CHAPTER 1

The Impetus for This Book: Our Early Childhood Leadership Think Tank

Joce, Anne, and Arvay

1.1 Introduction

Does the field of early childhood education really need another book about leadership? Scholarship about leaders and leading in early childhood education has been available for decades, albeit as a small subfield both of the leadership and early childhood education literatures. The quality of leadership in early childhood education services is now universally recognized as an important factor in the quality of education and care experienced by children and their families (Cheeseman & Walker, 2019). Data from Australia (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2016) show a persistent co-occurrence between good leadership and positive scores on quality metrics for early childhood services.

Less is known, however, about *how* leadership is enacted to promote sound early childhood practice and positive outcomes. What is in the "black box" between leadership and program quality? We may know instinctively if we are working for an ineffective leader, but does this necessarily depress the quality of our practice? These questions remain unanswered because there has been only limited exploration of theories to inform early childhood leadership. This is partly due to the historical reliance on models of leadership for early childhood settings being drawn from contexts, such as schools and business, that are professionally, culturally, and industrially very different to early childhood services (Heikka, Wanaganayake, & Hujala, 2013). A second limiting factor is that the professionalization of the early childhood field is recent, when compared with other sectors of the education profession. This means many new leaders may still rely on polemic and on custom and practice in their development, rather than on approaches that have been tested theoretically and empirically. A third factor is that existing scholarship on early childhood leadership remains strongly attached to interpersonal explanations for effective leadership practice. This is unsurprising, given the nature of the

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009023207.001 Published online by Cambridge University Press

work involved in early childhood education, but this orientation fails to explain how best to educate and support effective leaders. Fourth, and still with science and research on leadership in mind, there is a lack of scientific crossdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary approaches within the field itself. Structures and traditions of scholarship have prevented interdisciplinary collaboration and theory–practice development for sustainability, social justice, and change in the work of leaders.

This combination – the valorization of leadership as a critical factor in quality early childhood provision and/but a lack of robust theorizing – leaves the early childhood field and its leaders in a paradoxical situation, simultaneously high stakes but vulnerable. Where, then, might we find more robust ways of explaining how early childhood professionals can contribute to autonomous constructions of themselves as professionals and as professional leaders: leaders who are able to reflect critically and control their own practices, based on propositional knowledge that has been incorporated into their own leadership practices, and employ this knowledge to effectively guide the practices of others?

This, in short, is why we have decided to write what we think of as a "metabook" in three parts on leadership in early childhood education, offering different theory and practice perspectives. Our aim is to portray bodies of knowledge to stimulate and decenter the conscience of early childhood leaders and leadership scholars about what they know, enabling them to develop and redevelop their knowledge through points of reference to fit their own experiences. Further, and with reference to the current stasis in understanding leadership that we claim is afflicting the field, we seek to transcend a potential deadlock we see emerging between critique and transformation by opening up possibilities for these to occur simultaneously.

1.2 Why Write a Book about Leadership in Early Childhood Education from Different Theory and Practice Perspectives?

Our response in this book to these challenges is to open up ontologies – how we think scientifically of and about the nature of things – and epistemologies – how we think about knowledge and how it is produced – as resources for leaders. Through this book we aim to recognize the existence of different ontologies and give prominence to the pivotal importance of epistemic conduct in leadership roles and knowledge creation processes. Our strategy is to examine early childhood leadership from within, opening up leadership actions or events for new and expanded

visions of social realities, and to position leadership as located in experience, nature, culture, and life, and as a form of collective knowledge and practice. In this way we hope the book offers possibilities for exploring ways forward for the early childhood field. The book is our Think Tank. It describes and theorizes three approaches to understanding leadership in early childhood education, drawn from contrasting theoretical and scholarly traditions: respectively, First Nations' epistemologies from a kaupapa Māori perspective, postrepresentative nomadic process philosophies of education, and cultural-historical activity theory.

The book presents each of these approaches in turn across six chapters. The theoretical basis for each approach is presented in a standalone chapter, followed by a chapter illustrating the theory and methodology in practice through an extended case study. In this way, we want the book to be useful to researchers and academics in its accounts of theory, as well as to teacher educators, professional developers, and practitioners in its accounts of leadership research and development methodologies. In addition to these six chapters, our concluding chapter presents a conversation *between* the approaches that engages with possibilities and limitations for the theories' use in contemporary policy and practice contexts. Hopefully, this will contribute to strengthening interdisciplinarity and open up contestations in early childhood leadership literatures and discourse. We make no claims for the "truth" of the three theories elaborated in this volume. Instead, we take an empirical approach by providing a case-study-of-theory-in-action for each of the background theories. We accept that nothing is neutral, and that no one is neutral; it is therefore necessary to open up our approach to subjective judgment, both from ourselves and, most importantly, our readers. Although we will sometimes give voice to apparently unconscious knowledge processes, we do not seek to separate these from logical reasoning and grounds.

We offer for critique three methodologies for understanding leadership development through the presentation of each theory chapter and its respective case study. But the three methodologies are not entirely separate. Collectively, our approaches are anchored in practices that foster imagination and creativity in professional practice, employing strategies such as narrative analysis, writing, and photography to give expression to the experience of leadership in times of rapid policy development and professional change. We have tried to strike a balance between theoretical, methodological, and empirical aspects of leadership, with empiricism conceptualized in a broad manner to include virtual aspects. Finally, the book offers an international comparison between the cases presented,

which are drawn from Aotearoa New Zealand, Norway, and Australia. We wish to contribute to increased mental mobility and learning of leaders in early childhood education, from a standpoint of leadership as emerging and constantly in the making.

1.3 Leadership as Constantly in the Making: Our Think Tank Manifesto

We open, in this chapter, by making transparent the manifesto for our Think Tank. Despite its grand title, we do not see our manifesto as set in stone, but as exploratory, playful, and malleable. It responds to major tensions and challenges we understand to be confronting the early childhood education field at present with respect to the development of leaders and leadership. Although not an exhaustive list, it serves to anchor the chapters that follow in a set of problematics that contextualize policy, research, and practice more broadly than our individual chapters. In summary, our manifesto argues:

1. That the early childhood field is entitled to reclaim and shape the nature of its professionalism and, indeed, to conceptualize multiple professionalisms
2. That the early childhood field has its own distinctive body of knowledge, not always represented by government policies that are sometimes bereft of imagination and creativity
3. That leadership is not a panacea for the "quality crisis" in early childhood education
4. That the binaries of leaders|followers, leaders|teams, and individuals|community do not serve the early childhood field well
5. That leadership is not only a form of expertise but a site for making and remaking identity, subjectivity, self-determination, and difference for individual leaders and groups of leaders
6. That leaders must always contest the nature and effects of change, not just respond to criticisms of continuity
7. That leadership is an opportunity, and leaders are beholden to do something with that opportunity in relation to the problems of society that reach into early childhood education, including injustice, harmful consumption, and the silencing of diversity in all its forms.

We accept that the assertions of our manifesto are rather gnomic, so we now turn to an elaboration of each of the seven statements, beginning with the nature of professionalism.

1. Reclaiming professionalisms as multiple, complex, and collective. Early childhood leadership discussions and development are part of – and caught up in – broad and more generic contemporary discussions about evidence-based knowledge creation, professionalization, and/or professionalism. The concept of professionalism has largely grown out from fields like medicine and law, where there have been long-standing efforts to standardize practices to secure quality, equity, and access to services. Given the more "soft," open-ended, and social science and humanities (i.e., relational) nature of early childhood education and early childhood leaders, the field is often characterized as a "semiprofession," or not a profession or professional field at all (Molander & Terum, 2008; Smeby, 2014). This is not necessarily due to any lack of efforts to standardize and secure quality, but a recognition of the complicated nature of theory–practice relationships, and how difficult these are to quantify and measure.

Nevertheless, in a New Public Management and audit-oriented culture, characterized by plurifactual or postfactual (but polarized) public discourse, the concept of professionalism is vital for a field to conquer. Postfactuality describes situations in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs, rather than one based on facts. Being thought of as a semiprofession – or not a profession at all – can easily but imperceptibly be turned into thoughts about unprofessionalism and lack of knowledge, leading to an assumption of poor-quality professional practices. To overcome such postfactual positioning, the field needs to repeatedly achieve perspective and balance through differentiated spaces and affects, supporting educators to escape the tyrannies of perceived opinions, and to avoid "nudging" in particular directions from becoming "shoving" (Reinertsen, 2020). Difference in various situations is always and already classed, gendered, and ethnicized. Professionalism therefore demands iterative, not algorithmic, thinking. It is vital to constantly remind ourselves that evidence might equally work to exclude and diminish justice, as well as be inclusive and just. Clarity, definitions, strategies, and goal orientation can also work to hide, not only reveal. Categories might exclude; the "between" might disappear.

Our Think Tank Manifesto therefore argues for the early childhood field to take back the concept of *professionalisms*, think with it, explore it, and transgress the binaries of qualitative and quantitative, freedom and control, subject and object, real and virtual, individual and collective, body and mind. The plural form of "binaries" here is intentional. We seek to situate a rich and complex view of leaderships in the making, or emergent leaderships, that eschews simplistic notions of "equity," "quality," or

"access" within particular forms or models of educational provision. And, as mentioned, we aim to move from views of leadership centered on identity and individuality to a decentered view of leadership, with a focus on collective becomings – professionalisms, rather than individual professionals.

2. Reclaiming the relationship between knowledge and policy-making. The concept of professionalisms demands that the field claim its distinctive knowledge base, including forms of knowledge expressed as practice. However, early childhood education policy has long been characterized by reliance on particular forms of empiricism that have dictated the nature of valued knowledges for the field. We touch on two of the most enduring bodies of theory here to exemplify how empiricism has not always served the field well: developmental psychology and human capital theory.

Historically, the early childhood education field has drawn extensively on developmental psychology. Although it is a broad field, developmental psychology is principally concerned with the scientific understanding of the relationship between the chronological age of individuals and their behavior across the lifespan, with the study of developmental psychologies of children captured under the overarching term "child development." A variety of binaries (e.g., nature|nurture, stability|change, maturation|experience) characterized the field for decades but, more recently, developmental psychologists have increasingly attended to aspects of culture and cultural norms of child-rearing as important factors in children's development. Criticisms of the influence of developmental psychology on the early childhood field began to gain momentum in the 1990s (e.g., Woodhead, 1999), particularly from scholars employing postmodern and postcolonial theories, who pointed out its Eurocentrism (e.g., Cannella & Viruru, 2003).

The legacy of developmental psychology is important from at least two perspectives when thinking about the relationship between policy formation and knowledge for leadership. First, policies continue to engender a cultural norm of "whiteness" for leaders (Lu & Baker, 2014). We return to this point particularly (but not exclusively) in Chapters 2 and 3, which discuss the experiences of Māori women leaders in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Second, it has spawned a raft of "developmental" theories to explain how leaders grow in capability. Examples include Patterson's (2014) four stages of business leadership evolution (expertise, credibility, alignment and execution, strategy) and Freedman and Freedman's (2020) seven stages of leadership development for academic librarians. The issue at stake in relation to such models, and their

applicability for early childhood leadership development, is the risk of assuming that there is a developmental relationship between capability and the passage of time.

The reality for many leaders in early childhood education, however, is that they do not have the luxury of time to develop, since they are often thrust into leadership roles "accidentally" (Coleman et al., 2016) or at short notice (Douglass, 2019). Yet policy frameworks assume that those thrust into leadership roles have already reached the higher stages of leadership development. In Australia, the role of Educational (pedagogical) Leader was made mandatory in all early childhood services in 2012, with the expectation that these individuals would know how to lead implementation of curriculum and pedagogy. However, Sims et al. (2015) found these new leaders were mainly focused on improving their understanding of what was *required by policy frameworks* and how to transmit this to others, rather than *critiquing or reflecting on* these frameworks. In other words, new Educational Leaders relied on policy frameworks to define valued knowledge, rather than trusting their own reflexive capacities to connect the frameworks with the needs of the children, families, and colleagues in their immediate sphere of concern.

At the same time as developmental theories have held sway, early childhood education has been increasingly influenced by economic theories. In particular, many contemporary policies in early childhood education internationally have been influenced by human capital theory, a branch of behavioral economics (Tomer, 2016). Once the potential benefits of early childhood education for long-term life outcomes caught the attention of economists, they began to persuade governments and pan-global institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) about the desirability of increased policy attention to early childhood services. These claims rest on analysis of the enduring impact of particular pedagogical models, particularly for children and families defined (also through scientific means such as classification and algorithmic thinking) as "vulnerable" or living in "developing" countries (e.g., Attanasio, 2015). As with developmental psychology, there has been extensive critique of human capital theory with respect to its consequences for education, but much less attention has been paid to its consequences for leaders, teachers, and educators caught up in policy implementation.

From a human capital perspective, it is important to develop leaders' capacity as a necessary step toward development of children's capacities, which, in turn, leads to desirable social and economic ends. This is, however,

a highly instrumental and teleological view of leaders (and, inter alia, children) that erases the fact that leaders are also learners with complex needs, capacities, and preexisting knowledges. In this volume, our emphasis is on the professionalisms of leaders in the early childhood sector in a way that assumes they do not need prescriptive definitions of what constitutes "quality" in relation to children and families; rather, they need to be supported to engage with methodologies that can mobilize the rich knowledges *already present* within and among their diverse teams and center families.

Our manifesto, and the way it plays out in this book through theory and case studies, seeks to push back against these developmental and economic positionings in policy regarding the nature and purposes of leadership. However, policy-making anchored in developmental psychology and human capital theory not only exerts its influence at the global and national levels. Local sites, including individual early childhood services, make and enact policies on the basis of desired outcomes and informed by particular bodies of knowledge. Some of these bodies of knowledge are *literally* bodies: the embodied expertise of early childhood educators. In this book we expand on concepts of knowledge, knowledge creation, and meaning-making to challenge how these concepts have been understood historically in policy-making for early childhood leadership.

3. Leadership is not a panacea for the "quality crisis" in early childhood education. A persistent feature of public discourses of early childhood education for the last decade has been the construction of a global "crisis" in early childhood education. The dominant discourse in this construction relates to problems of access and supply, particularly in majority world nations (Best Start, 2016), which are real and urgent. A second feature of global discourse that has also persisted, more commonly in minority world settings, is the intertwining of a crisis of supply with a crisis of quality (e.g., Melamed, 2016). In the Australian context, the highly respected academic Fiona Stanley (2020) has written:

> The enormous economic benefits of *helping women to enter the labour market* has even been measured by the International Monetary Fund, which concluded that "raising female labour force participation rates to male levels could boost gross domestic product by 5 per cent in the US, 9 per cent in Japan, and 27 per cent in India" . . . Of course, investment in *high-quality* childcare isn't just good for the economy. Giving more parents access to more choices is good for individuals, relationships and, according to a wide range of data collected over a long period of time, for the children themselves. (Stanley, 2020, n.p., emphases added)

This mixing of women's labor market participation, childcare supply issues, and early childhood program quality reflects a central claim of human capital theory: supply in itself is insufficient to provide the economic benefits of early childhood education; programs must also be of high quality. This mix of economic and educational issues underpins a key feature of neo-empirical policy discourses in early childhood education: the pursuit of "what works." In early childhood education, the OECD (Mahon, 2010) has had a major role is sustaining this link between access to services, the quality of services, and the search for panaceas to resolve these ongoing crises.

Effective leadership has been cited as one such possibility and the "quality crisis" discourse has direct implications for leadership in early childhood education. The phenomenon of reluctant principalship that emerged among school leaders over two decades ago (Malone & Caddell, 2000) is now becoming evident in early childhood education. Research highlighting the importance of effective leadership in early childhood services has been mobilized by policy-makers to impose new expectations and accountabilities (often with increased workloads) for center leaders. But now leaders in early childhood education are faced with a paradox with respect to the relationship between leadership and program quality: ineffective leadership in times past is assumed to be a contributor to the contemporary "quality crisis" but, simultaneously, leadership is positioned as one of its solutions. Despite the development of leaders remaining a persistent problem in early childhood education due to the field's lack of robust research and development for leaders, leadership is now simultaneously positioned as part of the solution to improving quality, enhancing professionalisms, and disseminating knowledge.

Our position is to not align ourselves with this putative paradox since it threatens to paralyze center leaders. While acknowledging that millions of women globally face very real problems of access to affordable, appropriate care and education for their young children, we question the nature and purpose of narratives of "crisis" in early childhood education. Roitman (2013) alerts us to the nature of crisis narratives, including their tendency to make a temporal shift from "moments" to becoming an enduring feature of daily life:

> The term "crisis" no longer clearly signifies a singular moment of decisive judgement; we now presume that crisis is a condition, a state of affairs, an experiential category. Today, crisis is posited a protracted and potentially persistent state of ailment and demise. (p. 16)

Roitman articulates the way the term *crisis* also functions to obscure alternative perspectives:

> "Crisis" is a term that is bound up in the predicament of signifying human history, often serving as a transcendental placeholder in ostensible solutions to [a] problem. In that sense, the term "crisis" serves as a primary enabling blind spot for the production of knowledge. That is, crisis is a point of view, or an observation, which itself is not viewed or observed. (p. 13)

Following Roitman we ask: "Who is responsible for creating this narrative?" and "Whose interests are served by this narrative?" Specifically, the cases in this book allow us to ask: "How are leaders positioned in this narrative of crisis? "and "What are the consequences for those leaders?" Evidence presented in the case studies here and elsewhere (Nuttall et al., 2020) suggests that the policy narrative of a quality crisis is driving leaders to take ever greater responsibility for solving problems of the field that are not, in fact, within their control. This strategy of governance, known as responsibilization, mobilizes the positive values and dispositions of dedicated individuals as an alternative to *individuals and institutions together* taking responsibility for the complex problems facing society:

> Responsibilization – namely expecting and assuming the reflexive moral capacities of various social actors – is the practical link that connects the ideal typical scheme of governance to actual practices on the ground. Responsibility – in contrast to mere compliance with rules – presupposes one's care for one's duties and one's un-coerced application of certain values as a root motivation for action (Selznick, 2002). As a technique of governance, responsibilization is therefore fundamentally premised on the construction of moral agency as the necessary ontological condition for ensuring an entrepreneurial disposition in the case of individuals and socio-moral authority in the case of institutions. Neo-liberal responsibilization is unique in that it assumes a moral agency which is congruent with the attributed tendencies of economic-rational actors: autonomous, self-determined and self-sustaining subjects . . . (Shamir, 2008, p. 8)

The relationship between empiricism and policy-making that has led to the responsibilization of crises has failed to resolve important paradoxes that characterize the early childhood field, while leaving leaders and educators vulnerable to enduring problems such as the continuation of poor industrial conditions in some settings. This failure of policy imagination was highlighted during the recent coronavirus pandemic, which positioned early childhood educators as frontline workers, essential for maintaining families' economic activities, without providing them with equivalent job security and health protections (Heffernan & Preiss, 2020). At the same time as

they had to manage their own fears for themselves, their families, and their colleagues during the pandemic, they also played a major role in reassuring and educating families (Samuelsson et al., 2020).

4. Binaries of leaders|followers, leaders|teams, and individuals|community. Leadership is messy work, iterative and recursive, and the early childhood field has historically been ambivalent about leadership hierarchies and "the legitimation of positional power to center directors in particular, [which] goes against the natural flow of distributing leadership to others" (Waniganayake, 2014, p. 77). Attempts to explain this ambivalence have invoked the feminized nature of the field (Davis et al., 2014) and "resistance to hierarchical, controlling and instrumental models of leadership that are seen to be at odds with the collaborative, community-based and contextualized work of early childhood education" (Krieg et al., 2014, p. 75). But what if these features are strengths, rather than problems? What if binaries between leaders and followers, leaders and teams, and leaders and the community simply do not serve the early childhood field well – to the extent that early childhood services can be sites for the development of new relationships of leading?

One of the ways in which this is evident in this book is that all three methodologies presented for consideration, despite their ontological differences, rely on concepts of collective thought and practice. Epistemologies anchored in First Nations and feminist scholarship have always held collective knowledge and practice as paramount in theorizing. As noted in point 2, psychology is a late entrant to this way of viewing the world – with the exception of cultural-historical psychology, which derived from the communitarian economic worldview of Karl Marx. This epistemological stance is important for studies of leadership in early childhood education in multiple ways. First, it decenters the personhood of the leader. Identity, skills, subjectivities, and dispositions remain important, but only inasmuch as they exist in a dialectical relationship with the collective whole. Second, epistemologies drawing on collective worldviews lend themselves to recognizing knowledge and skills across teams and communities, contributing to more democratic forms of decision-making. Leaders who know how to foster, identify, and mobilize the distributed professional knowledges available within their teams resist binaries of leader|follower because they recognize that their individual psychology is part of a connected whole that involves the minds of others. This poses its own challenges, of course, but the cases in this book provide three examples of how collective knowledges might be identified and employed in the interests of children, families, and colleagues.

That said, we make no claims for the universal applicability of the methodologies we present. In keeping with our commitment to complex professionalisms, this book deliberately avoids the temptation to provide "recipes" for "effective" leadership. Rather, our starting points are in the on-the-ground experiences of early childhood leaders in diverse cultural, linguistic, economic, and professional contexts. Presenting a variety of cases is not, in itself, sufficient to illustrate and maintain the complexity of leadership for the early childhood field. For this to truly occur, cases of leadership practice need to be understood as existing in tension with one another, as potentially contestable within and across cases, and open to exploration, adaptation, and even rejection. It is in this spirit that we return to the conversation *between* the cases in this book in our final chapter.

5. Leadership as a site for making and remaking subjectivity, self-determination, and difference. Without such contestation of theory and practice standpoints, the field will find it difficult to pursue tricky questions for leaders related to issues such as subjectivity, self-determination, and difference. Following Biesta (2020) we understand education as an encounter *between subjects* that supports people to be *the subject of their own lives*. It is important to note here that Biesta rejects the positioning of subjectivity as a proxy for identity, personality, or the personal; rather, for Biesta, subjectivity is an existential matter deeply connected to one's self-determination.

In the leadership realm, we take this claim to mean that other people are not the objects of leaders but subjects with their own existential challenges, who are appreciated, heard, understood, and even resisted. The necessity for early childhood educators to preserve their psychological wellbeing in workplace relationships (Jones et al., 2019), even as they sometimes fail to achieve it (Hard, 2006), is both an understandable feature of emotionally demanding work and a potential barrier to asking tricky questions. But how can leaders uphold diversity and respect difference if their professional goal is to achieve alignment between subjectivities? This question becomes particularly pointed in relation to upholding the diversity of the early childhood workforce. Despite claims to inclusivity and acceptance, the early childhood field has more work to do in responding to teacher sexualities (Longley, 2020), the rights of teachers with disabilities, and, as we show in Chapter 3, racism (Escayg, 2020) and white privilege.

6. Engaging with both change and continuity. A distinctive feature of neoliberal thought, including its role in much policy formation in early

childhood education since the 1980s, is its ahistorical perspective. Each new policy initiative assumes the field can be made anew. Yet early childhood education is a distinctive and long-standing cultural form. As evidence for this claim, we suggest that, despite its local variations from place to place, early childhood educators (and likely also parents) would have no difficulty identifying an early childhood education and care setting wherever they found one. But the effect of recent global and national policy-making has been to imply that this historical form is inadequate, particularly in relation to its contribution to social futures. Like Campbell-Barr (2018), we ask whether questions about the nature of the knowledge base for work in early childhood education, have been silenced in debates about "quality" and "professionalism(s)."

For a long time, knowledge production has been conceptualized primarily as linguistic processes, giving primary focus to the importance of language, hence dialogue as *both method and means*: knowledge, knowledge creation, and meaning-making primarily happen through language. Although it has become fashionable to speak about a sociocultural and constructivist linguistic turn in both science and research, we are also interested in knowledge-creating processes that go beyond speech and thought. We see knowledge creation as material and embodied, in need of an affective component to work, and therefore encompassing experiences that surpasses knowledge-as-language. This demands that we also include the more-than-human aspects of professional life and, through this, give voice to indirect and unconscious aspects of knowledge creation and meaning-making. Our approach is to speak of the *ontoepistemological* turn in science and research. In keeping with the aim of this book to inform future practices of leadership and leadership development, our goals is to act with *foresight*:

> Rapid developments in society might lead to changes in educational structures and contents in the future. In strategic work with education research one should therefore look far ahead, for example through use of foresight *(framsyn),* through including different user groups. Regardless of this, there will be a need for new perspectives and approaches in research about and for the sector in the future. This requires willingness to take risks in research and innovation, which is something the department wishes to facilitate. (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2018–2019, p. 13; our translation)

For this reason, each of the case studies we present in response to our selected theoretical perspectives engages with the linguistic, the embodied, *and* the affective aspects of professionalisms in an attempt to influence policy, as well as practice, for the field.

The relationship between knowledge and change is a nontrivial question for leaders in early childhood education. Discourses of "quality" and "change" have become deeply entwined in the early childhood field and change, encapsulated in a constant striving for ever-improving quality of provision, has become a byword for leaders. While world events may make us long for stability, we also accept that change is necessary if we are to move away from less helpful aspects of the early childhood education field. Leaders need to be equipped to critique both the continuing form of early childhood provision in local sites, as well as demands for change. Such critique is central to leaders' confident articulation of their professionalism and, without this critique, the field is vulnerable to policy and practice "fads." As will be seen, this book commits to the idea that leadership necessarily involves change and the fostering of change, but also portrays the evaluative capacities of leaders to make judgments in the light of their own historical, local, and practice-oriented knowledges.

7. Leadership as both responsibility and opportunity. Leaders have a critical role in relation to public responses to "wicked problems" of justice, sustainability, diversity, affect, gender, and sexuality. In this book we therefore try to take into consideration both conscious and unconscious aspects of leadership and add value to *weak signals* in knowledge processes and leaderships. We explore how to renew knowledge through open-ended leadership processes that at the same time involve the risk of losing what we currently base our practices on, what we currently value, and what we sense and regard as sensible.

This includes the risk of reopening question of *who knows how to know* in organizations. The future may be echoing into the present, but the question of who knows how to know is forcing us not to close the processes for new generations. We ask how it is possible to stay with the always already unpredictable *foresight in research,* and *in addition,* how it is possible to bring thoughts into reexistence and not to predetermine judgment. This challenges us to rethink the anticipatory nature and power of imagination.

1.4 The Nature and Intentions of Our Think Tank

In contrast to the crisis discourse dominating contemporary policies, our aim is to present some ways the early childhood field might think anew about the development of leaders and the purposes of their work. The book is an invitation to open up and show ontoepistemological and deauthorized knowledge creation processes. As Christie (2009) writes,

> One of the most important things might be to upgrade peoples' own experiences, help people to explore their own experiences, make the experiences valid and through this make the carriers of the experiences secure. Secure that they through their lives have experienced something important, something that gives them the possibility to understand related themes, and therefore having the right to speak in several arenas. Maybe the most important role of the social science researcher is to create conditions for people to realize that they know something, thus realize that they are worth something. (p. 53; our translation)

Christie's claims apply to research and researchers as well as to leaders and leadership. As global citizens, we are "sailing the same boat." To make this spirit manifest, this book is a knowledge-creating, ethos-building project, simultaneously anchored in respect, tolerance, and troubles from the start. This kind of realism is our strategy to avoid any incipient temptations from neopositivist approaches to knowledge creation.

With this strategy in mind, we have recast the assertions of our manifesto in the form of questions, which we offer here to readers as one way of navigating within and between the chapters that follow:

1. How is professionalism understood in these chapters? What opportunities do these chapters offer to leaders to imagine a range of professionalisms?
2. How is knowledge conceptualized in these chapters? How do these knowledges reflect or contrast with knowledge as it is constructed by government policies in local leadership settings?
3. What is the relationship between leadership and quality in these chapters? How is quality conceptualized?
4. How do these chapters engage with binaries of leadership in early childhood education? What work is done by these chapters to problematize and help transcend these binaries?
5. What insights do these chapters offer for making and remaking subjectivity, self-determination, and difference for leaders?
6. What is the relationship between continuity and change in these chapters? How is the role of leaders conceptualized as engaging with continuity and change?
7. What opportunities open up for leaders in these chapters? How might leadership in early childhood education engage with the problems of society that reach into and beyond early childhood education?

In combination, the eight chapters in this volume offer, for exploration and critique, three approaches to understanding leadership development in

early childhood education. This deliberate search for critique of the three different perspectives and methodologies is what distinguishes this book from other volumes about leadership. It is important for leaders to know about multiple perspectives, different theories, and research traditions and, through this knowledge, become able to interpret and discuss different types of knowledge and knowledge creation in and for leadership. In this way, we hope the book can work as a "metaresource" about leadership for the early childhood field. Our goal has been to present this work at a consistently high level of academic quality, integrating the three sections around a coherent central theme – leadership in early childhood education – with an engaging balance between theoretical/methodological and empirical aspects of the book. For ourselves as researchers – and we hope for our readers – this work was, and continues to be, open, joyful, provisional, provocative, creative, complex, full of curiosity, and anchored in conversations with one another.