Having collected data in this manner, data analysis, as with any ethnography, was a ‘reflexive’ and ‘recursive’ process (Atkinson et al., 2011), with initial questions and insights from the field opening up other avenues and questions for exploration. Thus, reflections on, and attempts to understand local experiences, practices and meanings led to an examination of their connections with larger institutions, structures, and discourses, more specifically to an examination of the semiotic dimensions of each of these levels.

Using FDA, the attempt was to understand how “... social agents draw upon social structures (including languages) and practices (including orders of discourse) in producing texts, but actively work these ‘resources’, create (potentially novel) texts out of them, rather than simply instantiating them” (Fairclough, 2012, p.457). This will be elaborated further in the chapters following, which examine, in turn, a. how LSE has been constructed as a specific body of knowledge and expertise, and how it is applied to the regulation of childhood; b. how this body of knowledge functions to ‘discipline’ and ‘govern’ children, particularly those who belong to marginalised, and poor backgrounds; and finally, c. how this knowledge also gets reinvented in circulation and use, allowing for the production of new subjectivities and hybrid identities.

But before presenting these arguments in the later chapters, the following chapter first presents a ‘thick’ description of the field, in order to set the context for some of the observations that follow in the analysis chapters.