people with disabilities, what does that mean for you? What do you think?*

M6: I think personally that nobody feels that they're better than anyone else, and they also get the negative side of it where they don't feel that they are below anyone either, so they all feel that they are the same in some form.

Being among similar others can build one's confidence, as it reinforces one's established perspective on the world and self-esteem:

'Homophily - confidence' (young people)

Q: *Do you think that being able to choose who you work with is important?*

P1: I think to begin with yes, as it makes you feel more comfortable and more confident.

This is why young people with disabilities should have the opportunity to socialise with people who experience similar difficulties, S5 argued:

'Homophily - confidence' (school staff)

S5: And I would argue that because some students with disabilities need some extra support and some extra opportunities to meet with others and have their self confidence and their self esteem boosted, therefore there is an argument, I would say, for having their own space [...] I wouldn't say it should be totally exclusive, but the main thrust of it, the opportunity would be for the people with disabilities to meet there.

Homophily could also be about security – among similar people one feels safer.

W2 is visually impaired:

'Homophily - security' (young people)

W2: So I think again going back to this question, I think these two people with Asperger's would feel insecure about their disability and other people noticing it. [...] they feel like they're being picked on because of it and I don't think that's fair. And I think they just find it easier to work with someone who has their disability because they're on the same level, and people that are on the same level always get on.

M1 is a mainstream teacher and understood the students' position (safety), but also supported the teacher's decision (social inclusion):

'Homophily - security' (school staff)

Q: *And why could that be something beneficial for them?*

M1: *Because it will help them to mix with able bodied people and to not feel... they might have felt safe, and to sort of help them to go out of their safety zone by working with somebody who wasn't visually impaired.*

4.2.1.1.2. Positive homophily (young people)

Homophily was *positively* related exclusively by young people to easy communication, deep connection, participation and trust. C6, who has Asperger syndrome, noted that similar people, '*familiar minds*', can communicate more easily:

'Homophily - easy communication'

Q: *Would you like to explain to me what you mean by 'familiar minds' because it's an interesting phrase.*

C6: *You know, well familiar minds, exactly what it says on the tin, if you think something that you like and someone conveniently likes that and different things, you might bond together quicker, like super glue. If you're sort of 'Oh I'm interested in that subject,' 'Oh me too,' 'Oh awesome,' 'Let's be friends,' 'Ok.' Yeah sort of creating a network of things, and soon you'll have a huge, you know, familiar minds get a huge group and with that you'll know if there's any sort of... Once you connect to that gang, if something is wrong with one group you'll swarm in and look after them.*

W1, who has a visual impairment, argued that with other visually impaired people he could have a deeper connection. In comparison to non-disabled people, they would be able to feedback to him *'in a relevant way'*:

'Homophily - deep connection'

Q: *Would it be important for you to be able to choose if you were in the position of John?*

W1: *Yes, yes I think it would because if I was back in the story instead of John, I would have said 'I would like to work alongside visually impaired people because I can learn things from visually impaired people, but also I can learn from what sighted people tell me, you know, because if a sighted person says something to me or gives me some feedback then I can take that feedback on board, but on the other hand, however, if a visually impaired person gives me feedback then they'll be able to give it to me in a relevant way.'*

Also, being among similar others can promote participation, as similar people are perceived to have things in common:

'Homophily - participation'

Q: *Was it right or wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more daring with his life?*

W1: *Well I reckon he was wrong because if he was with people which [were] visually impaired as well then he could talk about, then he could participate in social activities because they would talk about the same kind of thing, maybe not on the same level, but at least on the same topics.'*

Finally, homophily – examined from the perspective of friendship – can also be connected to trust:

‘Homophily - trust’

Q: **Why do you think William had a preference for Marion?**

P3: *Probably trust.*

Q: **Why?**

P3: *Because, it's his best friend, so he would know her tendencies I suppose, he knows whether he would be able to work with her... reliability, I suppose. This is what comes to mind...*

4.2.1.1.3. Positive homophily (school staff)

Homophily was *positively* related exclusively by school staff to the following aspects: identity and emotional need. S5, a special school administrator, discussing scenario B2, noted that being with similar others can reinforce one's identity:

‘Homophily - identity’

S5: *I think my first reaction would be to close down the discussion because that would be the safest, but I don't think it would be the right decision personally. I think that people with disabilities should have the option, they don't obviously need to take it up, but they should have the option to have somewhere, a centre where they can get together to reinforce their own identity, to talk about issues specifically related to their challenges, to meet with other students on their own grounds as it were.*

And S3, a special schoolteacher, described homophily as a social and emotional need, especially as far as young people with disabilities are concerned – a need of ‘*immense*’ value:

‘Homophily - emotional need’

Q: *And do you think that being with similar people is an emotional need?*

S3: Yes. It is an emotional and a social need [...] I mean certainly for young people with disabilities, I think actually knowing at least some others who are struggling, perhaps have the same level of efforts to get up in the morning because of the problems they face and things like that... I think that's of immense value.

4.2.1.1.4.Negative homophily (both)

On the other hand, homophily was *negatively* related by both young people and school staff to oppression and bullying. C1, an 18 years old woman identified with Asperger syndrome, related homophily to the negative experiences she had in mainstream school. When she referred to the mainstream she used mostly present tense (suggesting perhaps that she still feels oppressed), while she used past tense (maybe a less stressing memory) to describe her experiences in a support centre for people with Asperger syndrome – for people like her:

‘Homophily resulting from oppression’ (young people)

C1: I find sometimes talking to normal people quite hard, because they don't really understand...I do in school and I try to talk to normal people I would find it so hard I have to really kick myself on the back and get myself talking to them. When I came here [to the centre], because I was with people that have the same problem as me I found it so easy to talk to them: Hi, how are you – you know, we find really easy to talk

to each other. But in school, I have no courage or no confidence to talk to any of them, because I was scared that as soon as I would open my mouth they would: Go away, leave me alone. The same thing...

S4, a special schoolteacher, also expressed a similar idea. The pressures of mainstream can often lead young people with disabilities to special settings, where they can be among similar people:

‘Homophily resulting from oppression’ (school staff)

Q: *So why do you think Andrew and Julie wanted to work together and refuse any other cooperation?*

S4: Well it's difficult to know without knowing them, but my experience of visually impaired people here, there are some people who feel comfortable being here and would have had maybe bullying problems in mainstream schools or just feel safer with people who know their conditions. And so maybe it's a safety issue, they just feel that they are kindred spirits that they know how each other will actually work without the pressures of other people judging them.

People with disabilities may prefer to be among similar others or in special settings also because of bullying, a special schoolteacher stressed:

‘Homophily resulting from bullying’ (school staff)

Q: *Why do you think they have chosen to be here?*

S4: [...] I think some of them have come from a very young age. But those who have chosen to be here, it will be a combination of advisory work, advisors advice to do that, and parental advice. Some of them [...] have had bad experiences in mainstream through bullying [...] which is a big thing.

Both the young people and members of school staff discussed how homophily – a preference for people who are similar – can limit one’s social horizon:

‘Homophily limits’ (young people)

Q: *And if they feel different because of their disability?*

B2: Then you’re just exaggerating the chasm between your two worlds; you are just making it, so they are gonna feel even more different. They are not gonna... they will eventually stop trying to interact with other people, wouldn’t they?

‘Homophily limits’ (school staff)

S4: Well if he allows them to work together on their own then as a microcosm he’s actually isolating them from their classmates and that’s not helping inclusion is it? That’s exclusion.

From this perspective, homophily was described as an opposite to inclusion.

4.2.1.1.5. Negative homophily (young people)

Homophily was *negatively* related exclusively by young people to fear. C10, who is identified with Asperger syndrome, noted that being among similar people can help avoid the fear of the unknown:

‘Homophily resulting from fear’

Q: *Do you think that the fact that they have Asperger’s syndrome has something to do with their preference to work together?*

C10: Yes.

Q: *How?*

C10: *'Cause they understand each other, 'cause they won't judge each other, I suppose they mix easier with their own kind, I suppose.*

Q: ***What do you mean by their 'own kind'?***

C10: *If they have the same condition then there's no reason to be fearful of the unknown.*

4.2.1.1.6. Negative homophily (school staff)

Homophily was *negatively* related exclusively by school staff to victimisation, lack of confidence and lack of social skills. S4, a special schoolteacher, described how young people with disabilities often see themselves as victims – perhaps an expression of internalised feelings of oppression:

'Homophily - victimisation'

Q: ***So why do you think Andrew and Julie wanted to work together and refuse any other cooperation?***

S4: *[...] it could be that they feel that they're, they have this inbuilt victimisation; I often see that in disability. [...] I don't [know] whether they feel that disability is poorly treated and therefore you have to fight, whether they feel of themselves as a bit of an underdog; they have this built in thought that, you know 'We have to fight for everything we get rather than see each other as equal members of society.'*

Homophily was related to lack of confidence to meet new people:

'Homophily - lack of confidence'

Q: ***Why do you think some people want to work only with certain people?***

M1: *Safety, lack of self belief, being – people who are less confident it tends to be really.*

And also, more generally, to lack of social skills:

'Homophily - lack of social skills'

Q: ***Why do you think it's tricky?***

M4: *Because I've worked with students who are, for example, autistic, and they're not very good at working with other students who are not like them so...*

Q: ***Why?***

M4: *I think because they've got, they're not very good, they haven't got social skills first of all so they chose like to be either working by themselves or with a teaching assistant.*

4.2.1.2.Difference

The notion of difference was also associated with positive or negative experiences. From a positive perspective, young people described difference and different people as something new and interesting. C10, identified with Asperger syndrome, reproduced a positive stereotype and referred to difference as something out of the ordinary:

'Difference is wonderful'

Q: ***Well why don't you think it is a disability and what do you think it is? Or your experience of that...***

C10: *Well it has... it is disadvantages and advantages and, like I said, if you call it a disability you're only ever looking at the disadvantages.*

Q: ***[...] And what are the advantages?***

C10: *What's the advantages? You have a deeper insight in to life, you have a higher IQ. I mean many famous people who invented Microsoft like Bill Gates, Einstein, who invented lots of things, and Mozart who invented lots of famous music, they all had Asperger's so I think this world does need people with Asperger's [...]*

W7, who is visually impaired, saw difference as a new experience. Although he shared similar experiences with other visually impaired people, he thought that being among different others can be '*more interesting*':

'Different people - new ideas, experiences' (young people)

Q: *And if you have somebody who is like you in the show, would there be any difference?*

W7: *Well the difference is you can tell jokes about partially sighted like, you know, blind things. That's a good difference! [...] And yeah you can have a good laugh but it's not the same as being able to talk with people outside.*

Q: *What's the difference?*

W7: *Well the difference, talking to people from outside you get to know a bit more about what's happening in the world and you get to find out a bit more like, you know, like say somebody like the African Americans or whatever they are, you get to find out what kind of food they eat and what kind of clothes they wear, yeah, stuff like that. So I think it's more interesting to be honest.*

Also M1, a mainstream teacher, stressed the importance of incorporating different people and new ideas in any educational activity, as it can help the students further in their life:

'Different people - new ideas, experiences' (school staff)

Q: *Have you had students who wanted to work together all the time in your class?*

M1: *Yeah.*

Q: *What did you do about that and how did you feel about that?*

M1: *The way I approach it is by having a talk, a general talk about working together, teamwork, and how on a good team you have people who, somebody who is maybe a good leader, somebody who is a good... You know, and that you look at skills and you put people together or you choose to join together with a group giving a variety of skills. And that you encourage people to work with and get to know people that they don't necessarily socialise with because it's, that's what happens in real life. You know, in your job you might not want to really, not choose to be best friends with your boss or whatever, or with a colleague, but you still need to work together and so you need to have that experience to help you for further life really. So that's what I tend to do, I tend to show them why it's good to mix and get a different, you know, you can get a different take on different ideas that people have.*

On the other hand, being with different people can be challenging for the young people, as C6, who has Asperger syndrome, discussed. Andrew and Julie created a little circle which was 'invaded' by an outsider:

'Different people - challenge' (young people)

Q: *But in terms of Andrew and Julie, would they feel that they were...?*

C6: *They might feel a bit threatened 'cause, you know, their little circle has been invaded by an outsider. It's all like isolated, they're isolated, they've got the same sort of condition so there's probably going to be a few problems with a low achieving student, a non-disabled student joining them, it might be a bit of a problem.*

And a mainstream school administrator who works for the special educational needs department of her school noted that teachers often react with fear to students that are seen as different:

'Different people - challenge' (school staff)

M3: I think students with disabilities, I think they're misunderstood [...] and also the fact that I think a lot of, I'm not saying all teachers, but I think a lot of the teachers are quite scared, to be quite honest. And they won't, don't ask, you know 'don't ask me, ask such and such, you know, I can't answer for them' and I think they are just scared of a reaction which they don't want to have because they don't know how to deal with it. And actually that, you know, students with disabilities, yes, but then students who maybe have behaviour, emotional and social issues, which [are] more what I focus on now, you get teachers that just won't ask them questions.

Nevertheless, it is much more challenging to be considered different yourself.

W2 described his difficulties of living with a visible disability:

'Visibility and invisibility of difference' (young people)

W2: [...] I don't think it matters on the disability. I think people are so intuitive and so intelligent that even a slight disability, people pick up on it, particularly kids, particularly if this is a secondary school, younger people tend to pick up on it more. I, for example, obviously I'm visually impaired, but when I'm out in public I actually don't behave like I do have one, you wouldn't be able to tell. However, looking at me about a year ago, just before Christmas, one eye, one of my eyes points straight forward, the other one used to tilt off and it used to be looking off to the right, and particularly young people, teenagers, kids, they notice it and they just stare and they stare and stare, and at some point it becomes very upsetting because it's... I had, I put up with it for 19 years and I just thought 'Screw it, I'm going for squint surgery,' and now my eyes point near enough

in the same direction and I don't get that so much. And it's, even if you don't, to bully someone you don't even have to do anything, you don't even have to say anything. When I'm out, when I used to be out in public and people used to just... It's almost as hurtful just to stare at someone like that, because you're singling them out and that's a horrible feeling. I felt like I was being bullied.

The need he felt to turn his visible disability to an invisible one indicates that visibility and invisibility is an important factor in terms of people's reactions to difference, but also that it is a matter of self-perception and self-esteem as his phrase reveals – *'to bully someone you don't even have to do or say anything'*. It is as though bullying comes from the inside as well as the outside. Difference is further discussed in the discussion chapter (section 5.3).

4.2.1.3. Similarity and difference in terms of disability

Young people and school staff also discussed similarity and difference in terms of disability. For C3, difference was mostly associated with visible differences; yet disability/difference can also be invisible:

'Similarity and difference because of disability' (young people)

Q: *How do you understand this word, 'difference', what does it mean for you?*

C3: I suppose it's an obvious difference, like appearance, you know, like you've got a stick and you might have to have someone to help you out, but like normal people, 'normal', they might have like, this is what I've learnt, they might have problems themselves, mental problems that people can't see inside, but that makes them appear normal like everyone else. But like learning disabilities and all that, they're obvious really, most of them anyway. So that makes people think of them as different really, 'cause they're not like them, well they don't appear like them.

A special schoolteacher described a situation where a student with a physical disability stood out because of his obvious difference, which in turn had an impact on the provision, but also on the behaviour of the people involved – they could not easily balance *‘in what ways he should be treated as typical and in what ways as special’*:

‘Similarity and difference because of disability’ (school staff)

S2: So when I was in mainstream I had a boy in a wheelchair in my class and he got a lot more attention than any of the other children in the class because he stood out; he was so much more obvious. And he had a member of staff exclusively working with him, and he had to have a special stair lift installed into the school that it wasn’t there before he arrived, but he had this stair lift installed so that he could get up the stairs and... So there were all sort of considerations put in specifically for him. [...] And a lot of the staff because they weren’t familiar with working with a boy with a disability didn’t entirely recognise what he needed, and in what ways he should be treated as typical and in what ways he should be treated as special.

Nevertheless people with disabilities are not all the same – there is similarity and difference within disability as well, C9 noted for young people with autism:

‘Similarity and difference within disability’ (young people)

C9: Disabled kids, sometimes disabled kids and disabled kids together will work out really well but sometimes it won’t work at all because each disabled kid is different. So like you might have some disabled kids who may have the same wavelength as you, you’ve got some disabled kids that may not have the same wavelength as you ’cause you have, if you think of Asperger’s syndrome and severe autism, there’s a lot of

difference between those boundaries 'cause most severely autistic children can't socialise, can't interact with people and they can't even talk so...

And M2, a mainstream teaching assistant, described a case where a young boy with Down syndrome could not relate himself to other young people with the same syndrome, as he thought that *'there were different'*:

'Similarity and difference within disability' (school staff)

M2: [...] I know I've seen a few parents who haven't told their children about their need, and I know that's quite strange on the outside thinking 'we know the child is Down's'. I've experienced a lad who would join a group of Down's children on a weekend and he didn't like it because he thought they were different and actually he didn't see himself like them. And it's like us putting someone 'Well you're Down's, you go in that group,' well no, we're all individuals.

Finally, similarity and difference also extend beyond disability to other aspects of difference – like preferences, race, skin colour or religion, as P2 noted, discussing the reasons why Jeremy did not want to invite to his party his blind classmate (scenario A4):

'Similarity and difference beyond disability' (young people)

P2: Maybe the fact that he is blind it gave in a sort of speak a reason why this person [was not invited]. We haven't talked about any year or classmates, they could have been you know black with Jewish, Arabic or Muslim and Christian and all that. So we could have had a multitude of factors where everyone is different maybe from the rest of the class. Maybe it is an entire disabled class and everybody is disabled in one way

or another. [...] Maybe Jeremy doesn't like white people, maybe everybody is blind in that class and they just don't get on, if that is an answer to your question...

And as M3 (a mainstream school administrator) stressed, all young people have their own personalities and ideas:

'Similarity and difference beyond disability' (school staff)

Q: *If we have on the one side students with disabilities and the other side students without disabilities, what do you think about that?*

M3: I don't think that would happen; I think you'd have a mixture of both because you're going to have... you're not going to have all students with disabilities that are going to want to do the sports. [...] Why should you? In all walks of life you've got people that will and people that don't want to do it, it doesn't really matter, maybe they just hate PE and don't want to be...

4.2.2. The role of choice

This section is about choice. Young people discussed how important it is for them to be able to make their own choices in terms of their social relationships (an issue further examined in the discussion chapter, section 5.9):

Q: *If you were Jeremy, would it be important for you to be able to choose?*

B2: Yeah. I would want to be able to decide whether I did or not. I'd want input from others, I would go and say: 'do you think I should invite him', 'what do you think I should do'? But in the end of the day, I wouldn't want people to say 'no, you have to invite him'. I would want it to be my decision.

Q: *Ok, do you think that being able to choose who you cooperate with is important?*

C10: *Yes, yeah. [...] It's important in terms of making me feel comfortable and relaxed and not anxious all the time [...] otherwise I'm prone to get stressed out and anxious and panic.*

B2 does not have a disability, and C10 has Asperger syndrome. They both thought that choice in social interaction is important. Nonetheless, it should be noted that C10 also made a connection between choice and her Asperger syndrome-related difficulties (stress).

Homophily – a preference to be among similar others – was seen as an expression of choice by both young people and school staff. Hence, for P2, who does not have a disability, Jeremy should be free not to invite David if he does not want to because they have personality differences (scenario A4):

'Homophily - choice' (young people)

Q: ***Was it right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?***

P2: *I think that if Jeremy sincerely thought that both David and himself wouldn't want David at the party then I think, irrespective of his disability, there was the decision. I don't think the decision for him not to be invited at the party [is wrong]...*

Q: ***Why?***

P2: *I just think that if Jeremy insists that it wasn't because he is blind and he thinks that David also would not want to come maybe they just don't get on a personal level.*

And the students should be able to decide for themselves in terms of their social interactions and to weigh the pros (comfort/safety) and cons (stigmatisation) of their preferences, a special schoolteacher noted:

'Homophily - choice' (school staff)

Q: Let's go back to the scenario. Do you think that the college principal would see a special place for students with disabilities as discrimination?

S2: He could well think that, but if it's coming from the students themselves rather than from any imposition by any form of authority, I don't think that it is discrimination. I think it's responding to their perceived needs rather than imposing a view on them. They've decided they want that because they feel more comfortable in that way.

Q: But could he fear side effects? The students could be stigmatised...

S2: Surely that's up to the students themselves. If they've decided that's what they want then they would have to understand they may well then be perceived as different, as disabled and possibly open themselves up to that sort of criticism.

But also inclusion should be about choice. Being visually impaired himself W9 argued that no one should be automatically included:

'Inclusion - choice' (young people)

Q: Ok. So is there anything morally wrong in Jeremy's decision not to invite David?

W9: Well no I don't think there is, if he didn't really want to invite him then he shouldn't have to, but you know, it's just his decision I suppose at the end of the day. If he, just cause David's blind I don't think it would make, I don't think... He shouldn't automatically be invited somewhere if somebody doesn't want – you know, if somebody doesn't want you there then you should just be treated like, you know, just ordinary. Just because you're blind doesn't mean you should be above anyone else.

S1, a special schoolteacher, stressed that people should find their own reasons to value inclusion, and their own ways to pursue and achieve it at their own pace. They might also choose not to be included, and their choice should be respected:

'Inclusion - choice' (school staff)

Q: *Why social inclusion should not be about shoulds?*

S1: Because that is someone exerting power and their idea of a reality and a concept of what there is. And social inclusion sometimes might defy what we think is good for somebody, and people to be socially included really well need to find their own ways as well as having guidance and something enticing them and helping and supporting. They also need to find a way out of this, you know, like a rabbit on the hole. You need to be able to find another way to run out if it gets too much, come back, look-see, tip their toes on the water, do it slowly, little by little if they like; or they might go fully into it. But social inclusion really works best when the individual ensconces what they want to get out of being part of society, and sometimes some people prefer to have some quietness away from the rest of society that's confusing.

4.2.3. Ethical implications of the tension

The homophily/inclusion tension has ethical implications in three areas: inclusion, homophily and choice (see also the discussion chapter, section 5.6).

In terms of choice, young people and school staff raised an ethical issue when one's choice is not respected. For C7, identified with Asperger syndrome, it is not fair to force people to cooperate despite their wishes:

'Violation of choice' (young people)

Q: *In your school do you have to cooperate with other classmates of yours for projects?*

C7: Not really for projects but we're sort of forced to cooperate with people we don't like [...] You'll end up by refusing to do the work 'cause you're with someone who you're being forced to work with. And in a way that's kind of disrespecting you so...

And for M3 (a mainstream school administrator), it is morally wrong for the teacher to discourage the students to voice their preferences, especially when the teacher has based his decision on the fact that the students have a disability and, for this reason, they 'need' to be socially included:

'Violation of choice' (school staff)

Q: ***Should Mr Jones discourage the students, the students who were very enthusiastic about the creation of this special sports team?***

M3: [...] *No I think that would be morally wrong if he discouraged them.*

Q: ***Why?***

M3: *Because, well that shouldn't happen... he shouldn't discourage them for... 'cause therefore what he's doing is that he is being discriminating, he's discriminating against them because they have a disability. It's almost to say 'Well you've got a disability so no I don't think you should be doing that.'*

Inclusion and disability were seen to carry ethical weight. C10 described inclusion as participation for all and as the best for everybody in the class. Yet, as Andrew and Julie in scenario (A1) represent homophily and choice, 'the best' for them could also imply respect for their preference to work together:

'Inclusion - ethical obligation' (young people)

Q: ***Ok, what do you think this scenario is about?***

C10: *Inclusion and what's best for the individuals.*

Q: ***What do you mean by 'what is best for the individual'?***

C10: *Well what's best for Andrew and Julie and the rest of the group [...]*

Q: ***What do you think inclusion is?***

C10: *Letting somebody take part, be a part of whatever it is you're doing. Not leaving other people out.*

And for M1, a mainstream teacher, inclusion is an ethical obligation as it would help the young people later on in their lives. This is why they 'need' to learn to work with everybody:

'Inclusion - ethical obligation' (school staff)

Q: *Is there a chance that Mr Brown wanted Andrew and Julie to learn to cooperate with somebody else too, as they wanted to work only together?*

M1: *Yeah I think so. [...] Because it reflects life doesn't it? I mean that's the world that they will live in and in order to get on they're going to need to work with everybody to overcome their disability in the best way possible.*

For P5, a young woman without a disability, and M2, a mainstream teaching assistant, the crucial factor in the homophily/inclusion tension is that disability attracts moral connotations. However, both seemed to question the moral necessity of inclusion, as being able to choose is also important:

'Disability - ethically charged' (young people)

Q: *Do you think that William's decision to pick Susan has been affected by Susan's disability?*

P5: *[...] I mean maybe he did. Maybe he was because... I mean he says he felt he should which sounds more like it's an obligation, more like he should pick her because of her disability. I suppose, yeah... maybe has affected him.*

'Disability - ethically charged' (school staff)

Q: *Do you think that there can be a solution or it's something...?*

M2: [...] You know, what's the solution? The solution is that these children, you know, it's an open area for everybody so would that teacher stop another group of people going in there? You know, it just happens that they're all Asperger's, what about if they were a small group of year tens or, you know, an age group rather than a need group, it wouldn't matter, what does that person... I think for the solution to happen I think Mrs Evans needs to say why those children can't go in there. Is it because they're not mingling with their classmates?

Further, homophily can be described not only in relation to choice but also to discrimination – from this perspective, it is ethically unacceptable. For example, C3, who has Asperger syndrome, described a decision based on a preference for similar others as a 'selfish' decision:

'Homophily - discrimination' (young people)

Q: Do you think that this is in some way discrimination?

C3: *Discrimination, yeah...*

Q: Why? Why do you think that?

C3: *Well it's really unfair because nobody asks to have a disability do they? It just comes; you get born with it naturally mostly so. They wouldn't like it if they had the disability and they're not invited to their friends parties just because they had a disability or whatever, so they should think about the other person and also feel what it would be like if they had the same thing and then the same thing happened to them and then them not getting invited because they're different, they've got a disability. So it's quite selfish really, what he's doing.*

And M1, a mainstream teacher, described racial homophily as racism, encouraged by the students' parents:

'Homophily - discrimination' (school staff)

Q: *Mr Brown has a preference for the students, Andrew and Julie, to cooperate with somebody different from themselves. Have you experienced anything like that?*

M1: Well I've taught in a school where 75% of the students were Asian and they really, really did not want to mix with others. [...]

Q: *Why do you think they wanted to work together?*

M1: Because in my opinion, and I know that they were from a parental side of things encouraged not to mix, and that the racialism that I found was greatly more from the Asians towards the whites, who were a minority in that school, than I ever saw the other way round, or have ever seen the other way round.

Finally, both young people and school staff seemed to pay particular attention to what the broader society deems to be right and wrong:

'What might people say' (young people)

Q: *Why, because she had a physical disability or for any other reason?*

W8: Not because she had a physical disability; but you could look at it both ways, he might have been penalised by people if he picked his best friend. That's the way I perceived it. So people might have looked at him wrongly for that. [...] I think personally he picked Susan because I think he would feel it would come across to outsiders that he picked his best friend, people would think 'Oh because he's friends with this, his best friend, oh let's pick his best friend.'

Particularly to school staff that have to handle sensitive situations involving students with disabilities, it was a matter of great importance and it was expressed as fear to discriminate or mistreat:

'Fear of being discriminatory' (school staff)

S2: *You know if someone does have a disability obviously they have to be treated slightly differently to account for that, and a lot of people are frightened of minority groups, and they are not fully aware of what the rights of those minority groups are. And therefore they don't want to fall foul of any discrimination legislation or whatever, so they might overreact and give more credence to their preferences than to others.*

M3: *[...] I know that students with disabilities do have a bit more of a... not leeway, but you have to be very careful when you are working around the different policies and things like that because there is a heavier downfall if you mistreat [...]*

4.2.4. Power dynamics and decision-making

This section examines power dynamics and decision-making at a school/institutional level. Inclusion was seen as a moral imperative and it is often imposed on young people as C10 stressed – the students '*should*' work together, the teacher '*is going to try and make them*':

'Inclusion forced' (young people)

Q: ***And the teacher's perspective?***

C10: *The teacher probably [...] either thinks that it would be good for them to work with people without Asperger's or he just thinks that everybody should be included so he [...] thinks they should work together or he's going to try and make them.*

M4, a mainstream teaching assistant, also noted that this is one of the purposes of mainstream schooling – to bring different people together:

'Inclusion forced' (school staff)

M4: [...] *there's nothing morally wrong about mixing people, students together.*

Q: **Morally right?**

M4: *Basically if you're in a mainstream class you are expected to work together, so yes.*

Q: **Is this something right or something that you're expected to do?**

M4: *I'd say it's still right because you wouldn't be coming to a school where, you know, where you promote inclusion if you're expected to just work with, let's say if you're autistic, just with autistic students. They, the students come to this school to, to a school like this to get a variety of experiences and, you know, they need to meet other students as well.*

And the young people often acknowledged the authority of the people in power, in this case the authority and expertise of the teacher:

'Authority and experience'

Q: **Why did Mr Brown and the two students have different views?**

C7: *Because Mr Brown is a teacher and he knows what's best, but Andrew and Julie like completely disagree with him and they think that they could do it without a third person.*

Nevertheless decision-making at school level is complex, as it involves relations of power between students, between staff and students, and across the school hierarchical structure. M4, a mainstream teaching assistant described the power inequalities among her students. More confident students tend to be listened to more easily:

'Power dynamics - students'

Q: Do you think that some students' preferences can affect decisions more than other students in the class? [...]

M4: *Well you always get some students who are more keen to speak up than others [...]. They're more confident. And some, they just don't know how to stop talking, you always hear the same voices and it's quite, you know, it's quite sad for the others.*

M1, a mainstream teacher, considered the teacher as a point of reference, and as the person that would have to make the final decisions in classroom issues. Students can voice their opinions, but they should accept the teacher's wishes at the end of the day:

'Power dynamics - staff and students'

Q: Should Mr Brown, the teacher, have the final word on the group allocation of his class?

M1: *Yes [...] because he's the teacher, at the end of the day you've got to have... A bit like a referee, you know if you don't agree with the penalty then... But you know, at the end of the day someone has got to make that final decision and in the position the teacher is in, it is up to them to make the final decision. I mean maybe students can sort of voice their opinions, but at the end of the day they still have to accept the final decision.*

And S7, a special schoolteacher, described in brief the role of the head teacher – 'it's her school, her rules':

'Power dynamics - school hierarchy'

Q: So who should have the final word on the matter?

S7: *The head.*

Q: The head teacher?

S7: It's her school, it's her rules. There's different ways you can protest, you can...

Decision-making could also be affected by the presence of students with disabilities, as S3 (special teacher) argued. Yet, there needs to be balance between what is provided generally and what according to individual needs:

'Disability affects decisions'

S3: I think there's the potential because of, you know, concern about not wanting to discriminate, there might be a tendency to listen more to the preferences of young people with disabilities. But, I think in a lot of school environments there would be that kind of tendency to look at things from both sides and weigh things up and, as I say, try to achieve the most good in whatever compromise would made not sort of doing something specifically for young people with disabilities that clearly in some way upsets those without disabilities.

Overall, decision-making is hard, as it has to incorporate input from different sources, to reflect values, and it is embedded in the complex hierarchical structure and bureaucracy of schools, as another special schoolteacher noted:

'Decision-making is hard'

Q: *Do you have any overall comments?*

S1: As me, a working professional teacher, I've been in so many head dialogues just with myself, inside my own head, and then take it to other teachers and then we see if it can affect change, [...] the senior management, head teachers. Sometimes I wish things can be sorted out more quickly, or not so boom boom bang gone and it's a bad decision, and more easily maybe. Because schools are very complex social places...

Q: *How these decisions could be made more easily?*

S1: *By all senior managers really believing the policies in the handbook and writing them openly and with lots of people's input and daring themselves to be honest.*

Q: *Even with the students input?*

S1: *In some cases yes, because lots of the policies do affect the students. It has to be cohesive, but it's hard to do that.*

Student voice and students' preferences were seen as an important aspect of decision-making, S3, a special schoolteacher, stressed:

'Student voice'

Q: *In general, do you think that students' preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at school level?*

S3: *I think they should certainly inform decision-making. You know one of the buzzwords in education these days is student voice - the idea that you listen to the students and you take account of their opinions. Obviously, they are not all specialists in education so it doesn't mean that they can decide what's on the curriculum and what's not and things like that, but certainly their feelings about things should be considered, their ideas should be explored and, you know, if they deemed appropriate should be implemented.*

And for M1, a mainstream teacher, students' preferences should be taken into consideration in decisions:

'Students' preferences should be taken into consideration'

Q: *In general, do you think that student's preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at school level?*

M1: *Definitely, yeah because they've got to own it, I mean the best way of getting them to perform is to feel that they have had a say in what goes on and that their wishes and*

their thoughts are valuable. You know, if everything is just imposed then outcomes are much worse.

Nevertheless, students with disabilities may not be able to express their preferences as other students would. S1, a special schoolteacher, stressed how important it is for students with disabilities to have the chance to express their preferences *'in whatever form they can'* and also that a team, rather than only one person, should advocate for them:

'Limitations, representation'

S1: [...] unfortunately in special schools I think sometimes we become too much the guardian, caretaker, nice person, assisting students to become even more disabled, and thinking of their welfare all the time. But they are laws to say that – I have to use the word shouldn't – shouldn't do that.

Q: *Would you like to discuss that a little more?*

S1: Such as mental capacity act and things like that. Some of our students here can't speak and in many other special schools as well, so yes we do have to take some decisions until we can understand what someone really wants and needs to do in their life. And it's always very-very hard and sometimes only when you reflect and you look back you could find 'ah, that was a wrong decision for that student and I am very sorry'. So this is why you must work in special schools and in mainstream schools in teams of people that are looking at the student from the same and different points of view. And not only we are observing in this microscopic world we are living, we are also encouraging the student to make links with other people and other ideas and express themselves in whatever form they can do to get their preferences sorted out.

However there should be boundaries and the students should have a say only in certain areas of decision-making. M6, a mainstream teaching assistant, noted that curriculum should be off limits for the students:

'Boundaries'

Q: Do you think that students' preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at school level?

M6: I think with something like this which is, which doesn't affect the curriculum in any way, I think it's a very, very key area that students should be able to voice their own opinions and be able to say they want to do it, because it doesn't involve the curriculum and their education as such in any way. This is something that they will benefit from a social side and for pleasure. [...] I do think that when it comes to curriculum, and it tends to be the whole education, the literacy, the reading and the writing side of it, a lot of students are going to rebel and say, will just do the complete opposite. So you need to be careful with how much say you give to them.

Also students' parents, especially when they are 'really on the case', have an often dubious role in decision-making, a mainstream teacher noted:

'The role of parents'

Q: In your class during the lesson do you feel that some students' preferences could be heard more easily or could affect your decisions more than other students?

M1: No, no I don't think so.

Q: In terms of the parents?

M1: It tends to be that, you know, if you know that a parent is really, really on the case then you are extra careful about what you do in reality, you know. So if you know, I do have at the moment a parent that I am extra vigilant about what I do. I wouldn't say that

I give into them because I don't think that's the right question, the right thing to do, but I am extra vigilant I suppose.

Finally, decisions at school level should be the product of open discussion. This idea is particularly explored in the discussion chapter (section 5.11):

'A culture of discussion'

Q: *Who do you think should have the final word on the matter?*

S3: [...] I think that probably in a school situation to have one member of the department steamroll at something that the other one is opposed to could create difficulties generally. I think it would be something that maybe needs to be thrown open across the staff so that it's not just two PE teaches, possibly extreme opposites, but a kind of discussion with the staff generally about how young people with disabilities are included across the curriculum, perhaps taken the focus away from PE and sports, but thinking generally and about where people can be included without anything special and where actually something special is needed. There almost needs to be a discussion that maybe generates a culture within the school that reflects a consensus on how inclusion is going to be implemented.

4.2.5. Policy issues

This section refers to policy issues. Members of school staff were all asked the same question at the end of their interview: *What kind of policy would resolve the issue in the scenario?* There was a variety of answers to this question. It should be noted that all institutional level scenarios (B1-B4) present the same issue: the homophily/inclusion tension in different contexts. School staff suggested that *equality and diversity, special educational needs, bullying,*

inclusion and discrimination policies are relevant to resolve the tension as presented in the scenarios.

S5 and S1 referred to an *equality and diversity* policy. For S5, a special school administrator, this policy would recognise the needs of the individual but also would keep a balance with the needs of the many:

‘Policies - equal opportunities and diversity’

S5: I think that’s what the equality and diversity is all about, it’s about recognising the needs of the individual, not the individual above everybody else, but the individual within the community.

S1, a special schoolteacher, noted that the diversity aspect of the policy would be about recognising difference, while the equality aspect of it would be about equal treatment and choice:

‘Policies - equal opportunities and diversity’

S1: OK, equality and diversity. People can be viewed equally, so in this scenario people can employ their choices in their free time; this should be one thing that is thought about. [...] it’s a mainstream secondary school so they are very diverse. So it doesn’t... the small group is not necessarily worse or better, or less able or more able than the bigger group, so they must be treated equally. And that way their differences known, you have to respect differences and deal with differences.

M6, a mainstream teaching assistant, discussed a *special educational needs* policy that would recognise that students with disabilities should be given the opportunities to participate fully, even in the form of special arrangements like the special team in the scenario B3:

'Policies - SEN'

Q: *What kind of policy do you think could be relevant to that? From the policies which are here in the school.*

M6: *Possibly the SEN policy, you know, we have to allow a child to be able to, you know, take part in...*

Q: *[...] So how would you apply the policy specifically?*

M6: *That is SEN students were being given the opportunity to do an activity that they might not necessarily be able to do within the mainstream school set up.*

Another special schoolteacher attempted to resolve the issue in the scenario B4 applying an *anti-bullying* policy; homophily here was perceived negatively:

'Policies - bullying'

Q: *Is there a policy related to these issues in the scenario in the school here?*

S7: *We have anti-bullying policies. [...] Well I suppose if the students were self isolating because they were being bullied or didn't feel like they could go in to the main with the mainstream students that would be covered by social inclusion and bullying as well.*

S1, also a special schoolteacher, proposed an *inclusive* policy based on consideration and respect:

'Policies - inclusion'

S1: *It's very difficult to write a policy that says you will all get along with each other and that you will all treat each other with respect – you can say that. You know, I've worked in a school where the school rules were one word, consideration. And that was it. That one word summed up what that school was about. So if you had someone with a special need in that school you were considerate of them, you've asked what they wanted, you didn't force your opinion on them, you allowed them time to speak if they*

spoke more slowly, you allowed them to leave the room early if they were in a wheelchair and they were finding the corridors frightening and so on. So consideration summed up what that school was about. And I think probably that is the best inclusive policy you can have simply to allow everybody to be as far as possible respected by everybody else.

S6, another special schoolteacher, thought that an appropriate policy to resolve the tension would be an *anti-discrimination* policy – but the issue could also result in the creation of a new policy (rather vaguely on equality), as no existing policy seems to offer a satisfactory resolution:

‘Policies - discrimination’

Q: **And how do you think it would be relevant to the issue in the scenario?**

S6: *I think it's... I think any anti-discrimination policy in any school could be applied to this situation.*

Q: **How?**

S6: *Because it would clarify the situation to both of these teachers that in fact it's acceptable for this... It may be that this scenario could be a scenario which results in a policy being created, if you see what I mean, this could be the beginning of something that could be included in a policy whereby the school policy may go.*

Q: **What kind of policy?**

S6: *Equality, an equality policy...*

These policies can overlap, or can come into tension, as M6 noted referring to a special educational needs policy that would be about individual needs and an inclusion policy that would be about including everybody or treating everyone the same:

'Policies - inclusion'

Q: **So do you think that the SEN policy and the inclusion policy could clash?**

M6: *They could possibly.*

Q: **Can they in real life, in the everyday school life?**

M6: *Yeah I think so because obviously, yes, the inclusion is about being able to include a child within the mainstream school, but then you've got the other hand where you've got the SEN policy where these children should have the right to be able to take part in any of the activities that are happening. So yes you would, you'd get it where it would hit in the middle, but you think it would overlap.*

S4, a special schoolteacher, identified the homophily/inclusion tension as an issue pertinent to classroom methods:

'Policies - classroom methods'

Q: **What kind of policy would be relevant?**

S4: *Well equal opportunities.*

Q: **How would it be relevant?**

S4: *No actually I don't know, I don't know about that one. It just came to mind, equal opportunities because there were some issues of them not being equal. But no I don't think we have a policy, equal opportunities is more to do with employment and... I don't think we, we don't have policies about classroom methods here.*

And he believed that we should leave the teachers to decide on it:

'The role of teachers'

Q: **Ok. In terms of the scenario, is there a policy related to these issues in your school?**

S4: *We don't have a policy on that, no, I think we just have to rely on the teachers to be sensitive to what's needed.*

Q: ***[...] Do you think that's a gap, that something is missing or...?***

S4: *No I think we have to trust teachers, I do, yeah.*

Finally, he raised the question of whether it is a matter of policy at all:

'Policies - not a policy issue'

Q: ***What kind of policy would resolve the issue in the story?***

S4: *I don't think it is about policies is it? I think it's more about enlightenment, you know, and... It depends which way, if the problem is with those two students or if the problem is with the rest of the class who don't like them or whatever it is that made them feel like that, then surely we need to be open and have discussions and, about disability and equality and everybody being treated equally and the same and hierarchies of judgement and... So I think if we can foster an ethos rather than a policy that would suggest a better way forward.*

If it is not a matter of policy, then it should be about the ethos of the institution (see also the discussion, section 5.10). S3, a special schoolteacher, described an ethos that would be about overcoming barriers to learning and participation:

'School ethos'

S3: *I think the ethos of the organisation is very much about overcoming the barriers to learning first of all, but also to social inclusion. That's very much what is about. And again behind that is the ideal – if you like Mr Jones ideal – that everybody can participate in the big wild world which is out there, but then there's the recognition that for some so that's going to be a problem, and so on. So what do you do about that, and*

then you bring in this kind of other opportunities and things like that, which don't achieve the full ideal but maybe push things in that direction.

Finally, almost all participants admitted that they are not very well informed about the current policies of their schools:

'Not well upon current legislation or policies'

Q: *Is there a policy related to the issues in the scenario in your school?*

M1: The policy... I don't know... I'm not sure... I don't really think so [...] Well I think there is, yeah, one policy that would guide you a little bit, but...

Q: *What are the principles in the policy that are related to the issues in the scenario?*

S1: I am afraid because I am such a busy working (she laughs)...

Q: *How could this policy be, what would it be about?*

S7: Now you're putting me on the spot! Sorry I should have read it before I came.

In conclusion, the policies that school staff suggested as possible resolutions of the homophily/inclusion tension gave vague directions as to how the tension could actually be resolved. This is an indication of the complexity of the issue in theory and practice (see the discussion chapter, 5.10). It could also suggest that school staff regarded policies as something distant, complex and not really helpful in their everyday practice; or that the whole issue would have to rest with the teachers and could not be the subject of a general school policy – this particularly applies when the tension was seen only as a classroom issue.

4.2.6.Social relationships

Young people expressed their preferences for social interaction with similar, different or a mixture of people (an issue examined also in section 5.4, discussion chapter). For instance, W3, who is visually impaired, expressed a preference for similar people, as she wouldn't trust a '*proper normal person*':

'Preference for similar people'

Q: ***So if you are able to choose, would you choose people like you or different people?***

W3: *People like me.*

Q: ***Why?***

W3: *'Cause I can communicate with them, I can be like, we'd be like each other and I wouldn't have to be worried that that normal person would go off like talking to other people. Yeah I wouldn't want like a proper normal person to be my friend to be honest. I would be their friend, but I wouldn't trust them really.*

And C10, identified with Asperger syndrome, agreed that similar people are the safest, less troubling, option:

C10: *[...] If there was another person with my condition in my same class, I would rather stick with them rather than try to be included, which might not be a success; it might make me feel more uncomfortable. If there wasn't another student with my condition in the class then it might be different, but if there is then I'd know who to hang around with.*

But B2, who does not have a disability, thought that different people broaden one's understanding and way of thinking, as they can open new perspectives:

'Preference for different people'

Q: Do you prefer to socialise with people you think are similar or different to yourself?

B2: I associate with completely different people to me, like opposite spectrum kind of thing.

Q: And why do you have this preference?

B2: 'Cause I have a very set view on life, and I know like exactly what I think it's right and what I think it's wrong. And to interact with people with very different views or very different experiences enables you to expand your own beliefs and incorporate them into what you believe as right and wrong. So it makes it easier to have an understanding, I think.

C1, also with Asperger syndrome, preferred a variety of people and ideas; it may not always be easy to deal with it, but ultimately is 'a good thing':

'Preference for a mixture of people'

Q: Can you think why you prefer this mixture?

C1: I think it is just nice. It is nice to have a mixture.

Q: Why?

C1: I don't know... You get different people's views, different people's opinions; you get different people's personalities, different people's perspective on life and stuff. [...] So, that's why if you have a mixture of people, then you can get different people's opinions. So then...sometimes some will be negative, some will be positive, but that's a good thing.

Yet, C2 did not see a difference between similar and different people. As he has Asperger syndrome, maybe his reaction was a kind of denial of his difference:

'No difference between similar and different people'

Q: Andrew and Julie are expressing a preference to cooperate with somebody similar to themselves. Have you experienced a situation like this?

C2: Right, I don't really mind. Of course I don't mind if someone would be here who hasn't got Asperger syndrome, I just don't. From my experience in life, I don't really see any difference. [...] I have worked with people who have got Asperger syndrome in groups, and most of other times I have worked with people who haven't got Asperger syndrome in groups. So I don't really see any difference.

Some young people preferred to be on their own, such as W2 who had rather limited options. He is visually impaired, based in a special college, but occasionally attends a mainstream one as well:

'I prefer to work by myself'

W2: [...] But now that I'm off to, I go to [mainstream college] every now and then I don't have a preference, but I do work by myself, entirely by myself because I'm the oldest one in the class and everyone is like four years younger than me. So I have a preference to work by myself because we don't work in teams there, but we also, they're like sixteen and they're highly immature. There's difference between sixteen and twenty so, yeah, so now I don't have a preference at all, it just happens to be that way.

Both young people and school staff stressed the importance of socialisation.

C6, with Asperger syndrome, related socialisation with different people to learning a foreign language – something difficult but also helpful:

'Importance of socialisation' (young people)

Q: *Would you like to explain to me again why this effort of Mr Brown to expand the social circle is important?*

C6: Well it helps with daily life really, if you don't know how to talk to people... It's like someone who speaks, you know, in a foreign language in a land full of people who speak a different language, it's pretty hard. It's sort of the same with the Asperger's, except, you know, not with different language barriers.

And M4, a mainstream teaching assistant, stressed that socialisation would supply the young people with the social skills they would need in their lives:

'Expanding the social circle' (school staff)

Q: *And why is this something that they need to do?*

M4: Because then they can sort of enlarge their horizons, learn from other students, and sometimes, I mean when you see for example autistic students, when they arrive the first year they're very shy, they hardly talk to anybody, and two years later you can see they've made friends, mostly other students with special needs, but sometimes other students who don't have special needs. And it's nice to see that, from the person who was really, really shy, they've actually managed to mingle with other students. So it's good for social skills first of all. Because once they leave school they'll be dealing with all sorts of people and most of them won't have special needs.

C6, identified with Asperger syndrome, perceived the peer networks in his school as parallel circles. Autism is just outside the middle ring which represents normality (in other words, it is slightly not normal). He also noted that if you '*stick with people you're familiar with then you'll do fine*':

'Peer networks' (young people)

C6: *You know, the normal, the people who think they're 'normal,' and outside of that people get a bit strange like... And I think we're in the middle ring, the autism, I don't know the others but, you know, they're technically on the outside. It's normal to band together, you know, like gangs in most things. [...] If there's a problem, if there's one little disruption everything goes to chaos, that's what I believe, if there's anything wrong with any of the social rings then everything will start collapsing on itself so best to stick with someone you're familiar with, you know, the familiar attitudes and things, stick to them, you'll do fine.*

And finally, M1, a mainstream teacher, described the role that peer pressure can play in the social behaviour of young people. They might do things they would not approve to retain their status among their peers:

'Peer pressure' (school staff)

Q: *Why do you think some people want to work only with certain people?*

M1: *[...] In schools unfortunately there's a huge sort of peer pressure thing and unfortunately students will choose, even though if they were on their own they would perfectly happily work with somebody, if they perceive that by being or working with that person they might not be thought of as cool they'll push them away. Whereas deep down they don't feel good about doing that, but they feel they've got to keep up their sort of image.*

4.2.7. Disability

This section is about disability. Young people and school staff noted how important it is for non-disabled people to have experience of disability. C5 has Asperger syndrome and works as a job advisor for people with disabilities; he noted that experience of disability can create '*a greater understanding*' among people with and without disabilities in the work environment:

'Experience of disability is important' (young people)

Q: *Do you personally feel that social inclusion is something quite important or not?*

C5: Yeah I think it is; it creates a greater understanding in general among more people. I've had it with employers who have taken on someone with a disability and know nothing about it and won't bother finding out about it so the rest of the staff don't know and it's just an absolute chaos.

Also, within an educational context, it is good for the students to have an understanding of the difficulties that their classmates may experience because of their impairments, a mainstream teaching assistant highlighted:

'Experience of disability is important' (school staff)

Q: *Why should she encourage them to do that?*

M5: Well it would be good for them socially to try and mix with others, and also good for the ordinary kids to understand the difficulties of the child with the disability.

People with disabilities can experience difficulties and need understanding. C5 noted how important it is for people with disabilities to have the understanding they need in their work environment:

'Disability related difficulties - understanding' (young people)

Q: *Do you have a suggestion for how it could be worded?*

C5: Well I think you would explain that it would be very difficult, you would explain that it would be hard to find him somewhere to work where it would only be with other visually impaired people and that maybe he might want to think about working somewhere else maybe with people who do understand what he's going through, even if they haven't got the same condition.

And S5, a special school administrator, stressed that young people with disabilities face difficulties that they should be able to voice:

'Disability related difficulties - understanding' (school staff)

Q: *Should the college principal discourage the students, the students with the disabilities?*

S5: *[...] No I don't think he should discourage them.*

Q: *Why?*

S5: *Well [...] I think that [the] students, young people with disabilities, have particular and specific challenges socially and educationally and I think they should be given a voice to express what their difficulties are and how they feel they can best meet them. And as a significant voice within the college they should be heard and wherever possible their needs should be met.*

Disability-related difficulties can have two aspects, a practical and a social. C3, who has Asperger syndrome, noted that Jeremy would need assistance to attend David's party (scenario A4), as he is blind:

'Disability related difficulties - practical (assistance)' (young people)

Q: *Was it right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?*

C3: *Yeah well I think it's wrong and pretty unfair really.*

Q: *Would you like to explain why?*

C3: *Well obviously, he would obviously need somebody to help him, take him to the party, but all because he's blind, is that a reason why he shouldn't have a great time?*

P4 who does not have a disability referred to a limit on 'how well you can communicate with people with disabilities'. This limit could be practical or psychological:

'Disability related difficulties - social' (young people)

Q: *The scenario says he decided to invite all his classmates, except David.*

P4: Yes, but two of those classmates could be blind as well. It doesn't say that [...] It could be a very small class, but you can't [know] all these factors but I mean he's inviting people [he] wants to invite. He thinks based on who he likes. But he might not like David because he hasn't got the chance to know him because he is blind and there's a limit there to how well you can communicate with people and how well you can get on with people, so...

Disability-related difficulties have a third aspect as well – knowledge sharing. W1 is visually impaired and discussed how important it is for him to share knowledge (mostly of technical nature) with other visually impaired people:

'Disability related difficulties - knowledge sharing' (young people)

Q: *Why do you think it was wrong to strongly discourage him?*

W1: Well because he was discouraging him from meeting people that were visually impaired like himself, and working alongside them, you know, which I think John could benefit from because he might learn something from another blind person, a person with a visual impairment, that he didn't know before.

Disability-related difficulties can also be impairment specific (see also the discussion chapter, section 5.3). W1 explains the difficulties he experienced being visually impaired in understanding information that is only in a visual form:

'Disability related difficulties - visual impairment' (young people)

Q: *What kind of things do you think John would find difficult to understand?*

W1: You know things like the colour of the sky... you know, things like visual programmes, you know when people start talking about expressions and mannerisms, I think that is very hard, if not explained, for a person with a visual impairment to understand.

And M5, a mainstream teaching assistant, described the social difficulties that can be associated with Asperger syndrome:

'Disability related difficulties - Asperger syndrome' (school staff)

Q: *Why do you think that the students wanted to be in the small garden by themselves?*

M5: Because they can't cope with the loud noise and the activity around them, that's why we provide somewhere for our autistic kids to go, 'cause they just don't feel secure or safe in a larger environment.

Disability is also about labels that have knowledge associated with them, and can form or affect people's identities (see also the discussion chapter, 5.3). C6, identified with Asperger syndrome, discussing his relationship with a friend of his who has dyslexia, related their friendship to their cognitive impairments. The intriguing part is that he was influenced by what he read in a book:

'Disability labels' (young people)

C6: [...] But anyway, yeah he's a good friend [...] the different thing which might help is that we knew each other, we got on brilliant as usual. But I think it's the dyslexia, Asperger's, they're on the same scale as I said so...

Q: *What kind of scale?*

C6: You know, like I don't know, I've seen it in a book about Asperger's, autism [...] they're two different scales but it's technically the same thing, and that sort of connects us in a way.

A mainstream teaching assistant also noted that the students with Asperger syndrome that preferred to gather in the small garden (scenario B4) might not know that they are identified with the same syndrome (with the label), but they still noticed that they are similar:

'Disability labels' (school staff)

Q: *Why do you think the students in the scenario preferred to gather in this small garden and be only by themselves?*

M2: [...] I am trying to put myself in their position isn't it really? I would probably say they felt that they were alike; they noticed that they were similar, even though they may not know that... 'Cause they might not know that they've got Asperger's, it all depends if they're told their need. But they realised that the people they were engaging with had the same attitude back, they were quiet, they weren't noisy, they might, they could be left alone, they weren't being bothered.

4.2.8. Miscellaneous themes

These are some recurring themes that illuminate aspects of the homophily/inclusion tension, but they are not directly related to specific research aims. Both young people and school staff discussed equality. C3, identified with Asperger syndrome, noted that all people should be treated equally:

'Equality' (young people)

Q: *So do you think it's right or wrong for him to pick her?*

C3: Well it wouldn't have been fair to, like he says initially, for his initial preference for Marion; it wouldn't be fair for him to pick her straight away because of Susan's disability [...] because all people should be treated equally.

But, a special school administrator argued that treating equally does not necessarily mean treating the same; this is the distinction between *equality* (treating the same) and *equity* (treating as personally needed). This distinction is further discussed in the section about further research (5.13):

'Equality' (school staff)

Q: *There are two different things then that need to be balanced [...]; would you like to tell me in terms of the scenario what those two things are?*

S5: Well you've got the balance of people having equal opportunities, being treated equally. I would suggest that the danger is that it doesn't necessarily mean being treated the same.

The two following themes ('age maturity' and 'different perspectives') refer to moral judgement that is central to the study. P2, a young man without a disability, highlighted the factor and importance of age maturity in deciding on issues of particular ethical importance:

'Age maturity' (young people)

Q: *And what about Jeremy?*

P2: Jeremy I think is sixteen, still very young, maybe he hasn't formed quite such a conscious like an adult, you know, a mature attitude to maybe how society kind of works in terms of including everyone or maybe he is still a bit kind of elitist in terms of

what he wants. You know, he wants to be very popular; he wants to maybe bring the best in [...]

And a special schoolteacher distinguished his own position from positions he does not agree morally with. Doing this he underlined the ethical importance of the issues discussed (inclusion and choice):

'Different perspectives' (school staff)

Q: ***So it's right or wrong?***

S7: *From her perspective I think she's probably, I think she's right. From my perspective I think she's wrong.*

Q: ***From the students' perspective?***

S7: *Wrong.*

Q: ***Why?***

S7: *Because they want to be in the garden, they're not causing any trouble, they're enjoying it, they're interacting appropriately. They enjoy it, why can't they be there?*

Young people also raised the issue of positive discrimination, especially in relation to scenario A3 that raises, among other issues, the issue of employment for people with disabilities. This theme can be related to the other unique responses that scenario A3 provoked (see section 5.12.2.1):

'Positive discrimination'

Q: ***Is it good to choose somebody with a disability over somebody else without a disability? What do you think?***

W8: *I think it's good to choose someone over, with a disability, but only... Not out of... because you feel, because an employer feels... because they're under pressure to choose the one with the disability. I think employers should employ people with*

disabilities, but only if they think they're ok for the job, that's what I believe. Because if you, because if the person can do the job, like just as well as an able bodied person can do, I would say I don't see an issue with it. But if the person with the disability can't do the job as well as the able bodied person can do then [...] they would just regret it.

Finally, young people often missed the point of the discussion, a matter already discussed in the methodology chapter (section 3.13). For example this young man with Asperger syndrome who, when discussing the scenario A1, raised also the issue of World War II:

'Missing the point'

Q: *Any other issues that you want to discuss about?*

C6: Well World War two is a big thing really, a big war, it might actually, for all I know it could actually class...

Q: *Yeah, I didn't ask you anything about that so...* (Both laugh)

C6: Yeah sorry I just noticed that. The presentations are quite hard to do so they might argue 'let's do this,' or 'let's do that.'

4.3. Summary

The data presented in this chapter suggest that:

- Homophily was consistent with the experiences of young people and school staff
- Participants perceived inclusion as an ethical obligation
- Young people and school staff could identify a tension between inclusion and homophily in both the scenarios and their own personal experiences

- Participants recognised an ethical dimension in the tension that is related to the two distinct aspects of homophily, choice and discrimination, and the moral imperative of social inclusion
- The homophily/inclusion tension was not easily resolved
- Choice in social interaction was important for the young people, even when it came into tension with the ethical obligation to include all people
- There is no clear direction as to how an educational policy about the tension could be formulated

In terms of the tension, more young people recognised it in their reflective response (after the discussion). This comparison is not relevant to the institutional scenarios, as school staff were expected to have more or less set ideas on the issues explored (see also section 3.8, methodology chapter). The following table depicts separately for each scenario how many young people recognised the homophily/inclusion tension in their immediate and reflective responses and how many of them were consistent or changed their opinion in their responses:

Scenarios	Young people that recognised the homophily/inclusion tension:		Young people that:	
	At the beginning of the discussion (Immediate response)	At the end of the discussion (Reflective response)	Were consistent in their responses	Changed their opinion
Scenario A1	2 out of 6 (33%)	4 out of 6 (66%)	2 out of 6 (33%)	4 out of 6 (66%)
Scenario A2	3 out of 7 (42%)	4 out of 7 (57%)	6 out of 7 (86%)	1 out of 7 (14%)
Scenario A3*	0 out of 7 (0%)	1 out of 7 (14%)	2 out of 7 (28%)	5 out of 7 (72%)
Scenario A4	2 out of 7 (28%)	3 out of 7 (42%)	4 out of 7 (57%)	3 out of 7 (43%)

Table 14: Young people's responses (summary)

*Scenario A3 provoked also some unique responses. This issue is discussed in this chapter (4.1.1), and the discussion chapter (5.12.2.1).

5. Discussion chapter

In this chapter, the empirical findings of the study are discussed in relation to the research aims and the literature. The chapter also has a section in which methodological issues are explored and especially the extent to which the initial theory has been adapted in response to the data. It concludes with ideas for future research, and a discussion on the study's significance.

5.1. Overview of the findings

This study explored young people's preferences for social interaction with others perceived to be similar and different to themselves, and how this might impact on social inclusion.

Forty people were interviewed for the project: twenty-seven young people with and without disabilities, and thirteen members of school staff. These young people were in the age range of 15 to 25 years old. The young people with disabilities had a visual impairment or were identified with Asperger syndrome. Members of school staff were teachers, teaching assistants and administrators from mainstream and special settings.

Eight different scenarios were used for the interviews, four for the young people and four for the school staff, that present an unresolved ethical tension between a preference to be among similar others (homophily), and the moral obligation of including all (hence also different) people.

The young people were asked about their initial and reflective responses to the scenarios (A1-A4). They responded following the same pattern, except for scenario A3. The young people either identified a tension between homophily (a preference to be among similar others) and inclusion (the principle of embracing difference); or they supported one of the two sides. It was

expected that after the discussion more young people would recognise the tension; this proved to be the case for all scenarios (section 4.3).

Scenario A3 provoked slightly different responses: a number of young people who were interviewed with this scenario chose not to support homophily nor inclusion in their immediate and reflective response. By not picking a side, these young people seemed to refuse to examine in parallel the two sides of the tension (homophily and inclusion) as presented to them. A reason could be a sense of equality and a subsequent refusal to accept disability as a factor of difference that could affect people's preferences for social interaction. This reaction was possibly reinforced by the scenario itself that refers to professional rather than personal social situations – see also section 5.12.2.1. Although the responses to this scenario appear different, they follow similar patterns to the responses to all other scenarios.

The tension between homophily and inclusion was described by the young people in all scenarios as a tension between what one wants to do (namely, to be among the people he or she prefers) and what he/she should do (to include everybody). The tension between *want* and *should* was also depicted to have an ethical dimension, as the use of words like *right*, *wrong*, *should* or *unfair* reveals. This indicates that the tension between inclusion and homophily is an ethical one; choosing the one over the other side could be *right* (an expression of choice) and *wrong* (concealed discrimination) at the same time. The young people suggested that the tension between *want* (homophily) and *should* (inclusion), might be resolved with some balancing between the two opposing sides; this balancing could acquire the form of discussion that would take both sides into consideration. Overall, the young people stressed their difficulty in suggesting a viable resolution.

The ethical dimension of the tension was related to different understandings of what homophily actually represents: choice to be among the people one prefers, or discrimination against different people. So, homophily can have a positive dimension (related to understanding, comfort, perceived commonality and equality, security, practical issues of communication, participation, trust etc.), but also a negative aspect (related to oppression, bullying, fear, lack of confidence, exclusion and discrimination).

An understanding of inclusion as an ethical obligation, a demand for equality and respect for all is also relevant to the homophily/inclusion tension. The young people recognised the ethical importance of including all people, but they did not justify the enforcement of inclusion despite people's genuine wishes and preferences; they noted that inclusion should be about choice.

Finally, young people discussed their preferences for social interaction. Similarity was mostly associated with security, trust and deeper connections, while difference was described as something exciting, but also challenging.

No major differences were found between the responses of the young people with and without disabilities. It can only be noted that young people with disabilities tended to discuss oppression, bullying and exclusion more (their actual struggles), while the young people without disabilities focussed on equality, respect and inclusion (perhaps a social desirability effect). In addition, the young people with disabilities connected most of the issues discussed to their disability-related difficulties: issues of access for the young people with visual impairment, and social issues related to their unique cognitive style for young people with Asperger syndrome.

On their part, school staff discussed their perceptions of the young people's social behaviour. They responded in similar ways in all four scenarios

(B1-B4): they either supported students' right to make their own choices (homophily), or defended social inclusion. They described the tension between inclusion and homophily in three different ways – the first coincides with the young people's understanding:

- as a tension between what one wants to do (to be among the people he or she prefers) and what he or she should do (to include everybody)
- as a tension between an ideal (inclusion for all) and the compromises needed to be made towards this ideal (in the form of special arrangements for some people)
- as a tension between treating everybody the same (general provision) and treating according to one's needs (special provision)

School staff also identified an ethical dimension to the homophily/inclusion tension. Listening and respecting the students' preferences was seen to be an expression of respect. Nevertheless, preferences for social interaction that come into tension with the moral imperative of inclusion should be respected only when they are directly related to the students' disability-related needs (for students with disabilities) or to particular educational needs (for all students). The underlying assumption is that in order to have successful and fulfilling lives young people need to be socially included.

As a possible resolution to the tension they proposed a fragile balance between the two opposing sides: all students should be included as far as possible but, since they are different, they should not be treated the same. The balance between inclusion and recognition of individuality would be uneasy and constantly threatened since provision, even if it might not be the same, should be fair for all.

The school staff stressed the complexity of the hierarchy of decision-making at school level, and the network of power relations intertwined with it. The hierarchy of school structure was mostly defended by the school staff who noted that decision-making should have areas restricted to the students, like the curriculum. However, student voice was considered to be of great importance. Inequalities of power were discussed not only in terms of the relations across the school staff, or between staff and students, but also between the students. For example, the problem of representation for students with disabilities was particularly stressed: all students should have the chance to express their preferences in whatever form they can.

School staff also explored whether the homophily/inclusion tension can be the subject of a school policy, yet failing to suggest a clear direction about the form and content of this policy. A variety of policies was proposed to be relevant to the matter: *equality and diversity*, *special educational needs*, *bullying*, *inclusion* and *anti-discrimination* among others. It was also suggested that the whole issue could result in the creation of a new policy; or that it is not a matter of policy at all and should be resolved by the teachers.

Finally, no major differences were found between the responses of the school staff from mainstream and special settings. It was expected that the special school staff would be more open to acknowledge and accommodate students' preferences than the mainstream staff, as a result of their different professional position in the educational system; this was only partly observed. The only noticeable difference was between teachers, teaching assistants and school administrators in terms of the discussion on school policies. Teaching assistants could not contribute constructively to the topic or were reluctant to do it, possibly because it extends beyond their professional role.

5.2. Research aims

The findings illuminated all the issues that the research aims raised (section 2.7.4). These are the basic areas of interest for each participant group:

Young people: *To explore perceptions of similarity and difference (aim 1a)*

As the young people stressed, perceptions of similarity and difference can be based on various aspects of human diversity, but also on disability. In terms of disability, the visibility and invisibility of impairment was described to be a crucial factor of social interaction. Difference can affect people's identities and challenge their perceptions of the others around them, an issue also raised by school staff. Disability and difference are further explored in section 5.3: *Disability and perceptions of difference.*

Young people: *To explore preferences for social interaction (aim 1c)*

The preferences for social interaction of young people with disabilities were often related to their disability-related difficulties. Being with different people was challenging for the young people, but it could also promote interest. On the other hand, similar people were described as reinforcing one's own perspectives on the world and self-esteem. These issues are examined in section 5.4: *Young people's preferences for social interaction.*

Both groups: *To explore the evidence and the aspects of homophily (aims 1b, 2a, 2b)*

The principle that similarity brings connection (homophily) was consistent with the experiences of the young people and school staff. Similarity-attraction was described as an aspect of social interaction in both scenario-based and

actual social situations. Homophily was related to choice, but also to discrimination and oppression. The issue is further discussed in section 5.5: *The two dimensions of homophily*.

Both groups: *To examine the ethical significance of inclusion* (aims 1d, 2c)

Both young people and school staff described inclusion as an ethical obligation. Both groups recognised the ethical significance of including all people. For some the enforcement of inclusion was justified, as it would promote a broader good. Others questioned the moral necessity of it despite people's actual wishes, introducing a tension between individual choice and dedication to a common good. The significance of inclusion is further explored in section 5.6: *The ethical significance of inclusion*.

Both groups: *To examine a potential tension between inclusion and homophily* (aims 1e, 2c)

Young people and members of staff recognised a tension between inclusion and homophily in both scenario-based and actual social situations. Inclusion and homophily can come into a tension as they represent different values: an ethical obligation to a broader good and individual choice. This is a tension between opposing values that cannot be easily resolved. Young people and school staff suggested possible resolutions, but mostly stressed their difficulty in balancing the two opposing sides. The issues are examined further in section 5.7: *The tension between inclusion and homophily*, and section 5.8: *Possible resolutions of the tension*.

Young people: *To explore the role of choice in relation to inclusion* (aim 1f)

Young people stressed that inclusion is as important as the people concerned consider it to be. The ethical significance of inclusion does not justify its enforcement and any kind of enforcement can show lack of respect. The ethical obligation to inclusion can be balanced with recognition of individuality, an issue also raised by school staff. This is further discussed in section 5.9: *Inclusion and individuality*.

School staff: *To examine how difference is managed at school/institutional level* (aims 2d, 2e, 2f)

School staff described the complexities of managing difference at school/institutional level. Decision-making is part of the complex power relations of the school hierarchy, and reflects a concern to accommodate student and parental voice. The power to affect decisions is also unequal between students. School policies complete this fragmentation rather than give clear directions. The issues are further examined in section 5.10: *Policy issues*; as well as in section 5.11: *Decision-making*.

5.3. Disability and perceptions of difference

The tension between inclusion and homophily was related to understandings of similarity and difference. Difference extends in many aspects of human diversity, like race, religion, sexuality, attitudes and beliefs. Young people and school staff also described disability as a crucial aspect of difference that can affect people's preferences for social interaction.

The idea that disability is a factor of difference has been questioned. The social model of disability claims that disability *should not* be seen as a factor of

difference, but instead as aspect of human diversity (Oliver, 1990; Barton, 2000; Barnes & Mercer, 2005). The argument of the social model is that disability is caused by social factors that set barriers to social participation; so, rather than the result of the interaction of the social environment with a specific impairment, disability is a social construction. This separation of disability from impairment has been called the disability paradox (Koch, 2001). In respect to this separation, Terzi (2005b) challenges the assumptions of the social model, using an example from visual impairment:

‘In stating that disability is a restriction of activity caused by discriminatory economic and social structures, the [social] model over-socialises the reality of disability. It is difficult to see, in fact, how the inability of a blind person to read non-verbal cues can be ascribed to a social condition’ (p. 202).

Accordingly, a young man in the study with a visual impairment expressed his difficulty in understanding non-verbal communication that is only in visual form. He noted that a visually impaired person may not be able to understand body language and mannerisms, if not explained verbally. Therefore, people with disabilities can face difficulties that are directly related to their impairments and are not caused exclusively by social factors.

Another perspective is that disability is the result of the interaction between individual and social factors. This is expressed by the *bio-psycho-social model* of disability (Devecchi, 2007; Norwich, 2010). A special schoolteacher, discussing scenario B4, gave an illuminating account of the interplay between social factors and impairment-related difficulties associated with Asperger syndrome. He noted that a secondary school can be noisy and busy (environmental factors), and the young people identified with the syndrome can experience information overload and struggle to read social clues

(impairment-related difficulties). The interaction of the two causes these young people's disability and difference.

Participants also highlighted the visibility or invisibility of impairment as an important aspect of difference. Davis (2005) distinguishes between disabilities that are obvious and others that 'neither their presence nor their nature can usually be ascertained in the course of the completion of a mundane social interaction' (p. 202). Young people with disabilities might attempt to escape the stigma of a visible disability. For example, a young man with a visible visual disability described his decision to have cosmetic eye surgery that would not improve his vision, but would make his disability invisible. Yet, even after the surgery, the oppressive feelings remained as they were deeply internalised (Tappan, 2006). Invisible disabilities may not attract the stigma of a visible impairment, but they can still be associated with particular challenges and difficulties (Davis, 2005).

Visibility and invisibility of disability can also affect non-disabled people's behaviour and their preferences for social interaction. In this case, the kind and level of interaction is particularly relevant. Davis (2005) defines the visibility and invisibility of impairment in terms of the ease of its perception during a mundane social interaction. Yet, regular social interaction can reveal any differences, as a young man in the study noted. He is identified with Asperger syndrome, a cognitive and largely invisible disability. His classmates did not really know, and they could not see, what his disability is, but because they had regular social interactions with him they could identify that he was different (Davis, 2005). This had in turn affected their behaviour and preferences: they had rejected him from their peer group. His difference was also highlighted by the fact that he had additional support, a teaching assistant designated exclusively to him. The

teaching assistant supported his learning, but at the same time made his difference apparent. Norwich (2008), building on Minow's work, has examined a tension between the recognition or not of students' differences that could result respectively in stigmatisation or denial of opportunities. This tension is known as the dilemma of difference.

Another dimension of disability is the language used to describe it. Young people, especially those identified with Asperger syndrome, discussed expressions like '*retarded*' and '*mental*' that others have used to call them. As Garland-Thomson (2004) writes, labels can be related to stereotypical ideas and beliefs about disability that is often seen as a departure from a valued standard, which is represented by normality. Members of staff also discussed how non-disabled people can think about people with disabilities; they might see them as less able, and this can affect their behaviour and language. The language of disability is often associated with terms that attract negative connotations, devalue and stigmatise people – what has been described as bad mouthing (Corbett, 1996; Norwich, 1999). However, disability labels can be useful as they have knowledge associated with them, and they can secure access to provision (Norwich, 2010).

Disability labels can also contribute to the formation of people's identities. For instance a young man identified with Asperger syndrome discussed what he read in a book about the relation between Asperger syndrome and dyslexia, and how he experienced this relation in terms of his connection with a friend of his, identified as dyslexic. This can be related to Hacking's (1999; 2007) position on the interactive nature of human classifications: people can internalise and transform the labels attached to them. Accordingly, this young man made the label and characteristics of Asperger syndrome part of his own

identity. Young people identified with Asperger syndrome also used the term '*neurotypical*', a concept initially employed by specialists (Newman et al, 2010), to describe *typically developed* people that are not identified with the syndrome. This expression reveals how the label attached to them has become part of their own identity, and how they identify themselves as part of a distinct group (Turner et al, 1987; Stets & Burke, 2000).

Members of staff highlighted another dimension as well. They noted that general perceptions about people with disabilities can be accompanied by a fear of the unknown. Disability is a constant reminder of the human morbidity and mortality; understood as such, it can induce a fear of contamination (Watson, 2000). A special schoolteacher stressed that while we do not want to mistreat people with disabilities at the same time we want the minimum possible of interaction with them, possibly because we are afraid they will make us feel uncomfortable. Being around people perceived to be different can be challenging, for which there is evidence from the experiences of young people, as a young woman without a disability noted.

Yet, it can be more challenging from the perspective of people with disabilities. A young man identified with Asperger syndrome discussed the tension in scenario A1: Andrew and Julie in the scenario identified themselves to be part of the same group, possibly based on their common impairment (they are both identified with Asperger syndrome). So, they perceived the decision of their teacher to add a third person to their group as a threat. This is what in social identity theory is defined as *self-categorisation* and *self-enhancement*: as people assign themselves in categories, group boundaries are sharpened (Turner et al, 1987; Stets & Burke, 2000).

Members of school staff also experienced similar difficulties but perhaps for different reasons. For example, a teaching assistant from a mainstream school described how teachers can be reluctant to deal with students with special educational needs because they are afraid. As students with special educational needs in mainstream education would not have complex needs, teachers were either afraid of the unknown that disability represents, or they believed that students with disabilities are *special* and that they should be educated by specialists in special ways. Allan (2011) also highlights this issue. However, Lewis & Norwich (2005) stress that:

'Practical pedagogies for those with special educational needs might look different from dominant mainstream pedagogies, but these are differences [...] at the level of concrete programmes, materials and perhaps settings. They are not differences in the principles of curriculum design and pedagogic strategy' (p. 220).

Students with disabilities or other differences that attend a mainstream school in most cases would not require distinctively specialist pedagogic strategies, since their needs would not be complex – yet, they might still require additional provision or special arrangements in order to participate fully. So, the teachers' stance has to be related to the reactions that disability, as a factor of difference, can cause: it can seriously challenge the way people think about themselves and the others around them (Watson, 2000; Koch, 2001; Lindgren, 2004).

5.4. Young people's preferences for social interaction

The discussion about disability and difference can also be related to an appreciation of diversity. Tropp and Bianchi (2006) write that 'societies have become increasingly diverse, and social norms and institutions have begun to shift, such that greater efforts are now being taken to acknowledge and promote

[various aspects of] diversity' (p. 534). They have also related the appreciation of diversity with an increasing interest for inter-group social interactions. Opposites can attract, as it has been found in studies about dyadic interactions (Dryer & Horowitz, 1997) and team membership (Kristof-Brown et al, 2005). In accordance with this idea, some young people in the study with and without disabilities described difference as something new and exciting. They often expressed a preference to be among different people that were associated with situations out of one's immediate experiences.

However, young people with disabilities also related their preferences for social interaction to their disability-related difficulties. For instance, one young person with a visual impairment and cerebral palsy expressed a preference to socialise with different people (with people who can see) as they can be more interesting, but also because they can assist him with his everyday disability-related difficulties and needs. This view raises questions about the genuine motives for his preference.

Difference can promote interest (Tropp and Bianchi, 2006), but it might also threaten the way people understand the world and themselves. However, being among similar people can reinforce anything we perceive as our position (Stets & Burke, 2000; Klohnen & Luo, 2003). Young people with and without disabilities described how their peers prefer to form '*cliques*', closed social groups, based on perceived similarity, defined by disability or other psychological or social factors. This is a *self-categorisation* process: young people perceive themselves as members of social groups in such a way that any comparison with others seen as out-group will result in an increase of self-esteem (Turner et al, 1987; Hogg et al, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000).

Similarity was shown in the analysis to be based not only on perceived group membership, as stated by the social identity theory, but also on shared attitudes and beliefs. The significance of shared attitudes and beliefs relates to the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Byrne et al, 1986), that similar attitudes can serve as reinforcements. This was particularly evident in the words of a young woman without a disability in the study. As she noted, people who agree with us validate our ideas and reinforce the consistency of our world (*'you don't get questioned for what you say and how you act'*). The opposite applies for people who disagree with us. As they create inconsistency in our world, they are associated with feelings of anxiety and confusion (*'people don't like to be questioned'*) that in turn might lead to lack of attraction (Klohn & Luo, 2003). This empirically evident social behaviour of like associating with like reflects the sociological concept of homophily (Kossinets & Watts, 2009).

5.5. The two dimensions of homophily

Homophily, a preference for others perceived to be similar (McPherson et al, 2001), is rooted in theories like the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Klohn & Luo, 2003) and social identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2000).

School staff stressed how important it is for young people with disabilities to be among others who can share their everyday difficulties and understand them deeply. A special schoolteacher described this as an emotional and social need of *'immense value'*. Yet, homophily is not only an expression of preference for similar others; as Kossinets & Watts (2009) note, homophily is also about context. For example, young people with disabilities can be educated in special settings that offer little opportunities for social interactions with non-disabled people. This was evident in the words of a visually impaired young man. He

attends a special school dedicated to visual impairment; as a result, his choices for social interaction were limited by the fact that the school is only for visually impaired young people – for people like him.

This kind of contextually induced homophily is described as *baseline homophily* (McPherson, et al 2001). However, when association with similar others is the result of an interaction between context and choice, another type of homophily emerges – *inbreeding homophily*. Inbreeding homophily is the outcome over and above what is determined by the effects of contextual factors (McPherson, et al 2001; Kossinets & Watts, 2009). This interaction between context and choice is illustrated by one young man with a visual impairment who was the only visually impaired student in his mainstream school (context). So, he mingled with other students that he described as '*not in any good social circles themselves*', an aspect that served as the basis of their perceived similarity. He actually chose to become friends with some of them. Therefore, contextual factors (mainstream, other loners) have interacted with individual choice (close friendship) to produce preference for similar people.

However, homophily can also have a negative aspect: it can be about fear of difference, prejudice and discrimination (McPherson et al, 2001), or feelings of inferiority and superiority (Tappan, 2006). Young people in the study distinguished between homophily as choice, and homophily as discrimination (McPherson et al, 2001). When homophily was seen to be the expression of personal preference this was deemed ethically acceptable; nevertheless, if homophily was driven by prejudice or discrimination against disabled people, then it was not encouraged. This is evident in the way that all scenarios were discussed. The actions of the people presented in the scenarios could be

judged differently according to the basis of and justification for their actions: choice was respected, but discrimination was denounced.

Homophily can also conceal feelings of internalised oppression or domination (Tappan, 2006). Internalised oppression describes a psychological survival mechanism that people who are denied power and influence in the dominant society often adopt. Messages about inferiority are deeply internalised and people can believe them to be true (Rowlands, 1995). Internalised feelings of oppression can be the driving force behind a preference for similar others, since people may prefer to be among others they perceive as equals. It can also be about feelings of insecurity. For example, a young man identified with Asperger syndrome described his fear to appear different or strange in the eyes of his non-disabled peers. As a consequence, he chose to socialise with people like him, namely, identified with Asperger syndrome or another cognitive disability. As he felt inferior, his non-disabled peers would possibly feel superior – the relative phenomenon of internalised domination (Tappan, 2006). Young people with disabilities, driven by internalised feelings of oppression and fear, often choose to be among others they see as similar. Young people without disabilities can in turn exclude their disabled peers because they do not perceive them as equals. This is a reason why homophily is seen to be a threat to the aims of inclusive education (Nangle et al, 2002; Frostad & Pijl, 2007).

Although homophily can conceal discrimination and feelings of oppression, it is an expression of individuality. A core idea of liberal theory is that people are individual beings with the right to make their own choices (Dagovitz, 2004). According to the capability approach (Sen, 2004) the notion of capability represents one's freedom of effective choice between valuable functionings (Nussbaum, 2000). Also, promoting people's capabilities and their

freedom of choice is a matter of justice (Terzi, 2005a). Rawls (1999) stresses that every person possesses an inviolability that even society as a whole (namely, the common good) cannot override. Accordingly, a special schoolteacher, discussing scenario B2, stressed that the students expressed a preference to work together for reasons they think are important and this preference should be respected. A question that can be raised is to what extent personal preferences can be respected when they are in tension with the moral imperative of including all people. The teacher described the principal's decision as an imposition that derives from his authority and power. In the scenario the principal represents the part of social inclusion. If inclusion is a greater good, then a tension between social inclusion and the young people's preference (homophily) can be seen as one between *individuality* and *commonality* (Goodhart, 2004; Norwich, 2008).

5.6. The ethical significance of inclusion

Inclusion in education and more broadly in society is considered to be an ethical obligation (Allan, 2005; Slee, 2011). Building on the philosophy of Levinas, Allan (2005) argues that inclusion is an ethical responsibility to the other that is ours even before our freedom. The ethical obligation to inclusion is expressed as a demand for social justice, equity and participation for all people in society and its institutions (Thomas, 2013).

Most young people and school staff in the study supported this idea. Social inclusion was described as an ethical obligation to all people. Especially young people without disabilities stressed how important it is to ensure that people with disabilities are included. However, what is more interesting is that this obligation can often be opposite to our actual inclinations and wishes. For

instance a young woman without a disability, when discussing scenario A4, stressed that Jeremy despite his initial inclination should invite his disabled classmate. She, thus, made a distinction between what people want, and what they are morally obligated to do. So, our moral obligation is to control what we may want or wish and concentrate instead on what it is ethically appropriate. From this point of view, inclusion is considered to have more ethical weight than individual preference.

Does the ethical obligation to inclusion justify its enforcement despite people's genuine preferences? For some members of staff the answer was yes. A mainstream schoolteacher expressed her certainty that the only way for Andrew and Julie (scenario B1) to have '*successful and fulfilling lives*' is to be included in the broader community:

M1: *Because in order for them to have successful and fulfilling lives they will need to work with able bodied students and disabled students alike, like everyone else.*

This idea can be related to what Pirrie & Head (2007) write about *shared values* in relation to inclusion. This teacher, driven by her sense of justice and her good intentions for her students, seemed to assume that Andrew and Julie – that are both identified with Asperger syndrome – should hold the same understanding as hers on what a successful and fulfilling life is. However, as Pirrie & Head (2007) stress 'talk of *shared values* can be presumptuous [and] the validity of statements like [this] is open to question' (p. 25). What is more alarming is that the teacher possibly felt this way because the two students are disabled; the assumption is that people with disabilities '*need*' to be as far as possible included. Yet, not all members of staff held the same belief. In the institutional scenarios (B1-B4), school staff either supported social inclusion (an ethical

obligation) or stressed that young people should have the right to make their own choices on issues that concern them (homophily as choice).

Young people with disabilities described inclusion as an ethical obligation, but also recognised the importance of choice. Inclusion was considered to be ethically important since it can contribute to the recognition and celebration of diversity (Topping & Maloney, 2005), and it can be an expression of respect (Cigman, 2007b). Social inclusion can also expand people's social horizons and allow them to be part of the broader community. Yet the enforcement of inclusion was not justified; inclusion is good and profitable as long as the people concerned recognise it and accept it as such.

Allan (2005) writes that the ethical project of inclusion is driven by desire for an ideally just society. Yet, the conceptualisation of inclusion as an ethical project can lead to a dead end; it fails to resolve the tensions and the dilemmas that inclusion raises, as it cannot achieve a balance between the ideal of inclusion for all and people's actual preferences. The moral obligation to inclusion can come into tension with individual choice; this tension between preference (expressed as homophily) and an ethical obligation to a greater social good (social inclusion) was clearly presented by a young man without a disability when discussing scenario A4. He was split between two answers that both seemed to be equally important and desirable: David's right to invite the people he prefers to his party (homophily) was contrasted to the stability of the whole social structure (social inclusion). So, the tension between homophily and inclusion is one between *individuality* (preference) and *commonality* (a greater good of particular ethical significance). This tension is also examined as one between *solidarity* and *diversity* (Goodhart, 2004), and *autonomy* and *control* (Norwich, 2008). Autonomy and control are opposing characteristics of modern

plural democracies. Solidarity is a synonym of homophily; it characterises traditional homogeneous societies and so it may come into tension with the increased diversity of modern societies. Individuality and commonality are in tension as they are based on values with seemingly dissimilar ethical weight.

5.7.The tension between inclusion and homophily

Homophily (a preference to be among others perceived to be similar) and inclusion (the principle of embracing difference) can come into a tension, as they are rooted in dissimilar value systems. In educational terms, the tension between homophily and inclusion involves ethical weighting between preferences for social interaction with similar others and the principle of including all people. Such tensions can be experienced by young people in their peer relationships; or by members of school staff in the consistency of their class or whole school management principles. Nevertheless, this tension can be constructive. It can draw our attention, on the one hand, to the difficulties that young people with disabilities can face and, on the other, to the fact that young people are individuals with a right to choose, even when we do not agree with or understand their choices (Terzi, 2005b). The homophily/inclusion tension can also be related to understandings of respect (Cigman, 2007b), and the nature of educational provision (MacKay, 2002).

Young people often feel forced to cooperate with people they would not prefer to or they do not know. This can throw tensions between members of staff and students, or among the students. A young man identified with Asperger syndrome, described his idea of what is involved in a teacher's respectful stance towards the students. He equated personal choice, namely the recognition of his individuality, with respect. Cigman (2007b), building on

Margalit's (1996) philosophical position, notes that respect is often understood in terms of avoiding the humiliation that any kind of recognition of difference, like labelling or categorisation, can bring about. However respect can also be related to the recognition of young people's individuality, and of their right to make their own choices (Terzi, 2005b). In the words of the above referred young man, any attempt to force inclusion it is '*a kind of disrespecting you*'.

The preferences of the young people with disabilities are often related to their disability-related difficulties. In the example above, the young man with Asperger syndrome conveyed his difficulty to cooperate with people he did not know; his preference could be directly related to the social difficulties that are associated with the syndrome (Newman et al, 2010). The recognition of individuality and difference can have an effect on the extent and nature of educational provision and on young people's life opportunities (Norwich, 2008). Yet, educational provision should reflect both 'a concern for equity and recognition of diversity' (MacKay, 2002, p. 162). This is a tension between provision for all students and provision adjusted according to individual needs that school staff recognised in relation to the homophily/inclusion tension. This is illustrated by a special schoolteacher who, when discussing scenario B3, explained how special arrangements for young people with disabilities can provide them with educational opportunities. The special sports team in the scenario was presented as an expression of students' choice and an opportunity for participation, but also a threat to social inclusion and a form of discrimination. However, the teacher noted that any opportunity for participation, even when offered through special arrangements, can add to social inclusion.

Dworkin (2010) writes that people can share values (like respect) even if they do not necessarily share criteria for their application; therefore, the same

values can be perceived in different ways. Respect can be understood in terms of avoiding the stigma of difference (Margalit, 1996; Cigman, 2007b) and be translated into a demand for full participation (Tremain 2005); or as recognition of individuality (Norwich, 2008) and express an entitlement to personal choice (Terzi, 2005b). Consequently, homophily (individuality) and inclusion (commonality), though seemingly opposing, can both be understood as expressions of respect to the other. However, a parallel examination of the two might cast doubts on the imperative of inclusion. For example, a special schoolteacher, though he supported the teacher's decision in scenario B1 to add a third student in the group of Andrew and Julie for the '*healthy*' purposes of inclusion, he also questioned the ethical necessity of it when people can feel happy without it: '*Is inclusion something we should be promoting? If people are happy without that, well what's the problem?*'

The answer is that individuality (homophily) and commonality (inclusion) can be balanced. Pirrie & Head (2007) write:

'There is never any exploration of the possibility that anything other than full participation is an option. [And yet] full participation is a chimera. Imagine the outcry if membership of the school football team or school orchestra were to be declared compulsory' (p. 24).

A dedication to full participation may not always be the best decision. The example of the orchestra in relation to participation and inclusion was also illustrated by a special schoolteacher. The teacher referred to the Paralympic orchestra where all the musicians had some kind of disability. During a music course, the man responsible for the orchestra gave a speech and presented his ideal, namely, an orchestra where there would be able body people performing alongside people who have disabilities. But in order to get there, he felt he had to begin with an orchestra with people who just had disabilities as a kind of a

stepping stone towards that what he saw as the ultimate thing that he was trying to achieve. This was his compromise, a negotiation between the ideal and the necessary arrangements towards this ultimate goal. Full inclusion and participation are both ideals, but compromises are also needed in the form of special arrangements for the people that require them. These special arrangements presuppose recognition of difference, individuality and personal choice. However, it is never one ideal against the other, but rather a negotiation between the two. Individuality (homophily) and commonality (inclusion) can be balanced, but flexibility and compromises are required from both sides, so any equilibrium is likely to be uneasy (Berlin, 2003; Norwich, 2008).

5.8.Possible resolutions of the homophily/inclusion tension

The young people expressed their difficulties in suggesting a resolution for the tension between inclusion (ethical obligation/commonality), and homophily (choice/individuality). This was particularly evident in the words of a young man without a disability who stressed how hard it is to discuss the issue. The presence of disability (that makes the whole matter a moral one) complicated things to the extent that right and wrong are blurred, in the sense that there is no single way of examining the situation. On the one hand, individual choice (homophily) is contrasted to an ethical obligation (inclusion); on the other, homophily can be about choice or discrimination. Overall, he described the issue as '*hazy*'. Central to his difficulty was whether it is ethically inappropriate to sacrifice commonality (inclusion) for individuality (homophily) as regards disability. This is why he noted that if it was about him – he does not have a disability – then '*things could be different*'. Young people often attempted to escape the difficulty of resolving or balancing the tension. For

instance in scenario A3, a young man with Asperger syndrome suggested that he would ask a teacher to decide for him. Or in scenario A4, two young people noted that Jeremy could invite his blind classmate but not socialise with him. The tension between homophily and inclusion is one of opposing values that are seen to have dissimilar ethical weight. However, as the recognition of individuality (homophily) can be an expression of respect (Cigman, 2007b), both homophily and inclusion can be seen to represent distinct but equally desirable ethical values; so, they need to be balanced.

This balance, the young people suggested, can be about a more gradual approach to the issue. For instance, in scenario A1 the teacher, combining social inclusion and choice, could add to the group of Andrew and Julie a third person of their approval. Another resolution can take the form of a discussion that would take both sides into equal consideration. Discussing scenario A1, a young man with a visual impairment argued that the teacher (social inclusion) and the two students (homophily) could engage in conversation. This conversation may even end up in disagreement but would show maturity and integrity, as both sides would have the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions. What this young man attempted to do is to balance the opposing values that each side represents. Norwich (2008) writes that people have different value systems that are not necessarily compatible; as a result, tensions and conflicts between opposing values cannot be resolved once and for all. However, such tensions can be partly resolved in the form of a fragile balance that requires flexibility and compromises from both sides. Goodhart (2004), when examining the tension between solidarity and diversity, uses the term *trade-offs* to describe the compromises needed in order to balance opposing or tentative values.

School staff also explored possible resolutions of the homophily/inclusion tension. Similar to the young people, they proposed as a solution the adoption of a more gradual approach (scenario B1 and B4), or a constructive discussion between staff and students (scenario B2 and B3). They also discussed how an uneasy balance between providing for all and providing as personally needed could be achieved. This equilibrium would involve balancing at an ideological and a practical level, since the issue is related to different understandings about the extent and nature of educational provision. Yet, things should be fair for all students, as a special schoolteacher particularly stressed: provision would not be the same as individual differences would be acknowledged (individuality), but at the same time it should reflect a concern for equity (commonality) (MacKay, 2002).

A recognition of difference (individuality, choice) can be balanced with a demand for full participation and inclusion (commonality, ethical obligation), but this balance would be uneasy and fragile. The difficulty lies in the compromises that each side has to make, especially as these compromises refer to ethical values that are seemingly opposing. However, as Berlin (2003) maintains, 'these collisions of values are of the essence of what they are and what we are' (p. 13), since they are part of our existence and way of thinking. A conflict of values is unavoidable in the realm of ethics, and the only possible resolution is an equilibrium that would be in constant need of repair (Berlin, 2003). Perhaps, a way to achieve this balance would be to provide space for individual choice in the processes of inclusion.

5.9. Inclusion and individuality

Homophily and inclusion, though rooted in dissimilar ethical values, can be balanced. The consequence is that inclusion can be seen as a matter of choice. This assumption is often considered to be questionable or dangerous for the purposes of social justice. This idea can be examined through the capability approach which defines the central notion of a *capability* as the freedom people have to achieve valued objectives (Sen, 2004) – so freedom entails choice. Terzi (2005b) explains the role of education as one of promoting young people's autonomy: 'while expanding capabilities, education plays a very important role in promoting the future freedoms children will have to choose their valued beings and doings' (p. 219); in order for education to promote future freedom, it should promote autonomy, 'the capacity to make informed choices on the kind of life one has reason to value' (p. 219). Promoting young people's autonomy to choose the life they value, it is seen as a matter of social justice (Terzi, 2005a; 2005b).

The young people in the study stressed the importance of being able to make their own choices. For example a young woman identified with Asperger syndrome, when discussing scenario A1, noted that inclusion is only one of the choices that the students have. Inclusion should only be as important as the two students consider it to be; their other option is to exclude themselves, if they feel more comfortable this way or they think that this would be better for their project.

Members of staff also related inclusion to individual choice. Especially (but not exclusively) school staff from special settings stressed that young people should find their own reasons to value inclusion, and be supported to find their own ways to pursue and achieve it at their own pace. Young people

could also choose not to be included, and their choice should be respected. School staff from special settings can be more sensitive to acknowledge students' preferences, as special settings mainly focus on the accommodation of individual needs (individuality); on the other hand, mainstream education is equally concerned with treating students with equity (commonality). So, the tension between individuality and commonality is also evident here as one between what is provided to all and what is personally needed (Norwich, 2008).

The recognition of young people's individuality can be expressed as an acknowledgement of a right to make their own choices, but also as recognition of their unique strengths and difficulties. Members of staff (especially from special settings) distinguished between inclusion for all, in the sense that all students are in the same educational setting and are treated without any differentiation, and another type of inclusion – where students are treated as personally needed, and there are special arrangements (or even settings) for some students according to their needs. Pirrie & Head (2007) stress that there are *systemic limits* to inclusion for all as it describes an ideal rather than a specific educational approach. They note that concepts like *responsible* (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995) and *moderate inclusion* (Cigman, 2007a; 2007b) are indications that inclusion for all lacks a clear definition of its purposes. Vaughn & Schumm (1995) describe responsible inclusion as a practice based educational model 'that is student centered and that bases education placement and service provision on each student's needs' (p. 265). Moderate inclusion is a way of thinking about inclusion that recognises difference and the difficulties that students who are different can experience; this acknowledgement is in turn reflected in educational provision (Cigman, 2007a; 2007b).

This is an example illustrated by a special schoolteacher to describe an early attempt at integration that from the perspective of full inclusion could be described as a shortcoming or a failure, as it was far from the ideal. A mainstream school had a partially hearing unit (PHU), one large room which was the only place in the school that was fitted with the loop systems required. The students that were hearing impaired could hear and be heard only there, as the system did not operate elsewhere in the school. So, the students that attended the unit had to stay in that room and the interactions with the other students were minimal. However, the teacher stressed, the students were happy and their needs met. The students felt '*comfortable*' in the unit, even though the interactions between them and the other students were limited. This special unit can be seen as categorising and excluding but also, despite its limitations, as bringing the students together. It may not be possible for a mainstream school to have special equipment in every room (the ideal), but even one room with special equipment (the compromise) can provide opportunities for inclusion. The pursuit of an ideal (full participation) and the replacement of difference with the politically correct, but neutral, notion of diversity (MacKay, 2002) may lead to a 'failure to address the needs of a *very small minority* [that in turn] means failure to accord respect to all, in favour of the spurious notion of inclusion for all' (Cigman, 2007b, p. 792). On the other hand, recognising difference and autonomy can be seen as an expression of respect, since this stance can be reflected on provision and translated to choice (Terzi, 2005b; Norwich, 2008).

5.10. Policy issues

The way school staff reacted to the question about policies is indicative of the notorious role policies can often play. For instance, a special schoolteacher nodded and laughed: '*Oh policies...*'

Members of staff were asked to suggest a policy or principle that would resolve the homophily/inclusion tension. Many policies were suggested (findings chapter, section 4.2.5); nevertheless, only few of them had actually something to do with the issue. Braun et al (2010) write that:

'Over the last two decades, policy-making has become an 'epidemic' of global proportions. [...] What is being demanded of schools and their role in national economic competitiveness and cultural cohesion is encoded in a litany of policy statements, documents and legislation' (p. 547).

The result is that schools and members of staff are expected to be familiar and implement a great number of policies that are planned for them by others; this policy hyperactivity has created fragmentation and confusion in terms of the meaning and expectations of school policies (Braun et al, 2010). In addition, policies are often written in thin, abstract, concepts (Dworkin, 2011) and fail to give clear and concrete descriptions of the issues they deal with. The discussion about policies in the study revealed this confusion.

Members of school staff located the tension within the policy area of equality, recognition of diversity, anti-discrimination, and more broadly of social inclusion. For instance, a special schoolteacher noted that respecting students' preferences ('*having their voice heard*') and ensuring appropriate provision ('*having the support they need*') are also relevant matters. Yet, interestingly, she admitted that '*there should be more to it than that*', in the sense that the balancing of the tension between homophily and inclusion cannot be set out as procedures and rules in a policy document. So, the management of the tension

is perhaps an issue related to the overall ethos of an educational institution. Donnelly (2000) describes school ethos as 'a *negotiated* process whereby individuals come to some agreement about what should and should not be prioritised' (p. 150). This *negotiated* process is based on the social interaction between the members of the institution:

'Ethos emanates from individual and group interaction and in this sense is not that which is formally stated or documented but is a process of social interaction' (p. 136).

This is why ethos is the expression of an educational institution's unique culture.

School ethos is related to school policies but it also extends beyond them. As members of staff stressed, the ethos is about overcoming barriers and enabling people to achieve their potential despite their difficulties. Hence, a particular school ethos can make possible better resolutions of tensions like the one examined between individuality (homophily) and commonality (inclusion). This would be a school culture that would put the needs of the students in the centre, and provide space for negotiation and input from all the people involved, both students and staff, and across the school hierarchical structure and power relations (Harber & Trafford, 1999; Hatcher, 2005). So, the homophily/inclusion tension raises an issue that cannot be resolved by a single policy, but rather opens a broader discussion about democracy in the school community.

5.11. Decision-making

The homophily/inclusion tension as an issue related to the management of difference at institutional level raises also the issue of democratic decision-making in the school community. Members of staff stressed their difficulty in suggesting a viable resolution for the tension. A reason could be that 'the

knowledge required to solve complex problems is dispersed throughout organisations' (Hatcher, 2005, p. 254). So, this tension is not an issue to be resolved by one person, but a matter that needs to be negotiated within the whole school community – by staff of all levels and students together.

Mouffe (1999) discusses Habermas's views about the notion of *deliberative democracy*, an understanding of democracy that incorporates questions of morality and justice into politics. She describes democracy as the 'free and unconstrained deliberation of all matters of common concern' (p. 751); this deliberation is expressed in a community as open dialogue. Interestingly, school staff also related inclusion to democratic dialogue. For example a special schoolteacher argued that what was questionable in scenario B2 was not the principal's decision to enforce social inclusion, but his willingness or refusal to engage in an open dialogue with the students. Many young people and members of school staff in the study stressed the importance of taking into consideration many voices in decision-making, and connected this to inclusion. Grossman (2008) argues for a link between inclusion and democracy, as they are rooted in similar principles about the role of difference and the value of pluralism. The concepts of *moderate* and *responsible* inclusion also presuppose the recognition of young people's individuality, and their ability to make choices and affect decision-making in their school communities.

Democracy in the school community is not a management strategy, but an entitlement to participation for all the people involved, staff and students alike (Hatcher, 2005). A democratic school is one that gives students the opportunity to make judgements and choices, and a place where everything is open to discussion (Harber & Trafford, 1999). It is about a school culture where decision-making is based on knowledge not position (Hatcher, 2005), and the

driving force behind any decision-making process is unobstructed dialogue (Harber & Trafford, 1999).

Yet, power inequalities and conflict of values are inherent in democratic communities. A dedication to democratic values does not mean that all people in a school community would have the same power or hold the same understanding of principles like *inclusion* or *respect*.

'Breaking with the symbolic representation of society as an organic body [...] a democratic society makes room for the expression of conflicting interests and values' (Mouffe, 1999, p. 756).

Mouffe (1999) argues that a democratic society is not the realisation of a perfect harmony, where all parts are equal and the antagonisms between them are absent. In democracy, conflict of interests and tensions of values are present, but people are free to express and negotiate them. Therefore, the aim is to transform an *antagonism* between opponents into an *agonism* (a process of constant negotiation) between people that might share the same values, but understand them in different ways (Mouffe, 1999; Dworkin, 2010). In a democratic school, inclusion is not an externally forced, meaningless, obligation but the product of an *agonism* in the sense that it is constantly negotiated. Accordingly, a special schoolteacher noted that the way inclusion is going to be implemented in a school should reflect a consensus between staff and students, and should be the product of discussion within the school community. This would require '*a lot of work*', as it would presuppose the acknowledgement of tensions of values.

5.12.Methodological issues

This section explores methodological issues: the extent as to which the initial theory of the study was adapted, as well as the strengths and limitations of the research design and the methodological approach taken in the project.

5.12.1.How I adapted theory

Methodologically, this study was conducted from an adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998). I attempted to construct 'a creative and developmental dialogue between emerging research findings and an extant [theory] with the aim of adapting [it]' (Bessant & Francis, 2005, p. 93). This initial theory was an attempt to provide an explanation for the social phenomena examined and derived from the literature and previous conceptual analysis. It informed the construction of the scenarios and interview questions, and provided me with a direction during the data collection (methodology chapter, section 3.4.3). The theory was brought together with the empirical findings during the analysis. Layder (1998) writes that, from an adaptive theory approach, theory should be open to responses from the empirical findings that may ask for a fundamental reorganisation, or for its abandonment. However, changes in the theory can be radical or less significant, like the filling of the details of an existing category, or the better understanding of its concepts and relations (Layder, 1998; Bessant & Francis, 2005).

In this study, since the initial theory proved to be consistent with the research findings, the theory was adapted in the sense of a better understanding of its connections and elements (Bessant & Francis, 2005). This is particularly evident in the framework of the analysis (section 3.12). The conceptual themes that derived from the theory were brought together with the

grounded themes from the data. The grounded themes were then organised according to the conceptual themes, and gave flesh, clear meaning and distinct dimensions to the conceptual themes; they also highlighted connections and differences. This is how the initial theory was elaborated through the interaction with the empirical findings (adaptive process):

Initial theory: *Homophily and social inclusion can come into a tension which has an ethical dimension and is intertwined with issues of personal choice (young people), relations of power and decision-making (school staff).*

Adapted (elaborated) theory: *Homophily – a preference for similar others – was consistent with the experiences of the young people and school staff in the study. Inclusion was considered to be an ethical obligation to the other, especially to people with disabilities or other differences. Homophily and inclusion can come into a tension, as they represent respectively a personal preference and an ethical obligation that may be contrary to each other. Yet, homophily can conceal discrimination; in this case, participants stressed that it should not be encouraged. This tension is evident in education, as students with disabilities or other differences might express a preference to be among similar others. School staff then would face the tension of respecting their preferences or enforcing inclusion. Young people stressed that any enforcement of inclusion shows lack of respect. So, the tension was not easily resolved. The matter is related to school policies that deal with equity, diversity, discrimination and inclusion, but cannot be fully resolved by them. It can then be related to a particular ethos that would recognise the role of open dialogue.*

This is a more particular example of this adaptive process, based on the findings about the notion of homophily. Homophily has according to the participants two aspects; a positive aspect, related to the association that similarity can bring, and a negative one, mostly related to oppression. In the literature, homophily is mostly described as an expression of preference for social interaction with similar others, or as the result of an interplay between preference and context (Kossinets & Watts, 2009). Yet, this preference can also conceal discrimination, fear of difference, and internalised feelings of oppression (McPherson et al, 2001; Tappan, 2006). In the research findings these two aspects of homophily are evident; they also gave flesh and distinct specificity to these aspects. Both groups of participants focused more on the positive aspect of homophily and, as evident by the many common themes, they largely shared their understandings about its nature and causes. Table 15 illustrates how the positive and negative aspects of homophily that the young people and school staff described illuminated the conceptual theme *similarity and difference* (more particularly the aspect of similarity) that was derived from the initial theory and the research aims (also discussed in section 3.12):

			Both	Young people	School staff
Similarity and Difference (Conceptual theme)	Similarity	Reasons for homophily: positive	Common ground Understanding Comfort zone Equal status Confidence Security	Easy communication Deep connection Participation Trust	Identity Emotional need
		Reasons for homophily: negative	Oppression Bullying	Fear	Victimisation Lack of confidence Lack of social skills

Table 15: Adaptive theory example (similarity and difference)

5.12.2.Strengths and limitations

This section is about strengths and limitations of the methodological approach taken in the study.

5.12.2.1.The scenarios used

The scenarios used proved to be useful, as they allowed participants (young people and school staff) to express their views in a clear, but also non-threatening way. Overall, the scenarios provoked rich and stimulating accounts. They helped participants to discuss a complex and for some sensitive issue, and also to draw parallels to their own experiences. Yet, some of the young people found it difficult to discuss the scenarios in depth or provide examples from their personal lives – the issue and how it was dealt with is further discussed in the methodology chapter (section 3.16). As a general comment, the use of scenarios, an approach influenced by research in moral psychology (Kohlberg, 1981; Turiel, 2008b; Haidt, 2012), proved to be an efficient way to explore ethical tensions and views.

In the majority of cases, young people and members of school staff gave consistent responses across the range of scenarios – four for the young people, and four for members of staff – and the subsequent interview questions. This indicates that the scenarios were able to capture the same issue, that is the homophily/inclusion tension, in a variety of sub-contexts. Here is an example of the theme ‘right and wrong at the same time’ that refers to the ethical dimension of the tension in all four scenarios for the young people (A1-A4). The presented actions were considered to be right and wrong at the same time, and there were described in similar ways in all four scenarios:

Scenarios	Interview excerpts coded with the theme: 'Right and wrong at the same time'	Interpretation
A1	<i>C2: It depends about the context. So, if he put pressure on them, I think that's wrong. But, if encourage them, I think it is right.</i>	Pressure (the enforcement of inclusion) is wrong, whereas encouragement (that entails choice) is right.
A2	<i>W6: He's wrong for discouraging him [...] but I think he's right by trying to make him feel more daring with his life 'cause he's trying to make the guy find a better initiative.</i>	It is wrong to discourage homophily as it shows disrespect for personal preferences, but at the same time it can be right because social inclusion (socialisation) is important.
A3	<i>P3: Morally wrong if it's purely because of her physical disability, but perfectly right if it's because she is capable of doing the job.</i>	Affirmative action even for the purposes of social inclusion is a kind of discrimination (wrong), but also an opportunity (right)
A4	<i>W5: I mean if the differences were disability related then I'd say in some ways it was wrong. [...] However, in some ways it may have been right because he was taking into consideration David's thoughts.</i>	A preference to be among similar others (homophily) can be about discrimination (wrong), or choice (right).

Table 16: Consistency of responses across scenarios (example)

However, scenario A3 (appendix 8.a.2) invoked also some unique responses; the situation presented was described by some young people as neither right nor wrong, and was coded accordingly ('neither right nor wrong'). Potential reasons for this scenario unique response were also discussed in the findings chapter (section 4.1.1), and in this chapter (section 5.1). The different responses of this scenario can be related to the fact that it refers to a selection for a job position, therefore to a professional relationship, whereas all other scenarios depict preferences for personal social interactions. It seems that some of the young people that discussed scenario A3 distinguished between the public realm of work, and the private sphere of personal relationships. As a result, they found it unacceptable to consider disability as a factor of difference that would affect their preferences for selection for a job position, since these preferences should not be expressed in the public realm but they are part of a private sphere. A reason can be that there is a strong liberal commitment 'to a private realm of society in which public intervention is forbidden or discouraged' (Crowder, 2004, p. 90). This stance created some complexity in terms of the analysis and organisation of the data, but also contributed to the diversity and richness of the research findings. In terms of the participants, scenario A3

created some confusion and it proved difficult to discuss, but at the same time the controversies in it led to interesting and stimulating accounts.

5.12.2.2. Issues related to particular groups of participants

This project involved young people with disabilities. For the young people with visual impairment some issues of access to the material used (vignettes) were taken into consideration (section 3.11). Some participants identified as having Asperger syndrome experienced information overload during the interviews, or needed more time due to slow information processing. In addition, the analysis and interpretation of the latter's responses proved to be in some cases complex as there were inconsistencies of some responses. These challenges are discussed in the methodology chapter (section 3.13). Despite any difficulties, the majority of the young people with disabilities could participate as any other young person of their age. Because of the complexities of the issues raised in the scenarios the particular approach taken in the study is not relevant to young people with learning difficulties (cognitive disabilities). Nevertheless, the ideas about respect and the management of difference discussed in the study are also relevant to this group.

In terms of members of staff, a possible limitation lies in the discussion about policies when it came to teaching assistants. It was expected that the homophily/inclusion tension as a matter related to social inclusion at class or whole school level would be an issue that teaching assistants could discuss. This was the case in all the aspects of the tension, except for policies. A mainstream school teaching assistant described her reluctance to discuss about policies since it is an issue that would be dealt with someone '*higher in the department*':

M4: *I wouldn't be able to describe a policy because I don't deal with those policies myself; [...] it would be somebody higher in the department who would be dealing with these situations...*

Therefore, she either felt that she could not contribute to the discussion or that the topic extended beyond her professional role and she did not want to cross any boundaries. As discussed in the section about policies (section 5.10), this topic is a complex one and was mostly covered by teachers or administrators.

5.13.Future research

This section outlines some possible future research following on from this study. As presented in the summary of the findings (section 5.1), the tension between inclusion and homophily was described by members of school staff in three different ways:

- as a tension between what one wants to do (to be among the people he or she prefers) and what he or she should do (to include everybody)
- as a tension between an ideal (inclusion for all) and the compromises needed to be made towards this ideal (in the form of special arrangements for some people), and
- as a tension between treating everybody the same (general provision) and treating according to one's needs (special provision)

The last form of the homophily/inclusion tension is perhaps the most interesting, as it is directly connected to understandings of the nature of educational provision. General provision (treating the same) describes what is provided to all people without differentiation, whereas special provision (treating according to one's needs) refers to what is offered to address the specific needs of certain people. Philosophically, this discussion is part of a debate about what treating

equally means: treating people the same (equality), or as personally needed (equity) (Singer, 1993)? This idea is also related to the capability approach (Sen, 2005) in which equality is understood to be about capabilities, the freedoms people have to achieve valuable objectives (Terzi, 2005b); thus, equality cannot be reduced to equal treatment. In educational terms, a tension between general and special provision reflects a different stance towards the needs of the students and also different understandings of inclusion (Frederickson & Cline, 2009):

- provision is the same for all (equality), the student has to *fit into* school, inclusion is understood as assimilation to a given educational system, or
- provision is personally adjusted (equity), the school has to be flexible, inclusion is understood as a process of accommodation to a diversity of students

This tension can be seen as one between opposing values about what an ethical stance towards the students should entail. These values often coexist in education in a sensitive balance, since *things have to be fair for all* in the words of a special schoolteacher; so, this tension also has an ethical dimension, as it involves issues of justice. A tension between general and special provision – that is to say, between what it is provided generally to all students and what according to their individual needs – can be explored empirically in terms of teachers' perceptions, with reference to the provision for students with disabilities or various racial, religious or other backgrounds when they are a minority in their class or school.

So, the following questions can be raised:

- How do teachers perceive what it is the same for all and what is specific to some students?

- To what extent and what contexts do teachers experience a tension between treating students the same and treating as personally needed?
- To what extent do they see an ethical dimension in this tension?
- How would they resolve this tension?

Norwich (2008) has examined this tension in terms of the recognition or not of students' differences that could result respectively in denial of educational opportunities or stigmatisation (the dilemma of difference). However, the methodological approach of this inquiry can be different from the one taken in the previously referred study. The general/special provision tension might also be explored through scenarios of moral dilemmas originated in studies within the field of moral psychology, like the scenarios used in the present study (Kohlberg, 1981; Turiel, 2008b; Haidt, 2012).

In a first phase, teachers could be interviewed with constructed scenarios like the following one:

In a secondary mainstream class, Mr Brown teaches history. He has to allocate his students into groups to prepare a presentation on World War Two. Ahmed and Ching-Lan, whose English is not their first language, expressed a preference to work together on the project and strongly refused to co-operate with anyone else. Mr Brown, knowing that no other student would have that option, felt he should ask a third student to join them in the task.

In this scenario, the tension is between the accommodation of the students' preference to work together that could be connected (or not) to their language-related difficulties and cultural differences (a special treatment), and Mr Brown's inclination to treat all his students in exactly the same way. The scenario could

be used to guide semi-structured interviews to explore experienced tensions that cover a range of school situations.

In a second phase, the interviews of the first phase can be used for the construction of real life scenarios, based on the actual experiences of the teachers/participants of the first phase. These scenarios can serve as stimuli for discussion during semi-structured interviews with a new set of participants.

A project based on these ideas could be conducted with a number of mid-career and experienced teachers that have worked with students of various cultural backgrounds or other minority groups, in big cities – since they are more diverse – in the UK and overseas. Teachers have to be well experienced to be able to discuss the issues in depth.

Such a study might reveal a tension of ethical values in education. In their responses, some teachers would be expected to be more sensitive to considering individual needs, while other teachers could be more willing to treat all students in similar ways, and this would be reflected in their teaching practices as well. The two opposing sides would be held in a sensitive balance. As such, the examination of a tension between general and special provision could open a broader discussion on teachers' ethical responsibility towards their students who are different, and the nature and practices of school inclusion.

5.14.The practical and theoretical significance of the study

This study examined a tension between inclusion, the principle of embracing difference, and homophily, a preference to be among similar others. Theoretically, this tension is one between seemingly opposing but equally desirable ethical values, namely between a moral obligation (inclusion) and the expression of personal choice (homophily); as such it cannot be resolved once

and for all (Norwich, 2008). Yet, as people's value systems are not necessarily compatible with each other, the two sides can be held in a fragile balance (Berlin, 2003).

Within the context of education, the tension between inclusion and homophily is constructive, as it can remind us that students who are different often experience actual difficulties (educational, practical, social, emotional) and that a preference to be among others they see as similar may be related to these difficulties. Equally important, this preference can simply be an expression of individual choice. Understood as such, their preferences should be taken into consideration in decision-making even when they are in tension with the moral imperative of social inclusion.

The homophily/inclusion tension is part of a broader tension between individuality and commonality (Goodhart, 2004; Norwich, 2008), and relevant to a debate about what treating students respectfully means (Cigman, 2007b). Respect has often been connected to the avoidance of humiliation that the recognition of difference can bring in the form of labelling and stigmatisation (Cigman, 2007b). However, the recognition of difference in a positive, non-demeaning way can secure appropriate provision for the young people who require it and provide them with educational as well as life opportunities (MacKay, 2002; Norwich, 2008). So, recognising individual differences can also be about respect. In addition, it is an acknowledgement of young people's right to decide for themselves on issues that concern them (Terzi, 2005b).

The homophily/inclusion tension highlights also the limitations that inclusion has, being a concept with an ideological rather than a practical orientation (Armstrong, 2005; Pirrie & Head, 2007). As already discussed (section 2.4.7), inclusion is largely defined with the use of *thin* moral concepts

like just or ethical (Allan, 2005; Slee, 2011). As Dworkin (2011) notes, 'thicker concepts often provide the case that the thin concepts presuppose but do not supply' (p. 182). So when, for example, Thomas (2013) writes that inclusion has many aspects among them social justice, equality, respect and participation or Allan (2005) that inclusion is an ethical project, what they lack is to provide grounds for their ideas that are described with the use of thin concepts (Dworkin, 2011). Inclusion is about justice, equality, respect and participation, and as such an ethical obligation, but this kind of abstract acknowledgment has little to offer without further expansion of the concepts in practical terms.

The practical significance of the study can be located in the implications of the homophily/inclusion tension in the everyday school life. The tension, as described by the young people and school staff, is evident in a variety of social situations. It can be experienced in the social interactions between students, staff and students, and across the school staff. It can also be related to the classroom or whole school management in terms of provision, inclusion, and issues of justice and difference. Hence, the study has illustrated how an homophily/inclusion tension can assume different forms, and be present in a variety of situations and contexts.

One of the issues examined in the study is what school policies or broader principles would resolve the homophily/inclusion tension. Members of staff found it difficult to suggest an existing policy or to describe a new one that would give a clear direction as to how the tension could be resolved. The matter has been discussed in the findings chapter (section 4.2.5) and in this chapter, in the *policy issues* section (section 5.10). A reason for this difficulty is that there are a great number of policies that cover different aspects of the issues involved (*difference, equality, discrimination, diversity*). These policies can overlap or

contradict themselves, creating confusion (Braun et al, 2010). They are related to the tension since they deal with inclusion and difference, but they cannot offer a satisfactory resolution. In addition, these policies are often written in thin, abstract concepts (Dworkin, 2011), failing to provide concrete descriptions of the issues they deal with.

Inclusion and homophily represent distinct values – namely, an ethical obligation and personal choice – and so the tension between them cannot be resolved once and for all (Berlin, 2003; Norwich, 2008). However, at school level, the tension between inclusion and homophily can lead towards an ethos that would make it possible to find a settlement that balances opposing principles. ‘School ethos can constrain people to act in particular ways’ (Donnelly, 2000, p. 150). This does not mean that people passively accept an externally forced status quo, but that their behaviour, way of thinking and expectations are largely affected by it. So, the ethos of an institution plays a crucial role in understanding and implementing inclusion. The homophily/inclusion tension can be resolved by an ethos that would give the initiative to the people involved (students and staff) to decide together on the meaning and value of inclusion for their school community, and give shape and direction to the way that inclusion is implemented. As Donnelly (2000) writes:

‘The value of understanding a school’s ethos lies in the fact that it isolates the factors which are likely to foster school effectiveness’ (p. 152).

A school that would have an ethos derived from the interaction of both students and staff, an ethos not imposed by the people in power, would be more likely to avoid tensions and more prepared to resolve and balance them; thus, it would be more effective in implementing inclusion and fostering a sense of belonging for all students. Inclusion, instead of a set of prescribed practices in the form of

formal and often futile school policies, would be a continuous process of negotiation and a shared value within the whole school community.

So, the tension between inclusion and homophily raises the issue of democratic decision-making in the school community. Hatcher (2005) argues that democracy in schools is not a management strategy, but an entitlement to participation for staff and students alike. The driving force behind any democratic decision is dialogue (Mouffe, 1999): a democratic school is one that gives the opportunity to all people to make judgements and choices, and a place where everything is open to discussion (Harber & Trafford, 1999). This does not mean that everybody in the school would have the same power or share the same values. Power inequalities and conflict of values are inherent in democracy (Mouffe, 1999).

Recognising the tension between inclusion and homophily has implications for the way difference is managed at class or school level. School staff stressed their difficulty in resolving or balancing the two opposing sides of the tension, namely individuality (homophily) and commonality (inclusion). This complexity is partly caused by the rhetoric of inclusion that largely focuses on what is just and ethically appropriate (Allan, 2005; Thomas, 2013), failing to clearly define inclusion's purposes. Inclusion described as a moral obligation rooted in justice and respect, is often translated into a demand for full participation (Tremain, 2005). However, such principles do not have a single meaning. In democracy the aim is to transform an *antagonism* between opponents into an *agonism* between people that might share the same values, but understand them in different ways (Mouffe, 1999; Dworkin, 2010). The acknowledgement of young people's right to be involved in decisions that concern their lives, even when their preferences come into tension with what is

considered as politically correct, is a matter of justice (Terzi, 2005b) and an expression of respect (Cigman, 2007b; Norwich, 2008) – it also reflects democratic values. In the democratic school, inclusion is not externally forced and for this reason meaningless, but the product of an *agonism*. In other words, it is constantly negotiated.

In conclusion, educational policies that are related to the management of social inclusion and difference are often written in terms of abstract, thin, concepts (Dworkin, 2011), or they offer absolute solutions to simplified problems (DfE, 2011). However, as discussed throughout the study, the management of difference is about recognising tensions and negotiating values. This way of thinking can have professional development implications for school staff in terms of managing difference at class or school level, as the scenarios used and the issues they raise can be translated into relevant training activities. The study can also inform school policies of inclusion and difference, as it can change their focus: from providing prescribed but artificial solutions, to acknowledging tensions and the value of dialogue. Such policies would prepare schools to face the challenges of managing difference.

5.15.Conclusion

This scenario-based study examined the relationship between the moral imperative of social inclusion (Allan, 2005) and homophily, the sociological concept that similarity brings connection (McPherson et al, 2001). According to this analysis of the participants' perceptions:

- Homophily was consistent with their experiences
- Inclusion was perceived to be an ethical obligation
- There is a tension between inclusion and homophily

- This tension has an ethical dimension related to the aspects of homophily, choice and discrimination, and the moral imperative of inclusion
- Any resolution was difficult
- Choice was important for the young people
- The tension is part of the complexities of managing difference at institutional level

Inclusion is mainly conceived as an ideological problem, and largely defined in terms of what is just and ethical; as a result the practical currency of the term is not sufficiently explored (Armstrong, 2005; Pirrie & Head, 2007). Homophily is a useful yet unusual way to examine the issues that inclusion raises. The idea of examining the two notions together was given by an analogy between inclusion and the aesthetic principle of dynamic balance (Kordis, 2009). As inclusion is often understood as an ethical obligation to interact socially with different people, it may come into tension with people's actual preferences. Homophily, although it may conceal discrimination and oppression (Tappan, 2006), can be an expression of individual preference to be among similar others (Kossinets & Watts, 2009). So the homophily/inclusion tension is one between individuality and commonality (Goodhart, 2004; Norwich, 2008).

In the context of education, this tension is constructive. It can challenge our understanding of what the ethical obligation to inclusion entails, and what treating the students respectfully should mean (Cigman, 2007b). Respect is often understood in terms of avoiding the humiliation of difference; yet, the recognition of students' individuality (their differences) is also an expression of respect (Cigman, 2007b), as it can be reflected in provision and translated into educational and life opportunities (MacKay, 2002; Norwich, 2008). In addition, it

is an acknowledgment that students are autonomous human beings capable of making their own decisions (Terzi, 2005b).

The homophily/inclusion tension questions the moral value of a demand for inclusion for all (Cigman, 2007b; Pirrie & Head, 2007), and opens a debate on participatory decision-making and democracy in the school community. However, conflict of values and inequality of power are likely to always be present in democratic communities (Mouffe, 1999). In a democratic school, inclusion would be a shared value not because all people would understand it the same way, but because it would be constantly under negotiation. The approach to inclusion that this study suggests can be translated into professional development training for the management of difference at institutional level. It can also inform school policies of inclusion and difference to acknowledge students' preferences and tensions of values.

Conclusively, the tension between social inclusion and homophily questions the core of the inclusion discourse, namely the justice of inclusion (Slee, 2011; Thomas, 2013). Since inclusion is largely explored normatively, it is unable to provide responses to critical issues, like the one of educational provision (MacKay, 2002) and fails to recognise young people's individuality (Terzi, 2005b; Norwich, 2008). So, instead of providing directions, it opens new debates (Pirrie & Head, 2007). Normative understandings of inclusion need to be translated into well-defined and achievable plans for action.

6. Appendix (access)

6.a. Letter of access (general)

Exeter, October 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is George Koutsouris and I am a PhD student in Education (special educational needs) at the University of Exeter. I am writing to ask you whether you would like to participate in my doctoral research.

My research topic is about young people's preferences for interaction with others similar to themselves and how this might impact on social inclusion.

I am planning to conduct interviews using short scenarios as stimuli for discussion. My intention is to interview young people with and without disabilities, as well as teachers, high level administrators, SENCOs and principals, or other persons who work with young people, such as educational psychologists.

Each person will be interviewed once. Interviews will be conducted one to one. Each interview will last no longer than 35 minutes. It would be much appreciated, if I could meet the young people before the interviews, so both sides would become familiar with each other. In terms of educators and administrators, the scenarios and interview questions can be provided beforehand. Anonymity and confidentiality will be applied to every aspect of the project.

If you would like to participate in the research, a first meeting and the interviews can be arranged between November 2012 and May 2013. I can be contacted at this email: gk234@exeter.ac.uk. My supervisors, in case you would like to get in touch with them directly, are Professor Brahm Norwich and Dr Shirley Larkin.

I would like to thank you very much in advance.

Yours sincerely,

George Koutsouris, PhD in Education student, University of Exeter

6.b. Letter of access (parents)

Exeter, March 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is George Koutsouris and I am a PhD student in Education (special educational needs) at the University of Exeter. I am writing to ask you whether you would like your son/daughter to participate in my doctoral research.

My research topic is about students' preferences for interaction with others similar to themselves and how this might impact on social inclusion.

I am planning to conduct interviews using short scenarios as stimuli for discussion. My intention is to interview a small number of students with and without disabilities in your son's/daughter's college. I have arranged to interview teachers and college administrators, as well.

Each student will be interviewed once. Interviews will be conducted one to one. Each interview will last no longer than 35 minutes. A member of the college staff will be present in the interviews. Anonymity and confidentiality will be applied to every aspect of the project. I believe students will find the interviews both interesting and thought-provoking.

If you would like your son/daughter to participate in the research, please contact [...] the college SENCO. For more information about the project or any other question, I can be contacted at this email: gk234@exeter.ac.uk. My supervisors, in case you would like to get in touch with them directly, are Professor Brahm Norwich and Dr Shirley Larkin.

I would like to thank you very much in advance.

Yours sincerely,

George Koutsouris, PhD in Education student, University of Exeter

7. Appendix (participants)

7.a. Information leaflet (young people)

Some general information about you...

1. Gender: male female

2. What is your age? 21.....

3. What is your country of origin? UK.....

4. Do you work study or both or neither ?

a. If you work, do you work full time or part time ?

Please specify your work position: Model.....

b. If you study, are you a secondary college or university student?

Please specify your course: Dance.....

5. Do you have a disability? Yes No

If yes, what kind of disability? Aspergers syndrome (But do not consider it only to be a disability)

6. Do you know people with disabilities in person? Yes No

If yes, please specify your relation to them: Friends.....

What kind of disabilities do they have? Usually same as me

Thank you

7.b.Information leaflet (school staff)

Some general information about you...

1. Gender: male female

2. What is your age?53.....

3. What is your country of origin?UK.....

4. Do you work study or both or neither ?

a. If you work, do you work full time or part time ?

Please specify your work position:Head of VI Specialist Services.....

b. If you study, are you a secondary college or university student?

Please specify your course:

5. Do you have a disability? Yes No

If yes, what kind of disability?

6. Do you know people with disabilities in person? Yes No

If yes, please specify your relation to them:Professional / social / family.....

What kind of disabilities do they have?Physical + sensory.....

Thank you

7.c.Ethics

7.c.1.Certificate of ethical approval

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH
DISSERTATION/THESIS



Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/> and view the School's statement on the GSE student access on-line documents.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: GEORGIOS KOUTSOURIS

Your student no: 600050583

Return address for this certificate: FLAT 25, APOLLO HOUSE, 71 LOOE ROAD, EX4 4FQ, EXETER, UK

Degree/Programme of Study: PhD in Education

Project Supervisor(s): Professor Brahm Norwich, Dr Shirley Larkin

Your email address: gk234@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 07887 608104

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my **dissertation / thesis** (delete whichever is inappropriate) **to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.**

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: date: 25 11 01 2019

NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must **not be included** in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2011

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

Your student no: 600050583

Title of your project: The preferences for interaction of young people with disabilities in terms of homophily and social inclusion

Brief description of your research project:

This study is about preference for interaction that young people with and without disabilities have for others who are similar or different from themselves, in educational and out of school contexts.

In modern diverse societies disability and difference raise a variety of questions that call for answers. The role of inclusion under these circumstances appears to be one of great importance. Inclusion has been described as a moral imperative, as an ethical project that fights for justice and equity in society. Inclusion in education and social inclusion can be seen as the successful result of the harmonious combination of different people that complement each other. Nevertheless, the idea of inclusion has often been translated to a demand for inclusion for all, as the only way of being dedicated to the ethical principles of justice and equity.

In a different context, the notion of homophily, mostly used by sociologists, can be seen to draw attention to a different aspect of social interactions. Based on the similarity-attraction hypothesis from social psychology, or on theories of identity and self-esteem enhancement, like the social identity theory, homophily seems to contradict the everyday theory that opposites attract, expressing the idea that similar people tend to congregate in homogeneous groups. This social behaviour could be seen to aim to ease everyday communication, and to reinforce along with self-esteem our own perspectives of the world. Homophily with its focus on sameness has been described as a threat to the aims of inclusive education, and as an idea seems to teeter between choice and discrimination.

Examining the two concepts together, we could argue that homophily focuses on aspects of social interaction that inclusion strategically neglects. This study seeks to explore whether and how homophily can give us new perspectives on understanding issues around sameness and difference, and most importantly new ways of approaching inclusion. The potential ethical tension between inclusion and valuing difference, on one hand, and homophily and valuing sameness, on the other, can be seen to reflect the artificial tensions between social construction and reality that dominate understandings of disability and difference. Such false tensions can lead to the rejection of the actual difficulties that people who are different may experience, and also to the denial of an element of choice in the processes of inclusion. Perhaps, giving space for choice can be an ethical position by itself.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

Thirty-five to fifty people are expected to participate in the project: ten to fifteen students with and without disabilities, ten to fifteen non-students up to 25 years old with and

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2011

without disabilities and fifteen to twenty people who work with young people in educational and out of school contexts. A small number of interviews from each group of participants (approximately fifteen in sum) will be used to pilot the scenarios and the accompanying questions.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

- a) **informed consent**: Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). **Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document.** a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents:

Students and institutional representatives will be contacted through their institutions. In terms of young people with disabilities that are not students, the researcher will attempt to contact voluntary organisations and community groups (online or face to face), in order to conduct interviews in non-educational contexts as well. Young people without disabilities that are not students will be approached through their workplace. For practical reasons, written informed consent will be sought before each interview.

- b) **anonymity and confidentiality**

All material will be anonymised from the very beginning. Instead of names, it will be used a system of codes. All material will be stored electronically and will be destroyed at the end of the project.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

This project will be conducted from an interpretative approach to explore preferences for interaction that young people with and without disabilities hold for others perceived as similar and different, with reference to the notions of homophily and social inclusion. The study will be carried out at individual and institutional levels. The interview method is considered to be the most useful to elicit the participants' views; semi-structured rather than structured or unstructured interviews to allow some flexibility in terms of the participants and at the same time some control over the discussion by the researcher. A potential ethical tension between homophily and inclusion will be explored through using moral dilemmas, brief scenarios originated in the work of Kohlberg in developing his theory of moral development. These scenarios will refer to a variety of contexts and situations, and they will be used as stimuli for discussion at the beginning of the interviewing process.

The scenarios that will be used during the interviews are written in a way that, though it raises sensitive issues, is unlikely to cause distress. Nevertheless, in any case, the researcher will keep the conversation at a friendly level, and he will constantly check whether the participants are ok to continue with the questions. Participants will have the right to withdraw at any time.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

A letter containing information about the project will be sent to every participant. At the end of the project, all participants will be sent a summary of the findings. They may feedback to it, if they wish to do so. All constructive feedback will be taken into consideration.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Non applicable

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: 01/11/2012 until: 10/07/2013

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): *B. Howard* **date:** *25/10/12*

N.B. To Supervisor: *Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.*

GSE unique approval reference:..... *D | 12 | 13 | 1*

Signed:..... *ABrown* **date:** *9/11/12*
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/>

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2011

Barrett, Jess

From: Koutsouris, George
Sent: 29 October 2012 13:51
To: Barrett, Jess
Cc: Norwich, Brahm
Subject: ΑΠ: Georgios Koutsouris - ethical approval form

Dear Mrs Barrett,

Thank you for your email. These are the clarifications you requested:

By young people, I refer to an age group of 15-25 years old. For participants under 18 years old, informed consent will be sought through their schools/colleges and from their parents or guardians in accordance with the school/college policy. For non-students under 18, consent will be sought from parents and guardians through disability organisations and action groups (if impaired) or workplaces.

The scenarios and the accompanying questions will not be relevant to young people with learning difficulties (cognitive disabilities). In terms of participants with visual impairment, the consent form will be sent to them electronically prior to their interview; any other impairment-related issues can be addressed orally during the interview. Young people with hearing impairment are not expected to participate in the project. Young people with physical disabilities and Asperger syndrome that are expected to participate will be treated as any other young people of their age.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, if more clarifications are deemed necessary.

Kind regards,
George

Από: Barrett, Jess
Αποστολή: Παρασκευή, 26 Οκτωβρίου 2012 4:10 μμ
Το: Koutsouris, George
Κκ: Norwich, Brahm
Θέμα: Georgios Koutsouris - ethical approval form

Dear Georgios.

I am writing on behalf of the Graduate School of Education's representative on the College Ethics Committee, Nick Givens, regarding your request for ethical approval for your research project. He requests:

- Please indicate the lower age limit for participants who are young people; this has implications for whether a parent's / guardian's consent may sometimes be necessary.
- **Informed consent**
Please give a few examples of how you will enable young people with / disabilities which impair understanding or communications to give or withhold informed consent, and indicate any key documents / policies / principals which will guide your decision making each time you have to consider the informed consent of such a participant.

7.c.2.Participant consent form



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me

Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form

All information I give will be treated as confidential

The researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity


.....
(Signature of participant)

5-03-13
.....
(Date)

(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher(s): 07887 608104

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Professor Brahm Norwich B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

OR

Dr Shirley Larkin S.Larkin@exeter.ac.uk

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

8. Appendix (data collection)

8.a.Scenarios and interview questions

8.a.1.Interview structure

Individual level (A)

1. Immediate preference
 2. Similarity and difference
 3. Homophily and inclusion (the tension)
 4. Ethical implications
 5. Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)
 6. Interactional preferences
 7. The role of choice
 8. Reflective preference
- } Outside perspective
- } Inside perspective

Institutional level (B)

1. Homophily and inclusion (the tension)
 2. Similarity and difference
 3. Ethical implications
 4. Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)
 5. Issues of power
 6. Decision-making
 7. Personal experience of the tension
 8. Policy issues
- } Outside perspective
- } Inside perspective

For all scenarios (at the end of the interview):

Do you think that the scenario succeeds in raising some issues?

What kind of issues?

8.a.2.Scenarios

The presentation scenario (A1)

In a secondary mainstream class, Mr Brown, the history teacher, asked the students to choose the classmates they wanted to work with to prepare a presentation on World War Two. Andrew and Julie, both with Asperger syndrome, agreed to work together on the project and strongly refused to co-operate with anyone else. But, Mr Brown felt he should ask a low-achieving, non-disabled student to join them in the task.

1. [Immediate preference]
Would it be right or wrong for Mr Brown to ask another student to join Andrew and Julie in the task? Why?
2. [Similarity and difference]
Why do you think Andrew and Julie wanted to work together and refused any other co-operation?
3. [Homophily and inclusion (the tension)]
Why did Mr Brown and the two students hold different views?
4. [Ethical implications]
Is there anything morally wrong in Mr Brown's preference? Why?
5. [Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)]
Should Mr Brown encourage Andrew and Julie to co-operate with other students? Why? Should Andrew and Julie persuade Mr Brown of their point of view? Why?
6. [Interactional preferences]
Andrew and Julie are expressing a preference to co-operate with somebody similar to themselves. Have you experienced a situation like this?
7. [The role of choice]
Do you think that being able to choose who you co-operate with is important? Would it be important for you, if you were in the position of Andrew and Julie?
8. [Reflective preference]
Do you still believe that it would be right/wrong for Mr Brown to ask another student to join Andrew and Julie in the task? Why?

The job centre scenario (A2)

After finishing his college education in a mainstream institution, John is now looking for a job. Being visually impaired, he visited a job centre near his hometown, well known for its disability support services. The centre could arrange for him a number of interviews for various jobs in the community. But when John expressed the preference to work only alongside other visually impaired people, the job advisor strongly discouraged him, and advised him to be more daring with his life.

1. [Immediate preference]
Was it right or wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more daring with his life? Why?
2. [Similarity and difference]
Why do you think John expressed a preference to work only with other visually impaired people?
3. [Homophily and inclusion (the tension)]
Why did the job advisor and John hold different views?
4. [Ethical implications]
Is there anything morally wrong in the job advisor's advice? Why?
5. [Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)]
Should the job advisor encourage John to work with non-visually impaired people? Should John persuade the advisor of his point of view? Why?
6. [Interactional preferences]
John is expressing a preference to work with somebody similar to himself. Have you experienced a situation like this?
7. [The role of choice]
Do you think that being able to choose who you work with is important?
Would it be important for you, if you were in the position of John?
8. [Reflective preference]
Do you still believe that it was right/wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more daring with his life? Why?

The radio show scenario (A3)

William presents a weekly music show at the radio station of the mainstream college he attends. He asked the teacher in charge of the station to provide him with a second producer, so he could add to his show live phone interviews. Two students were interested: Marion who happened to be William's best friend, and Susan who had a physical disability. William thought that both were equally good, but, despite his initial preference for Marion, he felt he should pick Susan.

1. [Immediate preference]

Would it be right or wrong for William to pick Susan? Why?

2. [Similarity and difference]

Why do you think William had a preference for Marion?

3. [Homophily and inclusion (the tension)]

Why do you think William felt he should pick Susan?

4. [Ethical implications]

Is there something morally good in William's decision to pick Susan?
Why?

5. [Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)]

Should William sacrifice his initial preference (Marion) and pick Susan?
Why?

6. [Interactional preferences]

William, despite his initial preference, chooses to cooperate with somebody different from himself. Have you experienced a situation like this?

7. [The role of choice]

Do you think that being able to choose who you co-operate with is important?

Would it be important for you, if you were in the position of William?

8. [Reflective preference]

Do you still believe that it would be right/wrong for William to pick Susan?
Why?

The party scenario (A4)

Jeremy has his 16th birthday at the end of the month and he will have a party at his house. He decided to invite all his classmates except David, who is blind. When his mother told him to rethink it, Jeremy answered that he came to this decision irrespective of David's disability, because he felt very different from him, and also believed that David would feel the same way.

1. [Immediate preference]
Was it right or wrong for Jeremy not to invite David? Why?
2. [Similarity and difference]
Why do you think Jeremy felt very different from David?
3. [Homophily and inclusion (the tension)]
Why did Jeremy and his mother hold different views?
4. [Ethical implications]
Is there anything morally wrong in Jeremy's decision not to invite David?
Why?
5. [Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)]
Should his mother encourage Jeremy to invite David? Why?
Should Jeremy persuade his mother of his point of view? Why?
6. [Interactional preferences]
Jeremy is reluctant to invite somebody different from himself. Have you experienced a situation like this?
7. [The role of choice]
Do you think that being able to choose who you invite to your party is important?
Would it be important for you, if you were in the position of Jeremy?
8. [Reflective preference]
Do you still believe that it was right/wrong for Jeremy not to invite David?
Why?

The presentation scenario (B1)

In a secondary mainstream class, Mr Brown, the history teacher, asked the students to choose the classmates they wanted to work with to prepare a presentation on World War Two. Andrew and Julie, both being visually impaired, agreed to work together on the project and strongly refused to co-operate with anyone else. But, Mr Brown felt he should ask a low-achieving, non-disabled student to join them in the task.

1. [Homophily and inclusion (the tension)]
Why do you think Mr Brown felt he should not allow Andrew and Julie to form a group together?
2. [Similarity and difference]
Why do you think Andrew and Julie wanted to work together and refused any other co-operation?
3. [Ethical implications]
Is there anything morally wrong in Mr Brown's preference? Why?
4. [Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)]
Should Mr Brown encourage Andrew and Julie to co-operate with other students? Why? Should Andrew and Julie persuade Mr Brown of their point of view? Why?
5. [Issues of power]
Should Mr Brown have the final word on the group allocation of his class? Why?
6. [Decision-making]
In general, do you think that students' preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at educational level? Do some students' preferences affect decisions more than other students?
7. [Personal experience of the tension]
Mr Brown has a preference for Andrew and Julie to co-operate with somebody different from themselves. Have you experienced a situation like this?
8. [Policy issues]
Is there a policy related to these issues in your institution?
What kind of policy would resolve the issue in the story?

The Greentown debate scenario (B2)

At Greentown College a group of students with disabilities believed that the college should have a special place dedicated exclusively to students with various disabilities. This centre would offer opportunities for social interaction among students with disabilities. The majority of the teachers at Greentown agreed to support the students' initiative. But, the college principal stated that he didn't want such a special place for students with disabilities on campus, because it could work against the aims of social inclusion that the college aspired. He decided, then, the matter not to be discussed again.

1. [Homophily and inclusion (the tension)]
Why do you think the college principal forcibly closed the matter?
2. [Similarity and difference]
Why do you think the students in the story wanted to have a special place dedicated exclusively to them?
3. [Ethical implications]
Is there anything morally wrong in the principal's decision? Why?
4. [Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)]
Should the college principal discourage the students? Why?
Should the students persuade the principal of their point of view? Why?
5. [Issues of power]
Should the college principal have the final word on the matter? Why?
6. [Decision-making]
In general, do you think that students' preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at educational level? Do some students' preferences affect decisions more than other students?
7. [Personal experience of the tension]
The college principal has a preference for the students in the story to socialise with people different from themselves. Have you experienced a situation like this?
8. [Policy issues]
Is there a policy related to these issues in your institution?
What kind of policy would resolve the issue in the story?

The special sports team scenario (B3)

In a mainstream secondary school, Mrs Warren, one of two PE teachers of the school, proposed to the head teacher the creation of a 'special' sports team, which would be for students with disabilities. To support her proposal, Mrs Warren conveyed to the head teacher the opinions of many students with disabilities that seemed to be very enthusiastic about the project. But when Mr Jones, the other PE teacher, was informed, he strongly refused to support the idea, because he considered it to be a pure act of discrimination.

1. [Homophily and inclusion (the tension)]
Why do you think Mr Jones reacted negatively?
2. [Similarity and difference]
Why do you think the students with disabilities were very enthusiastic about the creation of a sports team only for them?
3. [Ethical implications]
Is there anything morally wrong in Mrs Warren's idea? Why?
4. [Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)]
Should Mr Jones discourage the students? Why?
Should the students persuade Mr Jones of their point of view? Why?
5. [Issues of power]
Who do you think should have the final word on the matter? Why?
6. [Decision-making]
In general, do you think that students' preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at educational level? Do some students' preferences affect decisions more than other students?
7. [Personal experience of the tension]
Mr Jones has a preference for a team in that different students can be together. Have you experienced a situation like this?
8. [Policy issues]
Is there a policy related to these issues in your institution?
What kind of policy would resolve the issue in the story?

The playground scenario (B4)

A mainstream secondary school has a small number of students with Asperger syndrome. Every day, during the lunch break, these students tended to gather in a small isolated garden near the playground, where they were interacting peacefully. Mrs Evans, the school head teacher, noticed this everyday gathering and asked the students why they didn't mingle with their classmates. They answered her that the noise of the others was tiring, and that they were really enjoying their time together. But, Mrs Evans decided that from that point on the small garden would have to remain locked.

1. [Homophily and inclusion (the tension)]
Why do you think Mrs Evans decided to lock the small garden?
2. [Similarity and difference]
Why do you think the students in the story preferred to gather in the small garden and be by themselves?
3. [Ethical implications]
Is there anything morally wrong in Mrs Evans's decision?
4. [Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)]
Should Mrs Evans encourage the students to socialise with their classmates? Why?
Should the students persuade Mrs Evans of their point of view? Why?
5. [Issues of power]
Should Mrs Evans have the final word on the matter? Why?
6. [Decision-making]
In general, do you think that students' preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at educational level? Do some students' preferences affect decisions more than other students?
7. [Personal experience of the tension]
Mrs Evans has a preference for the students to interact with people different from themselves. Have you experienced a situation like this?
8. [Policy issues]
Is there a policy related to these issues in your institution?
What kind of policy would resolve the issue in the story?

8.a.3.Process questions for the pilot (formal and informal)

For the scenario discussed

Did you find the scenario clear and understandable?

Do you think that the scenario succeeds in raising some issues?

Would you like to propose any changes to this scenario?

For the accompanying questions

Did you find the accompanying questions clear and understandable?

Do you think that the questions are examining the issues that the scenario raises?

Would you like to propose any additional questions for this scenario?

In sum

Do you feel that there were issues left undiscussed?

Do you have any overall comments or suggestions?

8.b.Interviews

8.b.1.Examples from interviews with young people

8.b.1.1.A young woman with Asperger syndrome (scenario A1)

Would it be right or wrong for Mr Brown to ask another student to join Andrew and Julie in the task?

Perhaps if it made them feel uncomfortable. But if the group had to be three minimum then I guess they'd have to work around it.

Ok, so would it be right or wrong?

I don't really know the full circumstances. It depends how disabled they are.

And how could their disability have something to do with that?

If it's somebody they feel uncomfortable around then they shouldn't be forced. But if they were comfortable with that non-disabled student then I think they should work around it.

Do you think that the fact that they have Asperger syndrome has something to do with their preference to work together?

Yes.

How?

'Cause they understand each other. 'Cause they won't judge each other, I suppose they mix easier with their own kind, I suppose.

What do you mean by 'their own kind'?

If they have the same condition then there's no reason to be fearful of the unknown.

Mr Brown may want Andrew and Julie to cooperate with somebody else.

What do you think about that? Would it be something right or wrong?

I suppose from the aspect of inclusion I suppose it would be right.

Why?

To make sure everybody's included, if everybody else has a group and this one student doesn't.

So why do you think Andrew and Julie wanted to work together and refuse any other cooperation?

'Cause they probably don't want any trouble and they might be worried that the other student who doesn't have Asperger's might not cooperate with them.

Why do you think that they would have some kind of trouble, if they had to cooperate with somebody else?

What do you mean, sorry?

You said that they don't want any trouble, so cooperating with somebody else could mean trouble?

No, but there's always the potential. I mean if he works cooperatively with them then there's no reason to suspect any trouble, it depends how well they know him, the other student.

Ok, why do you think Mr Brown and the two students have different views?

Probably 'cause they know what it's like to have their condition and he doesn't. He's probably only looking at it from the teacher perspective.

And why are their perspectives different? What's their perspective?

They probably know that because they know how each other thinks they will work together well, and they're worried if they have to include someone else it might not go as planned and they'd probably just want to – they want to do what the teacher and everyone else is telling them to do so they'd want the people with them who are going to work best together.

And the teacher's perspective?

The teacher probably thinks that, either he thinks that it would be good for them to work with people without Asperger's or he just thinks that everybody should be included so he [...] thinks they should work together or he's going to try and make them.

So is there anything morally wrong in Mr Brown's preference?

The fact that he picked a low achieving student might make them look bad because he might think because of, because they have a disability they must be low achievers so he must put somebody at the same level as them, and that's not necessarily true.

If Andrew and Julie were capable academically, and he wanted to add a low achieving student to help him, what do you think about that?

If the student found it hard to work with them because they were higher achievers than him, and they understood each other's mind better, therefore could work better together, and he couldn't work with them as well, then I think he should be put with the others.

So do you think that Mr Brown did something wrong?

Well yeah he said that 'you should work with this other student' and it's not a matter of 'should' like you should want to, not 'you definitely should because I say so.'

But you told me before that from the perspective of inclusion it could be something good – to cooperate with somebody else.

Yeah, if they can do it.

So is there anything wrong in Mr Brown's preference?

I don't believe his intentions were wrong, but the way he did it was probably not the best.

So which could be a better way to do it?

Instead of picking the lowest achieving non-disabled student, find maybe a person in the class that they get on best with instead, if they have to include a third person.

And why do you think that would help them?

'Cause they might get on with them better.

Should Mr Brown encourage Andrew and Julie to cooperate with other students?

Encouraging them would definitely be better than saying 'You should cooperate with them.'

What's the difference between the two?

It's the way you phrase it.

Yes, and in practice?

'Cause it seems like they have to and not that they should want to.

In practice do you think that it could make a difference?

Yeah because if you try and make someone do something they don't want to do, you're going to make them uncomfortable and then you're going to make them less cooperative.

Should Andrew and Julie persuade Mr Brown of their point of view?

Yes if they feel that strongly about it, yes.

Why?

Because everybody has a right to an opinion and a right to express it, if they don't feel comfortable.

And if their preference will not help them to be included, what do you think about that?

It depends what's more important to them, being included or the project that they have to do.

What do you think?

What would I think if I was them?

Yes.

I don't know; I don't know what the project... A presentation...

What would be more important for you personally?

From a personal perspective?

Yes.

If there was another person with my condition in my same class, I would rather stick with them rather than try to be included, which might not be a success; it might make me feel more uncomfortable. If there wasn't another student with my condition in the class then it might be different, but if there is then I'd know who to hang around with.

Have you ever been in a class with another student who has Asperger syndrome?

Yeah.

How was it? Was there any difference in terms of other classes when there were no people with Asperger syndrome?

Yeah it's very different.

Would you like to explain that?

When there's no other people with Asperger's for me to mix with then I tend to get lonely and isolated and unincluded most of the time, where as if there is then we usually pair together very tightly, very quickly, and you only ever see us together.

And what about you in terms of the other people who don't have the same condition...

Sorry?

If there was somebody else with Asperger syndrome in your class would that make any difference in terms of you and the other people who don't have the same condition?

It would, yeah.

How?

I wouldn't feel the need to try to be included by them because I'd have someone else who I felt equal to. Even if I did make friends with a group of non-Asperger's, I still wouldn't feel an equal to them, or I might feel like they were including me 'cause they felt sorry for me, not 'cause they genuinely wanted to be my friend, or they might, but I'm just talking about experiences. I'd feel more of an equal if I had another Asperger's.

Do your friends have Asperger syndrome or not? Or do you have a mixture of friends?

Most of them have something with them.

Would you like to explain why do you think this happens?

Sometimes, I guess they're just the ones I get on better with 'cause we know how each other's minds think and I suppose others who don't might feel afraid of the unknown. Well, definitely, 90% of my friends do.

Is the unknown something that you're always afraid of?

What do you mean? I'm not...

As you told me, with different people you don't feel let's say equal, that you feel somehow unsafe...

A bit more like, we could, the friendship, if there was a friendship it wouldn't go as strongly or deep or meaningful and it would be unsteady. And they'd always have other non-Aspies to talk to so you'd never feel like you were really important, you wouldn't feel as important. I'm just talking about my experience, that's all.

Andrew and Julie are expressing a preference to cooperate with somebody similar to themselves. Have you experienced a situation like this?

Have I experienced something similar to that?

Yes.

Yeah.

Would you like to discuss it?

Ok, if the group had had to be 3 at minimum then whoever gets, I notice that whoever does get picked with me and another Aspie is often either reluctant or is usually another loner for a different reason. If... they're usually reluctant if they're picked at random, and that's why they're reluctant, it makes us not want to cooperate with them because it comes across as disrespectful.

Why do you think they are reluctant?

'Cause they probably would rather be with their own similar minded people rather than us, and we would rather be with each other.

Who is the person that says that you have to cooperate?

Usually the teacher or a teaching assistant...

Is there any discussion beforehand?

Not usually, they don't usually discuss it beforehand, they usually just put us in to groups like right away, like 'right we're doing this task' and it can get a bit rushed.

So would you prefer to make this choice by yourself?

Yeah, I think we'd feel more comfortable and the project would get done a whole lot smoother if we could just work with who we felt comfortable with.

Have you ever expressed a preference to cooperate with somebody very different from you, and you made this choice having that in mind?

It depends what my intention would be behind that.

What do you mean by that?

If I knew somebody was very different from me, it would depend why I'd then want to work with them if I knew this beforehand.

So in which cases would you want to do something like that?

If you wanted to take this person out of their comfort zone so that they could experience something different.

And why is this something good?

Yeah 'cause they might think 'Oh it would be a bad thing if I was with them,' but if they actually tried it, it might not be so bad.

Do you have any specific situation in your mind to tell me about in terms of that?

In terms of being included?

Yes, in terms of cooperating with somebody who is different...

Usually people don't think that I'll be as good at anything but they're usually quite surprised when I am 'cause I remember lots of facts about the project that later come up in exams and they are... they don't usually remember as much so...

And how do they react?

Surprised or they say 'well done' and then they sort of get confused about what to think of me afterwards.

So how do you think they were thinking about you before the activity?

They probably think that because of the condition, that I'm not as bright as them, when actually I'm... most people with my condition are in fact brighter than mainstream people, so if they gave me a chance they'd see how I was.

And how do you feel when they see that you can do the work?

I feel glad that I'm able to help them, although I think I would be rather helping people who are more grateful of my presence!

Ok, do you think that being able to choose who you cooperate with is important?

Yes, yeah.

Why is it important?

It's important in terms of making me feel comfortable and relaxed and not anxious all the time.

Would you like to discuss that? Why when you have the chance to make a choice, why would that make you feel...?

'Cause I'd feel in control, I'd feel...

And why is that important to you?

It's important to me to feel in control of my environment 'cause otherwise I'm prone to get stressed out and anxious and panic.

Do you think that this has something to do with Asperger syndrome or it's...?

Yeah.

You think it has to do with that?

Yeah.

Have you experienced it in other people with Asperger's syndrome as well?

Yeah, yeah...

Would you like to discuss that a little?

I think we feel a need for control in our lives 'cause we can't control what other people think of us, so at least if we have control over our environments or what's happening to us then we'd feel a little calmer. But if the situation gets too much, too overwhelming for me, then I'll stop cooperating and leave the room.

Why would you want to have control over what other people think of you?

'Cause they usually are... they don't try to see who we are beyond the Asperger's, they only ever see the Asperger's. They don't really try to get to know us or try to understand how our minds work.

Ok, so do you think that people see only the syndrome rather than you?

Yes, and they don't seem to grasp that we're, you know, we care about what people think of us as well. I mean they should know better but some people are just shallow, I guess.

So given that, would it be important for you to be able to choose if you were in the position of Andrew and Julie?

Yes.

Why?

Because they could become less cooperative if they weren't given choices. So I think if the teacher wants them to cooperate, which they, I think you can't always rationalise with them because of the condition so I think they should just let them do what's most comfortable for them if they want a good project at the end of it.

So would you like to apply your thoughts to the scenario? Let's think of the teacher that says 'You have to cooperate with somebody else' and you

told me that choice for them would be important. Imagine the situation and tell me what would happen if the teacher was to say that.

If I was in their position?

Yes.

I would confront the teacher on how me and the other student felt if we weren't [comfortable]. If we weren't uncomfortable and the other student was cooperative then we would work with him, but if not then we would confront the teacher.

I see. Do you still believe that it would be right or wrong for Mr Brown to ask another student to join Andrew and Julie in the task?

If they were comfortable with that other student, yes; if they weren't then no.

And if it has something to do with them cooperating with other people?

Because as you told me, in your case sometimes cooperation was a good experience. If the teacher had that in mind what do you think about the situation?

Sometimes they can't always cooperate effectively, even though I understand the principle, 'cause of their condition. It's not really the same, they're not as, when they have Asperger's they can't be as flexible unfortunately.

So if the teacher wanted to include them, what should he do in your view?

What should he do if...? There's just not enough information for me to...

I know; you can imagine whatever you want. So let's say that this teacher wanted to include Andrew and Julie because... Let's say that Andrew and Julie wanted to work together all the time, not just once, and the teacher wanted to find a way to include them. What do you think the teacher could do? What do you suggest?

How to include them?

How to make them cooperate with somebody else too...

If they... other people were cooperative with them then you'd have a more mutual... But it depends how the other students are around them.

So do you think that it would be another student with Asperger syndrome again? I guess it's difficult to find three students with Asperger syndrome in a class. Or could there be somebody else?

If it's somebody who is kind and cooperative then yeah. I think they should, rather, like I said, find the kindest, the person they work together best with rather than the lowest achieving student cause that doesn't reflect good on them.

So do you think it was right or wrong for Mr Brown to do what he did?

I can't give an answer because I don't have enough information.

I know there are gaps but you can fill them in the way that you want.

So I have to choose whether they get on or not with the non-disabled student?

No you don't have to choose, just tell me what you are thinking about that.

Well I've told you what I think about it. Unless I have more information on this story I can't tell you whether it's morally right or wrong for Mr Brown to try to make them include the other student.

What could make that morally right?

If they got on with the non-disabled student.

And morally wrong?

If they did not get on with that student and they would make them anxious and less cooperative if he tried to force them to do what they were uncomfortable with.

Ok, what do you think this scenario is about?

Inclusion and what's best for the individuals.

What do you mean by 'what is best for the individual'?

Well what's best for Andrew and Julie and the rest of the group...

How do you understand this 'best'? What do you mean by that?

What works out best on both their... You've got to do what's best for the other students and for them as well.

Do you mean in terms of their presentation or generally in terms of the atmosphere in the class?

Both.

What do you think inclusion is?

Letting somebody take part, be a part of whatever it is you're doing. Not leaving other people out.

Yes. Any other issues in the scenario?

The fact that a low achieving student was picked to go with disabled students, I think if somebody is low achieving and someone is disabled, those are two different issues and I don't think they should be linked, you know. How your achievement is, your personal achievement depends on your capability and your upbringing, what you've been exposed to and it's not the same as having a disability. So I think that's another issue that was there the whole time but that's separate from inclusion.

Would you like to tell me a couple of things about Asperger syndrome?

Because we discussed before whether it is a disability or not...

What would you like to know?

Well why you don't think it is a disability and what do you think it is? Or your experience of that...

Well it has... it is disadvantages and advantages and, like I said, if you call it a disability you're only ever looking at the disadvantages.

And which is a better word to describe it?

I call it, it's just a condition, it doesn't define who you are, I don't consider myself a disabled person, I've not grown up with that label so it's all very new and recent to me.

And which are the advantages?

What's the advantages? You have a deeper insight in to life, you have a higher IQ. I mean many famous people who invented Microsoft like Bill Gates, Einstein, who invented lots of things, and Mozart who invented lots of famous music, they all had Asperger's so I think this world does need people with Asperger's, we have our place.

What do you mean by 'insight in life'? Did you say deeper or better?

Deeper, we think more. And we feel more but we can't necessarily express it as well, as intuitively as most people perhaps...

Would you like to add something?

Well I think also the non-disabled student should have a say in what he thought was best for him as well.

Yes.

He shouldn't be made to feel that the situation is taken out of his control as well.

Do you think that this scenario could happen?

In real life?

Yes.

Of course, yeah.

Has it happened to you?

Yeah, or similar situations yeah.

And how did you feel about it?

Offended that they would pick a low achieving student to be with two disabled students, but if, only from that perspective, if the teacher wants to put someone who is going to cooperate best with them so they should pick whoever will cooperate best with them, regardless of whether they're high achieving or low achieving.

Ok, thank you.

- [End of Interview] -

8.b.1.2.A young woman without a disability (scenario A3)

Would it be right or wrong for William to pick Susan?

I don't think either really.

Why?

Because... well it depends [on] his reasonings I guess why he picks her. I mean other than the fact she has a disability, I wouldn't see there to be a right or a wrong for him to pick her... just who he thinks is perfect for the job. And obviously the disability... he hasn't felt has affected negatively on what she can do, so I don't know, I don't see that being a right or wrong really...

Do you think that William's decision to pick Susan has been affected by Susan's disability?

I don't know... It's very difficult to tell 'cause it's such a rush.

(Gap)

What do you think?

I mean maybe he did. Maybe he was because... I mean he says he felt he should which sounds more like it's an obligation, more like he should pick her because of her disability. I suppose, yeah... maybe has affected him.

So if he has been affected by that do you think he is right or wrong?

I don't know... I suppose it's good to take all under consideration but... I think it would be wrong to make a decision based on her disability if it didn't really affect anything other. But then if it helped to make a decision if they were equally as good then maybe... I don't know...

Why do you think William had a preference for Marion?

Because they are best friends...

And...?

They probably get along really well... but I mean there is also a layers of other things that they can come in to that as well. Working alongside your best friend, you know, you might not want to do... it can happen... those layers of things that could factor in.

Like?

Well things... I mean I don't know whether I... I reckon [If it was my decision] I'd probably just pick my best friend because I reckon it'd be really fun (she laughs). But if he felt that...I don't know... (With emphasis)

So, why William wanted to work with his best friend?

I would say just because they are best friends and it's a good thing...

What does that mean?

Well best friends just means you're close to them, somebody you get along with well, hopefully... kind of affect each other positively and kind of like bring out the best and have a... It's just good, isn't it, when you've got a best friend, it's somebody you feel you connect with really well, on a higher level. So I suppose it's just that really.

Why do you think then William felt he should pick Susan?

I would just... It's very difficult because I don't have much of... like an opinion on it myself... well not much of an opinion – I do have an opinion – but I don't think it would affect me unless it would affect like the job.

We can discuss your opinion...

Well, I don't know. I am just trying to think of it if it was me and my best friend and then somebody who had a disability, but I mean I would actually go with who I felt would be best for the job and who I would get on best with. If I saw myself getting along really well with Susan, and I thought she was good and she really wanted to do it then I would go for Susan... But, you know, if I thought Susan is good but maybe we didn't have much in common and I thought my best friend was just as good I probably would go for my best friend, if that makes sense...

Would you like to explain more why you would think like that?

I don't know, I suppose... Why I would go for...

Your best friend, yes...

Just because of the fact they are my best friend, and you would obviously want to have them around as well, wouldn't you?

What does that mean for you?

Friendship is quite important to me; it's quite a big thing. And friends are... I don't know... It's just because of the fact that it is your friend and...

Do you think that William and Marion may have things in common that William and Susan may not have because they are not friends?

Maybe William did find it a bit more difficult to get along with Susan, because they weren't friends. And I suppose some people as well might get a little bit scared off by the fact that somebody has got a disability, and also think that

they might not get along well because of that. I, personally, wouldn't think that. I don't think...

Why would they be scared?

I suppose it's the unknown, isn't it, to a lot of people that... the unknown where we don't like or then it does scare us and if it's something you are not used to and you are not comfortable around, often you try and stay away from that situation, that's what I want to do if... but...

But William chooses to do the opposite...

Yeah, but he is going for it. So he is obviously not... I don't know. He is just not affected by it. It obviously doesn't factor in to him, and I mean they can be so many reasons why; it could be out of sympathy, it could be because he... I don't know... I mean as well a weekly music show kind of thing, I don't know... He wants to do live phone interviews and stuff maybe because of Susan. She could connect with different people or, I don't know... like covered bit more, things like that... what they can give to it – I suppose they both have different things that they can contribute.

Is there something morally good in William's decision to pick Susan?

Yeah. I think it is good, because... I don't know; it's one of these things which are like people feel that they should go for. I don't know; maybe like help other people [...] a lot more is something that we think [as something] not wrong, but something that is... I don't mean it like that... I am just terrible with vocabulary. So, I think that's wrong if somebody's got a disability or... I mean other things [and] they might tend to go for it. But obviously when you are in a situation you don't want the sympathy, you just want to be treated as an equal. So, I mean it is kind of... like, I mean, I feel like people would see it as morally right, even

though it isn't necessarily. Because it shouldn't actually make any difference in a situation like this as well.

If I asked you the opposite... Is there something morally wrong in William's decision to pick Susan?

I don't know... Morally like I don't think... Once again I don't think it is wrong or right, there are so many different reasons. And if you are picking somebody you are gonna pick them for your own reasons and that's actually down to you why you want to hire somebody...

Would you like to discuss some of these reasons?

Why you might want to hire somebody? If you think they are good, if you think they can get better and improve maybe and learn and are willing to learn... Definitely if you get along well with them, I think that's an important thing. Something like... there's somebody who might be good at speaking, like expressing... not me [...]

Do you think that William could cooperate better with his best friend, Marion, rather than with Susan?

I don't think it really matters. Either... Maybe he could communicate with Marion a little bit more because they kind of get each other a little bit more, they're both in a relationship which always makes things a little bit easier and he might feel a little more comfortable, being able to tell her what he thinks... But, other than that, if you take that out, I don't...

Should William sacrifice his initial preference (Marion) and pick Susan?

I don't really know... I suppose he is just... like we are all different, are we? The way we all make decisions and what we all think is different. I suppose some people might think it's important to go on gut instinct and what you like first, what you feel first, is supposed to be right. But other people, like I don't always

get it right the first time, so you know if you did decide afterwards that decision was better, then that's fine. It's difficult when you don't know his reasons, but... I can't work out what I think his reasons necessarily are...

Maybe William wants to cooperate with somebody different from himself.

Do you think that it is important to try to cooperate with people who are different?

I think it is. I am trying to do a lot of that [...]

Why you want to do something like that?

Well you learn a lot more... I think everybody has something different to give; so going to lots of different people and trying new things and working with different sorts of people is always really important. Yeah, I think you learn a lot from it, I really do.

William, despite his initial preference, chooses to cooperate with somebody different from himself. Have you experienced a situation like this?

I have quite a few times. I've done quite a lot of work with lots of different people. I've done some work with people with dementia, and that was just... it was a little bit scary at first but I wanted to try and work with different people...

Did you choose to do that?

Yes, I chose to do that. It's only like knitting and things like that, but it was to remind them of things that they used to know. And you are also having conversations with them about their previous life to remind them as well. So, you've obviously got to speak to... they're the older as well, they are the elderly, so you've got to find out people who lived a completely different life to what we live, you've got to see how different things are and it was just really interesting to see how something like dementia works because I've never met anybody

with it, so I don't understand it really, you just hear about it [...] And I suppose you have your own decisions, don't you, everybody has, you know, an opinion that they make fit, but then working in an environment like that obviously changes your opinions. I also lived in a children's care home so that made me see things a lot differently. I had a really negative opinion on that beforehand and now I've come out with quite a positive opinion about it all. There's a quite a few, I can't think of who else I worked with. [...] There have been so many different types of people. I did also want to work with disabled people but unfortunately that job didn't happen in the end. But I [wanted] to do that too.

Why did you want to work with all these people?

Well, I just personally am really interested in learning about all the different things and... [...] I've got a place at the university doing applied drama, which is like drama therapy and it is all sorts of different people as well. And it's going things when normal therapy might not work. So, I mean it wasn't necessarily as part of that but I thought it would be good to use me in all these different people, as part of the experience, because you do learn a lot more from all of these different things. I've also... I don't know; I've done things like... I've done my level one sign language for signing, and that was also, say, just because I want to be able to communicate with people like that, as well I don't want to... I don't know exactly why my reasonings are; I think it's just learning [...] and new experiences.

So, you have a lot of experience working or being with people who are considered to be different. Given that would you like to discuss more the situation in the scenario?

Gosh, I don't know... It's such an open thing. How I think they might get on well with? I suppose once again it comes down to what the actual person is like, and

what [are] their opinions on it, and whether they are open to different things. And I felt like obviously William is, and... I don't know; it's difficult. I am trying to think as well as if I was in this situation. I really don't know who I'd go for...

Why?

Because it's just obviously... it is a good thing [to work] with your best friend, isn't it? I'd have loved doing something like that with my best friend, I really wish. I know I'd have a really good time... I mean even if Susan wasn't disabled I still be thinking of the same thing, I'll be like: oh they're [the girls] just as good to each other, but get on really well with at least... The disability doesn't really even click as anything in my mind [...] Regardless of whether Susan had a disability or not, I'd still be thinking exactly the same thing: it's my best friend, I get on really well, they are both as good as each other. And I probably would go for my best friend, just because of that fact.

So why do you think William thought he should pick Susan?

I mean in the wording of it he felt he should pick Susan. It does seem like he feels he should pick her because of her disability. It does seem that way not out of sympathy, but because he should, because it looks better. And also there are so many things nowadays about how you can't discriminate for things like disability and stuff like that. So it looks more like he is doing the right thing. I'd suppose people would have a lot more to say about it if he went for his best friend over the disabled person. People would [say] that's not really very fair. But it wouldn't matter if his decision was genuinely based on who he thought would be better.

Do you think that being able to choose who you co-operate with is important?

I think it is quite important really. I think it's really important.

Why is it important?

Unless you mean like you pick the people you get on best with...

Yes, if you are able to do that...

Oh, well... But no, not at all, I think, you just get on with people who would do then. (She sounds a little confused) I don't think it's important.

Would it be important for you, if you were in the position of William?

It's always nicer to have a choice. I mean... I suppose, I probably would... If in this situation, if they are equally as good, it shouldn't really bother William, I guess.

Which would be your criteria to make a choice?

I don't know...

(Gap)

Why would it be important for you to be able to choose who you cooperate with if you were in the position of William?

I suppose just to get the best for the job really, just to get the most...

So your criteria will be...

...Will be who can do the job better.

Do you still believe that it would be right or wrong for William to pick Susan?

I can't remember what I've thought William would do. I suppose after looking at it and thinking about like his relationship with his best friend and also who'd be best for the job – they are both kind of equally right for the job – my opinion still feels the same: I completely feel that he is right if he's done it for the purpose of the criteria that I just said, you know, 'cause he thinks Susan is best for the job, that's fine, there's nothing to... you know. But it is wrong if it is for any other

reason really [or because] she is a really bit different and... Yeah, I still kind of feel the same about it really.

Do you think that the scenario succeeds in raising some issues?

I think it does.

What kind of issues?

I particularly have talked quite a lot about like how society would view Williams' opinions and him making an opinion because of what everybody else might say or think. And that really isn't fair either; you should be able to have your own opinion. And I suppose the relationships between different people and how having a disability could affect a decision quite a lot, even though I personally don't think it should do really. I suppose mainly what I said first about how William might feel he has to pick Susan because what the rest of us might think about it. And we might think that he did the wrong thing by picking his best friend, even though she was his first preference.

- [End of Interview] –

8.b.2.Examples from interviews with school staff

8.b.2.1.A mainstream teaching assistant (female) (scenario B3)

Why do you think Mr Jones, the other PE teacher, reacted negatively?

Probably 'cause he thought it wouldn't be... it's not a case of inclusion. Because if you separate a group of students out that obviously have a disability, whether that be physical or within the realms of autistic or anything like that, then what you're doing is creating, you're excluding them rather than including them, I would have thought that's why he thought that.

What do you mean by 'a case of inclusion'?

What, Mr Jones...?

What do you think?

Oh, what is inclusion? Where everyone is included within the activity, within, well in the case of say the school or the PE group it's that everyone is included and treated equally so therefore you're included within whatever the activity is. But then again it can be differentiated, therefore making it easier for that person or persons to be included within it.

Why do you think that there were students with disabilities that were very enthusiastic about the creation of a sports team only for them?

'Cause it would probably give them a boost of self esteem and confidence I would have thought because also they would know that that would be tailored to the needs that... They would be able to take part within whatever that sports team would be. So therefore say it was, I don't know, I want to say basketball, then you know, the game or the team would be made up of kids with similar disabilities and therefore they would play to the ability and the expectations of those students within it and it wouldn't... they would make it their own rather than being in something which is, they probably, I don't want to say definitely, but they probably do get excluded from within the PE...

So why do you think Mr Jones reacted negatively?

Possibly he doesn't understand, possibly it wasn't... maybe it wasn't put to him in a way for him to understand and he just, it was a gut reaction, an immediate sort of 'oh we can't be doing that' sort of thing, rather than thinking into it and thinking actually what the students can get out of it and gain from it. So it might just have been a gut reaction and stand off: 'No, no, no 'cause I don't want to be seen as someone who is excluding students and is...' like he says, 'a pure act of

discrimination, 'cause it's discriminating against these students cause they've got disabilities.

You told me before what inclusion is for you. Do you think that your description of inclusion is opposite to what the students feel?

Well what I probably gave you was a general one, but I mean for students it's, depending whether they understand what inclusion is and whether they have the insight to know that they are being excluded, I mean within this case they probably would feel that they are actually, by having a special sports team, actually that's then including them within PE lessons. Because nine times out of ten through experience, students which don't necessarily have the ability to take part in PE, tend not to. So therefore if there is a special sports team which is put together which enables those students to take part, then yes they would probably feel that they are included.

Do you think, do you feel, that this special team would be inclusive or not?

Do I feel? I think off the back, if this was to happen... You know, and there has been talk within here, within this department, within this school, to actually have a special sports day for kids because a lot of the time on sports day a lot of the kids that are autistic, a lot of the kids that do, you know, that are physically disabled don't take part because they can't take part and that's not the whole ethos of the sports day, it's supposed to be a fun day, however those ones that are good at sport always compete, so therefore anybody that isn't, and especially those students which have a learning disability or are disabled in any type of way don't join in. So what was the question again sorry?

My question is whether a special team only for students with disabilities is inclusive or not.

I would, yeah I think so. I think what I was going to say was off of the back of the Olympics and the Paralympics then yeah, I think why not? You know, yeah I think it is.

Having Mr Jones's reaction in mind, is there anything morally wrong in Mrs Warren's idea?

So maybe Mrs Warren came up with this and maybe didn't think much into it and then actually listening to the other side of the argument in terms of Mr Jones's, I think that possibly then what they need to do is they need to weigh up the pros and cons, they need to get the students enthusiastic about the project, they need to maybe get the views of other students that are in the PE lessons, they need to get the views of the parents, and actually look into it inside of the discrimination act, and which side they are going to fall on. So I mean it probably just, the whole thing needs looking into a lot deeper. So it's not... you can't, you have an idea and you run to it and she's proposed it to the head teacher, but then therefore then, what you're then going to do is look at the policies of the school or the codes of practice and everything like that to see whether actually yeah, then...

Ok, but is there anything morally wrong in Mrs Warren's idea?

Not morally, no, not if that's how she sees it, no, not morally wrong.

In terms of Mr Jones's opinion?

Well that's Mr Jones's opinion.

So is there anything morally good in Mrs Warren's idea?

I think she's obviously taken time out to think about, that actually these students could possibly be struggling within the mainstream school PE school lessons and therefore what can we do about this? And has proposed what she has proposed.

So is there anything morally good?

Yes that's morally good that she's thinking about, she's thinking outside the box.

Ok, should Mr Jones discourage the students, the students who were very enthusiastic about the creation of this special sports team?

Should he discuss it with them?

Should he discourage them?

Oh discourage them; well no I think that would be morally wrong if he discouraged them.

Why?

Because, well that shouldn't happen, he shouldn't discourage them for... 'cause therefore what he's doing is that he is being discriminating, he's discriminating against them because they have a disability. It's almost to say 'Well you've got a disability so no I don't think you should be doing that.'

Yeah, but Mr Jones thinks that he acts against discrimination and he says that very clearly. He sees a special sports team as an act of discrimination so he acts against discrimination; at least he thinks he acts like that.

He thinks it, but if he's trying to discourage these students who have a disability, who are enthusiastic to actually give stuff a go then he is discriminating against these young people because they have a disability and because they want to try something out. Why should he have the right to do that without actually...?

You've got to enable these students, not discourage them to do something.

Then should the students persuade Mr Jones of their point of view?

Maybe that's what they do need to do, maybe the students do. I mean it all depends how much the students know doesn't it? Whether they know that they've got one that is backing them and one that isn't backing them... I think maybe Mr Jones is quite ignorant about the ability that these students with

disabilities have, therefore maybe they need to show him that 'actually if we had a team of all, you know, all of us doing...' whatever the sport is 'this is what we can do. It's not going to be up to maybe the expectations and the high standards of A* PE students, but hey, this is what our expectations are and this is what we can achieve,' then it might actually change... Maybe he just needs more knowledge and understanding and more education in terms of people with disabilities in sport as a general...

So should the students persuade him?

Yeah, yes.

But who do you think should have the final word on the matter? Let's suppose that there is a big disagreement – we have two teachers and the students.

Well you'd have the head teacher, it would go to senior management and it would have to go through there and the governors, and that's how it would... You know, you wouldn't, the battle wouldn't be between those two teachers, it would be taken to the next level and up so...

And then some other people would decide for them without them?

Well no, but they would hear each side of the argument, if that was the case, if it went to that. And then it would be taken out of their hands, definitely. I don't, I can't see that it would be, you know, because what would – these two teachers have to work together and you can't have warring teachers working together, that's not going to work. So it would be taken up to the head and above I would have thought.

And in terms of the students...?

Well the students obviously, but within that process the students are going to have their say because, you know, freedom of speech and every student having

a voice. So you would want them to voice it and you would want the students with disabilities and the students without disabilities to voice their opinions as well. So the matter would probably, if it was year eight students that it was based on then it might be a proportion of year eight students that sort of... I mean what you don't want to do is start having a major school debate with the students and have some on one side, some on the other, 'cause that's just going to give the wrong impression. So maybe, you know...

Why don't you want to have that? Do you mean half of the school on one side and the other half on the other?

Yeah I mean debating is brilliant, but you don't want to take it too far that it spreads right out and then you've got some students that are on that side of the fence and other students that are one 'cause that would just create chaos.

If we have on the one side students with disabilities and on the other students without disabilities, what do you think about that?

I don't think that would happen, I think you'd have a mixture of both because you're going to have... you're not going to have all students with disabilities that are going to want to do the sports.

Why?

Why should you? In all walks of life you've got people that will and people that don't want to do it, it doesn't really matter, maybe they just hate PE and don't want to be... Or they don't want to be put on a pedestal and they don't want to have that attention brought upon them. But then you're going to have students which really, students with disabilities that really enjoy PE and think this a wonderful idea and will do that.

Ok, so do you think that students' preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at school level?

So is it down to – is it important...? I think it's important, yeah, to take on board students preferences, yeah definitely.

Take on board, but not...?

Oh take on board and take wherever they need to go, so if it's a case that, like I said, if you're going to have a debate or you want the students to put their ideas forward to the head, to the governors and all the rest of it, then yeah, you know, their preferences need to be taken in to account. I mean cause I think a lot of the time they're trying to get students, students with disabilities, students without disabilities to think more independently, to have a voice, to speak up for what they believe in, so therefore their preferences, yeah that is an important part. So therefore yes, you've got to take it on board and you've got to take it seriously and, like I said, take it where it needs to go.

But do some students' preferences affect decisions more than other students?

Possibly, I think possibly. I think some... You've got some students... I think yes, definitely, you'll have, I know for a fact that you'll have some students who will... ok they haven't necessarily got the best reputation, whose preferences and ideas etc. will be brushed under the carpet because they're 'naughty' students, and you've got the A* students who might come up with the same sort of idea, their preferences, and it will go straight... Yeah it's not fair, it's... And I think also if you've got a student with disabilities, I think more time might be taken to listen to those preferences, but they may also get brushed under the carpet as well slightly. And that's as a general sweep because nobody likes to be told, yeah.

Would you like to discuss a little bit more about the students with disabilities?

I think students with disabilities, I think they're misunderstood and I think a lot of, maybe a lot of teachers don't take the time out to actually get to know the students, especially if you've got someone that is autistic, for instance, the understanding or the lack of understanding of that student can very much bypass any notion of preference that that child might make, and therefore they're not listened to and it's like... Or the support person that is with them is spoken to rather than the student. So I think there is still a stigma attached to a student with disabilities, and I think almost a... Yeah I just think a great stigma is attached to them. And also the fact that I think a lot of, I'm not saying all teachers, but I think a lot of the teachers are quite scared, to be quite honest. And they won't, don't ask, you know 'don't ask me, ask such and such, you know, I can't answer for them' and I think they are just scared of a reaction which they don't want to have because they don't know how to deal with it. And actually that, you know, students with disabilities, yes, but then students who maybe have behaviour, emotional and social issues, which [are] more what I focus on now, you get teachers that just won't ask them questions.

Have you experienced something like the situation in the scenario? You told me that there was a discussion about a special sports team in this school.

Oh yeah within this department, yeah, within this department we've always thought that on like sports day there's nothing for students with disabilities. So, you know, having a sports day designed for them to run alongside sports day would be great as well cause a lot of, you know...

Was there any debate about that?

No, it's only like a discussion that we've had amongst the staff within the department; so no it hasn't gone any further than that...

Mr Jones, the teacher in the story, has a preference for different students to be together...

Yeah I think that's important as well.

Have you experienced anything like that in this school?

What, where it's mixed ability classes?

Yeah, or...

Yeah that happens a lot, within the lower years that happens a lot, you've got, usually, nine times out of ten the students go round in their tutor group so if you've got a child in there that is autistic or Down's syndrome or whatever... So yeah, I mean that is one thing that happens really, really, it works really well here.

Was there any tension in terms of that? Were there students who didn't want to do that...?

Well as in any other students in that class, they don't have a choice because you go round... The point is that if you come to the mainstream school then you are a certain ability to be able to cope. So what would happen, so the whole... you would go round with your tutor group so you'd go to English with your tutor group, you'd go to maths with your tutor group. So in terms of that, that's just how the school runs so to then suddenly say 'if you don't want to do that and you want to do something else then you can', that makes it unfair and actually what you are doing is you are then not enabling that student to socialise within their tutor group, which is an important part of their growth through the school as well so...

Have you experienced students with disabilities that prefer to be among other students with disabilities rather than mixing with a broader group?

As they go up the school and as they do then tend to be in lessons with students that might have disabilities or low ability students so... And a lot of, you find that a lot of the students will have, do stuff outside of school as well, so they will go to clubs which specialise in students with disabilities. So they have that socialisation outside of school. I mean, and they don't, it's neither here nor there, it's not really a major issue if you know what I mean.

Is there a policy that would be related to this issue in the school here?

More than likely... If you're going to ask me where and what it is I wouldn't be able to tell you.

Something very general...

It would just be code of conduct and it would, I'm sure it would, yeah, I couldn't give you a...

What kind of policy could resolve this issue?

I don't know; no idea.

You told me about the SEN code, the code of...

Oh yeah, yeah well that, that would, but I know that the code of SEN is changing. But I know that students with disabilities do have a bit more of a... not leeway, but you have to be very careful when you are working around the different policies and things like that because there is a heavier downfall if you mistreat or you... For instance, not with this scenario, but if you've got a student with disabilities that comes... is statemented and is told off for something and given, expelled for a couple of days then... You know, say they're autistic and they don't understand what they did or what they've done and they got told off and they got expelled, I know that there is more, you can't do that without looking behind why, the statement of that child. So if it was someone that isn't statemented and they go up and they press the fire bell, they know intentionally

what they're going to do. If it was someone that was autistic that didn't understand what that was and pressed it then you've got to – there is a very, very fine line, a very fine line.

Ok, would you like to add something?

No I think I've probably said everything about that. No I don't think I do. Sorry!

Thank you so much.

- [End of Interview] -

8.b.2.2.A mainstream teacher (female) (scenario B1)

Why do you think Mr Brown felt he should not allow Andrew and Julie to form a group together?

Maybe he made the assumption that he wanted someone to work with them who was able to see, who was sighted, but was probably assuming that they... because of their disability that they were at a disadvantage to do the task together.

So why do you think he wanted to add a third student?

Well did he want to... he wanted to add a third student rather than substitute one, did he?

Yes.

Oh right, yes, on the other hand he might have wanted to add a third student to help the third student to appreciate the difficulties that other students have maybe, I don't know.

Is this possible that Mr Brown wanted Andrew and Julie to learn to cooperate with somebody else too, as they wanted to work only together?

Yeah I think so.

Why he would want this?

Because it will help them to mix with able bodied people and to not feel... they might have felt safe, and to sort of help them to go out of their safety zone by working with somebody who wasn't visually impaired.

And why is that something good?

Because it reflects life doesn't it? I mean that's the world that they will live in and in order to get on they're going to need to work with everybody to overcome their disability in the best way possible.

Why do you think Andrew and Julie wanted to work only together and strongly refused any other cooperation?

It might be because of perceived, they might perceive that others are sort of hostile to them or don't really like to communicate with them, and that they want to avoid the situation of feeling left out and that they identify with somebody they know understands the way that they... that has the same sort of needs. So it might be to do with the actual ethos of that school and that in another school setting they'd be perfectly happy. So it might be to do with how any child with specific needs is viewed in that school. Or it might be that they are just very good friends anyway, you know, I mean it might just be a coincidence that they're both visually impaired and that they... but it's still good to encourage them to work with others that don't necessarily, or aren't in their friendship group. So it's hard to tell really, I mean it could be a plethora of reasons.

Yes. Is there anything morally wrong in Mr Brown's preference to add a third student?

Morally wrong with adding a third student? Not the specific type of third student he chose you mean; just any other, any third student?

Yes – given that as you have told me Andrew and Julie may have reasons to want to be together.

Well because actually he... It depends on the specific piece of work, it does say that he asked them to work with people they wanted to work with, well if he then forced another person onto them then he wasn't keeping to the original task, which was to work with people you want to work with. He didn't ask them to work with someone they wouldn't necessarily normally work with. So in that respect it isn't morally right because they were... in wanting to work together that's what they were asked to do, so it's going against what they were asked to do.

Could there be something that Mr Brown thinks is more important than following his original idea? Could there be something more important than this idea?

Well I think that Mr Brown might have an underlying feeling that they couldn't cope on their own and that that's why they needed a third person, and he perceived that their disability was such that they needed someone else with them, and that might not necessarily have been the case. So if he was imposing the third person on them and didn't do for all the other groups then that just... That gives the impression that he feels that they're less able or less.... You know, why didn't he make the student go to another group?

But if they are less able to work together, less academically able if this is what you mean....

I mean we don't have the information do we about... I mean assuming these two weren't linked together – they probably wanted to link together because they are on an equal footing, you know, the sort of 'birds of a feather' type thing, and maybe not necessarily because they were both partially sighted, but Mr Brown sort of imposed his own views on them by making another one join them, I think.

Ok, this other one is a low-achieving student...

Yeah.

You told me that they may be less able and I am trying to understand what you mean by that...

Well you know, he, in choosing someone who was a low-achiever, but not disabled, that gives me the distinct impression that Mr Brown subconsciously thinks that because they are not able to see, that they are low achieving, but that's not necessarily the case at all.

So why have three low-achievers together?

Well it doesn't make sense does it?

So we could assume that Andrew and Julie are able academically and that Mr Brown's intention was to achieve something else.

Well his intention might have been to... for the non disabled student to be helped by working with able students. But then why didn't he choose another non disabled group of students for this student to go to?

Could it be that Mr Brown wants Andrew and Julie to learn to cooperate with other people?

Well yeah, but then... But I mean sometimes as a teacher you will put together students who are the same level in achievement and sometimes you'll purposely mix them. And I, my sort of take on this is: if they were preparing a presentation and it's a mixed ability group, you would mix up the abilities and then encourage them to take different parts in that, you know, somebody could be the scribe, somebody could give the ideas, and things like that. So in that respect then...

Mr Brown asked the students to choose who they want to work with, and Andrew and Julie wanted to work only together; it was their own

preference. We could assume that they are the only students in this class who have a visual impairment and so they want to work together at least in that project. But Mr Brown adds a third student in the group without even asking them. That's the situation that we have from the scenario.

Yeah and in my opinion that's morally wrong because he, especially if he had only, had just added the student to them and no one else, everyone else was allowed to work with who they wanted to and the sort of non-verbal impression it gives is that their views are less important than non-disabled students', and that's really wrong.

And if those two students want to work only together all the time and Mr Brown wanted them to learn to cooperate with other people, would there be something morally good in the teacher's way of thinking?

At another time, but not when he's said that in this task they can work with the people they want to. If he then, if he said 'I want you to mix up and to work with people you might not necessarily work with' then yes, but not when he's told them beforehand 'you can work with who you want to', 'cause he changed the rules.

Ok, should Mr Brown encourage Andrew and Julie to cooperate with other students?

Yeah.

Why?

Because in order for them to have successful and fulfilling lives they will need to work with able bodied students and disabled students alike, like everyone else.

And how would this help them?

Because it would help them to, they can sort of almost use the able bodied students to... You know they could, for instance in a group they could be doing

the thinking and saying and someone else could be the scribe so... We don't have any information about how these students work... I mean presumably they use Braille so in the classroom are they able to have facilities that help them to produce Braille? In that case then it's really important that they do just work together so that they can read each other's work and then communicate it verbally to everyone else.

But all these issues are practical issues; are there any other issues beyond practical issues in terms of cooperation between disabled and non-disabled people?

I think pre-conceived ideas that even people who maintain that they are inclusive, can subconsciously... And I think this has happened subconsciously, given the message that they are less able in areas where, you know, that they aren't, not necessarily less able, it's only they can't see, but their cognitive function might be really high. But he's sort of forgotten and sort of subconsciously thought to himself that they are disabled. But I mean there are lots of different levels of disability.

Which would be a more inclusive approach to that situation?

Well in that situation where he's said that they work with who they want to he should have left them to work on their own. Or he could have encouraged them to work with, to choose, each of them choose someone else who was someone else that they would want to work with, you know, I can't imagine... If there is only one person, the other person who's visually impaired that they want to work with then that sort of raises questions as to what's going on in the school, you know, the ethos of the school is wrong in that they don't feel included. It's not an inclusive sort of atmosphere, otherwise why would they feel so strongly? They shouldn't feel so strongly really.

In what terms is the ethos wrong? And what do you mean by 'inclusive atmosphere'?

I mean that able bodied students know and intuitively know and see for themselves that just because you are not able to see or not able to hear doesn't mean to say that you are any less able cognitively, in fact you are probably much more able than others, and that it shouldn't be a barrier to joining in anything.

And if they had a learning difficulty?

Well the same really, you know, that you can be, have a sort of, be disabled in, you know, cognitively as well, but you might be very good practically. So you know, it's to, the right ethos in school is that everyone knows that some people find some things more difficult than others and we're all of us good at some things, better at some things than others.

Let's go back to the scenario. Should Andrew and Julie persuade Mr Brown of their point of view?

Yes.

Why?

Because it's important that they are able to communicate their feelings and that they have a voice really, yeah, they shouldn't just... You know, they unfortunately probably will come across prejudice and they should be encouraged to sort of stick up for themselves basically.

The question is 'should they persuade him?' not just express their preference...

Well that might be a bit embarrassing because it's still drawing attention to...

Yeah I don't know really, it's difficult to say.

What do you mean by embarrassing?

Well I mean in a classroom situation there isn't much time to persuade, you know, I mean by the time they've... They're losing time, valuable time when they should be getting on with the presentation. But in my opinion they should be able to voice their displeasure at being, at him changing the ground rules for them and no one else. Why should he do that?

If there were not practical difficulties, like time difficulties or any kind of difficulties, and it's just a theoretical question, should Andrew and Julie persuade Mr Brown?

To change his mind?

Yes.

Yeah because everyone should be equal in that task and they were, he specifically told them that they could work with who they wanted to and so he's changed it for them, and why should he?

If he didn't say that and everything in the scenario was the same apart from that...

So they're asked to do the... to prepare a presentation but he didn't say 'with who you want to work with.'

Yes, and they have chosen to work together. Should they persuade him?

No they shouldn't, they should embrace taking someone else on board.

Why?

Well because they should be encouraged to think positively, that it's an extra pair of hands compared to everyone else, perhaps they can do better because they've got someone else with them, someone else to do some of the work, you know, and also that it's good to include people because if they actively say 'we don't want them working with us' that's making that other person feel really bad

and rejected. And so they shouldn't, you know, it's morally wrong for them to do that.

Should Mr Brown, the teacher, have the final word on the group allocation of his class?

Yes.

Why?

Because he's the teacher, at the end of the day you've got to have... A bit like a referee, you know if you don't agree with the penalty then... But you know, at the end of the day someone has got to make that final decision and in the position the teacher is in, it is up to them to make the final decision. I mean maybe students can sort of voice their opinions, but at the end of the day they still have to accept the final decision.

In general, do you think that student's preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at school level?

Definitely, yeah because they've got to own it, I mean the best way of getting them to perform is to feel that they have had a say in what goes on and that their wishes and their thoughts are valuable. You know, if everything is just imposed then outcomes are much worse. I mean it's, you know, that's a known so...

Do some students' preferences affect decisions more than other students?

I don't know, I think probably in reality they do, but they shouldn't do.

In this school?

In this school?

Yes.

I'm not aware of that, no.

In your class during the lesson do you feel that some students' preferences could be heard more easily or could affect your decisions more than other students?

No, no I don't think so.

In terms of the parents?

It tends to be that, you know, if you know that a parent is really, really on the case then you are extra careful about what you do in reality, you know. So if you know, I do have at the moment a parent that I am extra vigilant about what I do. I wouldn't say that I give into them because I don't think that's the right question, the right thing to do, but I am extra vigilant I suppose.

In terms of students with disabilities, could their preferences be respected more than other students? I don't know if you have many students with disabilities in this school.

Well we have some, yeah; I have one in my class. She has in place the things that she needs, but I don't give her any special treatment other than making sure that she's got the things she needs to access the lesson as well as anyone else.

But if she asked for something very specific, something like the situation in the scenario, what would you feel? Would you feel that you should help her more, that you should respect her preferences more because of her disability?

No.

Because of the difficulties that she's experiencing?

I don't think so, no, I mean it depends.... I mean I might take in to account the specific difficulty and if I thought that by joining another group she could be

helped then I probably would, you know, sort of be in the same position as Mr Brown really. I don't know; it's a difficult question.

Do you think that Andrew and Julie's preference has to do with their disability or not? They want to work only together.

I know. My intuitive sort of first thoughts are that it probably would be, yeah.

Would that make the whole thing different?

If they were just working together because they were... Yeah.

How different?

But for them, I would want them, I'd encourage them to mix and to be, you know... it's a bit like if you had two Asian students that just wanted to work together and nobody else, I would encourage them to mix. So it's no different in my opinion.

In terms of the difficulties they are experiencing – they may speak a different language or have a disability – do you think that their preferences could be respected more or not?

No I don't see why, you know in that... I mean for instance if they were asking for something to help them, for instance if it was going to help specifically with their difficulty then it would be perfectly right for me to provide the things that they need, but not just to sort of move them to a group when there's no specific reason to do with their disability or not, if you know what I mean.

Mr Brown has a preference for the students, Andrew and Julie, to cooperate with somebody different from themselves. Have you experienced anything like that?

Well I've taught in a school where 75% of the students were Asian and they really, really did not want to mix with others. But I haven't experienced a situation where two people who are disabled want to work together with the

same disability 'cause we just don't have, I've never been in a school where that's been the case, they've always been on their own.

Let's discuss about the Asian students. Why do you think they wanted to work only together?

Because in my opinion, and I know that they were from a parental side of things encouraged not to mix, and that the racialism that I found was greatly more from the Asians towards the whites, who were a minority in that school, than I ever saw the other way round, or have ever seen the other way round.

And what did you do about that?

I was a student so I didn't do anything, I just observed. I was a student teacher, I wasn't... I mean I can't imagine in a school here, apart from one school where... But that can't, you know, there still wouldn't be a majority, yeah.

Have you had students who wanted to work together all the time in your class?

Yeah.

What did you do about that and how did you feel about it?

The way I approach it is by having a talk, a general talk about working together, teamwork, and how on a good team you have people who, somebody who is maybe a good leader, somebody who is a good... You know, and that you look at skills and you put people together or you choose to join together with a group giving a variety of skills. And that you encourage people to work with and get to know people that they don't necessarily socialise with because it's, that's what happens in real life. You know, in your job you might not want to really, not choose to be best friends with your boss or whatever, or with a colleague, but you still need to work together and so you need to have that experience to help you for further life really. So that's what I tend to do, I tend to show them why it's

good to mix and get a different, you know, you can get a different take on different ideas that people have.

Why do you think some people want to work only with certain people?

Safety, lack of self belief, being – people who are less confident it tends to be really. And also in schools unfortunately there's a huge sort of peer pressure thing and unfortunately students will choose, even though if they were on their own they would perfectly happily work with somebody, if they perceive that by being or working with that person they might not be thought of as cool they'll push them away. Whereas deep down they don't feel good about doing that, but they feel they've got to keep up their sort of image.

Do you think that these preferences should be respected or not?

No, no.

Why?

Well I think you need to encourage them to, I don't think, you can't ever force people but you need to sort of positively encourage them to diverse – to choose different groups. And what I would so is rather than... What I always do is rather than say 'Right I want you and you to work together' because then it looks like I've chosen them, I do things like give out cards to everybody, and then you say 'right go and join up with all the green cards, join up with all the...' and so in that way it's totally, they can see it's a totally random choice. Whereas if you've chosen specifically as a teacher then they know that you've chosen for them to work with people, where as if it's totally random you say 'Well that's how life is, that's who you've been chosen to work with, you make sure it works, you know, do the things you need to and then help them to overcome any difficulty they come across with it.'

Is there a policy related to the issues in the scenario in your school?

The policy... I don't know, I'm not sure... I don't really think so.

I don't need the name of the policy.

Well I think there is, yeah, one policy that would guide you a little bit, but...

If you don't remember the name of it you could describe it.

Well it is inclusivity really, making sure that everybody is included regardless of any colour of skin, disability, or anything else.

And is this a written policy?

Is it a recent one? [There was a lot of background noise, *written* was misheard as *recent*]

Yeah, or is it...?

I absolutely don't, I don't know the date of it, but it would be because all policies have to be reviewed within 24 months, or should be, but I don't know the date on it.

So you think that there is a policy related to that?

I honestly don't know whether, I think it might be ok, but I don't actually know whether it is totally... I think it only could be loosely sort of attached to that policy really.

Ok, what kind of policy would resolve the issue in the scenario?

A diversity policy where you encourage people to work with everybody and include everybody, whether you think you like them or not, if it's cool or not, or anything else, you know. But if you're asked to do that then you get on and do it because that's what you've been asked to do. I don't think there is a policy actually that properly covers that at the moment.

Do you think that a diversity policy would resolve the issue? By that I mean it would give Mr Brown a direction as to how to resolve the disagreement with the students...

Mmm [yeah] because it would show that they are encouraged to work with other people, you know, that not just... But in this case though it still, they wanted to work with – I mean you can't get away from that, that's what he asked and so that's what they've done, chosen someone they wanted to work with. So in this case no because he still changed the ground rules.

So what kind of policy would resolve the issue?

Well just... I don't know really, I mean he shouldn't have changed the ground rules, I mean keep to... I don't know about policy though really.

Would you like to add something?

Not really, no, I mean it's very complex isn't it really? And at the end of the day... I always go back to actually gut feelings and I believe hugely in – and I've sort of said it to students as well, you know, deep down listen to your inner voice because those students, their inner voice should have told them, I think, that they should work with that other person.

And what about Mr Brown's inner voice?

Well his inner voice should have been that 'Actually I need to keep to what I said because I did say 'work with who you want to' and that's what they're doing, so I shouldn't change the ground rules here for them and other people.'

Thank you.

- [End of Interview] -

8.b.2.3.A special teacher (male) (scenario B3)

Why do you think Mr Jones, the other PE teacher, reacted negatively?

I think because in terms of equality he would be hoping that PE [could be] provided for everybody without having a special arrangement for certain people and he would regard the special provisions as a form of discrimination that they

couldn't engage in the normal sporting activities and things like that. I think, you know, it would be a concern that the students weren't integrated fully.

If all students were to participate equally, would there be any practical difficulties?

Absolutely, yeah. I think certain disabilities would mean that they couldn't engage in the same way as others in activities and he might be able to have... you know play rugby in a wheelchair with all the wheelchair users, but you couldn't – if you are confined to a wheelchair – you couldn't participate in rugby. So actually rugby itself would exclude wheelchair users. So, that's the difficulty. I think Mr Jones has an ideal which is very commendable but it is the practical difficulties that undermine it.

What do you think about the fact that many students with disabilities seemed to be very enthusiastic about Mrs Warren's idea?

I think many of them would see it is not discriminating but providing them with an opportunity which they wouldn't have under the normal arrangements.

Given that, what do you think about Mr Jones?

I am sure Mr Jones is well intentioned. Describing something as a pure act of discrimination suggests that he values the intense area of inclusion which I think most people would subscribe to. I think that what he is missing is that sometimes inclusion itself can bring about a form of discrimination in that it doesn't enable people to achieve the potential they could in more specialist settings.

Ok. Would you like to say something more about it? It sounds like a very interesting idea.

The students within the school who might have disabilities probably would not be able to get into the regular sports teams, the football team, the rugby team,

the hockey team, whatever... But, in a kind of a specialist sports team the conditions could be adapted to the disabilities and it would give them the chance to achieve, to perform in a way that they wouldn't be able to under the normal arrangements. So, although Mr Jones wants everybody included, it's that sort of level playing field... how do you create it when certain people have disabilities that mean they can't kick a ball or runabouts. They have to be special arrangements and they may achieve a high potential in a specialist sports team. Then they would... if they were just allowed the normal PE arrangements and nothing else.

Do you think that Mrs Warren's idea could threaten social inclusion in the school? Whether the creation of a special team could threaten social inclusion in the school...

It depends how it's arranged. I think actually it could add to social inclusion in that it gives students with disabilities an opportunity to achieve in an area when traditionally they wouldn't achieve. It would raise their profile within the school, raise awareness of them and you know they would be getting recognition for something they wouldn't normally get recognition for. So, I think, if it's presented the right way, it could if anything add to social inclusion. Interesting[ly], my wife teaches and she was on a music course last week and one of the keener speakers was the man responsible for the Paralympic orchestra, the opening event of the Paralympics, where all the musicians had some kind of disability, and he was saying that – if you like his ideal is an orchestra where there are able body people performing alongside people who have disabilities. But in order to get there, he felt he had to achieve, to begin with an orchestra with people who just had disabilities and it is a kind of a stepping stone towards that what he saw as the ultimate thing that he is trying to achieve. And interestingly,

he has had a lot of grief, a lot of criticism for doing that for people who probably have the Mr Jones's ideals. And I think there has to be, as in most things, there has to be some kind of compromise and it's never one ideal against the other. It's kind of negotiating a way between them to achieve in the end what it's going to be for the most good.

In Mr Jones's opinion, how does a special team only for students with disabilities differ from a sports team for all students?

I think a team that is a special team for people with disabilities obviously is going to exclude people who don't have the disabilities, but then they have that opportunity elsewhere. Sorry can you repeat the question?

Mr Jones sees a difference between a special team, and a sports team for all students. What kind of difference is this?

I think [in] a special sports team the sports will be adapted to the disability where his vision is probably people, whatever their abilities, taking part in sports as it is. I think that's part of it.

Let me rephrase the question. Do you think that a sports team for all students could promote social inclusion or not?

For all students?

Yes.

That would depend partly on people's disabilities. There might be people with certain disabilities who could function perfectly well within a sports team for anybody. I mean there are some notable examples of, you know, sort of footballers for example who actually got quite severely visual impairments, who have been able to see well enough to kind of play to a very high standard in a sort of mainstream football. But, that wouldn't be possible for somebody in a

wheelchair. So, there can be inclusion through the mainstream, but there can be certain circumstances where that can be very difficult to achieve.

Is there anything morally wrong in Mrs Warren's idea, the special team?

Because Mr Jones described it as a pure act of discrimination...

Yeah, I think that's a very strong reaction. I don't see that is morally wrong. I actually think whilst it might not fit with his view of social inclusion, actually it is an attempt to provide a form of social inclusion even though it seems to be something very special to a certain group of individuals.

So is there anything morally good in Mrs Warren's idea?

Yes, I think [...] morally I would sort of absolutely subscribe to... I think you know like most things it is a compromise, but it's a realistic compromise because there are those young people aren't going to get into the main sports teams, they are going to be very limited in what they can do within normal PE and providing something like that is going to help them to achieve in a way that they won't... be good for their self-esteem, and as I say I think it also raises their profile in the eyes of the population around them within the school. And I think that that has a value – the recognition that actually not everybody is the same, some people are different but it can be building up their respect for them.

Should the PE teachers persuade one another of their point of view? And this is an interrelated question to this question: Who do you think should have the final word on the matter?

I think if there can be a conversation, and there needs to be one, it looks very much if it might be difficult because Mr Jones is very infringed in his view points. I also think that probably in a school situation to have one member of the department steamroll at something that the other one is opposed to could create difficulties generally. I think it would be something that maybe needs to

be thrown open across the staff so that it's not just two PE teaches, possibly extreme opposites, but a kind of discussion with the staff generally about how young people with disabilities are included across the curriculum, perhaps taken the focus away from PE and sports, but thinking generally and about where people can be included without anything special and where actually something special is needed. There almost needs to be a discussion that maybe generates a culture within the school that reflects a consensus on how inclusion is going to be implemented. I think what you've got here are different models of inclusion. And they are not... Obviously people can be taken to extremes, but they are not mutually exclusive, there are all sorts of compromises that can be made.

Like?

Well, I think the special sports team itself, you know, is a compromise. It's a recognition that yes it would be great if Mr Jones could have a football team or, you know, sort of... put these young people into a tennis tournament, but they are not going to do that. So, this is the compromise. It's not, you know, sort of eliminating Mr Jones's ideal, it's that's not achievable at least at the moment. But this would be a halfway house, a way of going some way towards it and enabling... In a sense, it looks to me yes there needs to be a consensus on the staff, because there is a conflict between them, but my view would be if something like that isn't set up then there is unintentional discrimination simply by meriting the disabilities which prevents people from participating. This gives them an opportunity to participate or be differently to other people and that's the compromise. You know it enables them to participate rather not participate, but the compromise is they have to participate differently because of their needs.

Do you think that the special team could be discriminatory in a way, or could lead to discriminatory behaviour? The students with disabilities could be stigmatised...

I suppose there could be a kind of reaction to it from others in the school who aren't in sympathy with the ideal, who see things differently. I would hope there wouldn't be, I would hope it would be seen for what it does to promote inclusion rather than the other way round. I think one of the difficulties, and I wouldn't kind of roll it out because of the difficulty, you know I can remember when I was in school I would have loved to play for the school football team but I was never good enough. I didn't have a disability to hind behind it, I just wasn't good enough. So, there will be a lot of other students in the school who probably whilst they take part in PE and things might not perform to the standard that enables them to represent the school in teams and things like that. This would provide a way for people with disabilities to represent their school, perhaps to be an official team, take part in tournaments and things in a way that some of the other ordinary students, if you like, wouldn't be able to. So, I think you could say it provides them with an opportunity which some others within the school are not going to get. But, it's always going to be a difficulty that.

Let's go back to the teachers' disagreement. If there was a strong disagreement, who do you think should have the final word?

I think that it would have to go to the head teacher, and I think a wise head teacher would explore it at a whole staff level first of all and look for, you know, some kind of consensus within the staff. And obviously it would be for them then to take what they felt was the consensus and say actually this is what we are going to do. But I think, you know, it would have to be a decision at that level.

In general, do you think that students' preferences are relevant as criteria for decision-making at school level?

I think they should certainly inform decision-making. You know one of the buzzwords in education these days is student voice - the idea that you listen to the students and you take account of their opinions. Obviously, they are not all specialists in education so it doesn't mean that they can decide what's on the curriculum and what's not and things like that, but certainly their feelings about things should be considered, their ideas should be explored and, you know, if they deemed appropriate should be implemented. So, I think... I have really talked about this sort of staff culture, but the views of students should be incorporated in that as well.

Do some students' preferences affect decisions more than other students?

Right, that's quite a difficult, hypothetical question.

I am not sure it is hypothetical. Do you think that some students' preferences could be respected more than others?

I think depending on how students express their preferences more notice may be taken. I mean in a setting like this – certainly with the students that I work with, where there are behavioural difficulties and things like that – if somebody's behaviour resulted from a certain preference or something like that, people would take notice very quickly. If a student was quieter and their preference was expressed more quietly, less obviously, I can see that it might be overlooked. I mean I would hope that the intention of all staff would be to listen to all students, to be aware of their preferences and respect them as far as possible within the constraints of what we do here. But, I can easily see that a more vocal group of

students might get more notice than the ones who are sort of quietly thinking 'o, I don't like this' or 'I wish we could do that'.

The scenario is about a mainstream secondary school. Do you think that the preferences of students with disabilities can affect decisions in a mainstream setting?

I think they do affect decisions...

Despite being a minority?

Yeah. I think, you know, there is legislation that makes schools responsible for young people with special educational needs and for providing them with an appropriate curriculum, appropriate opportunities...

But legislation has to do with students' preferences or with general issues?

A lot of it will be to do with learning requirements, providing those things for them. And I have to say I am not that well upon current legislation, things like that. But...

Have you worked in a mainstream school?

Not for a long time. I worked for sixteen years in mainstream education and I am being here eleven or twelve years. So, it's receding into the distance.

So, do you think that students with disabilities can affect decision-making in a mainstream setting?

I think their presence affects decision-making. There has to be some account taken of them. Depending on their disabilities and how eloquent they are they might be able to... if they can speak up for themselves then obviously they can make an impact. But I think the very fact that you have young people with disabilities in a mainstream school or college does impact on decision-making, if you [decide] to take account of it.

Do you think that the preferences of students with disabilities would weigh more than the preferences of other students in a mainstream school?

I think that might vary. When I was last in a mainstream, I was working at a community college and they had a unit for young people with hearing impairment and these young people came in to mainstream classes, they might or might not have a member of staff supporting them, they might be withdrawn for certain things in the hearing impaired unit, but on the whole the unit was there to support them in the mainstream, not to take them out of classes and things like that. But, the very fact that that unit existed and that we had quite a significant minority with hearing impairments affected the way that teachers planned their sessions and things. So, if you got a number of people with similar disabilities, then there will be a focus on those similar disabilities and how to address them within the context.

In terms of provision yes, but as regards the students' preferences? In the scenario, the students express a preference for a special team. Do you think that the preferences of students with disabilities would be more respected than the preferences of other students? If we examine it as a matter of preference, not of provision...

That's a difficult one; I don't know that I've got a clear view on that. I think there's the potential because of, you know, concern about not wanting to discriminate, there might be a tendency to listen more to the preferences of young people with disabilities. But, I think in a lot of school environments there would be that kind of tendency to look at things from both sides and weigh things up and, as I say, try to achieve the most good in whatever compromise

would made not sort of doing something specifically for young people with disabilities that clearly in some way upsets those without disabilities.

Mr Jones has a preference for a team in that different students can be together. Have you experienced a situation like this?

Hm... Certainly, the school I was telling you about where they had the hearing impaired unit, there were opportunities within sports that, you know, young people with a hearing impairment could take part as well as anybody else. So, there were opportunities like that. That was quite possible.

In this school, are there any chances for different students to be together?

Because all students here may have similar disabilities, but there is...

...Huge variety (with emphasis). Well, I suppose all the time we are working with multiple disabilities and...

Why you do that? Which is the benefit from different people working together?

Sorry, I lost the thread. Are we talking why we have other school like this or why...?

So, different students in the school cooperate in various tasks. Why you, as a teacher, choose to do that? Is this cooperation beneficial for the students?

Oh yes, that's very beneficial. And that part of learning to respect people's differences and make allowances for them... That's...

Are there any problems with this cooperation?

I think on the whole is a very positive thing. I can't sort of think of any kind of immediate problems. I mean even here there are various things we do that might – particularly things involving kind of physical movement and things like that – where different people may be able to do different things. But they can't

necessarily all do the same thing and you've always got to make a decision: do I include this in the session because so and so can't do that. So do I take that out of the session, so they don't feel there is something going on that they can't do, or by doing that am I depriving other people who can do it of an opportunity. There are all those decisions to be made. And I think generally the solution that I would go for is to see there was something that everybody could do, but accept that there might be certain things that some individuals couldn't do, and that actually talking about that and accepting it was kind of part of the culture, a kind of recognition of difference and things like that.

If you had to organise an activity in the school would you prefer to do something with students who have similar abilities or with a range of abilities?

I tend to work with a range of abilities and I think that's my preference. I suppose I tend to accept what I am given rather than thinking of, if it was rearranged, it might be better. It might vary according to what we are doing, but I am used to running sessions that enable people to operate at different levels and to do different things.

And why you do that?

Partly because we've got such a small population and, you know, you could very easily say 'right, he is very different to her' and 'he is very different again'. You could very easily find that you kind of split them up so much whereas we are in a sense trying to achieve some inclusion here, in sort of getting young people with very different disabilities to rub along together and to integrate and join in a social context. And in a sense it is... again it is like the special sports team; you want these young people to be able to integrate into the wider community, but this is a stepping stone in that direction, just getting them to

engage in this community. And I think part of being in a community is knowing that people are different, that some have strengths in one area and some have strengths in another area, and building on that to encourage social interaction.

Given that you want to achieve as far as possible social inclusion in your sessions, do you think that Mr Jones wanted exactly the same when he refused to support the creation of a special team?

From the way he words his opposition, I would think that's what he wanted.

I have the impression that you are pro Mrs Warren's idea, at least in the context of the story.

Yeah.

So, why do you think Mr Jones is wrong, if you have the same principle to guide your actions?

I think he is wrong because he is... what he is missing is the fact that there are things that the young people who will go to the special sports team could do that they wouldn't be able to do in the main sports teams, in the main PE. I think he is missing that.

If it wasn't PE, if it was something else, something that would not involve physical activity, would there be any difference?

That might well be different.

Is the principle that is important, or the context?

I think it's the context. And I think, you know, I am fine with the principle of including everybody and if you can achieve that that's wonderful, but the context very often puts a perspective on the principle and therefore that's where you bring in your compromises and recognise that maybe the principle isn't achievable and how close can you get to it. And sometimes it might be a

specialist sports team, it might be a special orchestra – you know, sort of all whatever the context requires.

Ok. Is there a policy related to these issues in the story in your school?

Oh, policies... (He laughs)

Very generally, not something specific...

I think the ethos of the organisation is very much about overcoming the barriers to learning first of all, but also to social inclusion. That's very much what is about. And again behind that is the ideal – if you like Mr Jones ideal – that everybody can participate in the big wild world which is out there, but then there's the recognition that for some so that's going to be a problem, and so on. So what do you do about that, and then you bring in this kind of other opportunities and things like that, which don't achieve the full ideal but maybe push things in that direction.

The ethos, as I understand it, is not a written policy.

I am sure we've probably got stuff on equal opportunities and things like that. But the ethos is very much about enabling people to achieve their potential despite their disability and that's about learning and also about preparing for adulthood.

Let's go back to the scenario. What kind of policy would resolve the issue in the story? Policy or principle if you prefer it...

I think you would want a kind of policy or principle that stated that everybody has a value and should be included as fully as they can be, but with a recognition that people are different and that those differences mean that their requirements vary and that provision has to be adjusted sometimes to fit those requirements at the same time. You would want those things to be held in

balance, so that adjusting for one person didn't make things unfair for another, and that is the tricky thing all the time.

And how do you think this principle would resolve the issue in the story?

I don't know whether it would. I think it would only resolve it, if it came out of a consensus on the staff that had been achieved through discussion and, you know, an exploration of a lot of the issues in the sense that you are delving into in your research. I think there would be a lot of work that needs to be done on the staff and ideally with the students as well, I think, to... and that would be what generated a culture. And then from that culture you could have your principle, your ethos, your policy, if you like. But, it would come from that rather than producing a policy that [would] resolve it or.... I think it could be that way round.

Do you think that the scenario succeeds in raising some issues?

Definitely.

What kind of issues?

Well certainly, the issues of how you provide for one group of people without discriminating against another group of people. And what we mean by inclusion. And indeed sort of what's discrimination, what isn't discrimination. All these things were in there, yeah.

Do you think that there were things left undiscussed?

It just occurred to me within this... I can remember a good many years ago one of my students had his... we had an annual review meeting up a year to look at the provision and make sure that he has what's required. And somebody from the local authority came to visit and was very pleased to see him here and commented that what this place provides him with was peers with common issues. And I think that's the other thing that the special sports team might

provide, the opportunity to engage in sports with other young people who had similar difficulties, even if the disabilities were different. And I think that whole thing whilst you want young people with disabilities to have peers who don't have disabilities, it's important that some of their peers do, because they are going to have the understanding of the difficulties they face, and I think that's another side to it. So you do have to kind of provide that specialist setting as well in some way almost to kind of support people's emotional needs.

And do you think that being with similar people is an emotional need?

Yes. It is an emotional and a social need. Something that is...

For all people, or for people with disabilities in particular?

It might be trite for everybody, I don't know. I mean certainly for young people with disabilities, I think actually knowing at least some others who are struggling, perhaps have the same level of efforts to get up in the morning because of the problems they face and things like that... I think that's of immense value.

- [End of Interview] -

9. Appendix (analysis)

9.a.Example of a fully coded interview

A fully coded interview of a young man with visual impairment (scenario A2):

Equality	Picking a side - immediate A2	
	Homophily - common ground	
Different people - challenge		
	Homophily - comfort zone	
Getting both sides of the story A2		Disability related difficulties - understand
Right and wrong at the same time A2		
Homophily - deep connection		
Homophily - understanding		Disability related difficulties - social
Recognition of the tension - reflective A2		
Different perspectives		
Violation of choice		
Balancing want and should A2		Disability related difficulties - visual impairment
Importance of socialisation		
Homophily - participation		
Choice is important		
Disability related difficulties - knowledge sharing		
	Different people - new ideas, experiences	
Coding Density		

W1 A2.5-2

Was it right or wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more dating with his life?

Well I reckon he was wrong because if he was with people which [were] visually impaired as well then he could talk about, then he could participate in social activities because they would talk about the same kind of thing, maybe not on the same level, but at least on the same topics.

Do you think that if John could find a job where there would be people with and without disabilities then he would not be as socially included?

I don't think that's right, no, but at least there has to be a mix in a work place. You know because if a visually impaired person meets a sighted person, at least they can talk to together you see, but if there's a group with sighted and visually impaired then they can talk together about different things and maybe on different levels about different topics.

So would you like to explain again why do you think John expressed this preference to work only with other visually impaired people?

Well I think that he stated specifically to work alongside other visually impaired people, because he felt that he wouldn't be as comfortable amongst sighted people because they might talk about things that John might not understand, whereas if he worked with visually impaired people then he could take part in social activities.

What kind of things do you think John would find difficult to understand?

You know things like the colour of the sky... you know, things like visual programmes, you know when people start talking about expressions and mannerisms, I think that is very hard, if not explained, for a person with a visual impairment to understand.

Why did the job advisor and John hold different views?

I think because the job advisor might have been sighted himself and might not have understood that some things have to be explained to a visually impaired person, like mannerisms like I've said, and so forth. And I also think that John, having been visually

impaired for some time, reading between the lines of the short story, my thinking is that he tried to explain this to the jobs advisor but I don't think the job advisor took it into account.

Do you think that the job advisor could have something else in his mind? For example he may have wanted for John to cooperate with different people...

Quite possibly, I think cooperation of the sighted and visually impaired is vital, you know, because when you're out and about in a local community you might not meet so many visually impaired people, you might meet sighted people, but cooperation with visually impaired people and sighted people, it's good, you know, because like I said, you can hold conversations about different things. Maybe not about visual, maybe more about music and things that John could hear, which is very important as well because most people chat about both sides of things, the visual and things that they could hear, and I think that that would be very good as well.

Is there anything morally wrong in the job advisors advice?

Well I understand that he wants John to cooperate with both visually impaired and sighted, but I don't think that it was right for the jobs advisor to strongly discourage John from working alongside people with a visual impairment, I myself think that was totally wrong.

And why was it totally wrong?

Well because he is basically discouraging him from working with people that have a visual impairment as well. But on the other hand, however, if there was a mixture, a fair mixture of visually impaired and sighted, that would be good as well, you know, because John would be working alongside people with a visual impairment, but also with sighted people as well.

Why do you think it was wrong to strongly discourage him?

Well because he was discouraging him from meeting people that were visually impaired like himself, and working alongside them, you know, which I think John could benefit from because he might learn something from another blind person, a person with a visual impairment, that he didn't know before.

Equality
Picking a side - immediate A2
Homophily - common ground
Different people - challenge
Homophily - comfort zone
Disability related difficulties - understanding
Getting both sides of the story A2
Right and wrong at the same time A2
Homophily - deep connection
Homophily - understanding
Disability related difficulties - social
Recognition of the tension - reflective A2

Different perspectives
Violation of choice

Balancing want and should A2

Disability related difficulties - visual impairment
Importance of socialisation
Homophily - participation
Choice is important

Different people - new ideas, experiences

Disability related difficulties - knowledge sharing

Coding Density

John is clearly expressing a preference to work with other visually impaired people.

Do you think that's relevant?

I do indeed, yes, I think that he should... I know he wanted to work alongside visually impaired people, but if he also worked alongside sighted people as well then he could learn things that he didn't know himself, as well as learning things from visually impaired people, but I think we also learn from sighted people as well.

Should the job advisor encourage John to work with non-visually impaired people?

Well it depends because if the, if he works in a place full of all sighted people then no, but if he encourages him to work alongside people who aren't visually impaired and people with a visual impairment in a work place then I think yes.

What would be the difference between the two places?

Well because in the sighted place, you know because not many people would notice the white cane if they were walking along minding their own business, but on the other hand if there were visually impaired people there as well which use long white canes then they might notice each other and they might move out of each other's way if you know what I mean.

Should John persuade the advisor of his point of view?

Yes I think he should, because I don't think the jobs advisor has actually grasped the fact that John has specifically asked for this, for a certain thing, and I think the advisor just focuses on what he thinks is right for John, not what John thinks is right for himself.

Why do you think it's important for the advisor to respect John's preference?

Well because if the jobs advisor respects John's preference then he might realise that maybe John has asked for a certain thing, and the job advisor should take John's opinion or specific request into account so that he can see it from both points of view, whereas at the moment the jobs advisor is only seeing it from one point of view, his own, which is wrong in my opinion because both sides of an argument should be taken in to consideration.

Equality
Picking a side - immediate A2
Homophily - common ground
Different people - challenge
Homophily - comfort zone
Disability related difficulties - understanding

Right and wrong at the same time A2
Homophily - deep connection
Homophily - understanding
Disability related difficulties - social
Recognition of the tension - reflective A2
Different perspectives
Violation of choice

Balancing want and should A2

Disability related difficulties - visual impairment

Importance of socialisation
Homophily - participation

Choice is important

Disability related difficulties - knowledge sharing
Different people - new ideas, experiences

Coding Density

Getting both sides of the story A2

John is expressing a preference to work with somebody similar to himself. Have you experienced a situation like this?

Yes I have, in [...] when I went on work experience with [...] I actually worked alongside a visually impaired lady who actually had a guide dog, so yes I have worked alongside a visually impaired person myself.

And how was this experience? Would you like to describe it?

Ok well she worked on electronic channels, as did I, but we were working on the internet and I was writing things on how to, different short cut keys for JAWS the screen reader and she showed me on different key combinations, you know for: short cut keys for JAWS that I didn't know myself. For example I didn't know that control R right aligns the text, I only learnt that from the visually impaired lady that I was working with. So if you work alongside another visually impaired person then you can learn things like short cut keys and different things like that and so on.

Did you make the choice to work with her yourself, or it was a choice made by somebody else?

I made the choice because since I'm good on computers I think, I thought then it was best if I worked in electronic channels.

So do you think that being able to choose who you work with is important?

In a way yes, you know because at least you know who you're working with and their... well not so much their likes or dislikes, but more to the fact that you know who they are and what their voice sounds like, if you can hear their voice before you choose who you work with, if you don't, however, then you have to find out in time and actually react well to that... to those people.

In terms of whether they have things in common with you or they are very different from you?

Exactly, yes, because if I spoke to a visually impaired person really nicely and I spoke to a sighted person very nastily then that would be wrong you see cause every person should be spoke to the same way and in the same tone.

Picking a side - immediate A2
Homophily - common ground
Different people - challenge
Homophily - comfort zone
Disability related difficulties - understanding
Getting both sides of the story A2
Right and wrong at the same time A2
Homophily - deep connection
Homophily - understanding

Recognition of the tension - reflective A2
Different perspectives
Violation of choice
Balancing want and should A2

Importance of socialisation
Homophily - participation
Choice is important

Disability related difficulties - knowledge sharing
Different people - new ideas, experiences

Coding Density

Equality

Disability related difficulties - social

Disability related difficulties - visual impairment

Ok, the first part of the question was 'do you think that being able to choose who you work with is important?' and the second part is: Would it be important for you to be able to choose if you were in the position of John?

Yes, yes I think it would because if I was back in the story instead of John, I would have said 'I would like to work alongside visually impaired people because I can learn things from visually impaired people, but also I can learn from what sighted people tell me, you know, because if a sighted person says something to me or gives me some feedback then I can take that feedback on board, but on the other hand, however, if a visually impaired person gives me feedback then they'll be able to give it to me in a relevant way.'

Do you still believe that it was right or wrong for the job advisor to advise John to be more daring with his life?

I think, I still think that it was wrong because John has a right to choose what job he goes into and who his colleagues are.

And what about cooperating with different people, with sighted people?

Yeah, yeah well as long as he... I understand that John wanted to work alongside people with visual impairments specifically, however if he worked alongside sighted people as well then he could cooperate with different people. Yeah so in a way, on one hand I think the job advisor was wrong not to take John's request into account, on the other hand however I think the job advisor was in one sense correct to tell John to be more daring because I think what the job advisor had in mind was to ask, to tell John to think about working alongside visually impaired people and both... and sighted people as well, which could make a difference to John's way of thinking.

Do you think that the scenario succeeds in raising some issues?

I do indeed, yes.

What kind of issues?

Well I think that it raises issues on the fact that you might not always get the answer you're looking for when you're looking for a job. But also, I think it also raises the issue of visually impaired people, if they haven't come across sighted people before, you know, to

Equality

Picking a side - immediate A2

Homophily - common ground

Homophily - comfort zone

Disability related difficulties - understanding

Getting both sides of the story A2

Homophily - deep connection

Homophily - understanding

Disability related difficulties - social

Different perspectives

Violation of choice

Balancing want and should A2

Disability related difficulties - visual impairment

Homophily - participation

Choice is important

Disability related difficulties - knowledge sharing

Different people - new ideas, experiences

Coding Density

Different people - challenge

Right and wrong at the same time A2

Recognition of the tension - reflective A2

Importance of socialisation

be able to work alongside them might be very difficult, and I think that is an issue in John's case that might need addressing.

Would you like to say anything more about the scenario?

No.

About John?

Yeah but I reckon that John should think a bit more clearly, you know, on what his specific work placement would be, you know, because he just said 'with visually impaired people,' but he didn't say whether it was visually impaired people solely or whether there would be sighted people in there as well, that wasn't made clear, which I think John could be more specific about.

And what would be the difference? You told me some things before, but would you like to discuss it again?

Well with sighted people and visually impaired people they can actually chat amongst themselves about different things, whereas sighted people might chat about things that are on TV last night and so on and so forth, you see, but whereas visually impaired people might talk about music and things like that, and things you can hear and audio, whereas things that are more visual...

So is it about the different things that the two groups can share?

Yes, exactly, that can share different things. And like a sighted person might say to a visually impaired person 'oh I like this type of music' and a visually impaired person might be able to relate to that.

Ok, thank you very much.

- [End of Interview] -

Equality
 Picking a side - immediate A2
 Homophily - common ground
 Different people - challenge
 Homophily - comfort zone
 Disability related difficulties - understanding
 Getting both sides of the story A2
 Right and wrong at the same time A2
 Homophily - deep connection
 Homophily - understanding
 Disability related difficulties - social
 Recognition of the tension - reflective A2
 Different perspectives
 Violation of choice
 Balancing want and should A2
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 Homophily - participation
 Choice is important
 Disability related difficulties - knowledge sharing
 Different people - new ideas, experiences

Coding Density

9.b. Analysis framework

9.b.1. Young people (main framework)

Conceptual themes	Grounded themes	
Immediate preference	Recognition of the tension - immediate Not picking a side - immediate (A3) Picking a side - immediate A1 – A2 – A3 – A4	
Similarity and difference	Difference	Denial of difference Difference is wonderful Different people - challenge Different people - confidence Different people - new ideas, experiences Different people can be friends Visibility and invisibility of difference
	Similarity	Reasons for homophily: positive Homophily - similar people get on well Homophily - easy communication Homophily - deep connection Homophily - common ground Homophily - understanding Homophily - comfort zone Homophily - participation Homophily - equal status Homophily - confidence Homophily - security Homophily - trust
		Reasons for homophily: negative Homophily resulting from oppression Homophily resulting from bullying Homophily resulting from fear
		Reflection on homophily Homophily limits Experience of homophily Similar people - challenge
	Similarity and difference in terms of disability	Reference to normality Similarity and difference within disability Similarity and difference beyond disability Similarity and difference because of disability
Homophily and inclusion (the tension)	Understanding of the tension (scenario)	Want vs should (scenario) A1 – A2 – A3 – A4
	Experience of the tension (real life)	Want vs should (real life)
	Tension resolution	A tricky balance A1 – A2 – A3 – A4 Importance of discussion Want or should (not both) Balancing want and should Getting both sides of the story
	Reflection on the tension	A hard choice A1 – A2 – A3 – A4 A complex issue Practical difficulties related to the tension
Ethical implications	Ethics and choice	Violation of choice What might people say
	Ethics and inclusion	Inclusion forced Inclusion - ethical obligation Disability - ethically charged
	Ethics and homophily	Homophily - being selfish, stubborn, elitist, non daring, irrational Homophily - discrimination
Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)	Right and wrong at the same time A1 – A2 – A3 – A4 Neither right nor wrong (A3)	
Interactional preferences	I prefer by myself Preference for similar people Preference for different people Preference for a mixture of people No difference between similar and different people	
The role of choice	Inclusion - choice Homophily - choice Choice is important Choice is important vs not important	
Reflective preference	Recognition of the tension - reflective A1 – A2 – A3 – A4 Not picking a side - reflective (A3) Picking a side - reflective	

9.b.2.School staff (main framework)

Conceptual themes	Grounded themes	
Homophily and inclusion (the tension)	Understanding of the tension (scenario)	Want vs should B1 – B2 – B3 – B4 General vs special Ideal vs compromise
	Tension resolution	Fine balance B1 – B2 – B3 – B4 Balancing want and should Getting all sides of the story Balancing general and special Balancing ideal and compromise
	Reflection on the tension	A complex issue B1 – B2 – B3 – B4 Practical difficulties related to the tension
Similarity and difference	Difference	Discrimination Denial of difference Not everybody is the same Different people - challenge Different people - new ideas, experiences Visibility and invisibility of difference
		Reflection on inclusion Inclusion - choice Questioning inclusion Definitions of inclusion
	Similarity	Reasons for homophily: positive Homophily - identity Homophily - security Homophily - confidence Homophily - social need Homophily - equal status Homophily - comfort zone Homophily - understanding Homophily - emotional need Homophily - common ground
		Reasons for homophily: negative Homophily - victimisation Homophily - lack of confidence Homophily - lack of social skills Homophily resulting from bullying Homophily resulting from oppression
	Reflection on homophily Homophily limits Homophily - choice Homophily - not a major issue Homophily - the opposite of inclusion	
Similarity and difference in terms of disability All people have limitations Similarity and difference within disability Similarity and difference beyond disability Similarity and difference because of disability		
Homophily and inclusion (ethical dimension)	Right and wrong at the same time	B1 – B2 – B3 – B4
Ethical implications	Ethics and choice Violation of choice Limitations, representation Students' preferences should be taken into consideration	
	Ethics and inclusion Inclusion forced Inclusion - discrimination Inclusion - ethical obligation Fear of being discriminatory Disability - ethically charged	
	Ethics and homophily Homophily - being elitist, exclusive, non cooperative, stubborn Homophily - discrimination	
Issues of power	Power dynamics - students Power dynamics - confidence Power dynamics - school hierarchy Power dynamics - staff and students	
Decision-making	Boundaries Student voice The role of parents The role of SENCO The role of teachers Management decision A culture of discussion Decision-making is hard Disability affects decisions Teachers' knowledge - SEN, psychology Students' preferences can affect decisions	
Personal experience of the tension	Real life tensions	
Policy issues	School ethos Policies - SEN Policies - access Policies - bullying Policies - inclusion Policies - discrimination Policies - health and safety Policies - not a policy issue Policies - classroom methods Policies - equal opportunities and diversity Not well upon current legislation or policies	

9.b.3. Young people (other themes)

Other (grounded) themes	
Educational settings/philosophy	Mainstream vs special Problems in mainstream - help Problems in mainstream - learning Problems in mainstream - social participation
Values	Respect Equality
Missing the point/not following	Missing the point Not following or lost
Impairment-related	Disability related difficulties - visual impairment Disability related difficulties - Asperger syndrome
Social relationships	Peer networks Peer pressure Expanding the social circle Importance of socialisation
Disability	Stereotypes Disability labels Disability gives power Positive discrimination Adapted vs real life environments Experience of disability is important Disability related difficulties - social Disability related difficulties - understanding Disability related difficulties - practical (access) Disability related difficulties - practical (assistance) Disability related difficulties - knowledge sharing
Sentiments	Feelings - pity Feelings - inclusion Feelings - exclusion Feelings - determination Feelings - being different Feelings - positive discrimination
Policies	Policies - discrimination
Judgement	Authority and experience Different perspectives Age maturity

9.b.4. School staff (other themes)

Other (grounded) themes	
Teaching	Teaching practice - fairness Teaching practice - questionable Teaching practice - differentiation
Values	Respect Equality Human rights
Disability	Stereotypes Disability labels Disability gives power Experience of disability is important Disability related difficulties - understanding Passive vs proactive stance towards disability
Impairment-related	Disability related difficulties - visual impairment Disability related difficulties - Asperger syndrome
Special arrangements	Special arrangements - inclusion Special arrangements - opportunities Special arrangements - discrimination
Social relationships	Peer pressure Peer networks Expanding the social circle Importance of socialisation
Educational settings/philosophy	Social vs academic Mainstream vs special Mainstream - inclusion Problems in mainstream - bullying Problems in mainstream - learning Problems in mainstream - social participation Problems in mainstream - real life environment
Judgement	Age maturity Different perspectives

9.c.Definitions of analysis themes

9.c.1.Young people's themes

Young people themes

Name	Description
A complex issue A1	The discussion about homophily and inclusion is complex - A1
A complex issue A2	The discussion about homophily and inclusion is complex - A2
A complex issue A3	The discussion about homophily and inclusion is complex - A3
A complex issue A4	The discussion about homophily and inclusion is complex - A4
A hard choice A1	Choosing between personal preferences and social inclusion can be hard - A1
A hard choice A2	Choosing between personal preferences and social inclusion can be hard - A2
A hard choice A3	Choosing between personal preferences and social inclusion can be hard - A3
A hard choice A4	Choosing between personal preferences and social inclusion can be hard - A4
A tricky balance A4	Balancing want and should can be tricky - A4
Adapted vs real life environments	People with visual impairment may experience a tension between environments that have been adapted to offer special support to them, and real life environments
Age maturity	Age maturity is relevant to decision-making
Authority and experience	Authoritarian figures are expected to be experienced in handling issues of inclusion and social justice
Balancing want and should A1	Want and should needs to be balanced - A1
Balancing want and should A2	Want and should needs to be balanced - A2
Balancing want and should A3	Want and should needs to be balanced - A3
Balancing want and should A4	Want and should needs to be balanced - A4
Choice is important	Being able to choose the people you interact socially with is important
Choice is important vs not important	Choice can be important or not important in different cases
Denial of difference	People may deny the existence of difference
Difference is wonderful	Being different can be seen as something out of the ordinary
Different people - challenge	Being with different people can be challenging
Different people - confidence	Being with different people can build up your confidence
Different people - new ideas, experiences	Different people can offer new ideas and experiences
Different people can be friends	People despite their differences can be friends

Different perspectives	There can be different perspectives in the judgement of a situation
Disability - ethically charged	Disability is an issue ethically charged
Disability gives power	Being disabled can give one power over non-disabled people
Disability labels	The use of disability labels
Disability related difficulties - Asperger syndrome	Asperger syndrome can be related with particular difficulties

Name	Description
Disability related difficulties - knowledge sharing	People with disabilities can share knowledge related to their experience of living with the difficulties of a disability
Disability related difficulties - practical (access)	People with disabilities experience practical difficulties in terms of access
Disability related difficulties - practical (assistance)	People with disabilities experience practical difficulties in terms of assistance
Disability related difficulties - social	People with disabilities face difficulties in their social interactions
Disability related difficulties - understanding	People with disabilities experience difficulties because of their disabilities and need understanding
Disability related difficulties - visual impairment	Visual impairment can be related with particular difficulties
Equality	All people are equal
Expanding the social circle	Expanding one's social circle is important
Experience of disability is important	It is important for people without disabilities to have experience of disability
Experience of homophily	Young people's experience of homophily in real life situations
Feelings - being different	How people who are seen as different feel
Feelings - determination	People with Asperger syndrome show a great degree of determination to fulfil any project they have undertaken
Feelings - exclusion	How people with disabilities feel when they are excluded
Feelings - inclusion	How young people with disabilities feel when they are included
Feelings - pity	Non-disabled people may feel sorry for people with disabilities
Feelings - positive discrimination	How people with disabilities feel when they are positively discriminated
Getting both sides of the story A1	In any argument both sides of the story should be taken into consideration - A1
Getting both sides of the story A2	In any argument both sides of the story should be taken into consideration - A2
Getting both sides of the story A4	In any argument both sides of the story should be taken into consideration - A4
Homophily - being selfish, stubborn, elitist, non daring, irrational	The expression of a preference for interacting socially with similar people can be seen as selfishness, stubbornness, elitism, or as something non daring or irrational
Homophily - choice	Homophily is an expression of choice
Homophily - comfort zone	Similar people may find a comfort zone in each other

Homophily - common ground	People prefer to be among others they have things in common with themselves
Homophily - confidence	Being with similar others can give people confidence
Homophily - deep connection	Similar people can establish deep connections
Homophily - discrimination	The expression of a preference for interacting socially with similar people can be seen as discrimination
Homophily - easy communication	People find more easy to communicate with people they feel that are like themselves
Homophily - equal status	People prefer to be among others they think they have equal to them status
Homophily - participation	Being among similar people can promote participation
Homophily - security	People feel secure among similar others

Name	Description
Homophily - similar people get on well	People prefer to be among similar others because they get on well with them
Homophily - trust	A preference for similar people is based on trust
Homophily - understanding	Similar people can understand each other
Homophily limits	Being only among similar people limits one's social world and opportunities
Homophily resulting from bullying	Bullying can be a reason behind preference for homophilous ties
Homophily resulting from fear	A preference for similar people can be the result of fear for the unknown
Homophily resulting from oppression	A preference for being with similar others can be the result of oppression
I prefer to work by myself	Young people may prefer to work by themselves
Importance of discussion A1	Discussion can resolve tensions - A1
Importance of discussion A2	Discussion can resolve tensions - A2
Importance of discussion A4	Discussion can resolve tensions - A4
Importance of socialisation	Socialising with other people is important
Inclusion - choice	Inclusion should be an expression of choice
Inclusion - ethical obligation	There is an ethical obligation to include all people
Inclusion forced	Inclusion may be forced despite young people's preferences
Mainstream vs special	Differences between mainstream and special settings and philosophy
Missing the point	The interviewee is missing the point
Neither right nor wrong (A3)	The situation under discussion has been described as neither right nor wrong - A3
No difference between similar and different people	There is no or little difference between similar and different people as far as social interaction is concerned
Not following or lost	The interviewee is not following or is experiencing information overload

Not picking a side - immediate (A3)	An immediate answer pro homophily or inclusion has not be given - A3
Not picking a side - reflective (A3)	A reflective answer pro homophily or inclusion has not be given - A3
Peer networks	Peers create social networks
Peer pressure	Young people are sensitive to peer pressure
Picking a side - immediate A1	An answer pro homophily or inclusion is immediately given - A1
Picking a side - immediate A2	An answer pro homophily or inclusion is immediately given - A2
Picking a side - immediate A3	An answer pro homophily or inclusion is immediately given - A3
Picking a side - immediate A4	An answer pro homophily or inclusion is immediately given - A4
Picking a side - reflective A1	An answer pro homophily or inclusion is given after the discussion - A1
Picking a side - reflective A2	An answer pro homophily or inclusion is given after the discussion - A2
Picking a side - reflective A3	An answer pro homophily or inclusion is given after the discussion - A3

Name	Description
Picking a side - reflective A4	An answer pro homophily or inclusion is given after the discussion - A4
Policies - discrimination	Legislation about disability and discrimination
Positive discrimination	People with disabilities might be favoured because of their disabilities
Practical difficulties related to the tension A2	The tension between homophily and inclusion is intertwined with practical, real life issues and difficulties -
Preference for a mixture of people	Preference for interacting socially with a mixture of similar and different people
Preference for different people	Preference for interacting socially with different people
Preference for similar people	Preference for interacting socially with similar people
Problems in mainstream - help	Attending a mainstream school can be difficult for students with disabilities, in terms of getting the help they need
Problems in mainstream - learning	Attending a mainstream school can be difficult for students with disabilities, in terms of their learning
Problems in mainstream - social participation	Attending a mainstream school can be difficult for students with disabilities, in terms of social participation
Recognition of the tension - immediate A1	A tension between homophily and inclusion is immediately recognised - A1
Recognition of the tension - immediate A2	A tension between homophily and inclusion is immediately recognised - A2
Recognition of the tension - immediate A4	A tension between homophily and inclusion is immediately recognised - A4
Recognition of the tension - reflective A1	A tension between homophily and inclusion is recognised only after the discussion - A1
Recognition of the tension - reflective A2	A tension between homophily and inclusion is recognised only after the discussion - A2
Recognition of the tension - reflective A3	A tension between homophily and inclusion is recognised only after the discussion - A3
Recognition of the tension - reflective A4	A tension between homophily and inclusion is recognised only after the discussion - A4

Reference to normality	Ideas about normality
Respect	All people should be respected
Right and wrong at the same time A1	The tension between homophily and inclusion has an ethical dimension - A1
Right and wrong at the same time A2	The tension between homophily and inclusion has an ethical dimension - A2
Right and wrong at the same time A3	The tension between homophily and inclusion has an ethical dimension - A3
Right and wrong at the same time A4	The tension between homophily and inclusion has an ethical dimension - A4
Similar people - challenge	Being with similar people can be challenging
Similarity and difference because of disability	Similarity and difference is defined by disability
Similarity and difference beyond disability	Similarity and difference extend beyond disability
Similarity and difference within disability	People with disabilities can be similar or different
Stereotypes	Stereotypes about disabled and non-disabled people
Violation of choice	Choice should not be violated
Visibility and invisibility of difference	Difference can be visible or invisible and thus has different impact on people
Want or should (not both) A1	Want and should cannot be balanced - A1

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Name	Description
Want vs should (real life)	Want and should in real life is in tension
Want vs should (scenario) A1	Want and should in the scenario is in tension - A1
Want vs should (scenario) A2	Want and should in the scenario is in tension - A2
Want vs should (scenario) A3	Want and should in the scenario is in tension - A3
Want vs should (scenario) A4	Want and should in the scenario is in tension - A4
What might people say	One's decisions can be affected by what other people consider to be right and wrong

9.c.2.School staff's themes

School staff themes

Name	Description
A complex issue B1	The discussion about homophily and inclusion is complex - B1
A complex issue B2	The discussion about homophily and inclusion is complex - B2
A complex issue B3	The discussion about homophily and inclusion is complex - B3
A complex issue B4	The discussion about homophily and inclusion is complex - B4
A culture of discussion	Discussion is necessary in important issues
Age maturity	Age maturity is relevant to decision-making
All people have limitations	All people have strengths and limitations
Balancing general and special B2	Balancing general and special provision - B2
Balancing general and special B3	Balancing general and special provision - B3
Balancing ideal and compromise B3	Ideal and compromise can be balanced - B3
Balancing ideal and compromise B4	Ideal and compromise can be balanced - B4
Balancing want and should B1	Individual preferences and social inclusion need to be balanced - B1
Balancing want and should B3	Individual preferences and social inclusion need to be balanced - B3
Balancing want and should B4	Individual preferences and social inclusion need to be balanced - B4
Boundaries	There are boundaries as to how much students can have input in decision-making
Decision-making is hard	Decision-making at school level is a hard process
Definitions of inclusion	What inclusion is
Denial of difference	People may deny the existence of difference
Different people - challenge	Being with different people can be challenging
Different people - new ideas, experiences	Different people can offer new ideas and experiences
Different perspectives	There can be different perspectives in the judgement of a situation
Disability - ethically charged	Disability is an issue ethically charged
Disability affects decisions	The presence of students with disabilities in a class or school can affect decisions
Disability gives power	Disability can give power to disabled over non-disabled people
Disability labels	The use of disability labels
Disability related difficulties - Asperger syndrome	Asperger syndrome can be related with particular difficulties
Disability related difficulties - understanding	People with disabilities experience difficulties because of their disabilities and need understanding

Disability related difficulties - visual impairment	Visual impairment can be related with particular difficulties
Discrimination	Discrimination against people who are different
Equality	Young people with disabilities should be treated equally

Name	Description
Expanding the social circle	Expanding one's social circle is important
Experience of disability is important	It is important for people without disabilities to have experience of disability
Fear of being discriminatory	People are afraid that they may be accused of discriminating against disabled people
Fine balance B2	There is a fine balance between different approaches - B2
Fine balance B3	There is a fine balance between different approaches - B3
Fine balance B4	There is a fine balance between different approaches - B4
General vs special B1	A tension between treating everybody the same (general) and accommodating individual needs (special) - B1
General vs special B2	A tension between treating everybody the same (general) and accommodating individual needs (special) - B2
General vs special B3	A tension between treating everybody the same (general) and accommodating individual needs (special) - B3
General vs special B4	A tension between treating everybody the same (general) and accommodating individual needs (special) - B4
Getting all sides of the story B2	In any argument all sides of the story should be taken into consideration - B2
Getting all sides of the story B3	In any argument all sides of the story should be taken into consideration - B3
Getting all sides of the story B4	In any argument all sides of the story should be taken into consideration - B4
Homophily - being elitist, exclusive, non cooperative, stubborn	The expression of a preference for interacting socially with similar people can be seen as elitism, exclusion, lack of
Homophily - choice	Homophily is an expression of choice
Homophily - comfort zone	Similar people may find a comfort zone in each other
Homophily - common ground	People prefer to be among others they have things in common with themselves
Homophily - confidence	Young people may prefer to be among similar others because they feel more confident that way
Homophily - discrimination	The expression of a preference for interacting socially with similar people can be seen as discrimination
Homophily - emotional need	Homophily can be an emotional need
Homophily - equal status	People prefer to be among others they think they have equal to them status
Homophily - identity	People may prefer to be among similar others to reinforce their shared identities
Homophily - lack of confidence	Young people may prefer to be among similar others because they lack confidence
Homophily - lack of social skills	People may prefer to be among similar others because they lack social skills

Homophily - not a major issue	As far as young people with disabilities are concerned, being among similar people is not seen as a major issue by
Homophily - security	People feel secure among similar others
Homophily - social need	Homophily can be a social need
Homophily - the opposite of inclusion	A preference to be among similar others is seen as opposite to inclusion
Homophily - understanding	Similar people can understand each other
Homophily - victimisation	Young people with disabilities may prefer to be among similar others because they see themselves as victims
Homophily limits	Being only among similar people limits one's social world and opportunities

Name	Description
Homophily resulting from bullying	Bullying can be a reason behind preference for homophilous ties
Homophily resulting from oppression	A preference for being with similar others can be the result of oppression
Human rights	About human rights
Ideal vs compromise B2	A tension between ideals and realistic compromises - B2
Ideal vs compromise B3	A tension between ideals and realistic compromises - B3
Ideal vs compromise B4	A tension between ideals and realistic compromises - B4
Importance of socialisation	Socialising with other people is important
Inclusion - choice	Inclusion should be an expression of choice
Inclusion - discrimination	Inclusion can bring about some form of discrimination
Inclusion - ethical obligation	There is an ethical obligation to include all students
Inclusion forced	Inclusion may be forced despite young people's preferences
Limitations, representation	Young people with disabilities have difficulties in expressing their preferences or their preferences are voiced by third people (such as parents, assistants or agents)
Mainstream - inclusion	Mainstream school promotes the inclusion of young people with disabilities
Mainstream vs special	Differences between mainstream and special settings and philosophy
Management decision	Decisions related to school management
Not everybody is the same	People are different
Not well upon current legislation or policies	Members of school staff are not upon current legislation and they have not read recently their schools' policies
Passive vs proactive stance towards disability	Young people with disabilities can be passive or proactive in terms of their preferences and rights
Peer networks	Peers create social networks
Peer pressure	Young people are sensitive to peer pressure
Policies - access	Policies and staff reactions to them - access

Policies - bullying	Policies and staff reactions to them - bullying
Policies - classroom methods	Policies and staff reactions to them - classroom methods
Policies - discrimination	Policies and staff reactions to them - discrimination
Policies - equal opportunities and diversity	Policies and staff reactions to them - equal opportunities and diversity
Policies - health and safety	Policies and staff reactions to them - health and safety
Policies - inclusion	Policies and staff reactions to them - inclusion
Policies - not a policy issue	The homophily-inclusion tension is not an issue that can be resolved by a policy
Policies - SEN	Policies and staff reactions to them - SEN
Power dynamics - confidence	There are inequalities of power within a school community - confidence
Power dynamics - school hierarchy	There are inequalities of power within a school community - school hierarchy

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Name	Description
Power dynamics - staff and students	There are inequalities of power within a school community - school staff and students
Power dynamics - students	There are inequalities of power within a school community - students
Practical difficulties related to the tension B1	The tension between homophily and inclusion is intertwined with practical issues and difficulties - B1
Practical difficulties related to the tension B2	The tension between homophily and inclusion is intertwined with practical issues and difficulties - B2
Practical difficulties related to the tension B3	The tension between homophily and inclusion is intertwined with practical issues and difficulties - B3
Practical difficulties related to the tension B4	The tension between homophily and inclusion is intertwined with practical issues and difficulties - B4
Problems in mainstream - bullying	Attending a mainstream school can be difficult for students with disabilities, in terms of bullying
Problems in mainstream - learning	Attending a mainstream school can be difficult for students with disabilities, in terms of their learning
Problems in mainstream - real life environment	Attending a mainstream school can be difficult for students with disabilities because it involves the difficulties of a real life environment
Problems in mainstream - social participation	Attending a mainstream school can be difficult for students with disabilities, in terms of social participation
Questioning inclusion	The philosophy and the practices of inclusion can be questioned
Real life tensions	Real life tensions between inclusion and homophily
Respect	All people should be respected
Right and wrong at the same time B1	The tension between homophily and inclusion has an ethical dimension - B1
Right and wrong at the same time B2	The tension between homophily and inclusion has an ethical dimension - B2
Right and wrong at the same time B3	The tension between homophily and inclusion has an ethical dimension - B3
Right and wrong at the same time B4	The tension between homophily and inclusion has an ethical dimension - B4
School ethos	What the school ethos is about

Similarity and difference because of disability	Similarity and difference is defined by disability
Similarity and difference beyond disability	Similarity and difference extend beyond disability
Similarity and difference within disability	People with disabilities can be similar or different
Social vs academic	Education has a social as well as an academic aspect
Special arrangements - discrimination	Special arrangements for young people with disabilities can be a form of discrimination
Special arrangements - inclusion	Special arrangements can add to inclusion
Special arrangements - opportunities	Special arrangements can offer new opportunities
Stereotypes	Stereotypes about disabled and non-disabled people
Student voice	Students' preferences should be taken into consideration in decision-making
Students' preferences can affect decisions	Students' preferences can affect decision-making at class or school level
Students' preferences should be taken into consideration	Students' preferences should be taken into consideration in decision-making
Teachers' knowledge - SEN, psychology	Teachers need to have knowledge of SEN and psychology
Teaching practice - differentiation	Descriptions of teaching practice - differentiation

Name	Description
Teaching practice - fairness	Teachers should be fair
Teaching practice - questionable	Teaching practices that are questionable
The role of parents	The role of parents that have children with disabilities
The role of SENCO	The role of SENCO in mainstream education
The role of teachers	About the role of teachers
Violation of choice	Choice should not be violated
Visibility and invisibility of difference	Difference can be visible or invisible and thus has different impact on people
Want vs should B1	Respecting students' preferences is in tension with the moral imperative of inclusion - B1
Want vs should B2	Respecting students' preferences is in tension with the moral imperative of inclusion - B2
Want vs should B3	Respecting students' preferences is in tension with the moral imperative of inclusion - B3
Want vs should B4	Respecting students' preferences is in tension with the moral imperative of inclusion - B4

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