

**Ethnic Identity and Equality Issues in Urban Children:  
Historical Case Studies in the Context of a Review of British  
Policy and Practice 1968-2008**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy at Royal Holloway, University of London



August 2016

## Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in the thesis is entirely my own.



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Alice Akoshia Ayikaaley Sawyerr

## Abstract

At the core of this thesis are two pieces of empirical work. The first is a case study of a multicultural day nursery in a deprived area of an inner-city London Borough. The purpose of the case study was to explore perceptions of ethnicity, and prospects for identity enhancement. Research methods included filming of interactions between staff and 22 children aged 1.5–5years, interactions between the children and interviews with 11 staff members. The social context of this nursery's operation is placed within the context of political changes in the Borough, and the evolution of the national Sure Start centres.

The second is the issue of ethnicity and self-esteem among 11-18 year olds which are examined in detail, as well as the multiplicity of factors, including child abuse, which may depress self-esteem in children and adolescents from all ethnic groups. The literature examined shows that "race" appears to be no longer a negative factor in self-esteem development. These ideas are explored in data from 2,025 students aged 11-18, attending English secondary schools, using the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES). The face validity of this scale is established through correlation with reliable and valid mental health measures, and the RSES was found to have structural validity across age and gender groups. Results showed (as did American and international research) that boys had significantly higher levels of self-esteem than girls. Using a validated measure of physical and sexual abuse I found that up to 10 percent of girls (varying by age group) had experienced severe and prolonged physical or sexual abuse (sometimes both). When experience of abuse was controlled for, gender differences in self-esteem failed to reach statistical significance. This finding has not been reported in any previous research, and provides an alternative to convoluted and seemingly untestable post hoc theories that have been advanced to account for gender differences in self-esteem. The English schools sample showed that self-esteem had no significant variation between ethnic groups within males. In females, those of African-Caribbean origin had significantly higher levels of self-esteem than their female peers.

The third strand of this thesis involves placing the results within the changing context of equality, education and ethnicity in the period 1968 to 2008, showing change and evolution in the progress of "race relations" and "multiculturalism" in British society,

and focuses on specific episodes in this history. The overarching issue of equality is addressed in terms of power and alienation, and the “unmasking” of powerful forces which oppress the lives of children and adolescents, using a critical realist model of analysis.

## Acknowledgements

This study is completed with the clear leadership and direction of my supervisor Professor Christopher Bagley. I would like to thank him for his guidance in all aspects of the research process, his high standards and for bringing his vast knowledge and research experience to bear on this project. Professor Bagley's interest and familiarity with the research topic, and his support for my efforts to complete the study ensured that I maintained focus and momentum.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to the nursery practitioners, the children and the parents/carers who allowed me into their lives at the day nursery, offered me hospitality and shared their experiences with me; without their contributions, this research would not have been possible.

A special thank you to Professor Liz Schafer at Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL) for her guidance, insight, foresight, support and efforts which have enabled me to overcome obstacles during this process.

I am grateful to my colleague Fola Shogbamimu for introducing me to Professor Christopher Bagley and for his continued interest and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis.

I would also like to thank Dr Isaac Ewusi-Mensah (Consultant Psychiatrist) for his support and helpful comments on draft chapters.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to Nicolas Schroeder in the RHUL Computer and IT Service for not only retrieving my lost data but for providing invaluable continuous IT guidance and support throughout the writing of this thesis.

My special thanks to Professor Adam Tickell and Professor Rob Kemp whose decisions in senior management at RHUL made it possible for me to work on this research part time after leaving CNWL Mental Health NHS Trust in 2004, while lecturing full-time at RHUL.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the great support, encouragement and understanding of my family, especially my children Richard Williams and Jessica Anne Williams. A very special 'thank you' must go to Professor E. V. O. Dankwa (my first cousin) of the Faculty of Law, University of Ghana for inspiring me, and for his support.

This thesis is dedicated with love and thanks to the memory of my parents, Abraham Okoe Akilagpa Sawyerr and Adeline Margaret Ejurma Sawyerr who inspired me to start this PhD journey.

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## **Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms**

**Black-** The term Black is used to refer to individuals of African-Caribbean, African-American and African origin.

**Curriculum** - The term Curriculum is used to describe everything children do, see, hear, or feel in their setting, both planned and unplanned. It includes the DfE (Department for Education) Early Years Foundation stage.

**Key Practitioner** - The term Key Practitioner is used to refer to the practitioner allocated to individual children at the start of each child's attendance at the setting, with responsibility for liaising with the parents, observing, assessing, writing reports and reviewing the child's progress in all aspects of the curriculum in this setting.

**Mixed-race and of Mixed parentage** - The term Mixed-race and of Mixed parentage is used interchangeably to refer to people who have one White parent and one non White parent e.g. White/Black, White/Asian or Black/Asian.

**Parents** - The word Parents is used to refer to mothers, fathers, legal guardians, and primary carers of children in public care.

**Practitioners** - The adults (nursery staff) who work with children in the setting, whatever their qualifications are referred to as Practitioners except for instances when reference is being made to specific practitioners.

**Role of the Practitioner** - The Role of the Practitioner includes establishing relationships with children and their parents, planning and learning environment and curriculum, supporting and extending children's play, learning and development, and assessing children's achievements and planning their next steps.

**Setting** - The term Setting is used here to mean a Local Authority day nursery.

**Teaching** - The word Teaching is used here to include all the aspects of the practitioner's role (DFEE & QCA /00/587).

### ***Abbreviations and acronyms***

**ANOVA** - Analysis of Variance

**CCH** - Child-Centred Humanism

**CCEA** - Children's Centres in England Evaluation

**CECA** - Childhood Experiences of Care and Abuse scale

**CEVQ** - Childhood Events Questionnaire



**CR** - Critical Realism  
**CSA** - Child Sexual Abuse  
**DCR** - Dialectical Critical Realism  
**DfE** – Department for Education  
**DFEE** -Department for Education and Employment  
**DoE** - Department of Education  
**DES** - Department of Education and Science  
**DfES** - Department for Education and Skills  
**DoH** - Department of Health  
**EYFS** - Early Years Foundation Stage  
**GBCS** - Great Britain Class Survey  
**HEFCE** - Higher Education Funding Council  
**HMG** - Her Majesty's Government  
**IPPR** - Institute of Public Policy Research  
**MELD** - Acronym for the 4 levels of DCR: 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D  
**NAO** - National Audit Office  
**NESS** - National Evaluation of Sure Start  
**NEEB** -Nursery Nursing Examination Board  
**OECD** - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
**OFSTED** - Office for Standards in Education  
**Power1** - In DCR: enabling, emancipatory power  
**Power2** - In DCR: coercive, repressive power  
**PSHE** - Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum  
**PISA** - Programme for International Student Assessment  
**PTSD** - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder  
**QCA** - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority  
**RE** - Religious Education  
**RSES** - Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale  
**SEU** - School Exclusions Unit  
**SSCC** - Sure Start Child-Care Centre  
**SSLP** - Sure Start Local Programmes

**StJ's** - St. John's Nursery School

**UN** - United Nations

**UNESCO** - United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation

**1M** - In DCR, the first level: Non-Identity, Absence

**2E** - In DCR, the second level: Second Edge, Negativity 'absenting absences'

**3L** - In DCR, the third level: Totality of Social Structure

**4D** - In DCR, the fourth level: Inner Being and Transformative Agency,  
the Dialectic that is The Pulse of Freedom.

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# I Introduction

## Chapter 1: An African Journey

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter is in essence my attempt to acknowledge the part I have played in this research and is based on my belief and understanding that research is never a neutral matter and therefore it is important to make the researcher's role as visible to the reader as possible. Such information may also be invaluable in indicating '*where the researcher is coming from*', making apparent her value perspectives and biases (Evans, 1998).

In particular, I do not wish to distance myself from the multi-ethnic nursery practitioners, children, parents and carers at the nursery that I had worked with as a clinician over a 10 year period (1994-2004), work which also included the *Identity project on "myself"* in 1998 with the practitioners, parents and pre-school children (Sawyer, 1999).

Evans (1998) observes that: "*Researchers using ethnographic and biographical approaches often include reflexive accounts describing how they came to their topics and giving some personal details in order to situate themselves in relation to their work*". Connelly & Clandinin (1994) also noted that texts written as if the researcher had no autobiographical presence result in: "*Deception about the epistemological status of the research. Such a study lacks validity ...*"

It would therefore be unseemly for me, an African research student, a Chartered Consultant Psychologist, Consultant Systemic Family Psychotherapist, a Social Work Consultant and an Academic, to write a historical case study on my participatory observations and interviews with multi-ethnic nursery practitioners and children from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds which excludes a reflexive account of myself.

Distancing myself from the participants in this study in my mind would be what Fine (1994) describes as 'othering'. It is for all these reasons that I include the following account of myself in '*An African Journey*' in this chapter, and '*not for reasons of self-publicity*' (Evans, 1998).

## **1.2 My African Journey**

My journey begins in Freetown, Sierra Leone in West Africa, where I was born. My parents origins were Creoles (Krios) from Freetown. My upbringing in the first five years of my life was in Freetown, where I attended preschool. My parents subsequently moved to the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) where I attended primary and secondary boarding school.

I came to the UK to study nursing at age 19. During my nurse training at The London Teaching Hospital in Whitechapel (now the Royal London Hospital), I developed an interest in psychology, but was persuaded by my parents to complete my nursing training in the UK first before switching to a degree course in psychology. After passing my orthopaedic nursing (ONC) at Oswestry in Shropshire (UK) and State Registered Nurse (SRN) exams at the London Teaching Hospital, I left for my university education in Ontario, Canada in 1974.

I completed my four-year full time psychology degree in three years in 1977 (attending summer school each year) in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. I married after graduation, worked as a clinician in the juvenile correction system at Warrendale Assessment Centre in Etobicoke, Ontario, carrying out assessments and writing reports on young offenders for court hearings. By this time, I had two children.

I returned to university in Toronto in 1981 and completed my postgraduate studies in social work in 1983. I worked in the largest statutory Child Protection System in Canada, with the Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto, in Ontario till my family and I moved back to the UK in 1987.

In the UK, I initially worked in child protection with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London, from 1988-1994. I continued at graduate school with my studies and training in Psychology and Systemic Family Therapy at University College London (UCL), where I graduated in 1993.

I left the NSPCC in 1994 to work full time as a clinician in a multidisciplinary outpatient specialist all-age NHS Mental Health Trust Clinic (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services combined with Adult Mental Health Services) with the added responsibility for service provision to all six local authority day nurseries in a generally affluent central London borough with pocket areas of deprivation. I worked there for 10 years (1994-2004).

I initially taught part time at Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL) for nine years (1995- 2004) while also working full time at the NHS Mental Health Trust. I subsequently took up full time appointment at RHUL for 11 years (2004-2015) teaching Psychology, Family Therapy and Mental Health to undergraduate and postgraduate students and was an external examiner at Brunel University in Uxbridge for three years (2008-2011).

During this period I also completed the Postgraduate Certificate Programme in Academic Practice in Teaching and Learning (PGCertHE), at RHUL. I passed with overall distinction in 2007 which led to my achieving the status of Fellow of The Higher Education Academy in recognition of attainment adjudged by the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and learning support in higher education.

I was also a part time postgraduate student at RHUL working on this PhD thesis while teaching full-time. I have, since leaving RHUL in September 2015, turned my attention to the completion of this thesis.

### **1.3 Reflections on Ethnicity and Identity issues during ‘*An African Journey*’.**

In this section I look at some of the key developmental stages in my life. I reflect on where I lived geographically in the world, whether I was in a predominantly black or white environment, and whether or not it made a difference to me personally, educationally or professionally. I also reflect on my perceptions, feelings and interactions with others and whether or not these experiences had any impact on my identity and self-esteem. I then proceed to comment on specific situations in my clinical practice in which my ethnicity and perceived identity by others became an important topic for discussion. I briefly mention the identity project on ‘Myself’ (Sawyer, 1999) covered in more detail in this thesis, which was need- led as well as arising from my increasing interest in the development of identity in children.

I continue ‘*An African Journey*’ on a personal note, with the unveiling of my cultural and ethnic origins and the importance of this historical background in my understanding of my ethnic identity, and my subsequent professional and research development.

### **1.4 Childhood and teenage years in West Africa**

As far back as I can remember, between ages 5-19 years I was living in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) a predominantly (black) African society. I had no reason to doubt my

identity, I was conscious and proud of the fact that I was black and African, like every citizen in the country.

My parents were black and African. My dad was darker in complexion, my mum was quite light in complexion. My complexion is halfway between that of my mum and my dad's. My mum had long wavy soft hair. I have softer curlier hair than my dad. I did not attach any value or significance to either of my parents' complexion or hair texture at the time, or wondered about their ethnic origins. I was aware that my mum's relatives were all light skinned in complexion and my dad's relatives were all darker in complexion.

On reflection now, I do not remember ever thinking of myself as being different in any way, because some of my friends that I grew up and attended boarding school with had parents with similar complexions like that of my parents. I was never asked at school about my ethnicity or identity, only my name and the names of my parents. There isn't even a word for ethnicity or identity in the Creole (Krio) language which is my mother tongue (a Sierra Leonean dialect), or in the Ga dialect which I am fluent in, spoken in Accra, Ghana where I lived with my parents for 14 years.

### **1.5 Student years in the UK.**

When I arrived in the UK at age 19 to study, I lived with my uncle (my dad's younger brother) and his Nigerian wife in a flat in Earls Court, in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in Southwest London which although predominantly white in population, has a mixture of black and other ethnic minorities present. We soon moved to a house in Golder's Green, in the borough of Barnet in North West London where it was predominantly white with fewer blacks and other ethnic minorities than in Earls Court. We however had a lot of close family members visiting from West Africa and staying with us during the summer months. Local family friends and former school mates, mostly students would visit us on the weekends regularly to have dinner together, which we referred to as our favourite dinner parties. The house was always lively at weekends which I looked forward to especially when I was in Oswestry (a predominantly white area with very few individuals from black and ethnic minority populations), and also when I was in Whitechapel.

I stayed in the student nurses' quarters Whitechapel during the week to attend lectures or to work different shifts on the wards as a student nurse. I returned home when off duty to Golders Green, to spend time with my extended family.

The patients and community population in Whitechapel were a mixture of English, Irish, blacks from Africa and the Caribbean, Asians and other ethnic minorities. The staff and students at the hospital were also from multi-ethnic backgrounds.

My friends and student colleagues were a mixture of whites, blacks and individuals from different parts of the world. I never saw myself as being different and have no recollection of being made by others to feel different because I am black.

#### **1.6 Student and professional years in Canada.**

On completion of my nursing training in the UK I left for Canada where I was a full-time undergraduate psychology student. Being an international student, I was given priority for accommodation on campus for the three years during my studies.

Toronto is a cosmopolitan city similar to London with students from all over the world studying at the University. There were blacks who identified themselves as black Canadians, African Canadians and West Indians.

I was perceived and referred to by my white and non-white friends and work colleagues during my stay in Canada as an African Canadian, because of my Canadian citizenship. I did not have any experience of being the only black person during my student days in my lectures, in residence on campus or during my professional life as a clinician working in statutory settings with white children, adolescents and young adults and their families from diverse cultural backgrounds in the community. Again I never saw myself as being different and have no recollection of being made by others to feel different because I am black.

#### **1.7 Returning to the UK with my family in 1987.**

On my return to the UK in 1987 with my family, I worked as a clinician, with the NSPCC in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea from 1988 to 1994 with children and their families from multi-ethnic backgrounds in Ladbroke Grove in West London. I also conducted joint assessments and investigations with Kensington and Chelsea Social Services, worked collaboratively with health visitors and local community organizations and interpreters. The staff team members that I worked with were from

diverse ethnic, cultural and multi-faith backgrounds. During this stage in my life, I never saw myself as being different and have no recollection of being made by others to feel different because I am black.

This was my first full-time job in the UK and my ethnicity did not seem to matter. It was my qualifications, ability, skills and professional experience that mattered, as a clinician.

### **1.8 Working in a specialist all age service in a large Mental Health NHS Trust based in an affluent community in London 1994 - 2004.**

Although I was familiar with this mental health specialists service from my trainee student placement days there when I was studying at UCL (1991-1992), I had not given much thought to the fact that I was going to be the only black clinician on site at the clinic. It was a highly respected centre of excellence staffed by all-white clinicians and administrative staff, with very low staff turnover rate. Most of the staff had been working there between 10 to 20 years. The clinic was headed by a psychiatrist, and I was familiar with all the staff members working in the clinic and was warmly welcomed when I joined the clinic.

The only transition that I consciously thought I had to make was from that of a former student/trainee to the status of a colleague. The clinic was located in a middle-class, affluent area in the borough. It provided free NHS Mental Health outpatient services to all who would at the time self-refer, be referred by their GPs, health visitors, social workers, local school head teachers, local college principals, managers of local day nurseries in the borough, and by solicitors for Guardian ad Litem involved in family court cases (for parenting assessments).

### **1.9 Reactions from clients**

During my first few week and months at the clinic I began to notice and experience a strange pattern of behaviour from referred clients, who were all new to me. I would go to the reception room to call out the name/s of the referred individuals, couples or family members, greet them and lead them to the consulting room, close the door after them, introduce myself, sit down and attempt to begin the session. However the individuals, couples or family members would fix their eyes at the consulting room door as though they were expecting someone to join them in the session. I would reintroduce myself, ask them to introduce themselves and go through standard

assessment and routine interviews with them before starting to engage them in a conversation about their reasons for attending the initial sessions and how they would want to use the sessions. I noted that these clients were all white.

I also observed different reactions from black and mixed parentage children, couples and families, who had also been referred to the clinic. They reacted in the following ways:

- Some black Africans and African Caribbean clients after entering the consulting room would turn around and shake my hand congratulating me for being the first black clinician at the clinic. They used words like: *You have made it, You have arrived Sis. It's good to have some colour in this place.*
- Others presented themselves as quiet, polite, respectful and watchful. They would not refer to me by my first name but as:  
*Miss Alice, Mrs Sawyerr, Miss, Madam or Ma'am.*

#### **1.10 Attendance record noted**

There was a notable non-attendance by some white clients who did not call to cancel the subsequent appointment. This was in sharp contrast to all the black clients who kept all the subsequent appointments.

I discussed these observations in the weekly Monday clinical and allocation meeting with all the clinicians present and tried to find out whether this was a familiar pattern with the other clinicians. However my colleagues informed me they had never had similar experiences in all the years they had been working at the clinic

Only the director of the clinic a consultant psychiatrist remarked that it could be related to my ethnicity i.e. my being black in a visibly all-white clinic even though some of the clinicians were Jewish, others were Europeans and South Americans and that although these behaviours and reactions from clients had not been anticipated, it needed to be given serious consideration, monitored and worked with.

#### **1.11 Clients' subsequent explanations for their attitudes and behaviours.**

With time, as some of the clients began to settle in the sessions they also began to open up with me, which involved taking risks in sharing their feelings and becoming more reflective. This gradually extended to the sharing of the following with me.

For the white clients:

- They said they did not mean to be rude or disrespectful in the initial session when they were staring at the consulting room door.
- They were expecting a white clinician, as the clinic has never had an ethnic minority clinician in the staff team.
- Some had been referred to the clinic previously and were familiar with the ethnic composition of the staff team.
- My name on the appointment letter did not indicate to them that I was non-white so they may have been shocked to see me, and thought I was a new secretary or a student on placement, taking them to the consulting room before the arrival of the clinician.

For the black clients:

- They said it was a pleasant surprise for them to finally see a black clinician at the clinic - that was why they congratulated me.
- Some expressed their belief that a black clinician would be more able to take into consideration other cultural and traditional perspectives other than Eurocentric ones. This would include different child rearing practices, hierarchical structures in black families as well as the struggles, prejudices and injustice that black families face in society, especially when involved with social service, the police and the school systems.
- Others said they were surprised and could not help but wonder how I had managed to get a clinical post at that clinic. They thought I must be knowledgeable and well experienced.
- Some described me as a 'coconut': implying that I am only brown on the outside, but white on the inside.

I discussed the above at the subsequent clinical meetings. Most of my colleagues admitted that they had never thought of my ethnicity becoming an issue or expected this reaction from white and ethnic minority clients.

### **1.12 Reaction from professionals in the community**

As I began clinical work with referred children and their parents and carers on site at the day nurseries, all day once a week (rather than at the clinic as my colleagues had done previously), all the nursery practitioners presented themselves to me as more relaxed and friendlier towards me. They would ask me to join them in the staff room during my lunch break instead of me driving back to the clinic to have lunch.



I also became aware that the nursery practitioners whose group room children and parents I was working with jointly (with the clinic and the nursery), were giving feedback to the other nursery practitioners about the work we were doing together. These included:

- Positive changes they were observing in the children's behaviour,
- The fact that the parents were fully engaged in the work with their children at the nursery,
- Also the fact that they did not have to collect their children from nursery to travel with them on two buses each way to and from the NHS Mental Health Trust Clinic.

The preschool group room nursery practitioners also began to join me in the staff room during the lunch breaks and eventually invited me to their group room for afternoon tea with the children. They eventually told me that they had initially thought that I would be '*a coconut, brown on the outside but white on the inside in my thinking, attitude as well as behaviour*'. They however admitted that over time they had come to realize that their assumptions about me were wrong! The nursery workers also felt able to express their concerns to me about the number of black and mixed parentage children who were being referred to the NHS Mental Health Trust clinic rather than to the Family Centres. They said they were concerned that the children were being pathologised and labelled before starting school at age 5.

They were able to take this forward with the nursery manager which resulted in consultation sessions with all the nursery staff team, as discussed in Chapter 7.

During the identity project on 'myself', one of the preschool group room's black practitioner played an important and leading role in getting her colleagues, the children and parents to work collaboratively with her on completing the project tasks, and work on their children's ethnicity and identity issues, since some of the children seemed confused concerning these areas.

In one of the identity project staff consultation sessions, we talked about our ethnic background and identity. We gave permission to each other to ask clarifying questions. When it was my turn, I described my ethnicity and cultural background as black African, Creole from Sierra Leone. However when I was asked which section of the Creole ethnic group in Freetown I belonged to, I could not answer that question as I had never asked my parents for such information.

I was fortunate to have my mother living at home in the UK with me and my family, so was able to ask her the relevant questions. My mother informed me that her ancestors were the freed slave settlers from Nova Scotia, whom the British government had resettled in the western part of Freetown. She also explained that there had been a lot of interracial marriages (between blacks and non-blacks) over the generations on her side of the family, hence the light skin complexion in her family.

She also explained (as dad had passed on by then) that, my father's ancestors were originally from Nigeria, from the Yoruba people. They had been settled by the British government in the Eastern part of Freetown shortly after emancipation was declared by Britain. They had been taken from Nigeria but had subsequently escaped being sent to the Americas or Europe, so had not been involved in interracial marriages, which she pointed out explained their darker complexion and their retention of their Nigerian, Yoruba first names. Although their surnames had been changed to 'SAWYERR', the family has maintained a particular spelling of their surname which has remained prominent in Sierra Leone, Ghana and in Nigeria (spelled with a double R at the end).<sup>1</sup>

### 1.13 Conclusions

'*An African Journey*' started with my birth in Sierra Leone, travels through Ghana, England, Canada, back to England where my interest in ethnic identity issues developed and led me to the discovery of my ancestral historical roots in Nigeria and Nova Scotia.

In 2002 my colleague Fola Shogbamimu introduced me to Professor Christopher Bagley, his former teacher and research supervisor. Professor Bagley and his Jamaican colleague Loretta Young have a keen interest in cross-cultural psychological issues, and I cite some of their key studies in subsequent pages of this thesis. Since 2008 I have been associated with Professor Bagley's *Manchester Educational Research Network*, which explains the convergence of Professor Bagley's ideas with my own approach, and my use of materials and data available from the Manchester

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<sup>1</sup> My father's younger brother Professor Akilagpa Sawyerr, an academic lawyer, was Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana from 1985 to 1992. He was recently honoured by having a campus thoroughfare named after him. The eulogy at the public ceremony said of him: "After leaving office, he continued with service through the Association of African Universities where the campaign to pressure academic freedom in African Universities was given greater voice. This has ensured that many universities, to a large extent, are able to operate without much political interference." StarrFMonline, April 18, 2016 [www.starrfmonline.com](http://www.starrfmonline.com)

group, including material collected by Dr Kanka Mallick. Professor Bagley has provided the clear leadership and direction which has brought this project to fruition.

## Chapter 2: Purpose and Perspective

### 2.1 Introduction

This thesis has had long gestation. The idea began in the late 1990s when I was developing a programme of identity enhancement for preschool children in nurseries in an Inner London Borough. This arose from my work in a child, adolescent and adult NHS Mental Health clinic which served two distinct areas and population in the borough. A very affluent area and predominantly white (group) population and a multi-ethnic client group from one of the most disadvantaged areas of London. It was clear from my clinical work that some black children were confused about their ethnicity and their identity, and they had obviously been influenced by the stereotypes of black ethnicity held by the majority of white persons around them. A number of the children I was working with were attending the local authority day nursery, which I will call St. John's (StJ's). It was closed some years ago. The Local Authority immediately replaced the nursery with a Sure Start Centre, reportedly because of central and local government funding reductions.

But in 1998 the preschool age children (3-5 year olds) including some of the children in my clinical caseload attending StJ's, were presenting with confusion about their ethnicity and identity. So I devised an identity enhancement programme which would counter the negative stereotype about ethnicity and skin colour that the children seemed to be identifying with. I described this programme's success in a book chapter (Sawyer, 1999), and my work seemed to have had some influence.

In 2002 I began work on a doctoral thesis focussed initially on all of the children in StJ's, overtly examining how the "Six Early Learning Goals" prescribed by government, were being implemented in this multi-ethnic day nursery. Included in the goals were "Knowledge and understanding of the world" and "Social and emotional development", and I wanted to see how these goals included, if at all, any understanding of issues of colour and ethnicity.

This research was only partially completed, since the nursery was arbitrarily closed, and was then re-opened some months later as a Sure Start nursery, with an entirely new group of children. The politics underlying these changes I discuss later in this thesis.

For personal and professional reasons I could not continue with the doctoral research at this time, although I had analysed in detail the video-recorded interactions of staff and children, interactions between the children and the audio recorded semi structured interviews with the staff. Only in the past three years (to 2016) have I been able to focus the lens of research on to a Britain that seems to be changing rapidly in terms of ethnicity, migration, class, politics and social service provision. Because the research spans a long period of time, I decided to place the two pieces of research presented below (including the study of Northern Schools carried out in 2006-7) within the context of a historical review of equality, ethnicity and gender in Britain, with special reference to issues of education, health and community development. The period 1968 to 2008 has been chosen since it fits well with the review of literature which I was undertaking as part of the Manchester Educational Research Network, with my (now) thesis supervisor, Professor Christopher Bagley.

## **2.2 A Guide to the Chapters that Follow**

This thesis embodies two “empirical studies” on ethnicity, identity and self-esteem, which are developed and discussed within three intellectual contexts. First of all, the remainder of the present chapter will set out a perspective on equality in Britain today, looked at from the perspectives of social class divisions, which are analysed within a Marxian framework which discusses the role of ethnicity, gender and occupational status in forming the strata of society. The purpose of this initial discussion is to establish a value position, in which concern is expressed for the life chances and social mobility of the lowest strata of society.

Secondly, Chapter 3 elaborates the theoretical framework of Critical Realism, a philosophy of social science research which assumes that (contrary to positivist or social constructionist methodologies) that *reality* exists independently of the researcher, and can be elaborated and understood within the framework of critical realism, whose ultimate goal is the emancipation of individuals and institutions through a self-conscious, freely chosen process of *morphogenesis*.

Thirdly in my value grounding of identity studies, Chapter 4 establishes the basis of the value position which *underlabours* the critical realist model, informing and evaluating the actions of individuals in the matrix of critical realism. This chosen value position is called *Child-Centred Humanism*, which argues that all human institutions

and actions should be evaluated according to the degree that they regard children's interests as having primacy in all of society's institutions: the needs and rights of children must be considered, implicitly or explicitly, as the building blocks of all of humanity's social institutions.

Chapter 5 is concerned with episodes of equality and ethnicity in the period 1968 to 2008. This time period is chosen since the empirical materials considered by the thesis itself, were planned for and gathered in a ten-year period occurring within this time frame (1998 to 2008); this entire period is also one of significant change and development in research and policies concerning ethnicity, gender and equality in British society. Since other scholars have written systematic reviews of this history, I summarise their accounts, and instead focus in detail on specific episodes and themes, such as the history of medicine, the history of childhood, equality and exclusion of youth in British society, and specific episodes and themes in the movement towards ethnic equality. This Chapter should be read in parallel with Appendix A of the thesis, which is a lengthy and systematic review of the literature on equality and exclusion of youths in the period 1968 to 2008.

Chapter 6 establishes the themes of ethnicity, gender and identity in charting "the evolution and development of self-esteem research in Britain and America", observing the significant changes which these studies have identified, from the decades from the 1960s onwards, from the pessimistic findings of "doll studies" to recent decades in which self-esteem in ethnic minority children has made remarkable gains.

The writer's empirical work in this field is outlined in Chapter 7, which presents the findings of an observational study of a multicultural day nursery, following the researcher's development of a programme for enhancement of ethnic identity in young children. The findings of this study are placed within the context of a critical realist case study, and further detailed account of the research study is given in Appendix C.

Chapter 8 extends the review of literature to older children and adolescents, including American studies showing that African American adolescents now have excellent levels of self-esteem. This review in addition, focusses on gender, including literature showing that adolescent females have significantly lower levels of self-esteem (as measured in particular by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: the RSES).

Reasons for this are explored, including the literature on the negative impact of sexual abuse on self-esteem in females. It is argued that differential levels of self-esteem observed in many cultures might be explained by the incidence and impact which child sexual abuse has on adolescent girls.

Issues of ethnicity and gender are explored in the second empirical study of this thesis, including the analysis of an unpublished data set collected in 2006 to 2007 in Northern Schools of some 2,025 school students aged 11 to 18. Using standardised measures of self-reported abusive events, the study showed that the RSES was indeed a structurally reliable measure, and correlated with validated measures of mental health. When history of sexual abuse was taken into account, self-esteem differences between the genders did not reach statistical significance.

Within boys, ethnicity was not correlated with self-esteem, but in girls, those of African-Caribbean origin had higher levels of self-esteem than their female peers.

In the final Chapter, the importance of treating the school as a unique community which can address the social and psychological needs of all students is stressed. This is illustrated by two schools in the Northern Schools sample, which had marked differences in terms of histories of sexual and physical abuse, self-esteem and psychological adjustment. It is advocated, using the critical realist model, that schools and the communities they serve, should be unique centres for social action research which address problems of the families and children they serve.

It is concluded that “ethnic minorities” in English society are likely to be upwardly mobile, while (without major programmes of intervention) the “poor whites” will remain in the bottom strata, as a reserve army of labour.

### **2.3 Concepts of Class, Ethnicity, Inequality, Gender and Exploitation**

It will rapidly become apparent to the reader that a concern with Marx’s idea of class oppression, alienation and ‘the reserve army of labour’ frequently occurs in the pages that follow. This political leaning I borrow (perhaps temporarily) from Professor Bagley. The work of Marx which I have drawn on is his political humanism and freedom from economic determinism, and not Marx’s frequently misunderstood and misapplied writings on economic reform (Singer, 1996)

I note furthermore that it is possible to be a Marxist scholar, and not to mention Marx, or Marxian concepts at all. Thus in Brian Simon's *Education and the Social Order 1940-1990* (published in 1991) Simon simply spells out in great detail how educational systems control and socialize young people in ways which make them acquiescent and useful for the prevailing social, political and economic order of Britain. This is despite periods of educational reform and "break out" (such as the beginning of comprehensives, and the expansion of the university sector). The established order of capital clearly, in Simon's historical analysis, re-imposes itself and reorders changing institutions, in a phase which Simon labels "downhill all the way" beginning in the 1970s with the re-imposition of neoliberalism, which reflected, according to Clarke (2007) the crisis of capitalism brought about by America's prosecution of the Vietnam war, bringing in its wake "neoliberalism globalisation, imperialism with empires" (Radice, 2007).

Despite a New Labour slogan of "education, education, education" (Wragg, 2004a) the downhill slide has continued (in Britain and other capitalist economies) inexorably from 1980 into a condition which Tomlinson (2013) describes as the increasing globalisation of capitalist enterprise. *"Governments in modern capitalist nation-states are overseeing and encouraging a vast expansion of education and training, for reasons which those in control of policy and practice are not always clear about. Groups who were previously excluded or received minimal schooling are now included in formal schooling for longer and longer periods. Groups who previously monopolised privileged kinds of education leading to guaranteed employment now face threats of status and employment competition with larger numbers who aspire or are coerced into more formal schooling and its assessments. In order to retain privileges, elite groups support the reconstitution of segregative policies and provisions."* (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 5)

In Britain, it seems that in the long run educational systems will continue to serve the global economic power systems.

The educational system is changing, and so are the surface manifestations of social class in Britain, as Mike Savage and his team (2015) make clear in their Great British Class Survey (GBCS) which obtained surprisingly full accounts of many social, cultural and economic aspects of their lives from some 161,000 respondents who



completed a media-sponsored internet survey in 2011. The data allowed Savage and colleagues to construct a seven-fold schema of social class, with the Elite at the top, and the precariously-living proletariat, mostly poor, often unemployed at the bottom of the scale: this “precarious proletariat” was dubbed (following Standing, 2011) the Precariat, and are estimated to number about 15 percent of Britain’s population. (Only one percent of the internet responders fell into this class, so the team led by Savage carried out direct sampling to get an accurate profile of this group). They are sneered at, derided, looked down on by many in the classes above them, and called Scum, Chavs and Yobs, in modern slang. On the three bases of social class grouping in Savage’s (2015) analysis: income and wealth; cultural capital; and social capital, the Precariat are at the bottom of the class system, blamed for their own poverty. These are the ‘reserve army of labour’, useful cheap labour for capitalism in times of boom, and useful scapegoats in times of bust. They occupy, in Savage’s sociology, “worlds of shame and stigma”:

*“... The rise in rents in the neighbourhood caused them great anxiety. Owning a home there was not somethings they could even dare to imagine. The devastating impact of the bedroom tax, benefit caps and austerity cuts to local community services have had on their families and themselves were and are, felt sharply and painfully. They raise their voices and shout and swear; they are angry with – and frightened by – these precarious times.”* (Savage, 2015, p. 342)

Savage and his team have surprisingly little to say about gender – how women conceptualise themselves within systems of material wealth and reward, cultural capital, and social interactions, and the differences which partnerships or marriage might make, nor about what being single or in gay partnership means in terms of class profiles. But they imply that for the Precariat, women dislike self-conceptions of class, citing earlier research: women tend to reject ideas of being “working class”. These young women “... invested in femininity and respectability in response to the (real or imagined) judgement of others - *judgements based on the values and morals associated with the dominant class*. Yet they did not possess the required sorts of capital – economic, cultural or social – to be anything other than working class women.” (Savage, 2015, pp 365-366, italics in original). Moreover, drawing on the work of Skeggs (1997) Savage says that within the ‘emotional politics’ surrounding the identity of Precariat women there is “... ‘fear, desire, resentment and humiliation’

(Skeggs, 1997). It also reminds us that aspects of class identifiers are also shaped in particular ways by gender (along with race and sexuality). (Savage, 2015, p. 366).<sup>2</sup>

Guy Standing (2011 & 2014) divides the precariat (15% of the population, according to Savage) into two groups: at the bottom are the group he terms “the lumpen proletariat” whom the established order sees as “dangerous” in terms of their socially destructive anarchy, based on their psychological, social and political disarray, their dangerously figurative and literal fire-setting of the property and ideas of the respectable economic classes. Following Marx, Standing – Professor of Economic Security at the University of Bath (2011 & 2014) - echoes Marx and Engels in writing a manifesto on behalf of the precariat whom he describes as a ‘trans-European, bastard child of global capitalism’. They are, he says, a true class created by capitalism, following the economic logic of Marx’s historical analyses.

Where do *ethnic minorities* cluster within Savage’s class systems? Certainly not randomly. They are over-represented in two class groups: Technical Middle Class; and Emerging Service Workers. And they are under-represented amongst the Precariat. However, Savage is not very specific about types of ethnic minority within the class groupings, and this is obviously a field for further research. It seems likely that ethnic minorities will maximise their educational opportunities, their reserves of cultural and social capital, and will increasingly move out of the lowest status groupings into the better paid technical sectors, even though they are more than a generation away from achieving parity in the Elite and Established Middle Class groups described by Savage (2015).

Educational sociologists, following Standing’s, and Savage’s class analyses, have coined the term “precarity”, in discussing the fate of some school leavers. Dovermark & Beach (2016) in referring to the classic study by Willis (1978) on working class boys “learning to labour”, title their article: “From learning to labour to learning for precarity.” They observed: “*A demand on national economies in the 1970s* [during the Thatcher era] *was that they should begin to increase their labour market flexibility,*

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<sup>2</sup> Clearly, Bourdieu’s sociology is influential in Savage’s analysis: “... the thinking of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu [offers] the most perceptive approach to unravelling the complexities of class today.” (Savage, 2015, p. 19). That, concedes Savage, is why the original research questions explored in detail ideas about “cultural capital”, which may shroud (“mask” in Marxian terminology) the layers of social class. The upper two classes inherit cultural capital; the other classes gaze adoringly, with longing and admiration, over the invisible fence, or within the pages in the popular organs of social control, at the dream world of their masters.

*which came to mean transferring risks of insecurity on to workers. Education was one way to prepare future workers for Precarity ...*" (p. 174) Their analysis concerns not only Britain, but the whole of Europe. Batsleer (2016) in an incisive ethnographic study of young NEETS in Manchester show that living off food bank handouts was (for the capitalist class) a useful way by which low-achieving youth were ritually subjugated at a very basic level (nutrition) into membership of the underclass.

Tomlinson (2013) addresses the interesting issue of how middle class parents may cope with the potentially downward mobility of their children who are not particularly successful in school: it is crucially important for middle class parents that their children should not join the ranks of "the ignorant jobs", of the precariat, who in British society are usually blamed for their own failure. Middle class parents can maximise wealth and social capital by gaining either private education, or a favoured state school (through choice of where they live), private tuition and psychological help, and if necessary getting special educational status for their children (e.g. getting extra help because of dyslexia). The social capital of the middle and upper classes helps them to access the best routes in further education and training, and in using social influences to gain employment for children who would in consequence be able to escape joining the ranks of the precariat.

From her international survey Tomlinson points to the case of Finland, in which high scores on international tests of achievement (e.g. PISA) are gained by teaching which effectively truncates the standard deviation of the measures, so that that most pupils achieve close to the group's high average marks (see Sawyerr & Bagley, Appendices A and E, for comments on the Finnish educational system).

In Britain, the low educational achievers are blamed for their own failures (Johnston, 2007): a chaotic and ever-changing system of educational initiatives for youth who are or who will become NEETS (Not in Education, Employment of Training), and the frequent failure of these programmes, often leads to denigration of the underachievers (Tomlinson, 2013, pp 125-6).

Chronic poverty, the continuation of life in the underclass from one generation to the next, demeans the culture of life and its social meaning for up to 15 percent of England's population. It diminishes health, it promotes family brokenness, individual malaise and despair, the neglect and maltreatment of children, the abuse of the body,

the frequency of illness, and the prematurity of death (Marmot 2008, 2010, 2015). Healing poverty through initiatives such as a universal, living wage (Flaschel et al, 2012) could be hugely cost effective in public health terms (Bellis et al., 2014a).

But England is unlikely to adopt the policy of a living wage. Instead, policy researchers focus on absolute poverty and destitution in the land. The leading advocates in this field from the Rowntree Trust present considerable evidence from the research which they have funded, that chronic poverty is demeaning, and eats away at the basis for mental and social health (Unwin, 2013). Pointing to the general economic structure, they argue that poverty is both unnecessary, and easy to solve through fiscal measures. But they fail to address the more fundamental political or value question: who benefits from the institution of poverty in Britain?

The same question: who benefits? Must be asked of Gender and Ethnic inequalities. It is certainly in men's interests to have a class of humans who will satisfy their sexual needs, ensuring that their genetic prowess is transmitted through children, and to have women who will care for and socialise those children in satisfactory ways, cook and clean the dwelling place, and supplement household income through some kind of external labour. Feminism is clearly a threat to this comfortable male hegemony. The widespread sexual exploitation of girls and adolescent women, which I discuss at some length later in this thesis, is the crude expression of this male hegemony.

In the past, ethnic minority groups in Britain may have been trained to serve the dominant classes through special kinds of socialisation and control, through which those of "inferior" colour, nationality or religion (Catholics and Muslims for example), were trained to accept the stereotypes placed upon them, but nevertheless had to become cheerful hewers of wood, and drawers of water. The Tottenham riots of 2011 finally consigned that model of socialization to the flames (Unwin, 2011 & 2013; Standing, 2014).

In a fascinating account of the sociology of popular culture in Britain, Jones, (2011) analyses media and political accounts of *chavs*<sup>3</sup>, an apparently flamboyant group sometimes with temporary wealth, but allegedly little taste, who are trying to rise

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<sup>3</sup> A word derived from the Romany language, meaning "kid".

out of the precariat, and who are sneered at and stigmatised for trying to cohere as a cultural group.<sup>4</sup> The media-inspired campaign of denigration of this lower class group parallels the rise in income inequality in Britain, and the dismembering of the welfare state. According to Jones' political analysis these events are connected, and the chavs are a group to be kicked around by respectable folk whose aspiration for cultural capital glances enviously at the class above them, without sympathy for the sneered-at class below. These chavs are the welfare recipients, the scroungers, the welfare cheats, the deceitful layabouts and criminals, 'the feral underclass'. Middle Britain loves the class above them, and despises the class below. This mix of media and popular hatred is extremely functional for the capitalist social order. Chav-hate is, arguably, a greater problem than Islamophobia (Kundari, 2007; Fekete, 2009). Muslims have a solid ethical and spiritual tradition which assures them that they have moral surety in the face of hatred (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2008). Chavs, on the available evidence, have a much weaker identity formation (Jones, 2011).

## 2.4 Conclusions

The Chapters on self-esteem, identity and self-concept in ethnic minorities - the literature that I review and analyse, and my empirical reports of studies with children and adolescents - show that in this field, at least, there has been considerable, positive change. No longer do black and ethnic minority children and adolescents have an inferiorised self-concept thrust upon them. This is not however the situation for many females, especially white females.

My argument will be that our greatest concern should not be merely, or primarily, with the cultural and social development of the self-concept of black and ethnic minority children. Our concern should not be only with ethnic minorities, but also with the "poor whites", and their children who are making up Britain's 'perpetual underclass'.

Furthermore, I want to know why in a recent WHO international comparison of 42 world nations of young people aged 11, 13 and 15 (Inchley et al., 2016) the group with the poorest emotional health were 15-year-olds in Britain. British adolescent girls were also close to last in the nations surveyed in terms of physical health (measured

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the *Mirror* newspaper of July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 gloated over the suicide attempt of "the King of the Chavs" who squandered his £9.7 million lottery win in 11 years, and is now "a penniless drug addict".

by poor diet, exercise, obesity, sexual health, and alcohol and substance use). And why, in every nation and age-profile studied in the WHO survey, did females have poorer mental health than males? Is this connected with the prevalence and impact of child maltreatment, and sexual abuse experienced by females, which I explore in a later chapter?

Britain and America of all the developed nations have the most unequal distribution of wealth, as measured by the Gini coefficient (UN, 2005; Booth, 2008a). Do these two nations (which also come at the bottom of league tables for child and adolescent health indicators – Wilkinson, 2005; UNESCO, 2007; Currie et al., 2008; OECD, 2008; Friedli, 2009; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009) have integral or systemic links between inequality and the chronically poor health and adjustment in their underclass? Certainly, these two nations appear to be the most prominent of the developed nations in which global capitalism has imposed itself, and in which the situation of an underclass perpetuated by lack of social mobility is, among the developed nations, the most enduring (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016).<sup>5</sup>

The underlying economic forces of neoliberalism underpin (“require”) these class-based differences in life chances, and informed the economic and social policies (recreated from earlier ideas of economists such as Adam Smith) of the Conservative government’s agenda in Britain in the period from 1979 to 1995. These policies were largely continued by a New Labour government attempting to occupy the ‘middle ground’ of politics. This neoliberalism, as defined by Saad-Filho & Johnston (2005), *“... is the ideology of the market and private interests as opposed to state intervention. Although it is true that neoliberalism conveys an ideology and a propaganda of its own, it is fundamentally a new social order in which the power and income of the upper fractions of the ruling classes – the wealthiest persons – was re-established in the wake of a setback ... this upper capitalist class and the financial institutions through which its power is enforced is a hegemonic force. Although the conditions which accounted for the structural crisis were gradually superseded, most of the world economy remained plagued by slow growth and unemployment, and inequality*

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<sup>5</sup> Global capitalism’s negative ‘neo-liberal’ impact is greatest for the countries of the developing world, as the relevant essays among the 30 chapters in Saad-Filho & Johnston’s (2005) edited volume, show.

*increased.*” (p. 2) This inequality, we argue, is most enduring in the neoliberal economies of the USA and the UK, and thrives on the lack of social mobility of the poorest social classes (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016).

Finally: in leading the reader on this research journey I have needed to tell “my story”, explaining how my own identity and research interests have been formed; and how I have come to explore the research philosophy of Critical Realism, which has allowed me to assert with some confidence an underlying value premise which informs how I interpret research findings: the philosophy of *Child-Centred Humanism*.

## **Chapter 3: Critical Realism and Dialectic Critical Realism: Grounded Values and Reflexivity in Social Research**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The concept of Critical Realism (and its later development using concepts from Hegel and Marx) known as dialectical critical realism (DCR), comes from philosophy, and not from social science. It uses philosophical language and reasoning, which is often challenging for the social scientist who has had no grounding in formal logic, or in the discipline of philosophical analysis. DCR is not an account of social science, but rather a philosophy of how knowledge about people and their social structures may be construed, interpreted, described and fitted together. DCR assumes that although the ground of knowledge is real, it also has a value base: there is no such thing as value-free social science.

Critical Realism (CR) clearly prefers social science research which employs qualitative, case-study methods, but acknowledges that multiple methods (including surveys and statistical analyses) can be used in order to gain the fullest information about “a case” (Alderson, 2013)

Critical Realism emerged from the writings of the philosopher Roy Bhaskar who was seeking an alternative to what he saw as ambiguous and often confusing models of scientific methodology, particularly, the Popperian doctrine of “falsifying hypotheses” (Popper, 1992). He extended his critique to the methodologies of social science (Bhaskar, 1975), attempting to find a way forward from what he saw as the stultification and confusion of “positivism”, “phenomenology”, “post-modernism”, and “social constructionism”. Critical realism has been attractive to social researchers, and theorists who are committed to a firm ideological basis for viewing human action (e.g. Marxists, Muslims, Catholics) in asserting that *structures* within society are real and although their influence may be debated, their *being* or ontology (e.g. class exploitation, alienation, the nature of spiritual being) is not in doubt.

It is of course possible that Marxists and Catholics will disagree profoundly on what is or should be salient (Creaven, 2007) but CR nevertheless also lays the way open for dialogue and compromise between seemingly incompatible systems through the process of dialectical critical realism (Bhaskar, 1993/2008). Bhaskar adapts the Hegelian model of dialectical debate (traditionally: thesis, antithesis, synthesis) and goes beyond this model in positing a fourth level in the dialectical process which leads



to action for, or advocacy of change. Moreover, this process of dialectical critical realism (DCR) is a continuous process in the lives of social systems, dyads and individuals, and there is continuous feedback between the 'agents' (the actors or individuals in DCR), or between various individuals: through these reflexive ideas and exchanges, organisations are in a process of continuous change and adjustment to new feedbacks, and the changing of social structures.

At this stage, a challenge in reading CR theoretical texts and research emerging from that theory should be mentioned: Critical Realism has developed its own vocabulary, and has coined new words ('neologisms') which the student may have difficulty in learning, or retaining. Furthermore, common English words are used in a way which attributes a rather different meaning to that of everyday language. The use of the word *absence* is a case in point. The difficulty of grasping CR concepts may be illustrated by this quotation from Anderson (2016): "*Absence as a noun or verb is central to the DCR process of absenting absences, constraints, ills, contradictions, oppressive power, relations or inequities. Absence is the crucial empty physical, social and mental space that enables movement, imagined alternatives, processes and change.*" (p. 166). Thus "absence" actually means (in some, but not in all situations) the presence or existence of some positive force for social change.<sup>6</sup> Despite the complexities of her CR model, Anderson in her two volumes on *The Politics of Childhood Real and Imagined* (2013 & 2016) has many valuable things to say, and I have tried to utilise her insights in this thesis.

What one finds in CR writing is an absence of dogma, and a willingness to engage in debate (the essence of DCR) to reach compromise. Thus Collier (1994) offers a useful synthesis of Weber's "individualism" and Durkheim's "collectivism" showing (pp 144-145) that these are not alternative models of individuals within social systems, but in the DCR mode, interactive ones, which coexist and offer simultaneously, ways of promoting social action for change: individual's co-operate collectively, but remain individuals, is the message. Thus, in Collier's (1994) analysis

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<sup>6</sup> "At its philosophical core lies a theory of *absence*, which Bhaskar combines with his pre-existing arguments from critical realism for the significance of ontology. This is a basis for the realist understanding of human *being* in society and in nature which, through the account of absence, is aligned to a theory of *becoming* and change in a spatio-temporal world. The alignment of being and becoming is achieved in a manner that displays both a uniqueness of individual philosophical voice and boldness of intellectual vision, and these gave Bhaskar a fair claim to stand ... in the first rank of western philosophy today." (Norrie, 2010, p. 3).

of Marx's writing on *Capital*, most wage earners are mystified by the nature of capitalism that exploits them: their alienation remains unmasked. But in the Dialectical Critical Realist model they are capable of understanding and changing both their modes of thought and their social actions, their necessary "underlabouring" (using a term borrowed from Locke) in addressing capitalist exploitation. The worker who fails to grasp the nature of his or her exploitation remains in a state of "non-realism", asserts Collier (1994) (p. 12).

In response to critics of this Marxian approach, Collier (1994) says: "... *modern non-realists often accuse realists of dogmatism because of our defence of objectivity. They accuse us of arrogance in claiming truth for our theories ... [but] ... To claim objective truth for one's statements is to lay one's cards on the table, to expose oneself to the possibility of refutation.*" (p. 13)

This bold claim to recognise "reality" (which is, of course, initially an intuitional process) rejects postmodern ideas of the relativity of knowledge and the impossibility of constructing linear models of basic cause; and the rejection of social constructivist ideas that knowledge and values are relative, and are generated through unique sets of social interactions. One understands why CR has proved attractive to the Muslim scholar Matthew Wilkinson (2015). In "making sense" of his experience of teaching in a Muslim school he says: "... *this book draws upon the tradition of dialectical European philosophy, epitomised by Hegel ... Most recently, this tradition has been brought with great energy and conceptual sophistication into the contemporary academy by the founding figure of the philosophy of critical realism, Roy Bhaskar, as well as others following his lead, such as Alan Norrie, Andrew Wright and Margaret Archer. Critical realism is exceptional in its coherent articulation of a contemporary philosophy of being, of knowing and real personal, ethical and social change, and its refusal to reduce being of all types, including spiritual being, to socially constructed epistemology or merely psychological or semantic meaning. This makes the philosophy of critical realism at its original, dialectical and spiritual moments an ideal vehicle for the development of a systematic rationale to interpret Islam and Islam-in-education in a multi-faith world.*" (p. 10)

Wilkinson draws on both Islamic and critical realist thinking in arguing that Muslim education should be "a philosophy for success", or empowerment (or, as

Marxists would put it, the unmasking of alienation). *Success* is seen by Wilkinson as embedded in the multidimensional development and self-realisation of human social interaction within and between the four planes of social being defined by CR theorists. These planes are:

The Real: material transactions with nature (e.g. "the ground of being", "the essence of humans", "the uniqueness of each human being" counterpoised with forces of nature, polity and economy which impose themselves on humans; and the divine revelations of various world religions);

The Actual: Inter-subjective (interpersonal) transactions between individuals or 'human agents' in different settings, including socialization and social control, the imposition of racialized identities; economic deprivation; forced migration et alia: and the understandings which humans have of these controlling forces, in dialogue, in writing, in protest, in political movements;

The Empirical: Social relations at the *non-reducible* level of structures, institutions and forms;

The Transcendent: The embodied personality's liberation through mutual tolerance, the shedding of false consciousness, spiritual fulfilment; awareness of self-potential, self-actualization. (Adapted from Bhaskar 1993/2008 – this is also the basis of Alderson's MELD model, explained below).

Wilkinson focuses his analysis on "the embodied personality" and his or her spiritual, intellectual, affective-cultural, civic, and instrumental dimensions. Each of these dimensions has distinct and interrelated or "articulated" ontologies. "Ontological realism" concerns the philosophical study of being (the first level of being in CR theory), and is a central concept within DCR: "*A basic understanding of critical realist ontology, the philosophical study of being is ... that being exists independently of our knowledge of it and in particular, our ability to describe it, so that it cannot be reduced to discourse, nor is it merely contained or constructed in the semiotics of our speech.*" (p. 50)

Alderson (2016) in construing "the politics of childhood" offers the following explanations of DCR's 4-levels of analysis, which, following Bhaskar, she terms **MELD**. The first level is **1M** - DCR concepts of basic reality e.g. moral realism, which

consists (in social science) of ethical naturalism. The 'moral realism' inherent at this basic level of DCR "... accepts that harm and benefit are universal, causal, moral realities, which are defined and experienced in varied local and personal ways. To deny moral realism would set up theory/practice inconsistency ... Because humans are vulnerable, sensitive, social beings, able to flourish and to suffer, moral realism is part of human nature and daily life, and is not artificially introduced (Archer, 2003; Bhaskar, 1986; Collier, 1999) ... **1M** seeks to avoid the anthropic fallacy that places humans at the centre of the purpose and meaning of the universe (Bhaskar, 2000, 26). Instead, **1M** sees that we are part of nature ... A related problem is the adultist fallacy. This sets rational adults at the apex of morality, and regards childhood as a slow climb up from lower, natural, pre-social, pre-moral babyhood to higher, socialised, moral adulthood." Alderson, 2016 pp 28-29)

Priscilla Alderson in her two volumes on 'the politics of childhood' offers a vigorous and often moving account of the children she has been involved with in her research over a 30-year-period, but admits that she is a recent 'convert' to DCR: "The challenge of rethinking my past research in relation to DCR, and of writing this book, has helped me, and I hope it will help readers, to see how DCR enlarges research theory and analysis. Since learning about DCR, I have revised some of my former ideas and discarded others, on the continuing journey of learning and changing." (Alderson, 2013, p. 8).

Alderson terms the second level in her DCR analysis **2E** (second edge) "... which concerns the transition into intervention and *process in product*. **2E** concerns actively negating problems that were identified at 1M (Bhaskar, 2008, 97-8). This involves absencing *aporia* (contradictions and constraints, ills and untruths) ..." (Alderson, 2016. p. 34). Exactly how this is done is problematic however, and often one is challenged to know where to "fit" one's research findings within the four levels of analysis, and how to interpret findings (and undertake further research) in terms of absence, dialogue, dialectic or change – for example, the research studies on children which Alderson presents us with. She continues (p. 36): "A seven-scale DCR framework for interdisciplinary analysis (Bhaskar & Danemark, 2006) helps to connect many themes ..." This additional level of complexity is certainly challenging for the researcher.

We move to Alderson's third level called **3L**. She terms this level the *totality of change*, and comments " ... **3L** recognizes that we all share the core universal human nature our common humanity, and we are all unique and ethically different ... We are interconnected and interdependent, dialectic replaces dichotomy, 'is' connects to 'ought', and 'ought' connects to 'can' (Bhaskar, 2010, 146-8) ... " (Alderson, 2016, p. 41). It is at this level of understanding social structure that Margaret Archer's ideas (1995, 2000, 2003) of *morphogenesis* (personal change through dialectic interchange, and self-reflection) may become increasingly important. And then at the level of the fourth dimension **4D**, there occurs the fullest realisation of *reflexive analysis*.

The transformative agency of **4D** aims for "...emancipation ... in the free society where each individual's flourishing depends on everyone flourishing. **4D** works to overcome the false sense of self as separate and isolated. We relate to the world and to other people through recognising what we share in common (Bhaskar, 2002, 305). The key questions concern identity (who am I?) and agency (what am I to do?)." (Alderson, 2016, p. 46). At this stage then, false consciousness is shed, and alienation is unmasked.

The combined model is thus called **MELD** – in summary:

**1M**: Basic values, which are often unseen or unrecognized, but which inform or control action (e.g. covert power systems and alienation)

**2E**: Seeds of hope, and the dawning of understanding and dialectics. The realisation of *absence*, of lack of fulfilment, and yearning for change.

**3L**: Understanding of how social structures constrain us.

**4D**: Critical reflection and social change.

Clearly, this is an ideal (and idealistic) model, and Bhaskar (2000, pp 8-9) warns us of the possibility of "malign MELD", in which negative, coercive powers subvert consciousness, control debates (e.g. through newspaper campaigns), and ensure that the powers of capital are unassailed, however much information we have (e.g. on health inequalities, on educational underachievement, or on poor quality schools). The 'seeds of hope' of 2E are often dashed.

Alderson devotes her two volumes to accounts of how, effectively, to liberate children so that their rights are fully realised. She uses the 1E assumptions about the “real” world and its state in nature (what Wilkinson in his Islamic formulation would call the original garden of paradise in which, following the acquisition of knowledge, Adam and Eve are charged with “naming all things”). “*Childhood and nature overlap in symbol and in practice ... ways in which children are treated reflect activities towards nature. These range from neglect and abuse to violence that wastes potential and ends the lives of millions of children.*” (Alderson, 2016, p. 46)

Alderson then devotes her volumes to analysing children’s lives (especially those in contact with health care systems) in detail, explaining how their condition is perceived and classified, and how they are treated - fit into the MELD hierarchy. “*The DCR aim of promoting utopias is to negate alienation ... schools are particularly good places for transformation, having the time, space and long-term relations to nurture utopian work ... DCR concepts can assist teachers in being reflective, self-critical, and collegial ... DCR’s concrete utopian imagination is not a prescription for the future, but for an open society where individuals decide what to do with their freedom. It is an inner urge that flows universally from the lack of elemental absence (lack, need, want desire).*” (pp 157-158)

Considering alienation’s ending, Alderson speculates about the ‘natural communism’ that would follow – what Quakers would call the Kingdom of Heaven existing on earth now, through the process of constructive relationships. In Alderson’s formulation this communism goes beyond Marx (who merely wanted ‘from each according to his ability, to each according to his need’): “Marx’s ... generous giving and taking is not possible if everything is already shared.”<sup>7</sup> (p. 159). In this model, the needs, rights and interests of children are not separate, but shared, in the utopia which Alderson anticipates. Alderson’s (2013) chapter on “Inner Being: Alienation and Flourishing” sums up, for me what is most inspirational in Alderson’s critical realist theory of social science. She comprehensively demolishes the myth of “value free social science”. Research with children, she argues, is not only value-informed: its

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<sup>7</sup> There is an intriguing parallel with Flaschel’s (2009) idea that Marx’s “reserve army of labour” will disappear if the social democratic state gives all citizens, whether working or not a generous living allowance, in his model of ‘flexisecurity’.

entire goal in showing how children can “flourish” at the highest level of the MELD model is, as Bhaskar put it “value saturated” at each step in the MELD framework:

*Having reviewed support for value-informed social research, I now summarise MELD 4D, fourth dimension, where values are central ... the traditional Hegelian dialectic is taken towards logical, consistent completeness ... To include real being (ontology) and real transformation, MELD 1M first moment begins with non-identity and absence; 2E second edge involves negativity and oppressive power; 3L, third level, concerns open, dynamic totalities [of social structure] which move on to 4D, fourth dimension, of praxis, transformative agency in ethical practice and liberating power, the dialectic that is ‘the pulse of freedom’. I hope that this chapter, by showing all the MELD moments, will help to clarify the meaning and relevance of some earlier parts of this book. They all relate to the DCR logic that human beings inevitably desire and move towards freedom and justice, and that this is or should be the central concern of social science ... When individuals are out of touch and alienated from their body and nature (plane 1), from other people (plane 2), and from structures and institutions (plane 3) they can become unable to act in order to absent the absences and power2 [of oppressive forces], and they are denied the capacity for transformation at MELD 4D. (Alderson, 2013, p. 138)*

Although DCR is a complex philosophy for social science research, Alderson’s reconstruction of her previous research with children using the DCR framework, which she elucidates in the passage quoted above, is both enlightening and enervating. The reader’s journey in following this difficult intellectual model seems justified. According to Bhaskar (1993/2008): “Practical, concrete utopianism stands in contrast to abstract, intellectual utopianism ... being practical involves absencing constraining absences, as each in their own way, human beings try to overcome power2 and ‘master-slave’ relations’ in society and nature ... the dialectic is an inner urge that flows universally from the logic of elemental absence (lack, need, want, desire) ... against power relations towards freedom as flourishing.”

The critic will say that Alderson has taken a winding and intellectually convoluted path to reach an inspiring conclusion. But there is no denying that her work *is* inspirational.

Priscilla Alderson's (2013) reflections on the religious origins of "theories of the self" in critical realist theory is fascinating too, for the student of self-concept: she writes that: "Ideas about the self-illuminate the fourth plane of social being, the inner self, and MELD **4D** on *flourishing*, and its converse, *misery*." (p. 140)

Consideration of the soul, the inner or spiritual self, may be outside of the bounds of conventional sociology, but for Alderson "DCR explores unseen deeper realities, and shows the problems in social research that ignores them ... Without some explicit theories of human nature and the young self ... [research] ignores concepts of harm and benefit to children ... ideas from religion and philosophy seep into common imaginings of the self ... they [Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha] exemplified 'childlike' humility, poverty, humility, vulnerability, willingness to admit ignorance and to learn, with obedience to a transcendent goodness and an innocent detachment from worldly power." (pp 141-142) Alderson then turns back to her mentor, Roy Bhaskar (2002) who "theorised an embodied personality, a psychic being or soul or anima, and a ground state, all three striving for humanity."

Brad Shipway (2010) writing about critical realism's contribution to the discipline of education comments on CR as a philosophical and a transcendental (spiritual) model that "encompasses educational administrators and policy makers, teacher educators, and philosophers of education in what they do and think." CR uncouples itself from postmodernism, enabling researchers to describe the 'real' world through a grounded, value ontology. Shipway quotes Collier (1994): "... *critical realism is an ongoing research programme within the human sciences, and in particular in their theoretically and politically contentious border areas. It is certainly not a completed system which can be applied in these fields to solve all problems: on the contrary, by treating scientific projects as explorations of realities with inexhaustible depths, it helps to keep these projects open for self-criticism and development.*" (Collier, 1994, p. 236).

According to Shipway (2010) CR has "an emancipatory mission" for research and practice in education. "Critical realism supports a stratified, democratic use of



homology<sup>8</sup>, and the exercise of power is a vital condition for the possibility of emancipation of students and those who work with them.” (p. 5)<sup>9</sup>

### 3.2 Matthew Wilkinson: Dialectical Critical Realism and Islam

The generosity of the shared dialectical process also flows from Wilkinson’s (2015) analysis of Islam. He too uses the MELD hierarchy, and concludes his **1E** analysis: *“The Islamic Critical Realism (ICR) fulcrum offers the philosophical possibility that God may have granted genuine spiritual insight to those who fall outside one’s own religious tradition and this can enrich rather than threaten one’s own commitment to faith and facilitate a genuinely respectful engagement with the ‘other’.”* (p. 64)

Moving to **2E**, Wilkinson observes how Bhaskar (1993/2008) adapted Hegel: *“He radically alters the phases of dialectic into non-identity, to absence, to totality to transformative praxis in an extension of the ‘revindication’ of ontology and the positing of a new ontology of original critical realism.”* (p. 66) Further, on absence, Wilkinson observes: *“According to critical realist thinkers, absence, negativity and change are essential parts of the duality of presence and absence in being (Norris, 2010). For example silence is the precondition of speech, rests are indispensable to musical sound, and as we know from natural science, empty space is a necessary condition of solid objects. In the experience of selfhood, a sense/knowledge/belief that ‘I am this’ necessarily entails a sense/knowledge/belief that ‘I am not that.”* (p. 66)

In DCR absence is, crucially, transformative. “Indeed, dialectical change is understood by critical realists as the process ... of remedying or removing absence” (Bhaskar, 1993/2008). For Bhaskar, positive change is often the removal of, or progression from, something negative. The archetype of this movement is the process of abolishing (i.e. absenting) the conditions of slavery – and on the meaning of the “master-slave” relationship Bhaskar has much to say.

In Wilkinson’s (2015) account of the journey towards combining British and Islamic citizenship in Muslim adolescents, he first paints the **2E** picture of absence, and the ‘absence’ of seriousness’ in National Curriculum goals concerning citizenship

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<sup>8</sup> “Homology” is a term borrowed from biology which explains the link between “the transcendental realist world view”, and Roy Bhaskar’s political model of socialism (Collier, 1998, p. 469).

<sup>9</sup> It would be interesting to have a critical realist account of “emancipation” in the world of children’s friendships described by George & Clay (2013) and their idea of “challenging pedagogy”.

education. But as his research progressed, Wilkinson moved to 3L, the level of 'seriousness'. As an example, he cites Lovelock's (1979) idea of *Gaia*, the self-regulating, self-healing universe, which he relates to the Qur'anic idea of *kalifa* or stewardship of the earth. At this level, DCR concepts allowed Wilkinson to focus on transformative ideas, on the notion of the primacy of structure over individual agency. At the **4D** level, the meaning (and pedagogy) of citizenship education was taken outside of the classroom into 'the world', so that "... *unity-in-diversity is the bedrock of society, in which institutional structure both predominates over individual agency and can be transformed by it. This task of linking agency with structure means that more than any other subject at the level of 4D (Fourth Dimension – transformative praxis), citizenship education needs to be carried outside of the classroom into the community.*" (Wilkinson, 2015, p. 246).

I would be fascinated to see a critical realist programme of pedagogy in research and evaluation, addressing institutional racism, in a school case study.

### **3.3 Margaret Scotford Archer**

Archer is, in my reading, the most impressive of the sociologists who have been inspired by Bhaskar's critical realism, and its unfolding from and through Marxism and Hegel, into dialectical critical realism, into realms of theology, and how in critical realist theory, we may understand and apprehend notions of the divine (Archer et al., 2004).

Bhaskar's (1993/2008) earlier consideration of (and modification of) Marxian theory had led some American commentators to label him as a Marxist (and hence the virtual boycott of DCR by American sociologists – Gorski, 2013). Transcending the purely material concerns of Marxian ideology, he embarked on a spiritual journey, exploring Hindu and Buddhist concepts of self and soul (Bhaskar, 2002). Certainly, as Wilkinson (2013 & 2015) saw in adapting DCR in Islamic terms, there are profound possibilities of DCR transcendence in reconceptualising Islamic (and other theologies') approaches to citizenship education.

Archer's fullest and most eloquent account of "the internal conversation" for this reader is her 2003 volume *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. Her arguments concern "structure" (which has variable meaning in philosophy and sociology, but is seen as an enduring form), and "agency" (with similar debates about its meaning, but intuitively, how individuals relate, subjectively, to structure). Both

structure and agency exist independently (i.e. have ontological reality), and causal relations between them remain to be investigated. Structure and agency “are two distinctive and irreducible properties and powers, and ... human reflexive deliberations play a crucial role in mediating between them.” (p. 14) Thus *reflexivity* is central in Margaret Archer’s sociology: “*Were we humans not reflexive beings there could be no such thing as society. This is because any form of social interaction, from the dyad to the global system, requires that subjects know themselves to be themselves. Otherwise they could not acknowledge that their words were their own nor their intentions, undertakings and reactions belonged to them ... not one social obligation, expectation or norm could be owned by a single ‘member’ of society.*” (p. 19)

Moreover, the reflexive, internal conversations and self-appraisals of individuals in their interactions with others have, in Archer’s model, causal power in modifying structures: these “extrinsic effects ... mediating cultural and social properties of their societies ... and the private lives of social subjects are indispensable to the very existence and working of society.” (p. 52)

Archer draws ideas and insights on the social psychology of the self, described in the writings of William James (1890) and George H. Mead (1934/1974), whose ideas of self-other, and I-myself she analyses in detail, and is critical of their ideas of “personal reflexivity”: their idea of the “inner world” lacks autonomy in relation to the individual’s “outer world” – a crucial shortcoming, in Archer’s goal to “reclaim the internal conversation” as talking “to” society, not merely “about” society. Only then, Archer proposes “... we are in a position from which properly to consider the potentialities of our reflexive deliberations as the process which mediates between ‘structure and agency’.” (p. 129) Archer illustrates her thesis by analysing the “internal conversations” of twenty adults, making each a unique case study, in showing inter alia, “How the different *individual* modes of reflexivity, which mediate constraints and enablements in quite distinctive ways, are also related to *collective* action.” (p. 166)

Reflexivity does not usually lead to structural change, of course, and Archer illustrates why this is so in her analysis of types of reflexivity. But, reflections upon reflections, refined, shared and polished reflexives, “‘meta-reflexives’... are such because they pursue cultural ideals that cannot be accommodated by the current social structure and the array of contexts it defines ... By personifying their ideals of

truth and goodness, the meta-reflexives awaken them and re-present them to society. In so doing they re-stock the pool of societal values, by displaying alternatives to the aridity of third-way thinking – and its repressive consensus ... “ (Archer, 2003, p. 361).

A useful critique of Archer’s “reflexivity and conduct of the self” has been offered by Akram & Hogan (2015), who examine among things, how Archer’s idea of self-reflexion may challenge ideas of the “taken-for-granted” everyday events in the lives of individuals which form part of Bourdieu’s (1986) account of *habitus*. Bourdieu downplays ideas of freely willed choice in making decisions, focussing instead on how social and economic classes create reserves of social capital, through socialising those below them into “unconscious acceptance” of everyday lifestyles. It’s almost as if some wealthy elite had devised a newspaper called *The Sun*, which the workers may enjoy as their daily intellectual succour: this same cabal would have been responsible for creating ‘sink estates’ and poor quality comprehensives. This habitus of the labouring classes, and of the reserve army of labour is deeply entrenched. The proletariat’s only mode of upward mobility, like that of the proles in Orwell’s *1984*, is to win the lottery. Yet despite this gloomy continuity of class, Bourdieu allows that ‘misrecognition’ (akin to Marx’s ‘false consciousness’) can change over quite lengthy periods of time, or change in response to sudden upheavals, such as war. Bourdieu has appeal for some radical sociologists in that he seems to have identified how socio-economic classes perpetuate themselves through symbolic rituals which can be enduring across generations: but these rituals may also be identified, and changed (e.g. Carlisle, 2013; Garth, 2015; Savage, 2015).

Archer’s idea of morphogenesis, as part of a self-reflexive change in self-concept, a path to “social mobility” seems a light year away (or perhaps a “second edge” away in CR terms) from the rather depressing portraits of everyday social life which come from detailed ethnographic portraits of working class life which students of Bourdieu paint. For Akram & Hogan (2015) Archer proposes “... a seismic shift [from Bourdieu’s account] in how people form and conduct themselves in everyday life, a process that would result in the realization of extremely high levels of *ethical autonomy* ... she goes beyond Giddens’ and Bourdieu’s notions of everyday, routinized taken-for-granted actions ... offering an entirely new view of how people form, manage and understand themselves in everyday life.” (p. 610).

Archer (like Alderson, 2013, p. 80) does not reject Bourdieu's account of "everyday habitus", but offers instead a novel form of social psychology of everyday life. What is novel (among other things) is Archer's idea of *agency*, which is developed within the framework of Bhaskar's dialectical critical realism. Personal reflexivity (renewing one's own thoughts, feelings and actions in relation to those of others) is shared, according to Archer, by all people who find themselves in a common social situation. Akram & Hogan (2015) sum up their understanding of Archer's position: "*Reflexivity is the regular ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their social contexts and vice versa ... Reflexivity in modern society means a transition from a morphostatic to a morphogenetic society of constant change. Reflexivity is also linked to our emotional commitments and our moral concerns ... all of which help to maintain 'the internal conversation' which reflects ongoing conversations in agents about who they are, and how they see their lives progressing ... Archer's work raises the idea that individuals think about who they are (in the sense of personal and social identity) and modify their identity in the course of everyday being ... Central to such a practice of the self is a deep sense of awareness of who one is, how one became who they are, and the benefits of pursuing such new performative aspects of identity.*" (Akram & Hogan, p. 620)

In this new world (for it seems to be too exciting to be like the old world which we all remember): "*Reflexivity emerges from a new social and cultural order, which creates novel situational contexts, and which they must negotiate ... In such a scenario, agents draw upon their socially dependent, but nevertheless personal powers of reflexivity to define their courses of action ... Reflexivity is not necessarily positive, because it can also have negative outcomes ... some will be taking the best course, but may make mistakes ... not all reflexion is successful, but all are crucially trying to be reflexive.*" (Archer, 1995, p 110).

In *Making our Way through the World* (1995) Archer argues that there is movement between modes of reflexivity, taking the agent through the various levels of the MELD model (or not, as the case may be). But at each level the individual's "internal conversation" is crucial. Archer (2013, p. 13) defines four types of reflexivity, which can occur at any of the MELD levels: "*Communicative Reflexivity (conversations with others, before they can lead to action); Autonomous Reflexivity (internal*

*conversations that are self-contained, leading directly to action); Meta-Reflexivity (internal conversations about critical actions within society); Fractured Reflexivity (broken or negative conversations). And reflexivity can assume crucial importance in times of stress and change. Progress and change are not inevitable.”*

Akram & Hogan (2015) are impressed by Archer's thesis, and comment: *“Archer's work raises the idea that individuals think about the way they are (in the sense of personal social identity) modifying their identity in the course of everyday being ... But what does it mean when she says that agents regularly rethink and evaluate their everyday being? ... Central to such a practice of self-reflexion is a deep sense of awareness of who one is, how one became who they are, and the benefits of pursuing such new performative aspects of identity.”* (p. 621) Akram & Hogan raise important questions of how different Archer's idea of self-reflexion is from Bourdieu's notion of habitus: or at least, how one moves from one state of being, or knowledge, to another status. Archer's objections seem to be to Bourdieu's philosophical assumptions in his methodology (which Bhaskar would likely have rejected as flawed) in arriving at his model: she does not object to Bourdieu's moral impulse, which at the end of the day, seems close to her own.

This is a fascinating area for qualitative research, for eliciting extended accounts of how people in specific communities, or with shared pasts (e.g. ethnicities, childhood experiences) construe themselves through their intellectual, moral and emotional histories, their reactions to others, how they share thoughts, feelings and opinions. The agents in such a study might be people undergoing change in their lives and who are making choices for the future, reflecting on their past: a population of senior high school students might be ideal for such a study. Would the results confirm Archer's idea of achieving social mobility through self-reflection, or Bourdieu's idea of achieving personal change through the absorption of new ideas? I suspect that both ideas might be confirmed, or a new synthesis of both views might emerge: perhaps the four stage MELD model might even be applied to the results! One problem which such research might face however, is that if the researcher interviewed her informants repeatedly over a period of time, she herself would be part of the reflexive process, and might mould a set of ideas in her respondents simply by asking questions about key issues, without expecting particular answers. And of course, in the interim her

informants would be set on a train of thinking. The intelligent respondent might make an electronic search on being reflexive, and might begin to discuss Archer's, Bhaskar's and Bourdieu's ideas with her fellow students. And where would that lead us?

Margaret Archer (2014) replaces the idea of postmodernism with that of "late modernity", enabling a "trajectory towards a morphogenetic society". That, in Marxist terms, would be a society liberated from the oppression forces of alienation.

### **3.4 Critical Realism's Marxist dimension**

Throughout Critical Realist writing there is mention of Marx, much of it critical, although Roy Bhaskar (1992/2008) clearly draws inspiration from Marx and Hegel, even when he is moulding their ideas creatively into an entirely new way of understanding "society and nature." Collier (1994) writing about critical realism before Bhaskar developed his influential ideas concerning dialectical critical realism, observed: "On the basis of the critical realist solutions to these questions [e.g. how to reconcile structural causality with effective human agency] I suggest that Marxian social science is about *constraints on the reproduction and transformation of social structures*. The knowledge of these constraints is the ground for political judgements: constraints on the reproduction of society show how it cannot reproduce itself without developing certain destructive features ... " (p.234: italics in original).

This implies that critical realism should, like Marxism, be concerned with alienation, the separation of the individual from the 'natural' status implied by their relationship to the social equity required by 'labour' (employed, for example, in schools in the world of subordinated learning, or employment). This alienation, a form of habitus, is an "enslaving ideology" transmitted between generations: CR's (and DCR's task) is to 'unmask' this alienation, and replace 'false consciousness' with reflexive knowledge which enables social structures, and individuals interacting with structures, to reach a state of self-hood that melds them in the utopian awareness that may be the natural state of humankind.

There is lyrical parallel to morphogenetic insights, in the model of "wonder" which Ahmed (2004) derives from the writing of Descartes (on the body's first passions of cognitive surprise) and the "sensuous certainty" which Marx describes in the first dawning of consciousness in the unmasking of alienation: "*The body opens as the world opens up before it; the body unfolds into the unfolding of a world that becomes*

*approached as another body. This opening is not without its risks: wonder can be closed down if what we approach is unwelcome ... But wonder is a passion that motivates the desire to keep looking; it keeps alive the possibility of freshness, and vitality of living that can live as if for the first time ... wonder involves the radicalisation of our relation to the past, which is transformed into that which lives and breathes in the present.*" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 180).

Critical Realism, in Daniel Little's (2012) analysis sees critical thinking as "emancipatory". In both Marxist and CR traditions the term "critical" has specific meaning. Bhaskar cites Marx's Feurbach thesis: "The philosophers have sought to understand the world: the point however is to change it." In this model, critical science is an engaged or committed scientific endeavour, aiming to construct knowledge that may be, according to CR's emancipatory paradigm, for humanity's long-term benefit. Like Marx's *Capital*, which was subtitled "a critique of political economy", CR also attempts to expose the underlying ideologies of powerful interest groups, and to expose "false consciousness".

On the difficulties of research findings actually leading to change, Alderson (2013) observes: *"Many childhood researchers are disappointed that their 'participative research' ends with the neat reported findings (words) seldom leading to real, messy, transformative change (deeds). DCR helps to identify and remedy this problem, in following Marx by identifying five types of practical contradictions to be resolved if real change is to occur."* (p. 91). Alderson continues her analysis of DCR in Marxist mode in discussing Bhaskar's (1993/2008) borrowing from Marx of the idea of "the master-slave relationship", which goes beyond the power of "masters" in older societies to all kinds of power relationships: *"'Master-slave' relationships involve Marx's understanding of concepts that are central to DCR [identifying] ... forms that have immanent contradictions that can suggest an ideal and misleading representation of the world; and also a real world that can be described, classified and explained in various, changing and developing ways. Marx, as a scientific realist, believed that explanatory structures are essentially not only distinct from, but are often ... in opposition to the phenomena they generate. Examples include the way many schools fail many of their students ..."* (p. 111)



Marxist scholars who have identified “master-slave” relationships in schools are, for example Coard (1971 & 2004) on the labelling of Black children as “subnormal”; Willis (1979) on working class boys “learning to labour”; and Banfield, (2016). But the educational administrators of England will usually<sup>10</sup> maintain that authority in schools must be preserved, if we are to produce workers for a functioning economy. For Bhaskar (1993/2008), “The ruling classes claim their enduring power, far from being abuse of the slave by his master, is their right and duty (like the colonial ‘white man’s burden’) and is also in everyone’s best interests. This Marxist idea of false-consciousness, or *mystifying* of the reality, is propagated as a routine part of class power” (Alderson, 2013, p. 116)

Grant Banfield (2016) in his *Critical Realism for Marxist Sociology of Education* uses the terms “Marxist” and “Marxian” interchangeably. This, I infer, is a way of saying that although he is a Marxist, he is certainly not a Marxist-Leninist. He defers to Roy Bhaskar’s ‘spiritual socialism’, quoting Bhaskar’s early (1989) writing: “*I take it that whatever our politics ... socialists can agree that what we must be about today is the building of a movement for socialism – in which socialism wins a cultural hegemony, so that it becomes the enlightened common-sense of our age.*” (p. 1)

Banfield tells us that his ‘starting premise’ is that Marxian education is in Marx’s words ‘revolutionary practice.’ According to Banfield “*Education is part of what Gramsci has actually called ‘the war of position’ ... where the trenches of civil society are won in classrooms, workplaces, pubs and on street corners, that socialism becomes ... the enlightened common-sense of our age. According to Bhaskar, not only is there an elective affinity between critical realism and historical realism, but also the original intent of critical realism was to support the science of history that Marx had opened up ... it is in their differences that the real possibilities of a working relationship between critical realism and Marxism are established.*” (p. 1) This last point is important: DCR may draw on Marxist ideas, but it goes beyond Marx’s interpretation, e.g. his use of Hegel. Furthermore, “*A crucial defining feature of critical realism is the seriousness with which it takes ontology. This seriousness is an antidote to what we will see as tendencies in fields like the sociology of education (and Marxist sociology of education) to ontological shyness.*” (Banfield, 2016, p. 3)

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<sup>10</sup>Tim Brighouse (QVINE.org.uk), is an inspiring exception.

An ontology based on the stratified, four-level MELD model permits “... *Bhaskar’s stratified, differentiated ... real ontology indicating that what appears and is immediately experienced are only surface features of deeper realities ... Bhaskar’s emergentist ontology allowed him to advance an emancipatory critique of human-harming social structures ... with understanding of the structural causal relations underlying them comes an ethical responsibility to negate and overturn them. Science is simultaneously a social and emancipatory practice: the underlying methodological content common to both the natural and social sciences is emancipation: Bhaskar’s dialectic of ‘the pulse to freedom.’*” (Banfield, 2016, p. 4)

As Brad Shipway (2013) observes in his *A Critical Realist Perspective of Education*, schools are particularly appropriate places for a (Marxian) critical realist analysis and reconstruction. They contain, and control (and often harm) our precious children; they are the state’s agents of socialization; they control and discipline, preparing the young to be rulers, administrators, technicians, labourers, excluded minorities, or the reserve army of labour - according to their various rituals, and social structures ranging from those of the ‘public’ schools to the ‘crumbling comprehensive’ servicing sink estates (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016).

The conclusion is that critical realism enriches and humanises Marxism, and counters the development of reactionary themes such as “the dictatorship of the masses”. DCR’s spiritual aspirations concerning the soul and the self also enrich the insights of Marxism. Alderson’s use (2013 & 2015) of Bhaskar’s four level-analysis in writing about children and their emancipation, their flourishing, and their possibilities for fulfilled and non-alienated lives is profoundly creative, and inspirational. Collier (2002) argues that critical realism “can add to Marxism without taking anything away” - but he acknowledges that some of his fellow authors (in an edited volume on *Critical Realism and Marxism*), may disagree.

I conclude this section with the views of Creaven (2007), who is the most enthusiastic of the “Marxist critical realists”. Examining how Marx and Engels worked together, he observed that Engel’s was the “underlabourer”, clearing away the underbrush of false ideas and philosophical nonsense that impeded the clarity of Marxian ontological analysis. (Wilkinson, 2015, too uses the idea of underlabouring, which clarifies the road to emancipation in the critical realist model). Engels’ survey of

“the condition of the working class in England” was one of the underlabouring tasks for Marx’s theory of *Capital*, for instance. In Creaven’s (2007) analysis “Marxism was already, implicitly a critical realist social theory.” Thus Bhaskar’s evaluative realism, “... provides (in Marx’s phrase) ‘an ethical basis for championing the struggles of the oppressed’ as a natural principle of justice.” (p. 29)

In his most recent writing, Creaven (2015) uses the Bhaskar’s dialectical model to resolve the tensions between the “two Marxisms” – structuralism, and humanism - to show that there is a “coherent unity” between the two forms.

### **3.5 Application of Critical Realism models in different fields of research**

Critical realism and ‘social ontology’ models have become increasingly popular with researchers in several areas of social science research, although the bulk of research is still undertaken with children and adolescents in educational, health and social care settings. One interesting development is the growth of CR research in the area of industrial sociology, and human relations management (Zacharialis, Scott & Barrett, 2010), and a recent textbook (Edwards, O’Mahoney & Vincent, 2014) includes case examples of how to approach research settings in the CR mode, to collect relevant data, and interpret it using dialectical critical realism.

Easton (2010) offers a useful guide to case study research using critical realism, for use in organisational, business and human relations management (for an example of this application see, for instance, Abubaker & Bagley, 2016). In Easton’s CR model, the case study must be grounded on a firm ontological basis of “truth”, of a description of the nature and implicit values of the organisation studied. He recites the “basic assumptions” of CR: “Firstly, the world exists independently of our knowledge of it; secondly, our knowledge of the world is fallible, self-deceiving, cloaked in implicit or poorly-organised theories whose assumptions are not often explicit – thus our initial concepts of truth and falsity often fail to provide a coherent view of the relationship between knowledge and its object; thirdly, the realm we wish to research is differentiated and stratified ... by actions, texts and institutions, and they are all *concept dependent*.” (p. 120)

Easton urges: “Critical realism first of all makes the ontological assumption that there is a reality, but it is usually difficult to apprehend. I distinguish between the real world, the actual events that are created by the real world and the empirical events

which we can actually capture and record. Thus we will always be surprised about the nature of the real ... The research process is one of continuous cycles of research and reflection. The final result is the identification of one or more mechanisms that can be regarded as having caused events.” (Easton, 2010, p. 128)

Following Easton, I propose a case study of a preschool day nursery, in which the ontological assumptions about ‘reality’, causal processes, and the potentials for reflexive morphogenesis are, at different levels of the MELD framework, for the different agents (Alderson, 2016):

*The child:* is enrolled in the nursery according to some special criteria; plays, is fed, grows, learns, acquires beginnings of selfhood and ethnic identity, shares thoughts and feelings with peers. He or she begins to acquire concepts of gender, and values concerning a presumed place in the world.

*The nursery worker:* is burdened with social values, and implicit assumptions about how and what children should do and learn, in order for them to conform to the norms of the school into which they will graduate.

*The manager:* brings to the nursery group the values from above on who shall be admitted, and how they shall be handled and taught, and how parents should be dealt with.

*The researcher:* observes, learns from, cares about the children and their workers, engages in reflexive dialogue with herself and the workers and the managers, beginning to understand the patina of ‘false consciousness’, the web of deceit, which the social structure is using to control the children, who will soon ‘learn to labour’.

*The bureaucrat:* the faceless ones, who manipulate, control and deceive, who close the nursery and dismiss the children, because they are offered a large financial reward for so doing; they issue documents justifying this, which are cloaked in deceit and false assumptions. The ‘dismissed’ children learn their first lesson in the master-slave relationship, of being temporary or reserve workers in the capitalist social order.

In the Chapter and Appendices on my nursery school case study, I will try, *post facto* to elaborate this model, even though when I undertook that fieldwork, I had not come across the Critical Realist model of social research.

### 3.6 Conclusions and reflections on critical realism

In reading (or trying to read and make sense of) Bhaskar, Alderson, Wilkinson and Archer and other critical realists, I have been struck by a new facet of communication and information which influences all of our lives: the electronic information system of the web from which we are constantly gleaning information; and as well as sending frequent e-mails and texts, the sharing of ideas and images with friends (and others) on sites such as Face Book, Twitter etc. The youngsters among us are no longer truly part of themselves: we share ourselves, reflexively, with a much wider world than when Roy Bhaskar published his first book, in 1978. What is the meaning of this electronic world? Alderson (2013, p. 102) is worried about the covert collection of children's electronic data as a means of controlling them, an electronic version of Bhaskar's (1993/2008) 'master-slave' relationship. But there is also a powerful anarchy in the data which is collected on all of us, and liberation when it is released through the integrity of 'whistle-blowing'.

And finally, what of the older adolescents whose "souls have been murdered" (as Schatzman, 1973 puts it). I'm referring to results later in this thesis which have identified a group of adolescent women who lead shadow lives because of the chronic physical and sexual abuse they have endured. The qualitative researcher would likely elicit these accounts from her informants. But then, how should she intervene (as intervene she must)? And, returning to Alderson's (2013 & 2016) reconstruction of her earlier work with children, how might the researcher help these adolescent women achieve a self-actualization of identity?<sup>11</sup>

Alderson observes that: "*Children and adults learn about their needs through their bodily experiences within relationships; they express their needs and views through their bodies; and they are respected or disrespected in the casual or harsh ways in which their bodies are treated in practice.*" (Alderson, 2013, p. 94) She is writing about her research with physically challenged children: but these words could have been written of physically and sexually abused children. How can Archer's

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<sup>11</sup> This is, alas, not an academic speculation but one based upon my anguish at the results, reported in a later chapter of this thesis, concerning the "Northern Schools Study" which found that some five percent of adolescent women had "devastated self-esteem", often reflecting prolonged physical and sexual harassment, maltreatment, and abuse.

inspiring message of personal growth help us in bringing these children and adolescents through 'absence' to their fullest potential?

Finally, I want to emphasise how exciting and life-changing critical realist theory may be . Once you have absorbed it (or your personal version of it, since different actors will perceive DCR writings differently, and take away different aspects of the model in their quest for truth-telling and social change) your life, your thinking and feeling about the world will never again be the same. Reflecting, thinking, feeling, relating to one's own thoughts and those of others is exciting, a daily excitement which is never lost. In my case, and in that of my thesis supervisor Christopher Bagley this is a shared journey, since we have discovered critical realist theory together, and our reflexive, morphogenetic processes are closely shared.

I am empowered in being confident that *my* value judgements and the actions that derive from them can be important: in research I now move easily from 'is' to 'ought', and reflexively through dialogue and debate with my academic and professional partners, set new goals and horizons for achieving liberation, and see ways of escape from alienation and 'false consciousness' imposed on myself and others.

Critical realism gives to the student what Ahmed (2004) calls a sense of "wonder" in rediscovering and redesigning the social matrix of her world: *"This critical wonder is about recognising that nothing in the world can be taken for granted, which includes the very political movements to which we are attached. It is this critical wonder about the forms of political struggle that makes Black feminism such an important intervention, by showing that categories of knowledge (such as patriarchy or 'women') have political effects, which can exclude others from the collective ..."* (Ahmed, 2004, p. 182).

## Chapter 4: Child-Centred Humanism (CCH): A Guiding Value?

*The final and unavoidable conclusion is that education-like all our social institutions must be concerned with final values, and this in turn is just about the same as speaking of what have been called 'spiritual values' or 'higher values'. These are principles of choice which help us to answer the age-old 'spiritual' (philosophical? humanistic? ethical?) questions: What is the good life? What is the good man? The good woman? What is best for children? What is justice? Truth? Virtue? What is my relation to nature, to death, to ageing, to pain, to illness? How can I live a zestful, enjoyable, meaningful life? What is my responsibility to my brothers? Who are my brothers? What shall I be loyal to? What must I be ready to die for?*

Abraham Maslow (1964/2014). *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences*, p. 64.

*In Sierra Leone, one in 21 fifteen-year-old women will die of a maternal-related cause; in Italy the figure is one in 17,100, but in the USA, the country that spends more on healthcare per head than any other, it is one in 1,800. Why?*

Michael Marmot (2015) *The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World*, p. 36.

### 4.1 Introduction

I have attempted to employ the principle of Child-Centred Humanism as an ethical ground which *underlabours* throughout this thesis. The concept of underlabouring is part of a Critical Realist (CR) research model. Within CR, what underlabouring is concerned with is the general ethical model, the working model through which ethical principles and practices are weighed and performed. The under-labourers are the everyday workers, of good-will who in Collier's (1994) script: "... aim to remove the idols (Bacon), obstacles (Locke) or ideologies (Marx) that stand in the way of, new knowledge to be produced by the [social] sciences." (p. 19)

Every person is their *own* philosopher in Critical Realism, not just the professor in her ivory tower. And Alderson observed that critics "... overlook how philosophy is integral to everyday and research thinking, and that a main task of philosophy is to be an under-labourer, clearing away rubbish and laying foundations. The philosopher Mary Midgley (1996) compares philosophy with plumbing. These can both be ignored and taken for granted until they are not working well ... and plumbing's equivalent in clear logical thinking, has to be fixed." (Alderson, 2013, p. 20)

For the Muslim Critical Realist (Wilkinson, 2015), underlabouring is both literally and figuratively, doing good deeds like clearing the highway of rubbish, effectively implementing the *Sunnah*, the life and teaching of Prophet Muhammad. In Hadith 26 of Imam Nawawi's collection, for example: "Every joint of a person must perform a charity each day that the sun rises ... every good word is a charity ... and removing a harmful object from the road is a charity." Every step, every action, must serve others, and in Child Centred Humanism every action, thought, deed and intention must 'underlabour' the principle: *Children First*.

I have adopted the CCH model to guide the interpretation of what to examine, and how to interpret findings, since it is a model favoured by Christopher Bagley, my thesis supervisor. It is thus politic for me to adopt his CCH principles: at some time in the future I may interrogate this model, and through a process of dialectical critical realism, may try and develop a new, better, or alternative model. On the other hand, CCH has much to commend, and it seems to cohere with the ethical and change elements of Critical Realism.

An understanding of CCH grew out of Bagley's (1973) review of the literature on legal decisions surrounding child adoption, in which it became clear that the higher courts in Britain were increasingly likely to put the child's interests first, when the rights (or demands) of adults for possession and control of the child conflicted with what judges thought were the child's best needs and interests. Bagley translated this idea of "children first" into a more general philosophy of child welfare and child care (e.g. Bagley, Young & Scully, 1993), termed "total child welfare" meaning that all human institutions and actions should be designed and operated on the principle of "children first".

Inspirational here was Colin Ward's (1979) book of joyful anarchy *The Child in the City*, which showed how children adapted to, and then took over, city spaces. Bagley expressed outrage at the violation of children's space and movement, this "absent" army of victims, by the power given to an adult-centred, materialist world in which the motor vehicle, and its right to move speedily through children's spaces, had primacy. He showed that in Canadian and in British cities (1992 & 1993) that many thousands of children were killed or severely injured each year by these steel assassins as the children ran, played, crossed roads to reach play spaces or schools,



or cycled on city roads. Moreover, it was children of the economically poor who were most likely to be killed in this way, since they perforce lived in areas most cut through by traffic.

Christopher Bagley extended the concept of CCH into a more general humanistic doctrine, arguing that such humanism could have either a secular or a religious basis, and could be founded in Quaker ideas of universalism which, in application, always made children's needs and interests primary (Lampen, 2015), ideas also extended to the humanistic treatment of child victims of sexual assault whom Bagley (1995a & 1999b) saw as frequent victims of the panicked processing of a system designed to help them. The humanist principle was also extended to the treatment of child sexual abuse offenders (following Hank Giarretto's (1981) humanistic treatment model (Bagley, 2003; Bagley & LeChance, 2000).

CCH has *psychological roots* in Carl Rogers' humanist psychology, the "third way" (the middle ground of integration between behaviourism and psychodynamics). From Rogers CCH draws pedagogic ideals of knowing each *individual* child in a group, and caring deeply about their needs, strengths and aspirations. This is why CCH is a firm advocate of small school classes, assuming that the teacher cannot know adequately each pupil when class sizes rise above, say 15 per teacher.

Abraham Maslow's humanistic idea of positive psychology fits well within the CCH philosophy of serving the developing needs of the child, adolescent and adult for nurturing, physical care, safety, love, esteem, and stimulation, to reach the fullest fulfilment for both the child and the adult. This *Psychology of Being* (1968) is embedded in religious ideals and values which enable "peak experiences" of actualization (Maslow, 1964/2014).

CCH has a *theological underpinning*, assuming (with Quakers and Muslims) that all children are born, not sinful, but are joyfully seeking from, birth with their inmost spirit, the spirit in others "playing cheerfully in the world" (to paraphrase George Fox).

CCH treats each child as a unique and special human being, with a unique combination of needs, abilities, strengths, and aspirations. The parent, the teacher and the counsellor needs to understand, in the Thomas-Chess account of the uniqueness of child in the developmental matrix – and the principle that adult actions and interactions regarding the child must be modelled on the "goodness of fit" between

the unique combination of each child's biological, personal and social gifts, and the adult nurturing of those gifts (Chess & Thomas, 1999). Bagley & Mallick (2000b) tried to apply this model in their longitudinal study of child temperament (replicating Chess & Thomas), showing with case studies and statistical data, that two children with identical needs at birth could "spiral up" or "spiral down" (e.g. into delinquency) according to how adults interacted with them.

*Children's rights* are central in the CCH model. For adults there are three kinds of rights: transcendental or absolute (e.g. the right to have basic needs for nutrition, safety and love to be met); contractual (e.g. those mutual rights and obligations as the child grows older, and becomes of age, defined in a legal contract); and social (e.g. the developing citizen's right to freedom, and their obligation to respect the freedom of others, in the social contract on which society is implicitly founded.) Children have a special set of rights, and for a definition of these I turn to the developmental psychology of Maslow (1954/1970). Maslow's pyramidal diagram of human needs is well-known, and I will not reproduce it here. At its base, are the child's physiological needs for food, water, warmth, safety and security: in the CCH model the child has an *absolute right* to have those needs met by surrounding adults. There cannot be any reciprocal basis to the meeting of those needs. As the child grows older, she or he is socialized and educated, with a growing body of reciprocal relationships. "I help you" is implicit in the relationship in which "you help me."

These reciprocal relationships grow into a set of interactions which make up the social contract. Society has a duty to enable young people to maximise their talents, and to esteem themselves (and others) psychologically. At the apex of the pyramid is *self-actualization*, making the most of the talents and the psychological, social and material wealth which society has given us, for the benefit of our own spiritual growth, in ways which maximise the welfare of our common citizens: and of course, the welfare of the most precious citizens who are our children.

#### **4.2 The Rogerian tradition**

Abraham Maslow, George Kelly and Carl Rogers have been categorized as "phenomenological personality theorists" (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2007) who are philosophically grounded in notions of personal freedom and personal development (the essence of CCH).

Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology which focuses on individual uniqueness, and the possibilities for "harmonic growth" - that is, achieving fulfilment through meeting ethical goals involving other people - is important in CCH *provided that* self-development is intimately linked to social development. Rogers teaches the psychology of human development not by statistical materials, but by a series of individual case studies of adults reflecting on how they experienced challenge in childhood and young adulthood (Rogers & Stevens, 1967).

We learn, says Rogers "to be free" through our parents' care, and the kindness of our teachers, and the reciprocal rewards that being a good citizen brings. "Trust" and "empathy" are the markers of the progress of the adult. "Being free" has to be learned, through self-discipline. It is a reflexive process, in which learning to love ourselves, we love others: we love "our" child, we love children, we love "your" child. In this reflexive social contract we seek the equality of all citizens (Rogers, 1961 & 1980; Kirschenbaum & Henderson, 1990). In the Rogerian model of social exchange, each person "opens the spirit" to others in a trusting and creative manner, absorbing the goodness and goodwill of the other person. In this process the individual acts freely (i.e. exercises free will, and in the course of doing this, self-discipline, or 'discernment' as Quakers would say). 'Free will' in the Critical Realistic dialectical model which we are applying here, is not merely an abstract decision or choice: it is based on dialogue, communication and questioning, making sense of oneself in relation to one's past, and one's current interactions, and fresh information on the meaning and effects of one's choices. Anderson (2013) illustrates this beautifully in her accounts of children making choices concerning life-changing surgery for conditions such as scoliosis.

CCH as applied to education follows Rogers & Freiberg (1980) in insisting that teachers should know their children as *individuals*, and be focused on the child's individual development within the classroom group. This is only possible if the class of children is small enough for the teacher to know each child well, and engage in an individual teaching plan for each child in the classroom. In this model, a school class should not contain more than 15 children, large enough for children to play creatively with others, and to learn co-operation with the larger group. 'The fifteen' may also contain children with challenging psychological and physical needs. CCH informs the review, later in this thesis in the section on Equality, on the necessity for small classes which accommodate those with 'special needs', and some relevant research evidence

on this topic is reviewed in an Appendix A of this thesis (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016). This research shows, perhaps unsurprisingly, that in smaller classes there are fewer 'off task' interactions amongst children, more focus by teachers on individual needs of children, and in the long-term enhanced scholastic and social skills in the child and in the adolescent and adult that they become (e.g. Blatchford, 2003).

The critic of Rogers may argue that this is a bourgeois, individualistic concept of self-realisation, unavailable to "ordinary" working people and their families. This is certainly true, and it is true also that being a pupil in a class of 15 students or less, is usually the privilege of those whose parents have been able to purchase a private education. But it does not deny T. H. Green's social democratic principle that every child should be enabled to enjoy the privileges of the most wealthy in the land. Rich countries such as Britain, as we argue in the appended paper on equality can easily afford to fund such a quality of education for every child.

John Lampen, an advocate of Quaker schools founded on Quaker educational principles argues that we must look not at the schools themselves, but at: "*... the environmental therapy movement which Friends and others developed to meet the needs of 'difficult' children evacuated during 1939-45 War. Their practice recognised each child's innate worth and capacity for good by creating systems of governance and discipline which embodied Quaker testimonies to peace and equality ... this is one of the great Quaker contributions to education in the last 200 years.*"

Within Quakers there is currently a vigorous debate ongoing about what exactly Quaker values in education are, or should be, and the organisation and practice of the seven Quaker secondary schools in Britain and Ireland is being examined in detail (Newton & Broadfoot, 2016). What is common in these schools is that classes are small, and teachers focus on "the inner worth and capacity for good" of each child<sup>12</sup>.

The dialectical critical realist model's perspective on moral realism (Bhaskar, 2008; Archer, 2016) seeks "to avoid the *anthropic fallacy* that places humans at the centre of the purpose and meaning of the universe." (Bhaskar, 2000 p. 26). Following this principle, CCH is not an individualist goal, even though it adopts Rogerian principles of phenomenology in child and adult development: it has a universalistic

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<sup>12</sup> [www.qvine.org.uk](http://www.qvine.org.uk)

purpose, applying not merely to individuals, your children and my children, but to all of humanity's children, past and present.

Thus CCH has a view of the history of childhood, which western society has only recently come to understand as a separate area for concern (Mayall, 2013). This suppression of childhood's history is a form of alienation: in Alderson's (2016) words: "The present estranged, destructive relations between humans and nature suggest that many people are alienated from their physical human nature in different ways that need to be researched separately and together ... The effects of alienation were evident in the severe ill-health of children and adults in Victorian slums and factories ... and are replicated today in many majority world cities." (p.27) Friedrich Engels (1845) in his *The Condition of the Working Class in England* drew ecological maps of Manchester showing the worst zones of deprivation. Today some of those zones of deprivation in Manchester are sited *in exactly the same city zones*. (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016).

#### **4.3 Thomas Hill Green, 1836 to 1882**

The nineteenth century *political theorist* Thomas Green (1999) may seem an odd intellectual pairing with the humanist self-theorists of twentieth century America. Green was a remarkable thinker, laying the intellectual and moral ground for the development of the British welfare state by Beveridge and his followers. Green argued that the twin goals of human activity ought to be to maximise the citizen's welfare, and to maximise that citizen's freedom. Green argued passionately that being economically poor, being poorly educated, enduring degraded housing environments and working conditions, undermined the citizen's freedom, including that citizen's ability to contribute interactively in any kind of metaphysical social contract, to the welfare of others (Wempe, 2004). Green stated: "An interest in the common good is the ground of political society, in the sense that without it no body of people would recognise any authority as having a claim on their common obedience." (Green, 1942, 45-46).

Green's ethical socialism had a metaphysical ground, which he took from Hegel's *Propaedeutik*: that in self-reflection the individual citizen recreates himself or herself in daily reflection in acknowledging his or her own duty (maximising concern for others, and the freedom in oneself), and eliciting such actions in one's fellow citizens, in a dialectical system of interchange with oneself and with one's compatriots

seeking, as Quakers would say, that of God in everyone (indeed, Green was a fervently religious socialist - Boucher & Vincent, 2006). It should be said that Green took on board Hegel's "naïve idealism", which is criticised and reformulated by Roy Bhaskar (2008) in his marriage of critical realism and the dialectical method (Norrie, 2010). But it should also be said that for all its challenging complexity, Roy Bhaskar's *The Philosophy of Metareality: Creativity, Love and Freedom* (2012) also has much to commend itself to CCH. And we are glad to sign up T.H. Green as a patron of CCH, since his heir, the British welfare state, is a crucially important element in fostering child welfare (just as dismantling the welfare state is an attack on children and their welfare).

In Green's personal self-development in supporting a benevolent social contract, there is an interesting parallel in Margaret Archer's (2003) idea of morphogenesis, part of the critical realist model. Indeed, Green's model of metaphysical introspection and recreation of the self-other bond of mutual generosity in daily thought and interaction, seems to me to fit remarkably well with Archer's idea of a social structure grounded in a process of continuous reflexivity.

Archer's ideas (Archer 1995 to 2012) on reflexivity fit well within the Child-Centred Humanism (CCH) model outlined here, and also with the ideas of loving interchange between human beings advocated by Rogers. The critical realism that Archer proposes is a revolutionary model (following Bhaskar, 2008) of how humans conduct themselves in everyday life, achieving high levels of "ethical autonomy" in which one appraises oneself in relation to other agents in the wider social system. This reflexive self-other system is a "morphogenetic" one of continuous change. Each individual, in this reflexive process, engages in "internal conversations" which are shared with the reflexivity of others who are also reflecting on and communicating their own internal conversations about novel situations. Each day these collaborating individuals in their networks of support and friendship, both negotiate, and create the matrix of change (Power 1, *liberation* versus Power 2, *oppression*, in Bhaskar's model).

While of course evil remains in the world, and existing power systems of rich over poor, and of ignored or exploited children remain, Archer's emphasis on liberation and 'upward mobility' through an increasing self-consciousness in all of our actions,

is clearly an optimistic one. One is struck by some remarkable similarities between Thomas Green's Hegelian dialectic in recreating selfhood on a daily basis (in Green's case, through daily prayer and contemplation), and Margaret Archer's perpetual reflexivity in finding ethical pathways for oneself in relation to one's fellow citizens. For both Green and Archer, the goals seem to be freedom, choice, and autonomy in reaching goals of social justice.<sup>13</sup>

Archer's notion of reflexivity is the most optimistic manifestation of Bhaskar's 'four-sided cube' model of society (material transactions with nature/social relations between agents/interpersonal relations between individuals as subjects, and not as subordinated agents/intra-subjective relations as the internal reflections of the subjects, engaging in self (re)construction of their personal and cultural identities). In Bhaskar's four-level model of dialectical critical realism, there is constant interplay, dialogue and power struggles between each facet of the cube in "geohistorical space." If this sounds complicated and difficult, it is because Bhaskar *is* complicated and difficult, but the challenge of critical realism is also extremely exciting.

Margaret Archer's work grew out of her concern with comparative studies of educational sociology in Europe, including the struggles of working class children to achieve upward social mobility (Archer & Giner, 1971; Archer, 1979). Her work has expanded in its moral compass to possess a very complete ethical domain. Like other critical realists (e.g. Bhaskar, Collier, Wilkinson) she is both radical in a political sense (Scambler, 2012), but nevertheless, also appears to be strongly influenced by (as was Green) "the ontology of God".

Although Archer does not make explicit her theological position (except in one joint publication – Archer, Collier & Porpora. 2014, on "the divine ontology" replacing positivist agnosticism), I detect elements of the Vincentian *will* in her position: each human being, however wretched their situation (e.g. as a slave, or a prisoner) has moral challenges each day, possibilities of kindness and mercy to others which they may act upon, reflect upon, and recreate themselves in, despite their wretched

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<sup>13</sup> Wilkinson (2015) uses an Islamic model of critical realism in a rather similar way: the five daily prayers and reflection on The Qur'an and Sunnah (life and teaching of the Prophet Muhammad) are models by which human reflection can be liberating, allowing the ideal society created by the Prophet Adam to roll out across the earth. There are similar, parallel themes in Franciscan and Quaker theologies. Note that a cube has six sides: in Wilkinson's CR schema, Creation is the foundation of the cube, and the attainable Paradise forms the highest level.

situation: spiritually at least, their pattern was one, as Archer would put it, of 'upward mobility' (Vincent de Paul, himself a slave for many years, argued that even the 'poorest' human was capable of daily acts of kindness – Pujo, 1998).

Reflecting on one's past, the events of yesterday, the events of childhood is a core part of Roy Bhaskar's dialectical interchange in which the passive past ("the absence") is pondered and recreated in a new present. In this model we recreate not merely ourselves, but also the ethic that childhood is primary.

This self-reflective pathway to ethical behaviour is grounded psychologically, in Mead's idea of the reflexive self, modified and extended by Archer (2003).

#### **4.4 Conclusions**

Finally, I follow Bagley in adding to CCH Marx's idea of alienation from the self, imposed by a capitalistic society in which making profit is the dominant motive, explicit or implicit, ordering how human values are *officially* framed, and how social institutions and public debates are moulded. In Marxian theory, the capitalist system has created an underclass, a 'reserve army of labour' who are chronically unemployed and under-skilled but who can be called on it times of economic boom or growth to become labourers and service workers,, for the benefit of capital and the minimisation of wages (for the reserve army is constantly looking for work, at or below minimum wage level). The children of the poor, in this model, must be segregated into 'sink' estates of public housing, in which they can be observed, ordered, contained and controlled. Some of these children would, as Engels (1845) observed, graduate into being career criminals and can be safely contained in penal institutions. Others can be given a decent second class education which will enable them, when required, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water.

CCH is passionately concerned with the unmasking of the alienation which clouds the consciousness of these families and children (who temporarily contain ethnic and religious minorities, and refugees; but with a solid phalanx of 'poor whites'). As Scambler (2013) writes of Margaret Archer's view of Marxian theory: "To introduce the concept of ideology it is necessarily to introduce that of false-consciousness." And dialectic critical materialism's reflexive model can in its reflexive, morphogenetic mode, help those with "fractured reflexivities" to grasp "true-consciousness", sharing with those in the ghettoized sink estate a fuller realisation of their position.



*Everyone*, in T.H. Green's and M.S. Archer's models of social action, may achieve upward mobility, to the life of the gentle-person. In Wilkinson's Islamic CR model, it is the journey on the Straight Path (the focus of each of the five daily prayers) that ensures that the faithful imitate Prophet Muhammad's peaceful example, on the straight road to Paradise. For Muslims, the soul given by God resides in each human being, not merely in other Muslims, and the Muslim's task is to seek out and serve (as do Quakers) the soul of everyone (Bagley, 2015). Again CCH's model of reciprocal love, and CR's reflexive morphogenesis seem to converge.

Now, this model of Child Centred Humanism is complex and controversial, and I borrow it from my supervisor, Christopher Bagley. I do not necessarily agree with all of the assumptions of this model, but for purposes of this thesis, I am prepared to defend it.

#### 4.5 Appendix The Children's Charter of Development Rights

(<http://bit.ly/ChildrensCharter>)

The following Children's Charter, which I reproduce here since it fits so well with CCH principles, has been produced by the Save Childhood Movement, reflecting Article 3 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child: "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts or administrative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration." The Children's Charter advocates:

**'Awareness:** *Children have the right to live in societies that are fully informed about the evidence supporting healthy human learning and development, societies which take action to protect children's rights and freedoms based on this awareness.*

**'Health and Wellbeing:** *National and local decision makers have the duty to provide environments that maximise children's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. In doing so they should recognise the vital importance of parents, families and local communities and the intrinsic human need for belonging and contribution.*

**'New Technology:** *Policy makers have the duty to ensure that young people's development is safeguarded from the unintended developmental consequences of living in a digital world.*

**'Learning and development:** *Children have the right to be protected from any system that might inhibit their innate curiosity, creativity and love of learning ....*

**'Adult Wellbeing** *is essential for child wellbeing. Adults have the right to expect the cultural and social systems within which they live to support their own learning and self development. Children ... have the right to be protected from any relationships that are uninformed or harmful to their health and well-being.*

**'Pre-Birth:** *... mothers and babies have the right to be protected from all factors that might compromise their health perinatal and birth experiences.*

**'Engagement and Encouragement:** *Children have the right to be in the company of informed and encouraging adults who help to enhance the ways in which they can relate to and understand the world.*

**'Physical Activity:** *Children have the right to be provided with environments that enable them to develop all of their senses and physical capacities.*

**'Body Image:** *Children have the right to be protected from negative media and commercial influences that might undermine their confidence and self-worth.*

**'Play:** Children have the right to be provided with the time and space to explore their environments in unstructured ways that nurture their creativity, independence, self-confidence, self-expression, cooperation and emotional resilience.

**'Risk-Taking:** Children have the right to learn from challenge, to experience failure as learning, and to become confident and adventurous explorers of the environment.

**'Wonder and Awe:** Children have the right to maintain a deep connection with the natural world that helps them feel part of something greater than themselves and fosters compassion and empathy ...

**'Stewardship:** Children have the right to be protected from systems that endanger their own future. They need to learn about plants, animals and ecosystems so that they understand the importance of balance and sustainability and can grow up as stewards of the environment.'

(For the full text from which the above quotations are taken, see: [www.savechildhood.net](http://www.savechildhood.net))

## ***II Historical Overview***

### **Chapter 5: Equality and Ethnicity 1968 to 2008: Selected Episodes of History**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

*There are perhaps three kinds of books one write on the subject of 'history' ... One is a 'how-to' guide to practice. Another is a philosophical investigation into theories of knowledge. The third is a polemic supporting a particular approach. (Arnold, 2000, i)*

This section on aspects and elements of the recent history of ethnicity and equality contains elements of the third of Arnold's approaches. It is a polemic undertaken using some of the assumptions of Bhaskar's (2008) dialectical critical realism, as identified by Archer (2008) and Alderson (2013 and 2016).

The events of yesterday are past: everything is history. Ethnographers (e.g. Glass, 2016) argue that we should address this history not merely from documented, external facts, but from individual, life-time memories which become embodied in folk memories (the "history from below" described by Jordonova, 2006).

The Jamaican teenager, on finally leaving secondary school triumphantly shouts, "Free paper come!" This *free paper*, the document of manumission is the release from slavery *and* later from the oppression of a grinding discipline of educational systems still infected with the ghost of colonial values, with set books for English examination boards which ignored the literature of the Caribbean underclass, and the history of slavery and colonial oppression (Searle, 1973). The pain of that slavery is transmuted into the wail of Bob Marley, and the song of "Sallow Brown" the child of a slave and a white owner, who is separated forever from family through being sold. In the Caribbean psyche, in its patois and folktales derived from West Africa's *Anansi*, who defied capture by the slavers, there is a hidden theme of alienation (the imposed separation of body, social being and spirit) that has to be resolved. But, as the Critical Realist model teaches, individuals are often "alienated from their past" by powerful structural forces (Alderson, 2016). Folk memories may reintegrate that past.

The past recalled by the ethnographer is both an account of her own past, and the past memories and current ideologies of those with whom she engages in research (Glass, 2016).

The history of education, identity and ethnicity in Britain since the late 1960s is part of my folk memory, my own ethnic identity, a personal account expressed through reviewing and recollecting the events surrounding “colonial immigration” and the adaptation of a British class system to order and control these immigrant vestiges of empire. British society was, and still is psychologically, a colonial power whose wealth was enhanced by the slave trade. As Fekete (2009) argues, Britain’s “new McCarthyism” is founded on deeply embedded ideas in British history of the need for conformity to white, British values and the desire to root out dissidents, extremists, and religious non-conformists (e.g. Muslims).

The strata of British society are the hidden holders of wealth, an international cabal whose wealth is largely hidden in their offshore accounts; then there are the white administrators, politicians and professionals who maintain (or at least order) the tradition of British values, and the smooth working of the capitalist system; their underlings are the middle whites, senior clerks and overseers who administer this class-based capitalist system: and then the workers artificially divided into several sectors. First are the lower whites, heirs of colonial clerks and tradesmen, and their siblings – heirs of the soldiers and sailors who administered the empire; then there are the imported colonial subjects and their descendants; and a permanent underclass who serve various functions – as scapegoats for economic inequalities, and as a ‘reserve army’ who can be used to depress wages and enable capitalism to function efficiently.

There are small, but important, fragmented ‘status’ groups and their ‘parties’, in Weberian terminology: the artists; the intellectuals; the critics, the scholars whose commentary is safely ritualised within their collegiate holding-pens; the rabble of journalists; the trade unionists of uncertain power; and the spiritual leaders who hold in check the confused anger of any congregation they are able to muster. Finally there is the important seed of refugees, and the newly-nascent Islamic groups who are now the fashionable targets of disdain and hatred amongst the middle- and lower-whites, and their organs of information.

The popular history of England is a falsified one, unconsciously embedded in the language which lauds the ephemeral British values which must be taught to children so they will not become radical<sup>14</sup>, for a radical is dangerous: ‘... *is it better to ‘think’ without having critical awareness, in a disjointed or episodic way? In other words, is it better to take part in a conception of the world mechanically imposed by the external environment, i.e. by one of the many social groups in which everyone is automatically involved from the moment of his [sic] entry into the conscious world ... Or on the other hand, is it better to work out consciously and critically one’s own conception of the world and thus, in connection with the labours of one’s own brain, choose one’s sphere of activity, take an active part in the creation of the history of the world, be one’s own guide, refusing to accept passively and supinely from outside the moulding of one’s own personality?’* (Gramsci, 1971, pp 323-4, quoted by Collier, 1994).

This then, is the theme of radical education: writing, thinking, exchanging ideas to form a set of values wherein the individual’s alienation might become unmasked. To know the world in this way is to desire its change. Chris Searle, the radical teacher and headmaster who was dismissed from his headship for trying to ‘unmask’ the alienation of schoolchildren in England, sets out five brilliant principles of a radical, ‘inclusive education’:

*An ‘inclusive school’ cannot exist if it accommodates itself within a system of market competition and rivalry. Such a system needs its failures to balance its successes, its unsaleable goods to complement its retail profits... Secondly, and fundamentally, there is the question of curriculum. An inclusive curriculum starts from the breadth of the lives of its students and their communities, and goes on broadening. The inclusive school is a school of the world: it does not stop at being the school of the nation. Its curriculum includes the narratives of all who impact upon it. It does not restrict itself to a canon of established work – it is a tool of discovery, a creative mechanism by which the autobiographies of all of the lives of the school can be told or explored; all their histories, languages, beliefs and skills. It goes beyond the personal, institutional and national boundaries that it breaks through ... Thirdly, the inclusive school is a critical school. It takes nothing from above on trust. It uses its languages to examine and*

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<sup>14</sup> *Fundamental British Values in the Early Years* (2015) and *Prevent Duty Guidance* (2015) available at <https://www.gov.uk>

*critique. It educates young scholars – who are also young critics – and teaches them – to quote Brecht, to ‘grab hold of a book. It’s a weapon. You must take over the leadership.’ ... Fourthly, there is the relationship the ‘inclusive school’ has with its community of learners and their families, who often become the teachers of the teachers. This community offers a depth of support, involvement, knowledge and governance which can build such a symbiosis, that school and community become one ... Fifthly, there is the dimension of a school’s ethos: an inclusive school should be a place of trust, care and intercommunal friendship. It should be a bulwark against division ... a centre of active participation and democracy, where its constituents have their own fora - and, most pertinent, it should be a centre of growth in co-operative empowerment among students and teachers, and an incentive towards the empowerment of the community it serves. (Searle, 2001 pp 149-150)*

Fifteen years after Searle was writing, concepts of “inclusive school values” had taken a significant turn, with the passing of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act of 2015, which has led to schools (state and private) being issued with the Prevent Duty Guidance, in which teachers were required to teach ‘British values’ which required verbal conformity to the British state. Any teacher or school governor who deviated from these guidelines was liable to be issued with a letter declaring him or her to be a “non-violent extremist” – the case of the governor of a Birmingham primary school caught up in the “Trojan Horse” affair is a case in point.<sup>15</sup> This is not a climate in which Chris Searle would survive as a teacher, offering his pupils ideas derived from Berthold Brecht.

One of my tasks then, in this thesis, is to provide glimpses of a historical account through a radical lens, of the origins of education for minority children in England from 1968 to 2008. The final year of that review was still a time of hope.

By ‘minority’ I mean children whose ethnic identity, language, or legal status as children of refugees, is different from the majority. I also include in this population, children from all ethnic groups, with physical and cognitive challenges. These latter are important minority groups, greatly neglected in educational discourse (Bagley, 2008; Tomlinson, 1981, 2013 & 2014).

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<sup>15</sup> Bagley (2016).

## 5.2 Political, economic and social philosophies: perspective on evolving ideas

I like change, evolution and synthesis in ideas, and this in part accounts for my liking for Roy Bhaskar's Critical Realism. Bhaskar uses, for example Marxian and Hegelian concepts, but also goes beyond them in the evolving model of dialectical realism. For those concerned with equality of groups as the starting point for discussions of education, ethnicity and gender, Marx's ideas are an important starting point: "The concept of a 'reserve army of labour' has been much discussed since Karl Marx referred to this as a way in which capitalists have a pool of cheaper workers (women and children in his day<sup>16</sup>): this pool of labour can be useful for profit-making in times when they become an 'overworked part of the working class, which swells the reserve army of labour' (Marx 1887: 636)." (Tomlinson, 2013. p 16).

This Marxian idea is used frequently throughout this thesis, including Marx's idea of alienation (the separation of the worker from a natural mode of social habitus, imposed by the conditions of labour, and the masking of that oppression by means of the creation of false ideologies). Tomlinson (2013) describes in detail how modern day youth are persuaded by government ideology and media that failure to find employment when their 'skill' is lacking, is their own fault, and not that of the capitalist system. Blaming the victim is a powerful way of remaining in power.

The ideas I wish to synthesise include not only ideas of class oppression, but ideas of personal freedom as well, which emerged from the writings of the English philosopher T.H. Green, emphasising the twin goals of maximising both human freedom *and* human welfare, ideas which have led to the founding of the British welfare state. Some religious groups (notably Quakers) excluded from universities and professions, moreover tried to prove that religious ideals could inform the ethics of private enterprise, trying to show that the natural inclination of humans is not towards capitalist exploitation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> And in the twentieth century, as Gaine & George (1999 pp 12-13) observe.

<sup>17</sup> The work of the chocolate companies, in particular Cadbury and Rowntree, and the systematic efforts by The Rowntree Foundation to research the nature, extent and effects of economic poverty, and to lobby governments in this regard, are cases in point (see J. Unwin *A UK Without Poverty*, 2014, [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)): 39% of Britons over 18 do not have a secure job, or one that pays a 'living wage' ([www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)).



Peter Flaschel (2009) the German social economist, offers an ingenious synthesis of Marx, Keynes and Schumpeter in developing the idea of “flexisecurity”, which offers within a capitalist, but social democratic framework, the ideas of “putting Marx to bed”, by guaranteeing the “reserve army” not merely a living wage but a comfortable freedom from the “wants” described by Green and Beveridge, and a stake in the monetary economy through spending power in the model of Keynes, as adapted by Schumpeter in liberating the spirit of “the restless entrepreneur” in a social democratic, market economy (Flaschel et al., 2012).<sup>18</sup>

### **5.3 Summary of the conclusions of a major review of *Race and Education: Policy and Politics in Britain***

It is not my purpose to critique or build on Tomlinson’s (2008) major review of the literature in this field prior to 2008. Rather, I offer brief case studies of people and events – accounts and stories which seem to me to enliven and enrich the understanding and appreciation of issues surrounding ethnicity, identity and equality in the field of British educational and cultural systems.

However, I cannot proceed until I have summarised Tomlinson’s major conclusions. First of all, she points to the “negative, defensive and contradictory central government policies directed towards racial and ethnic minorities in Britain.” (2008, p. 177) Policies seem to have been piecemeal, often well-meaning, but poorly conceptualized with ideas about “pluralism” and “multiculturalism”, “assimilation” and “integration” being weakly defined, but strongly debated. The underlying pressures of xenophobia, prejudice and racism have meant that policies in relation to “migrants” have been harsh. But at the same time, attitudes to the required “assimilation” by ethnic and religious minorities of “British values” have been confused, and contested.

Tomlinson (2008) concludes that: “*A continuity throughout the book has been the contradictions between political encouragement of immigrant labour, while at the same time enacting legislation to control immigration, and allowing a discourse of antagonism to ‘immigration’ in general to dominate public and media discussion ...*

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<sup>18</sup> Note however, Keune (2014) criticism of this seemingly attractive model for its allegedly bourgeois pretensions, and for the complexity of its formulations which might only work in already wealthy economies such as the Nordic countries where flexisecurity has a dominant influence. It may be some time before this excellent model is adopted in Britain.

*Policies have been influenced by xenophobic and racist reactions within the indigenous population ...” (p. 177)*

In Tomlinson’s (2008) analysis of government policies (including those of Labour and New Labour governments) there was, she observes “a continued attempt to deflect attention away from the situation of racial minorities by claims they were simply part of the disadvantaged sector of society.” (p. 178) This is the ‘Bethnal Green’ model, in which different groups of immigrants, from Jews in the nineteenth century, to Bangladeshis in the twentieth settled in the cheapest available housing, gradually making good, and then moving on to professional jobs, and middle class areas of settlement (Glynn, 2005). Certainly “ ... minorities settled in inner cities and towns among sectors of a working class where jobs were available but then disappeared, [and] there was competition for decent housing, schools were neglected and under-resourced and not intended to be educated to high levels.” But governments rarely made consistent efforts to absorb immigrants into housing and jobs in systematic ways which reflected policies for equity. Disadvantaged white, working class groups in these areas (typically, northern cities in which textile industries had declined) often blamed the minorities for their own disadvantages.

“The most critical failure” that Tomlinson (2008) identified has been the chronic failure or neglect of policies for the education of African and Caribbean heritage, black children and adolescents. The emergence of a black (and other ethnic minority) middle class may not be of much assistance “ ... *for black children segregated on poor housing estates and in less successful schools ... The endless production of research and government reports on the lower achievements of black young people and the subsequent minimal and grudging adoption of measures to raise their attainment levels have now gone beyond blame and exhortation. It is no longer acceptable that as a group young black citizens can be allowed to fall behind other groups in education and employment, and be regarded as potential criminals.*” (pp 178-9).

A further policy theme identified by Tomlinson (2008) was “ ... the minimal and grudging preparation of teachers to teach in a multi-ethnic society.” Despite some progress “*From the mid-1980s a general devaluing of the teaching profession, merged with right wing attacks on any multicultural, anti-racist or equality courses led to a disappearance of most university, college and local authority or in-service work ... The*

*lack of any national strategy to prepare and develop all teachers for a society and a world now experiencing more ethnic, racial and religious conflicts and tensions ... is a serious omission.” (p. 179)*

Tomlinson continues: “A major discontinuity for teachers, however, was the absence in Britain from the 1990s of a discourse and a language concerning the preparation of all young people for a democratic multicultural society.” (p. 180) While she refers earlier in her review to The Crick Report, and the beginning of the Citizenship Education curriculum, she accurately observes the unevenness of the adoption of this curriculum in English schools, and its confusing overlap with Religious Education, and other curricula.

However, this flexibility has been welcomed by Muslim schools who teach Citizenship as part of the Muslim Education curriculum (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2008). But any school which becomes an Academy is no longer required to follow the National Curriculum, of which Citizenship Education is a part. How then will schools, as an institution, address Citizenship Education and the idea that “ ... education in a democratic, plural, multicultural society be shaped by a public service culture relevant to the whole society, not one that encourages private, faith, business or an particular group interest.” (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 180)? I can accept that some faith schools (e.g. Muslim schools, Quaker schools) prepare their students for magnanimous and public-spirited participation in public life (e.g. Bagley & Al-Refai, 2014; Newton & Broadfoot, 2016). But will this be true of business-led Academies?

Tomlinson’s (2008) somewhat optimistic conclusion is that a British government might engage in “ ... more direct political organisation and engagement to ensure that equality in terms of citizenship rights and responsibilities, and the removal of structural and institutional treatment ...” (p. 181) This was written at the cusp of government change, when the continuation of a New Labour government was a possibility. The same was true of the review of policies on equality and inclusion we undertook, with a final perspective on the fiscal and school year 2008-9 (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016). By 2016, there were stronger grounds for pessimism than there were in 2008.

#### **5.4 Episodes of ethnicity in Britain, 1968 to 2008**

I have chosen to try and explore through fragmentary episodes, the history of British minority education (and often, more specifically, English education) over the past 50

years, a period covered by my lifetime. This is a rather personal task, shared with my colleague and thesis supervisor, Professor Christopher Bagley. More systematic and integrated accounts of this history have been offered by others (Tomlinson, 2008; Warmington, 2014).

During these 50 years I have been an African-born child, a migrant, with Caribbean slave forbearers, a nurse, a teacher, a scholar, a child of empire in Canada and Africa, a professional psychologist, a child and family therapist, and a lecturer in psychology. The historical account (in which I nested my original research project, on identity and self-esteem in minority children in London) is inevitably selective and focuses on key studies and the profiles of scholars I have found interesting and influential. Only very recently have I discovered the exciting perspectives of analysing knowledge and actions implied by the work of Critical Realism (Bhaskar, Archer, Crieghton, Alderson), a challenging set of philosophical ideas which has been taken up by some Marxists (e.g. Crieghton, 2007), Muslim scholars and researchers (Wilkinson, 2015), and Catholic feminists (Archer, 2014). All of these exponents of Critical Realism seem to have in common a grounded ontology, which allows them to form types of dialectical critical realism in which Hegel's model of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis is modified into a reflexive, four-factor model that leads to an advocacy of change.

My theme, then, is of an underclass upon which the middle and lower whites have tried to impose an inferiorized self-concept not only on some ethnic minorities but also on 'poor whites', for whom their alienation (sometimes based on racialized, class oppression<sup>19</sup>) remains largely unmasked. Added to the 'poor whites', and the ethnic minority underclass are the downwardly mobile groups of the physically and cognitively challenged. The issue of inclusive education for these children is an interesting case of groups whose disadvantaged status cuts across class and ethnic lines, but whose difficulty in becoming productive wage earners means that they too must often serve the economic system by downward mobility, being transferred into the underclass (Tomlinson, 2013).

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<sup>19</sup> Working class racism – blaming ethnic minorities for their ills – is highly functional for the capitalist class system (Fekete, 2009).

## 5.5 Why study history?

This perennial question has many answers. A nation often defines itself by its “public history”, in which events, facts and accounts of events are selectively construed, and often falsified (Jordanova, 2006). Radical (e.g. Marxist) historians try to construct a “people’s view of history” (e.g. Morton’s *People’s History of England*, 1938). But the “periodization” in such accounts may involve naïve abstractions which, according to Popper’s (1957) critique of Marx and Engels, creates a ‘poverty of explanation’, a value schema imposed on events, rather than a schema emerging heuristically from “the people’s” accounts of history. Popper argued that since “my” actions can never be predicted (because “I” have free will), the future events and life course of the mass of the people can never be predicted (Popper & Eccles, 1977).<sup>20</sup>

Max Weber’s classic argument on the bases of stratification (Bendix, 1978), is also based on his historical analysis: while it is not based on accounts of the actors of history, nevertheless it has an intellectual appeal in offering three bases for stratification: class (relationships to the economy); status (political influence, sometimes independently of wealth); and party (the social organisation of political struggle, which is not merely based on economic factors). This model seems to me to offer an intuitively attractive way forward in trying to explain the interplay of historical events, in which economic interests and forces, and popular struggles to reconstruct an identity, offer the opportunity for oppressed groups to break free of agencies which implicitly or explicitly, engender a “false consciousness”. And Weber’s model of social class and bureaucracy does not intellectually oppose Durkheim’s idea of society as a set (or sets) of collective social systems in which group values and identity powerfully influence individuals. Rather, in the Critical Realist model both are relevant, and coexist in an interactive and reflexive manner. Creaven (2007) neatly marries Weber and Marx in his critical realist exposition of Marxism.

Ultimately in this sketch of recent history I acknowledge the critical realist view that “I” am part of the values of history, and reflexively I am part of this account, as I recreate or retell history, I am also influenced by it. I acknowledge, with Scambler

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<sup>20</sup> Popper’s partnership with the neuropsychologist John Eccles is an interesting departure from Popper’s previous writing, and this foray into the world of the spirit has not had the consideration that it deserves. His autobiography *Unended Quest* (1976) shows Popper to be a man of warmth and complex ideas, who is not merely a purveyor of anti-marxist or positivist ideologies.

(2014): *“For Bhaskar, the ‘transformational model of social action’ outperforms, sees off, the individualism of Weber, the collectivism of Durkheim and the phenomenology of Berger ... The transformational model of social action goes hand in hand with a relational, rather than individualistic collectivism or interactionist concept of society.”*

The ontological basis on which I build this historical sketch is value-laden: the belief that Britain is governed by socioeconomic class interests, and the racialization and stigmatising of minorities reflects a government policy serving economic or class interests. I believe, nevertheless, that human beings can, through reflexive ‘conversations’ with themselves and others, achieve special “status islands” (or “parties” in the Weberian model), in which social change (“upward mobility” in Margaret Archer’s term, 2003 & 2014) is possible.

Understanding and attempting to break free of the false consciousness by deprived minorities, whose self-perceptions and aspirations have been de-based by a capitalist class system, is one of the themes of this thesis. Part of this shedding of a false consciousness also involves the shedding of a “false history” (as Tosh, 2002 terms it) by the lower whites and the exploited minorities. While Marx and Engels (1848/2008) may be criticized for their predictions concerning the decay of capitalism, their humanist conclusions, their use of the Hegelian ideas of thesis-antithesis-synthesis in analysing social histories deserve close attention (Collier, 1992), adaptation, and reformulation (Creaven, 2007; Bhaskar, 2008).<sup>21</sup>

## **5.6 Specific episodes in recent history**

### **5.6.1 Histories of childhood, and the sociology of childhood**

Aries (1962) is a starting point in analysing how cultures and societies have over time, viewed and treated children. These ideas have changed profoundly over the centuries, from an era where infanticide of “unwanted” children was common, to the emergence of ideas that when the rights of adults and children conflict, the rights of children are paramount, and should prevail. This is well illustrated by changes in the law concerning adoption in England and Wales, when landmark House of Lords’ decisions established the primacy of children’s interests and rights in contested cases of

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<sup>21</sup> Capitalism, in the form of neoliberalism, has resurged triumphant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Campbell, 2007; Arestis & Sawyer, 2007; Steger & Roy, 2010). Marx & Engels (1848) had observed that sectors of the failed underclass could safely be contained in prisons. In America, the failure of “the war on poverty” was replaced with the “war on crime”, and the incarceration of the lower classes on an unprecedented scale (Hinton, 2016).

adoption, which has led to the establishment of the professional *guardian ad litem*, who advises judges on how they might proceed in cases where custody of a child is contested (Bagley, 1973).

Mayall (2013) offers a perspective on “the sociology of childhood” from a historical perspective. The literature of import is quite recent, and usually dates from the 1970s onwards, when researchers moved beyond ‘laboratory’ studies of child development to concepts of how children perceived and interacted with, and possibly influenced, their wider environment. Another type of work Mayall identifies is that of longitudinal study, in which children are followed up from birth until middle or even old ‘age’ – the 1946 birth cohort originally studied by Douglas (1969) is a case in point. This is a special kind of ‘historical’ study: findings from some of these British longitudinal studies are reported in a later chapter, on child maltreatment as an antecedent of mental health problems as an adult.

Mayall (2013) concludes her essay with observations on the often bewildering interactions between children and various forms of social media, and portable electronic devices. It seems not uncommon for grandparents to be instructed in the use of such media by their young grandchildren (a type of relationship which is worth further study). Mayall argues that studies of the sociology of childhood have directly and indirectly, exposed the strengths and weaknesses of social policies on behalf of children: *‘While this may be a long journey, with many setbacks and some doubting commentators, it has to be undertaken patiently and thoroughly. The analogy with feminism holds: since the early 1970s, women have faced a huge task ... Sociological approaches to childhood, it can be argued, face even greater difficulties. However, some progress has been made and even more can be achieved.’* (pp 37-8). Priscilla Alderson’s two-volume account (2013 & 2016) of her 30 years of research with children, refocussed through a critical realist lens, is a bold contribution to this challenging task.

### **5.6.2 The social history of medicine**

One approach which will interest the social scientist is that of focus on a specific topic in science, or on policies related to a particular group. In this respect, ‘medicine’ has been the most intensively studied (Porter, 1997), and shows how medical ideas, irrationalities, ‘desperate remedies’, and progress has reflected major trends in

society, in terms of theology, philosophy, conquest and war, social control and punishment (as in the case of psychiatry), and the slow emergence of ethical conduct in medicine and medical research, epidemiology and public health, and the modern emergence of “evidence based medicine”. The astonished reader may ask: how could medical practice be other than ‘evidence-based’; but it is salutary to note that ‘treatments’ were often driven by bizarre theories, untested, and often cruel.

Porter (1997) ends his massive historical survey thus: ‘*The close of my history suggests that medicine’s finest hour is the dawn of its dilemma. For centuries medicine was impotent and thus unproblematic. From the Greeks to the first world war, its tasks were simple: to grapple with lethal disease and gross disabilities, to ensure live births and manage pain ... Medicine [today] has led to inflated expectations, which the public have eagerly swallowed ...*’ (p. 718)

Porter does not adopt any particular “philosophy of history”: rather, his accounts of human folly and failure in coping with sickness simply reflect various phases of conventionally-described history (Jordanova, 2006, Chapter 5). Better treatments of illness came not from physicians but from nurses in the care of those injured in battle (e.g. Florence Nightingale); and of evangelical Quakers in the care of the mentally ill in developments such as *The Retreat* in York (Porter, 1997, p 497). Today *The Retreat* now specializes in treatment of adolescents whose behaviour (e.g. repeated self-harm; eating disorders) has made them unacceptable in mainstream schooling.<sup>22</sup>

Alderson (2013) offers a striking example in the history of medicine: the identification by Semmelweis in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, of the causes of high rates of maternal mortality through poor hygiene procedures – an evidence-based finding rejected by medical ideologues.<sup>23</sup> Alderson, in observing that the children killed by this medical malpractice were entirely absent from the historical account writes of this ‘absence’ that: ‘Absence is a central concept in dialectical critical realism (DCR) and this book is concerned with the absence of children and childhood from almost any

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<sup>22</sup> Smith (1993) in his history of the “human sciences” grounds modern psychological and social science in a dialectical process, engaging with the unfolding philosophical and theological traditions of the Greeks, the Catholic Schoolmen, and the Enlightenment and later philosophers (including Quakers).

<sup>23</sup> This spread of infection was caused by lack of hand-washing hygiene by 19<sup>th</sup> century physicians. Muslims, in their critique of Western medical practice, point out that Muslims wash their hands (and other body parts) five times a day prior to their ritual prayers, and thus introduced practices which minimized cross-infection in Islamic medical practice from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards. See: <http://bit.ly/1LEoEBd>



report ...[in] major topics of public concern. Yet children and their interests are actually central to all of these 'adult' matters.' (Alderson, 2013, p.3) Similar points are made by Fekete (2009) in her analysis of how European state policies have, over 20 years, changed and developed to control the inflow of 'alien' groups: the children within the asylum seekers, the drowned refugees, and the deportees are children too. Or, as the Charlie Hebdo cartoon ironically put it, the little drowned boy on the shores of Greece would have grown up to be an adult terrorist in Europe. Children are only relevant for the official policy makers if they hinder or assist the procedures of acceptance or deportation: "Only a miniscule fraction of the world's orphaned, abandoned or separated children make it to Europe; their presence should evoke curiosity or sympathy. Instead, governments want them to disappear." (Fekete, 2009 p. 185)

Medicine, in Foucault's (1976) analysis has been enveloped in "a cloud of unknowing" so far as its true values and purpose are concerned, and "the clinic" which has emerged is hyper-rational, but not hyper-humane. But, according to Scambler (2016): "Foucault is stronger on *how* power works than on *why* ... His notion of 'governmentality' for all its purchase, glosses over what people with capital 'do' to those unable to resist being exploited – largely due to what Margaret Archer calls their *natal* or 'involuntary' placement in society (via relations of class) or oppressed (via relations of state command)." Certainly Foucault has inspired considerable debate amongst academic historians, who often appear to resent this sociological intrusion into their territory (Porter & Jones, 1998). His emphasis on "power and humanity" has upset some, and energised others (McGowen, 1999).

Large populations of children are ignored by modern medical practice, since they live in economically marginalized, and politically troubled areas (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016): as Alderson (2013 & 2016) puts it in critical realist terminology, they are "absent". For example, the huge toll of malarial infection on children's CNS development in Africa and Asia goes largely unremarked in the annals of medicine (Bagley, 2008).

In the review of literature on the development of self-esteem, later in this thesis, I examine the potential effects of sexual and physical abuse on the adjustment and mental health of adolescent women. It is astonishing that mainstream psychiatry only became alerted to this widespread public health problem through the work of

sociologists in Canada and the U.S.A. (Badgley, 1984; Finkelhor, 1979). Sexually abused children are in critical realist terms, absent figures in the history of childhood (Alderson, 2013).

Finally, it is clear from the evidence we have reviewed (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016) that poor psychological and physical health in Britain is transmitted over time (perhaps even over centuries) through the perpetuation of an underclass in which the health of parents is intimately linked to the poor health of their children. While this relationship is not absolute or deterministic (the cycle can be broken) - in a capitalist-controlled society it may well be in the interests of the ruling group to have a lowest tier of individuals whose marginal skills can be used whenever the demand for labour would otherwise drive up wages through shortage of unskilled labour.

### **5.6.3 Some relevant historical studies of ethnicity and education**

The Marxist scholar Chris Searle (2001) writes about “race, class and exclusion in British schools”. This is not a difficult history to write, for there are numerous examples to draw on in policy documents and descriptions of practice. But after his initial chapter on educational and governmental policies, Searle chooses to draw on narrative accounts (his autobiography as a head teacher, and the writings of pupils themselves). Searle, an English teacher, draws extensively on his pupils’ poetry. The refugee boy wrote: “I used to swim down on the beach on the river./ Then the war started again when I was ten years old,/ And I was frightened, it was a bad war./ My Uncle Issa Haq<sup>24</sup> was shot by the soldiers/ You could see dead people everywhere”. In Britain said Searle, “many young Somalis were confused, unsettled and fragile”. One bullied Somali boy reacted angrily to racist abuse and punching, and was excluded from school (Searle, 2001, p.70). Exclusion Searle sees as a “moral façade”, a strategic tool in the unmasked poverty of English educational. This moral façade is a whited wall, upon which in 2016 a government has daubed a pastiche of “British values”.

Searle, a head teacher of a secondary school in Sheffield, was dismissed from the school when he finally refused to exclude pupils for *any* reason. A Yemini, ‘now English’, boy wrote of this school: “If the world was like our school:/Then the sun would shine/And racism would die/Beauty would rise/And the darkness would hide.” Searle’s

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<sup>24</sup> Haq is one of the names of Allah, and is often taken as a surname by Muslims. It means “teller of truth”.

approach, for me, is a brilliant way of seeking historical truth by means of poetic biography.

Searle's philosophy of the Inclusive School, quoted above, seems to me an ideal way in which a school should be inspired by its teachers, through which the 'absence', the alienation of pupils, becomes unmasked. Schools should be gentle places, and no pupils should exploit or abuse any other person, physically, psychologically, or sexually. Some schools run on Quaker principles (as described by Lampen, 2015; and Newton & Broadfoot, 2016) may achieve this: most do not.

#### **5.6.4 Telling it like it was: Forty scholars and activists speaking out**

This stirring volume edited by Brian Richardson (2005) contains the text of Bernard Coard's original monograph of "How the West Indian child is made educationally subnormal by the British educational system" which demonstrated with data how children with African-Caribbean ancestry were wrongly labelled as "stupid" and denied educational opportunity.

The contributors reflect on various themes stemming from Coard's seminal work, and Coard contributed (from his prison cell) a chapter making the following points: Quality education should be available for all children; Education is the most important form of wealth for families and nations; Discriminatory education is a tool by which women, and minorities, are subjugated; Income, wealth, power and privilege maintains its own, self-perpetuating system of elites; Break the link between capitalist interests and its connections to race and education:

*"Some may ask whether the nation has sufficient resources to spend so as to bring all schools throughout the country up to high educational standards so that all children can enjoy exposure to these standards. The answer is an unqualified yes. Britain is a wealthy country with more than sufficient resources to do this. It is all a question of priorities."* (Coard, 2005, p. 189). Although a Marxist, Coard couches his arguments in terms of Britain's national interest in developing *all* of its citizens into skilled workers. He does not discuss issues of alienation and false consciousness. This task is left, in this edited volume, to Mahamdallie, who echoes the Brechtian phrase in his chapter title *Is this as good as it gets?* He, like other contributors, makes it clear that the institutional racism in education that Coard exposed "became the analytical touchstone for the Black Parents Movement of the 1970s." The issue that Coard

exposed remained, in different form, in “Thatcher’s Britain”. Continuous political activity, campaigning by the Lawrence family on behalf of their murdered son (Doreen Lawrence contributes to this volume), and the Macpherson report exposing institutional racism, have changed the nature of the debate, and of educational practice.

It is unlikely that there are many teachers today who are actively racist: it is educational policy makers who control systems, who are racist by default, offering third rate education to ‘poor whites’ and ‘poor blacks’ alike. Wally Brown (2005) a black educator, writes that “the future belongs to us”. Yes, the battle on behalf of black youth is nearly won, it is the poor whites we have to worry about. This book contains great poetry by black poets, and interesting accounts of supplementary education schemes. This is a cheerful and stirring book which convinces one that black youth in Britain are on an upward trajectory (just as their Muslim peers, described by Ramadan (2010), are moving out of the ghetto, as Islamic educational systems bed down in Britain). This book is a piece of history, looking backwards with anger, and forwards with hope. For the ‘poor whites’ it has little to offer.

Chris Searle writes angrily in his chapter that a disproportionate number of black youth were (in 2003) being excluded from school: but the very fact that they are black means that they are numbered, noticed, counted, and cared about. While my historical review ends in the period 2008-9, I would venture the guess that exclusion rates for black children are now (in 2016) falling. For the underclass of ‘poor whites’, and for the white children with special needs, for the children who have been through the care [sic] system my hypothesis is that their rates of exclusion from school on arbitrary, cruel and illogical grounds are not falling (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016).

#### **5.6.5 Issues of Institutional Racism**

*Direct Racism* involves conscious, direct and deliberate actions by individuals (or their social institutions) which denigrate and disadvantage a person of an ethnic, religious or perceived racial (or racialized) group, or indeed a whole group of people, through organised propaganda, and direct discrimination. The evidence on such racism in Britain was described by a team of researchers at The Institute of Race Relations (IRR) in London, which led to the publication of a lengthy, well-researched and widely publicised book by Jim Rose and Nicholas Deakin, and others called *Colour and*

*Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations* by the Oxford University Press in 1969. This long report was widely read and favourably reviewed, and its research on racial discrimination, for example, led to the strengthening of the laws which made racial discrimination in access to housing, services and employment, illegal.

Warmington (2014) in his review of the role of “black intellectuals” in this process observes that however earnest and well-directed, the IRR at that time was directed, run and staffed mainly by “white liberals”. However, the IRR could only survive on private foundation grants, and some government contracts: it declined to be an arm of government, and following the publication of its massive report, funding greatly diminished. The IRR survived as a much smaller institution, now led by its radical librarian A. Sivanandan, who described how a core of radical staff took over the IRR (1975). The Institute is now known internationally for its radical, Marxian approach. The IRR’s academic journal *Race* changed its name to *Race and Class*, and now has a healthy world-wide circulation under the auspices of its new (capitalist) publisher SAGE Journals Inc.

The approach of the IRR can be gauged by an article by Sivandandan in 2005 entitled “Why Muslims reject British values”: *“As the IRR pointed out at the time, the fight against racism cannot be reduced to a fight for culture; nor does learning about other people’s cultures make racists less racist ... the racism that needs to be contested is not personal prejudice, which has no authority behind it, but institutionalized racism, woven over centuries of colonialism and slavery into the structures of society and government.”* In this analysis, institutional racism is part of class warfare, ignored until “unexpectedly” it was given “official currency” by the Macpherson Report of 1999.

Since that time the IRR has produced a number of excellent reports, including comprehensive studies by its new director, Liz Fekete (2009) of Europe’s “new racism”, Islamophobia. This further analysis sees working class racism and anti-immigrant rhetoric of the right, and Islamic radicalism as “useful diversions” serving the ends of international capitalism, which divert energy away from workers uniting in a common, anti-imperialist cause (see Bagley, Al-Refai, Sawyerr & Abubaker, 2016, for a fuller discussion).

Ironically “liberal” legislation such as the Race Relations Acts and subsequent legislation on behalf of ethnic, gender and physically challenged groups may be functional for capitalist enterprise, since they enable the most qualified workers (e.g. ethnic minorities) to be recruited without worrying about obstructions by the white proletariat. It enables too, stereotyping of “industrious and intelligent” ethnic groups such as Indians and Chinese who are channelled into sectors of labour (technical, engineering, medical) where their skills are much needed (Phillips, 2011). None of this liberal patina denies the fact of the profound *absence* (in CR terms) which is the Level 1 tier of Institutional Racism: that is, institutional racism thrives on the denial of the concepts of ethnicity and race.

The liberal ethos of the IRR’s first manifestation has continued in the work of the Runnymede Trust, with Professor Nicholas Deakin being involved in 2016, as he was in 1969, in this organisation’s scholarly work. The Runnymede Trust (a private charity) is credited with defining the term “Islamophobia” in 1997, and continues to monitor this important aspect of British racism (Runnymede, 2016).<sup>25</sup>

Institutional racism silently infects institutions and their norms, values and actions which are translated into everyday behaviours in which it is assumed that certain groups (e.g. Muslims, Refugees, Migrant Workers, African-Caribbeans et alia) by their nature, or because of their embedded beliefs, or their current circumstances are bound to behave in a certain way. Thus it behoves public officials (e.g. police, teachers) to ‘stop-and-search’, or report to the police any student expressing opinions incompatible with ‘British values’. Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2015, for example, any teacher or school governor who does not do so may be issued with a formal letter from the British Home Secretary declaring them to be a “Non-Violent Extremist”, in consequence of which they will be barred from being a school governor, or lose their licence to teach.<sup>26</sup>

The Marxist scholars of the Institute of Race Relations have long argued that this deep layer of racism has been ignored by the ‘white liberals’ who merely describe

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<sup>25</sup> It is pleasing to note that the major funding for both the radical Institute of Race Relations, and the liberally minded think-tank, The Runnymede Trust in the past five years, has been the Quaker foundation, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

<sup>26</sup> Bagley (2016) reports that several such letters have been issued to Muslim school governors in the wake of the ‘Trojan Horse’ affair (see Bagley, Al-Refai, Sawyerr & Abubaker 2016, for details).

the surface layers of the racist society. The Macpherson Report (1999) was (as Sivandandan observed) a surprise in pointing to layers of institutional racism in police reaction to the murder of a black teenager (Stephen Lawrence) by a gang of white youths. Tomlinson (2008) describes this report, which created the idea of “institutionalised racism” (in the metropolitan police, and by implication in other British institutions) as “a defining moment in British race relations.” Certainly, the government responded with an amendment to the existing Race Relations Act. This required institutions such as police, health services and educational institutions to work towards providing “equal, fair and just services to all groups.”

The ethos of “equality” implied by this collection of statistics on “ethnic origins” fed in part into the development of the Sure Start programmes for preschool children, which were modelled on the American Head Start movement of providing preschool monitoring and provision for children from disadvantaged groups (Eisenstadt, 2011; Sawyerr & Bagley, 2016).<sup>27</sup>

The ideas apparently underlying the concept of institutional racism have been analysed in detail by Celia Phillips (2011) who after identifying some conceptual ambiguities (What kind of racism? What kind of institutions?) concludes: “... *Institutional racism can be retained to assist our understanding of persistent ethnic inequalities in key areas of social policy ... institutional racism needs to be situated within a conceptual framework which acknowledges the role of racialization [the imposition of racial labels] at the micro, meso and macro levels ... and can explain ethnic inequalities in education (e.g. attainment), and policing (e.g. stop-and-search practices).*” (p. 187). She is pessimistic however, of practices which are functional for a class based social system changing, except in the long run. One problem in the official data she presents is that the many children of mixed ethnic ancestry (Platt, 2009) are not adequately identified: are they counted by officials (or themselves) as white, or black, mixed, or other? This dilemma points to some intriguing research possibilities.

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<sup>27</sup> Despite (or because of) the success of Sure Start, the Coalition Government in Britain initiated fiscal policies which have led to the steady decline of the Sure Start Centres (Campbell et al., 2016; Torjeson, 2016).

### 5.6.6 Educating “Our” Black Children (2001)

Who are “we”? We are all teachers, all professionals, all people of good will - the parent-figures of all children in the land (and in the world). The idea implicit in the title of Richard Majors (2001) book is pleasing, and fits with our idea of Child-Centred Humanism, that everyone, and all of humanity’s institutions, should address humanity’s primary value, of putting the needs and interests of children first. Richard Majors was an American educator working in Manchester when he edited this book, which has 15 well-researched and incisive chapters, including several by Americans who offer interesting insights into positive trends for enhancing Black achievement and identity in the United States. Issues addressed include ‘black masculinity’, ‘Afrikan-centred curriculum’, supplementary education, ‘ego-recovery’ in African-Caribbean adolescents, Black feminism, school exclusions, and successful schools.

This book is a stimulating blend of scholarship and moral fervour, which addresses, for example the (im) moral bases for excluding anyone, of whatever ethnicity or status, from schooling. Figures are cited from the 1990s showing that Black adolescent males were 15 times more likely than others to be excluded. But it is important that these boys could be identified, and advocated for. Poor White boys excluded from school are less identifiable, and have fewer advocates.<sup>28</sup>

Two years before this edited volume was published, the MacPherson report on institutional racism was published. This was certainly a turning point in ethnic minority relations in Britain. African Caribbean children and their parents (who, with increasing frequency, included one white parent) were ‘standing up to be counted’, forming a distinct and coherent pressure group. Institutional racism was on the run: David Gillborn’s inaugural professorial lecture at the Institute of Education, London in 2002 was on *Education and Institutional Racism*. Gillborn was pessimistic about the

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<sup>28</sup> Research published by the Department for Education in 2012 showed that 1996 was the peak year for exclusions. By 2009-10 African Caribbean males were four times more likely than other pupils to be excluded. The most frequently excluded groups were (a) Roma and Traveller children; (b) children of any ethnicity, receiving ‘free school meals’. On achievement, Perera et al. (2016) constructed a ‘benchmark’ measure from GCSE results, to compare with international data. On this index English pupils, collectively, were achieving at about 60% of the level of the highest scoring countries internationally. On ethnicity, African-Caribbeans were scoring in the middle range (as were English Whites), but all ethnic minority groups were achieving higher scores over time. ‘Social disadvantage’ (regardless of ethnicity) and being schooled in the Midlands or North of England, depressed achievements by more than 10%. If these trends continue, it is ‘poor whites’ who will be England’s most disadvantaged ethnic group.



educational future for African Caribbeans in Britain, but events seem to have taken somewhat different turn. Fortunately for the racists, a new target had appeared on the horizon, Muslims (Fekete, 2009).

#### **5.6.7 Can individual schools make a difference?**

*“By the 1990s, a new educational phenomenon had appeared in Britain. This was the failing school, a demonized institution whose head, teachers and governors were deemed to be personally responsible for failing whole communities ....”* (Sally Tomlinson, 1998, p. 157)

*“The unashamedly normative desiderata are (i) to define a good school or society in relation to an expected and continuing increase in the variety of resources; (ii) in a manner to allow this variety to translate into a distribution of opportunities that furnishes the social conditions for a good life for all members of the school or society; (iii) and proves resistant to the recrudescence of the current actualist state of affairs.”* Margaret Archer (2015, p. 22).

In their much-cited monograph *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effects on Children*, Michael Rutter, Barbara Maughan, Peter Mortimore and Janet Ouston (1979) take their title from the number of hours the average child would spend away from home, in educational institutions taught by teachers, and interacting with peers. This, surely is an important piece of the environment that must have a powerful influence on children and adolescents, for good or ill. Yet it was remarkable that little was known about the effects of schools, *qua* schools, on the youngsters they contained. Before embarking on this work Rutter had compared samples of children from an inner London borough (Camberwell) with similar aged groups in a quiet, semi-rural environment (Isle of Wight), and had shown for instance, that the lives of “West Indian” children in Camberwell were marked and marred, by a variety of institutional features of the school (Rutter, Yule & Bagley, 1975).

Building on this work, Rutter et al. (1979) studied some of the schools in the Camberwell study, plus others in contiguous Boroughs to form a group of 12 schools whose institutional processes, and social, scholastic and behavioural processes and outcomes were intensively studied. Rutter had validated a short measure of behavioural and emotional problems for completion by teachers and/or parents, and the profiles of groups of children varied significantly between schools, for unknown

reasons. Moreover, in the previous longitudinal work in “School A” 30.8% of pupils had behavioural difficulties according to this scale at age 11, but this proportion had *fallen* to 9.2% at age 14; but in “School B” in the same Borough, 34.0% had behaviour problems at age 11, *rising* to 48.0% at age 14 – all highly significant differences. Reasons for this were at the outset of the research, unknown.

It was clear to Rutter’s team in studying the “school effect” that characteristics of pupils enrolling at age 11 had to be controlled for, in statistical terms, if any school effect was to be identified. Within each school a considerable amount of questionnaire data was generated, included pupil-completed questionnaires on (for example) how well the school “Helps you develop your personality and character.” There was significant variation in the measures across schools, as well as between pupils according to age, gender, achievement, ethnicity and other individualised variables.

*“Our finding that secondary schools varied greatly with respect to rates of examination success, attendance, misbehaviour and delinquency is entirely in keeping with the evidence from other research. However, our investigation has taken matters a stage further by showing that these differences were not explicable in terms of the children’s characteristics prior to secondary transfer. Rather, they stemmed from experiences during the secondary school years.”* (p. 179)

The findings of Rutter’s team were salient: some schools had many pupils who were disgruntled, sad or rebellious; others had rather few. The differences *could not be wholly accounted for* by the behavioural profiles of pupils entering at age 11. This “school effect” was stable over time, and was not linked to the physical quality of the school buildings, or spaces (e.g. playing fields) surrounding the school. There was however, a cumulative or additive effect in terms of “success” (fewer behavioural problems, more examination successes, more pupil and teacher satisfaction). There was, clearly a “school process effect”, a school ethos associated with success. Pupils were calmer, teachers praised them more; teachers stayed in post longer; after school clubs and activities thrived. “Happiness” was the order of the day, and the successful schools had an implicit but enduring set of values which were independent of the often decayed urban settings in which these “flagship schools” were moored. These were outstanding schools, but there was an equal number of secondary schools in the area studied, which were “beached wrecks” as educational institutions. This remarkable

study has had a number of effects in that often reactionary educational administrators have adduced the policy that a new, highly-paid head can “turn a school around” (a philosophy that survives in the current obsession with Academies).

Disappointingly, Rutter’s ground-breaking research has stimulated rather few ethnographic studies of schools, which could have added qualitative flesh to the sturdy bones of Rutter’s quantitative work – for example, the contributors to the edited volume on *School Effectiveness for Whom?* (Smith & Tomlinson, 1998) replicate but do not seem to build, in theoretical or ethnographic terms, on Rutter’s models of successful inner-city schools.

Michael Rutter himself deserves special mention. He is the world’s leading child and adolescent psychiatrist, and now in his ‘eighties still (in 2016) was publishing several scholarly papers a year. He has made breakthroughs in the genetic study of psychiatric disorder, particularly autism. But he is also well known for his work in social psychiatry, especially his longitudinal work on Romanian adoptees. Most remarkable is the sociological dimension he brings to his clinical work, which is quite unparalleled in Western medical research.

One of Rutter’s team, Peter Mortimore (1988) reported on “school effectiveness” in a sample of 50 English primary schools, and showed that some schools were much more effective than others in supporting pupils’ personal and intellectual development, when the variable intake to the schools was controlled for. Smith & Tomlinson (1989) in a study of 18 “multiracial comprehensives” replicated Rutter’s design, and also showed that ‘the school effect’ could be strong: “ ... *the results confirm the finding of Fifteen Thousand Hours, that different secondary schools achieve substantially different results with children who are comparable in terms of background and attainment at an earlier time ... [We] also show that these effects are more important than any differences between black and white children, and they provide a more detailed and reliable account than has yet been available of the progress from the age of 11 of children belonging to racial minority groups. The study was much less successful in explaining why the differences in explaining why the differences bet schools occur ...* “ (p.3).

Again parallel ethnographic work would be most welcome, but none of the schools studied by Rutter, Mortimore or Smith and Tomlinson seem to have been

studied in this way. Instead research analysts (e.g. Brighouse & Tomlinson, 1991; Slee et al., 1998) have examined administrative procedures, and interpersonal relationships between staff, and between teachers and staff in trying to construct profiles of successful schools. Valuable though this kind of work is, we would love to know in more detail of how, at the heart, these schools throb.

It is relevant to mention here recent research by Newton & Broadfoot (2016) on “the school effect” in five Quaker secondary schools in England. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, they show that the Quaker ethos (respecting and nurturing one another in a community devoted to learning, and service) has prevailed over the years, despite the majority of students and teachers not now being Quakers themselves. The origins of this philosophy of education are described by Lampen (2015).

Subsequent sociological research (e.g. Searle, 2001; Carlisle, 2013) has followed the tradition of Paul Willis in showing why some (perhaps most?) secondary schools are relatively unsuccessful in meeting the needs of all of their students.

#### **5.6.8 Adding resources: quasi-experiments in school evaluations**

A different kind of research on “quality schooling” is the experimental one: choosing a ‘failing school’ and a similar control school, and supplying the target school with extra resources, teachers, and social work support. Such projects have shown that when target and control schools are compared, to be very successful, and are likely to be cost effective: initial costs are easily offset in the medium run in saved costs of youth delinquency, dropping out of school, lack of skills, unwanted pregnancies, unemployment etc. In the Appendix on “Excluded Youth” (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016) the methodology and results from some of these studies are presented, and reviewed.

I offer a brief overview of the “experimental” study undertaken by Bagley & Pritchard (1999 a & b). They selected for intensive study two matched secondary schools and feeder primary schools, in separate parts of the same urban area, serving communities several miles apart. Both communities were marked by high delinquency rates in children and adults in public housing projects. Both communities also had high rates of mental illness in adults, and child care referrals associated with families who were barely coping with the challenges of everyday life. In the focus schools funding allowed for an additional teacher to be placed in the primary school in the most

deprived sub-area, who focussed in particular on learning and behavioural problems in young children. A half-time teacher was added to the staff of the secondary school, who specialised in work with learning-challenged children, and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A full-time social worker addressed problems of families of selected pupils attending both the secondary and the feeder primary school, focussing especially on sibling groups from particularly disorganised families, using the “family service” model of working intensively with a small case load of “high risk” families (Starkey, 2002).

The programme lasted for three years, and both focus and comparison schools were monitored regularly by the researchers using both pupil questionnaires, and teacher reports. In the focus secondary school exclusion rates fell to zero by the third year; pupils reported less bullying and fighting, and said they enjoyed school more; formal delinquency rates were down; in the families of the focus school children, rates of abuse, neglect and removal to care dropped dramatically; no ‘unwanted’ pregnancies were identified; absenteeism rates fell; self-reported drug use dropped. None of these indicators improved in the contrast school, where rates of pupil problems became worse rather than better. The researchers’ cost analyses showed that that even in the short run, the experimental inputs into the school were highly cost effective, and if applied nationally would have yield savings of many millions of pounds. In retrospect however, the researchers reflected that it was not merely the additional inputs that had helped: the ethos of the school seemed to change, and all of the teachers know that their school had been singled out for special treatment. They had discovered, once again, the joy of teaching! This mood of optimism was catching, for pupils and teachers alike.

Williams & Pritchard (2006) in the first part of their challenging book *Breaking the Cycle of Educational Alienation: A Multi-Professional Approach* give fuller details of qualitative and case study data collected in the experimental study described above, and stress that a school-based social worker was crucially pivotal in the multi-professional approach. This worker could act immediately in giving support to families, whose son or daughter was manifesting problematic behaviour in school. In the second part of this book, the authors review further British studies which had achieved somewhat similar results, and elaborate a model for the caring, inclusive comprehensive school. This important research, funded by a New Labour special

initiative, does not appear to have had much impact on professional policy in subsequent years, and the valuable lesson of linking social workers within schools has not, so far as I am aware, been adopted.

### **5.6.9 Jamaica Rising: The Power of Juk<sup>29</sup>**

The extraordinary island of Jamaica was the receiving port for African slaves, where they were broken in before being shipped to plantations across the British-ruled Caribbean. Jamaica has long had a reputation for the severity of its regime and its punishments to make black people conform to servitude. The African spirit has survived however, in Jamaica as in nowhere else.

In the West African system of religious drumming, of the five ritual drums the big, father drum is the Jah drum which when pounded evokes the spirit of Jah (or Jahweh, as Rastafarians say). This religious metaphor of sound survives powerfully in Jamaica today. Life is lived outdoors, and the throb of sound systems pulse from the bush a mile away.<sup>30</sup> Jah is the god of fertility, of sex, of power. His thrust is Juk, and has music is Jazz. Juk means to hit, to thrust, to strike, to sing, to dance, to strive, to have sex, to create, to be fertile, to *survive*. Juk has guile and cunning, the Anansi figure from West African folk stories who always outwits his opponents, just as Jamaicans will always defeat slavery and oppression, ancient or modern.

When the European colonialists raped North and South America, they first tried to enslave the Amerindians. In this they failed entirely: when enslaved, North American Indians and the Caribbean islands' aboriginal dwellers, all died within a few months or years: deprived of a traditional culture they simply could not survive. The cultural story that this embodies will not be retold here. Suffice it to say that on an island like Newfoundland in the land which the British appropriated and called "Canada", Amerindians were unable to flee, were herded into the centre of the island, and put down. In this Canadian province (as was the case with Tasmania's aboriginals) Native Indians were entirely exterminated; the same happened in all of the Caribbean islands, although in Jamaica some of the "Maroons" (hiding in the mountains) intermarried with escaped slaves.

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<sup>29</sup> I am relying for these accounts on Jamaican friends and colleagues in Britain, and the Vince Hines Foundation ([www.ubol.com](http://www.ubol.com))

<sup>30</sup> In Trinidad it is the percussive sound of open-air steel bands which seduce the listener.

African slaves survived, I intuit, because of their outgoing, thrusting culture, the culture of Juk, which strikes back, which lies in wait for opportunity in whatever form it takes, including taking white names, white manners and white professions, even submitting to concubinage and various values of 'whiteness'. Yet many profoundly African cultural forms survive in Jamaica, including *pocomania* (a shamanist-style of group worship with drumming, dancing and singing, and a few Christian accoutrements). Ancestor worship (burying one's dead on family property, with grave ornaments favoured by the dead ancestor), animal sacrifice in times of change and stress, and many other African rituals have been hidden from western anthropologists. Only Fernando Henriques, the Sephardic-African anthropologist from Brazil was able to describe some of these with any perceptive accuracy (Henriques, 1967).

In Britain a 'black history' movement drew on several African and Caribbean strands to form supplementary and Saturday schooling for black youth (e.g. Stone, 1979; Richardson, 2005). Foremost amongst this movement has been the Jamaican Dr. Vince Hines, whose Brixton-based foundation led to the publication of *How Black People Overcame Fifty Years of Repression in Britain 1945-1995* (1998). Other leading activists in London deserve mention, especially Chris Mullard (Mullard, 1985) an academic whose community organisation strengthened the black cultural roots of the Nottting Hill Carnival in London.

I end this section with two brief case histories of Jamaican families in London, Canada and the United States (the three countries to which Jamaicans have in large numbers, emigrated). First of all, the 'B' family: Mr. and Mrs. B arrived in London in 1960 with their two Jamaican-born children, and settled in Brixton, and had four more children. All attended the same "successful" Roman Catholic secondary school. Mr. B was a chauffeur for a West African country's Ambassador in London, who passed on to Mr. B a signed photograph of Marcus Garvey, which he proudly displayed in his living room. Mrs. B worked as a primary school's cook. All of their children are professionally qualified; and three have academic or medical doctorates. The professional achievements of these six children have ranged from College Director, Dean of Surgery (at a leading US University), Attorney General of a Caribbean nation, two Professors, and a Director of Nursing in a large hospital. Mr. B has now passed, but his wife attributes her children's success to the good school that they had attended. The question must be asked: why have these children (and many other Jamaican

children) achieved so well? The answer probably lies in the happy coincidence of a “good” secondary school attended, and high levels of achievement motivation (like that of the Jamaican-American Colin Powell, and like Obama, child of immigrants). This survival is a sophisticated form of Juk.

Now, consider the ‘W’ family. Poppa W has passed now, but he was the successful inheritor of land in rural Jamaica, on which he grew sugar cane, refined rum, and leased some of his land for bauxite mining. In the West African polygamous tradition he had four wives: each wife took his surname, and each lived in her own house in the village compound. By his first wife he had 12 children, but only 13 children by his other three wives. All lived quiet, Anglican lives, and attended Sunday services. Girls and boys lived at various times in the different houses, according to space, and needs (e.g. for an older girl to help with young children). All but one of the 12 children of the senior wife have become professionals in Britain, Canada, the United States, Jamaica, and other Caribbean islands. They are teachers, accountants, paramedics, professors, land surveyors, senior nurses: all (but one) have degrees, including four master’s degree, and one doctorate. The one exception is the oldest son of the senior wife, who in his turn has inherited the family land, has acquired more properties, has four wives, and (at the last count) is father of 36 children by these four wives. Only the marriage of the first, or senior wife was solemnized in the Anglican Church in this rural Jamaican parish. (This extended family in its second and third cousins, includes an Olympic bronze medallist sprinter from the 2012 games; and an Olympic gold medallist from the ‘seventies).

I draw several lessons from these case studies: Africa survives in rural Jamaica, and this form of polygamy has not been described in any published ethnographic work; diverse cultural systems both run in parallel, and happily intertwine; this cultural complexity by no means inhibits upward social and occupational mobility; and only quite wealthy people (with traditional, African chief-like status) can afford to be successful polygamists!

These are, I submit, not isolated or unique case histories; they may not be typical, but they are certainly not atypical either. They are Jamaica rising, out of the



children of Africa, a people making the best of themselves.<sup>31</sup> Jamaica is one of the most successful of the Caribbean islands. Its music, born in Africa, is refined and flows back to Africa, so the reggae beat is now common in West Africa. Jamaican athletes and professionals are the strongest in the world: Juk survives.

#### **5.6.10 The Poverty of Education in Britain**

This historical review ends, arbitrarily, in 2008-9. I wanted to form an impression of the development and change of how inequality and deprivation (both absolute and relative) impacted on the lives and achievements of families, children and adolescents in what seemed to be a Britain divided along lines of social class and ethnicity. The purpose of this exploration was to 'unmask' not only my own alienation in this divided, complex society but also the alienation imposed on the 22 children who are at the heart of my study of a nursery school in a deprived (i.e. oppressed) area of Inner London. I wanted to understand the nature of the forces that oppressed them and their families, forces which must be understood and unmasked if we are to create a society in which the selfhood of each individual becomes self-actualized.

I have put this review (appended to this thesis) in the past tense, since the account is a form of history. The state of Britain in 2008 may be significantly different from Britain (or of England) in 2016.

Since the document on which this overview is based is written jointly with Christopher Bagley, I reproduce here only the overview of that research. The full document (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016) is appended to this thesis. Numerous supportive references are cited, and for these the reader is referred to the Appendix. The overview is placed within quotation marks, to make it clear that I am not the sole author of this document:

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<sup>31</sup> Another under-researched factor concerns the spread of migrant Jamaican families across countries (Canada, USA, Britain, Trinidad), their network contacts in the age of Skype, and their 'social capital'. An additional intriguing project for research are the 'Windrush' families and those arriving before 1960 in London, who (faced with discrimination in access to rented housing) with the aid of low-interest GLC loans bought large Victorian houses around Clapham, Brixton, Streatham and Tooting Commons, which sell today for £1 million or more. I have been informed of several Caribbean millionaires now enjoying comfortable retirement in Jamaica, or on other Caribbean islands, based on their London property sales. As Young (2005) says, 'accentuate the positive'. If you can't overthrow capitalism, at least you can slide into its ranks. Other Caribbean property millionaires, I am told, have moved to quieter English suburbs or cities, and are funding the house-buying and education of their children and grandchildren.

*“Britain offered the promise of a quality education from preschool to university, but currently youth in the population who formed a more or less permanent underclass (at least ten percent of the population) rarely took full advantage of these educational opportunities, due to a variety of negative pressures in their lives. Up to 2008, Britain was one of the world's wealthiest countries, both in terms of gross national income, and average income per head – but this wealth was distributed much more unequally than in all countries of the developed world, with the exception of the United States. In Britain, health indicators – rates of illness and death from various diseases and “accidents” in the first two decades of life - illustrated the chronic disadvantages experienced by the poorest income quintile of the population. Differences between rich and poor families in this regard were actually increasing. The poor remained economically poor and in relatively poorer health, decade upon decade, while the incomes and good health of the richest quintile improved year by year. The rich were becoming richer, but the poor remained poor.*

*“There were powerful structural problems within British society which created enduring economic poverty, which persisted between generations, with its associated educational poverty: at least half of children from families in the poorest income quintile endured second-rate conditions of living, second-rate educational provision, and restricted occupational opportunities. These were “the excluded youth” of Britain. This sector of the population also suffered disproportionately from chronically poor health, maladaptive behaviour, exclusions from school because of their ‘special educational needs’, and various long-term neurological disorders.*

*“Children from the underclass were much more likely to live in areas of large cities in Britain marked by social or poor housing, high levels of criminality, intergenerational family problems, and psychiatric illness in adults. The schools which serve their “sink” estates were often of poor quality, “crumbling schools” with high rates of teacher turnover, and the lack of specialist teachers in maths, science and languages in secondary schools. Classes in these schools were often too large for effective teaching, and teacher morale was often low. ‘Troublesome’ pupils from these schools were often subject to temporary or permanent exclusion from the educational system, and if they completed schooling they only atypically gained examination successes which enabled them to proceed to college or university.*

*They were likely to become a chronically under-employed underclass, leading disorganized lifestyles marked by petty criminality, as well the drift into begetting the next generation of the underclass.*

*“Britain could offer focussed school-based educational and social work intervention services for families and children otherwise destined for school exclusion and educational failure. These demonstration projects have shown that although such interventions are costly in the short term they are nevertheless frequently successful in diverting young people from depressed and self-defeating lifestyles. Because of the criminal justice and social service costs saved, in the long-run these interventions could have profound psychological and fiscal benefits.*

*“The ‘poverty of education’ in Britain in the period under review was illustrated by international comparisons which highlighted Britain’s comparative failure on a number of indicators of achievement, health and well-being in children and adolescents. Two groups were identified as having especially high levels of stress and failure within the educational system: children growing up in (or having recently left) residential child care; and children with ‘special educational needs’. High levels of permanent and temporary school exclusions identified an educational system which practised exclusion rather than inclusion. Children were particularly likely to be excluded from mainstream schools on grounds of alleged disruption, poor academic performance, disability of various kinds, or the simple fact of being bullied. Britain, although a signatory to the UN Commission on the Rights of Disabled Children (2006), in practice violated this convention through its high levels of educational exclusion of children because of their cognitive, emotional or behavioural challenges. The plight of children with autistic spectrum disorders was particularly dire in this regard.*

*“International literature on school class sizes has been reviewed, showing clearly that in smaller classes (18 or less) teachers could focus on the learning, emotional and behavioural needs of each pupil, without the need for forced exclusions. However, in Britain many school classes contained 30 or more pupils, and in secondary schools classes could be up to 60 in size, because of the shortage of specialist teachers in mathematics and science (so that classes had to ‘double-up’ for the one qualified teacher). It was argued that one of the crucial investments needed in a rich nation is that of halving school class sizes.*

*“We commended the government’s Sure Start initiatives for under-fives in families in deprived areas, but almost certainly these programmes although successful in some applications, were underfunded and not comprehensive enough in scope to be fully effective. We described an alternative type of intervention in which social workers and specialist teachers are attached to primary and secondary schools serving deprived areas. Such interventions could be highly cost-effective in reducing school exclusions, problem behaviours in school and community, school drop-out and later problems such as unwanted pregnancy, drug use, unemployment and criminality. Here, we argued, was a way of preventing children of the poorest families becoming the next generation of the underclass.”*

#### **5.6.11 The multiculturalism debate**

The issues surrounding multiculturalism and education are very relevant for this thesis: but since I am co-author of a paper addressing these issues quite extensively (see the Document appended to this thesis by Bagley, Al-Refai, Sawyerr & Abubaker, 2016) I will offer here only a brief commentary on the issues involved.

We argue that the attack, both popular and political, on the concept of multiculturalism is fundamentally racist and xenophobic in nature. This semi-intellectual critique, while failing to define in coherent terms what is meant by “culture”, attacks the idea that there could be more than one version of the concept of English or British culture. As Modood (2013) says, multiculturalism is here in Britain to stay: live with it. Afro-Caribbeans, Asians, Muslims and many other cultural groups (including Scots, Irish and Welsh) are here in England for all time. And they will marry your children, and your grandchildren.

Demands for “integration” are often actually demands for assimilated subordination, and the giving up of ‘alien’ languages, customs, religions, dress styles, and skin colours. Fortunately these views are firmly held by only a minority of the white English population, Many African-Caribbeans are in fact assimilating through intermarriage with non-racist whites; and an increasing number of former Christians are converting to (assimilating with) Islam. Islam itself is non-racist, a wonderful mix of ethnicities.

The nature of racism in Britain is changing, and anti-black prejudice is now morphing into Islamophobia. Islam itself is a religion of non-violence, a religion of dignity and good deeds, loving neighbours including Christians, whom Islam from its very beginnings, has accepted with tolerance and respect. This is illustrated by the studies on citizenship education and religion of Al-Refai & Bagley (2008), Wilson (2014) and Wilkinson (2015), and in the pluralist theology of Tariq Ramadan (2010).

### **5.7 Conclusions**

This is a partial and highly subjective view of episodes in British multicultural history from 1968 to 2008. In constructing it I have used a variety of informants, scholars, immigrants like myself, and published accounts of special areas of interest, including medicine which was my first profession when I arrived in Britain. The review of inequality of education focusses on “the underclass” who with decreasing frequency, contain the ethnic minority children of immigrants. Black British and Asians in Britain are rising up, not in revolt, but through their aspirations to succeed in educational and occupational sectors. How long will it be before Britain has a Prime Minister who is ‘non-white’, a Muslim, and whose parents were born in Pakistan?

Nevertheless, Britain more than any other European country, has a rigid class system in which “poor whites” often attend the worst schools, with lives blighted by many negative factors in family and environment. Ethnic minorities may reside temporarily in this ghetto of the underclass, but the poor whites, without a clear ethnic or religious identity with which to dignify themselves, are effectively required by the forces of capital, to remain in the ‘reserve army of labour’, in which Bhaskar’s (2008) master-slave relationship and its supporting ideologies, remain unmasked.

Good schools can help children to be upwardly mobile (including children from ‘poor’ white families), and putting extra resources into schools can “break the cycle of alienation” (Williams & Pritchard, 2006). African-Caribbean children, I argue, have strong motivations to succeed academically and the combination of such pupils and a “successful” secondary school can lead to powerful success and upward mobility in Black (and Asian) students. For the future of Blacks and Asians in Britain I am optimistic; on the future (*pace* Tomlinson, 2013) of the “poor white jobs” I am more worried. They have a much weaker ethnic or religious identity,

apart from a broad nationalist spirit. Their religious and value affiliations are often weak or confused, and they generally do not have aspirations to be upwardly mobile (Tomlinson, 2013).

These “poor whites” are part of the segment of social class which Guy Standing refers to as “the precariat”. Writing of recent social changes in Britain, and the danger that the precariat might become the foot soldiers in “emerging neo-fascist movements” in Europe and North America, Standing observes: “The precariat is most exposed to a crisis of identity ... [but] the precariat must not desert multiculturalism or the legitimation of multiple identities. However, it must do more, in that it must have its interests represented in all identity structures and institutions. This is not a plea for a new form of corporatism. It is a call for the precariat to become a class-for-itself.” (Standing, 2014, p. 274).

That this form of identity has not yet evolved is clear from the research of Goodwin & Heath (2016) who analysed data from a panel study of more than 31,000 voters following the referendum vote which resulted in a majority opting to leave the European Union. The ‘Brexit’ group (voting to leave) in many ways resembled those who favoured the right-wing United Kingdom Independence Party in previous studies using this panel of voters. The Brexit group were significantly more likely to have incomes below the median for the country; they had many fewer educational qualifications; they lived in neighbourhoods where their neighbours were also often unskilled and in precarious, insecure and poorly paid employment; they were, in ethnic terms, predominantly white. What united this group of Brexit voters was their strong sense of “an English ethnicity”. This seemed, in 2016, to be the current identity focus of the precariat class.

I will try and integrate this subjective historical review within the research findings that follow. Meanwhile, I want to express my disappointment at the lack of good ethnographic studies of ethnicity in British schools in the period 1968 to 2008 (only the qualitative work of Connolly, 1998, and Searle, 2001 stands out – but I am enlivened by Chris Sarra’s 2013 critical realistic ethnography of the education of First People in an Australian high school.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Peter Woods’ excellent textbook *Inside Schools: Ethnography in Educational Research* (1986) had, according to *Google Scholar* been cited by only 104 researchers up to 2016. About half of the

I am disappointed too by the lack of studies in the tradition of urban sociology pioneered by Morris (1957), which could have focussing on ethnicity as a major variable, and which might illuminate aspects of the lives of children, youth and their families in British cities, through spatial analysis of how disadvantaged conditions cluster together, within the catchment areas of certain schools, which may themselves be disadvantaged.

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research using Wood's approach was in the Dutch language (including research on bilingualism in Dutch immigrant children). Very few of the cited references were in the fields of ethnicity, and none was from the UK. Searching the articles in *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* (an American journal) I could not find any notable articles on UK educational settings. The textbook by Goetz & LeCompe (1984) on ethnographic research in education has several hundred links on *Google Scholar*, but not a single study that I could locate focussed on an English school of any type. A much more fruitful resource proved to be the UK journal *Ethnography and Education*, which began publishing in 2005. Special issue Vol. 6 No. 2 (2011) on *Race, Ethnography and Education*; and Special issue Vol 11, No. 2 (2016) on *Prearity, Ethnography and Education*, I found particularly valuable, and discuss some of these articles in the text of this thesis.

### **III Identity and Self: Studies of Ethnicity, Gender and Mental Health**

#### **Chapter 6: Ethnicity, Gender and Identity: The Evolution and Development of Self-esteem Research in Britain and America**

*The world experienced (otherwise called the 'field of consciousness') comes at all times with our body as its center of vision, center of action, center of interest. Where the body is, is 'here' when the body acts is 'now' what the body touches is 'this' all other things are 'there' and 'then' and 'that'. These words of emphasized position imply a systematization of things with reference to a focus of and interest which lies in the body ... The body is the storm center, the origin of coordinates, the constant place of stress in all that experience-train. Everything circles round it, and is felt from its point of view. The word 'I', then, is primarily a noun of position, just like 'this' and 'there'.*

(William James, 1890, pp. 154-155)

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In the model of child-centred humanism (CCH) the aim of studying children, their interactions and their development, is to understand ways in which their beginning levels of self-esteem can be built into a self-concept which is aware, intelligent, comprehensive, confident and compassionate in ways which allow each of the stages of life's challenge defined by Erikson (1965 & 1968) to become, at each developmental stage, actualized in ways which allow the child to become confident and magnanimous with regard of self and others, in ways which (in Maslow's model) are self-actualizing, helping the child to become an adult full of love and wonder at the marvellous world which they have inherited.

This growth of self-actualization (Maslow, 1970) is based in the core being of the child, his or her body, skin colour, hair texture, the dynamics of movement, the nervous system, sensory impressions, linguistic and visual pathways, touch and taste, movement and breath: every child is not merely special, every child is unique, and the self-concept of each child is unique too as he or she makes sense of the myriad of interactions of daily life, and the endless, joyous reflexivity of reshaping the self-other matrix. Each interaction produces a new 'self', according to the symbolic interactionist George Mead (1934). Although Mead suggested that oftentimes we reflect, internalise or modify the views which others have of us, the self as agent is nevertheless powerful. As James (1985) had argued: "Our self-feelings in this world depend entirely on what



we back ourselves to be and do.” (p. 4) James maintained that individuals have free choice (or free will) in these matters, and Vincent de Paul would agree.

Margaret Archer (2003) develops the ideas of the reflexive self from the writings of James and Mead into the idea of the dialectical, morphogenic self in which the I-Me dyad engages continuously with others in formulating ideas about their shared world. The critical realist Priscilla Alderson (2013) also grounds her ontology in the physical being of the child: *“Children and adults learn about their bodily experiences within relationships; they express their needs and views through their bodies; and they are respected or disrespected in the sensitive or casual or harsh ways in which their bodies are treated.”* (p. 94)

## **6.2 Recent historical perspectives**

In reviewing the recent literature on self-esteem and self-concept, I cannot detect much change in basic theory concerning self-esteem (e.g. in Owens, Stryker & Goodman’s 2001, *Extending Self-Esteem Theory and Research*). Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale (the RSES), developed in the 1960s, is still widely used internationally, in educational and clinical settings, and is well validated in terms of how it correlates with (predicts, or is predicted by) measures of depression, anxiety, and emotional and behavioural problems in children, adolescents and adults (Robins et. al. 2001). Self-evaluation (a description in evaluative terms of what the individual assumes their basic characteristics to be) is measured most frequently in the literature of clinical and social psychology, by Rosenberg’s (1965) simple 10-point scale.

Self-esteem levels (as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale – RSES) both predict and reflect emotional instability, and scholastic success within different age groups, and within different demographic groups (categorized by gender, social class) in Americans, and across the world at about the same levels, even though mean RSES scores sometimes differ between the various groups studied.

It was clear in Hewitt’s (1976) overview of the idea of ‘self’ in social, clinical and educational psychology that ‘self-esteem’ had dynamic and interacting relationships with ideas of identity and self-actualization. I reproduce (with permission) the figure which Loretta Young (in Young & Bagley (1982) constructed in her review of “self-esteem, self-concept and the development of black identity”. This seems to me to draw together the strands of research quite succinctly, and provided the basis for

their cross-cultural studies of 'racial identification' using the Color Meanings Test (CMT), and the Preschool Racial Attitudes Measure (PRAM) designed by Williams and Morland (1976).

In her idea of "global identity" as a preliminary to presenting data on "children and race", Young (1982) usefully draws together the degree to which an individual has, at various ages (infancy through to adolescence, mid-life, old age) tackled the identity challenges which all humans face – with Maslow's hierarchical model of life-stage needs, with "self-actualization" at the pinnacle of Maslow's well-known triangle. Many individuals, because of, for example, their position in social structure, fail to achieve this highest level in which the person the best of their talents in magnanimous self-development. As in Erikson's system, there is often 'premature identity foreclosure'. Carl Rogers' person-centred approach does not incorporate stages of development, but is reflexive and context dependent at each moment of an individual's life. For the adult, there is a duty (in the Child-Centred Humanism model) to create conditions of growth for the child to proceed from "absence" (in Bhaskar's critical realist model) to a realization of self in the phase of 'upward mobility' described by Archer (2003).

In Young's model (reproduced in Figure 3.1, below) identity is clearly related to self-concept and self-esteem. Identity has both cognitive (knowledge) and affective (evaluation) aspects. The higher order concept combining these two aspects of self is what Young terms *global identity*, the highest-order concept, incorporating both self-concept and self-esteem in an integrated whole. Within global identity are the parts of the self, related to one another in particular configurations representing varying degrees of ego integration. The degree and type of integration at any point in time depend, Young argues, on the ways in which the various developmental "crises" or challenges in Erikson's (1968) schema have been solved, and the degree to which the parallel needs outlined by Maslow (1954/1970) - e.g. for love and belongingness, have been is equivalent to the idea met. The term global identity is equivalent to the idea of global self-concept elaborated by Coopersmith (1975).

**GLOBAL IDENTITY OR THE GLOBAL SELF-CONCEPT**

(the parts of the self, related to one another in particular configurations representing varying degrees of ego integration, and differing degrees of success in the resolution of Erikson's life-crises, or fulfillment of Maslow's life-stage needs)

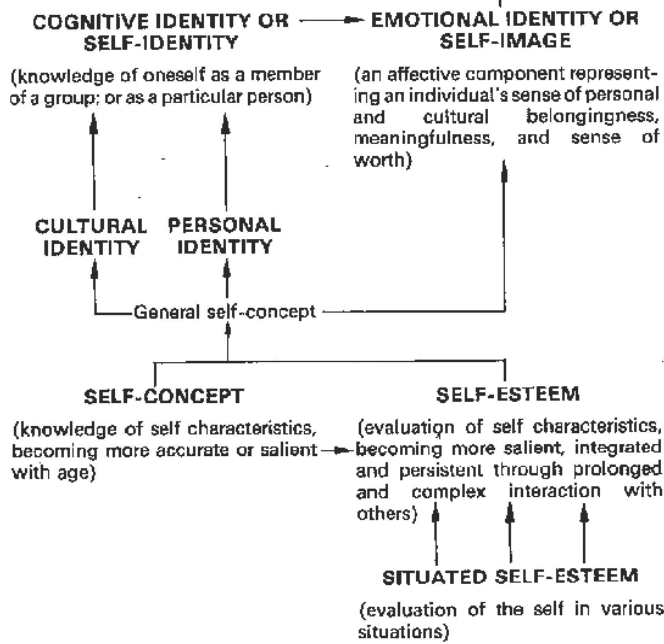


FIGURE 3.1 Relationships of identity and aspects of the self

### **6.3 Studies of ‘racial’ identity in young children using dolls, and figures with contrasted ethnicity**

Since my own research (Sawyerr, 1999) and the work in the present thesis which stemmed from that interest, was based on helping minority children achieve an adequate sense of self using dolls and other materials, I have a particular interest in this literature. The American doll studies of the twentieth century, asking children (usually aged five or less) of different ethnicities which doll they preferred had produced gloomy findings, showing that African-American children often preferred the “white” doll or figure (Clark, 1966; Porter, 1971; Fox & Jordan, 1973) – although a substantial minority or sometimes even a majority preferred a doll which looked like them. The point was in the comparison – some 90 percent of white children preferred the “white” doll, and also attributed positive characteristics to the doll which looked like them, and saw black figures (and children) in stereotypically negative terms.

Milner (1973 & 1975) was the first British psychologist to replicate this type of study in an English setting. He studied 100 African-Caribbean, 100 Asian (mainly Indian), and 100 European children (presumably white) in South and West London. He adapted the classic doll figures described by Clark (1966) and Morland (1966), asking the questions “which doll looks most like you?”; ‘Which one do you like the best?’, and of the adult figures questions such as ‘Which one of these two men is the bad man?’ All of the white children chose the white doll when responding to being asked to choose the doll ‘like them’; but only 52 percent of the black children, and 76 percent of the Asians made the ‘correct’ choice. Similar patterns occurred in identifying figures who resembled parents.

All of the white children would ‘rather be’ the white figure – but so would 82 percent of the black children, and 65 percent of the Asians. Concerning ‘out-group’ preferences, six percent of the white children thought it would be fun to be part of a black family, compared with 74 percent of Asian children, and 72 percent of black children. None of the white children held negative stereotypes about their own group; but 65 percent of Asian children, and 72 percent of black children, had negative stereotypes of African-Caribbeans. Milner concluded that this misidentification was not the result of cognitive confusion (there were no cognitive test differences between groups), but rather reflected the incipient poor self-esteem of the minority children. In later writing Milner (1996 & 1997) argues that certainly in America, the impact of racial

self-derogation in young children using the doll test had greatly diminished, reflecting the growth of the “Black Pride” movement. For Britain however, Owusu-Bempah & Howitt (1999) remained pessimistic.

The most recent English study using dolls or photographs that I can locate (Lam et al., 2010) does however give rise for optimism, however. These researchers used eight stimulus photographs with 124 black, white and Asian 3 to 5-year-olds in London. The older the child, and the better their performance on a symbol recognition test, the more likely were they to identify their own “race” correctly. But whatever the children’s ethnicity, they did not display any pattern of rejection of their own ethnicity, or preference for a different ethnicity. Another optimistic study comes from Rutland et al. (2005) who studied the self-perceptions of 136 white, English 3 to 5-year-olds from contrasted environments: housing in which all residents were white; and housing where residents were a mixture of both black and white families. Only the children who had little inter-ethnic contact showed negative evaluations of the black individuals displayed in the stimulus material. Children from the mixed-ethnicity environment showed no biases. The authors interpret these findings in the light of Allport’s (1954) well-known paradigm that “equal status interaction produces liking.” I speculate that children who grow up to enter the growing number of mixed-race partnerships in England (Platt, 2009) often come from mixed-race urban areas.

#### **6.4 Identity and institutional racism**

One of the most significant government policies developed in response to the recommendations of the Macpherson Inquiry Report (1999), on the death of Stephen Lawrence, was the recognition that education has a crucial role to play in eliminating racism and promoting and valuing racial diversity.

The National Curriculum was legally established in England through the Education Reform Act of 1988, and allowed governments to make curriculum changes which all state schools had to follow, as evidence or policy required. Thus, after the Macpherson Report was published in 1999, national government required schools to ensure that they take account of responsibilities for addressing issues of institutional racism, in curriculum planning and delivery. Early Stage inspectors in Wales, and Office for Standards in Education inspectors in England now had to evaluate and report on a range of racial equality issues. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE),

launched a government initiative for Racial Equality, *Learning For All: Standards for Racial Equality in Schools*, (2000) in England and Wales in February 2000 as a first step in addressing the Macpherson Report's recommendations.

The Macpherson Inquiry Report's major contribution has been the provision of a clear definition of 'Institutional Racism' and its implications for all educational and related organisations to examine and tackle subtle and covert forms of discrimination. The report defined 'Institutional Racism' (p 6.34), as:

*"The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviours which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. It persists because of the failure of the organisation openly and adequately to recognise and address its existence and causes by policy, example and leadership. Without recognition and action to eliminate such racism it can prevail as part of the ethos or culture of the organisation. It is a corrosive disease."*

While the nursery school research study I undertook in 2002-4 did not focus on, or measure institutional or individual racism, it explored the following: how learning was facilitated, how positive self-esteem, positive self-concept and values of racial diversity might be communicated between practitioners, and to children, through the implementation of the foundation stage curriculum. This I felt was important as these areas could influence the learning process of all children (i.e. Black, White, Mixed-Parentage and Ethnic Minority) in positive ways in a multi-ethnic day nursery; or they could have negative consequences for Black, Mixed-Parentage and Ethnic Minority children (Milner, 1997).

The study (reported in detail in the following chapter, and in Appendix C) was especially concerned with early learning and influences, because of the potentially life influencing experiences that young children can have. The literature reviewed prior to the inception of that study suggested that the younger children were, the more vulnerable they might be in internalising racism from subtle or overtly discriminatory practices (Rist, 1970: Adams 1978: Ingram, 1982: Brophy, 1980: Ogilvy et al., 1990: Connolly, 1998).

## 6.5 Studies on Nursery Education and ethnic diversity

During the four decades prior to 2002, there had been a growing interest in the study of ethnicity and childcare, by psychologists, sociologists and social policy researchers in Britain. Researchers had focused on such areas as: differential treatment of children, children's self-identity, children's cultural identity and children's racial and gender identity - e.g. Adams (1978), Verma & Bagley (1982), Bagley & Verma (1982), Milner (1983), Troyna & Williams (1986) Wilson (1987), Tizard & Phoenix (1993), Barn (1993), Owusu-Bempah (1994), Owusu-Bempah & Howitt (1998), Barn, Sinclair & Ferdinand (1997), and Connolly (1998).

These empirical research studies highlighted concerns, and heightened awareness of negative experiences and the impact of differential treatment on Black and Ethnic Minority children's psychological, emotional and identity development. The studies also emphasised the need for educational and local authority social service departments to address the identity needs of children of all ages from Black and Ethnic Minority backgrounds.

Specific research studies carried out in nursery education contexts had shown that the quality of childcare was vitally important in the pre-five stage (Ogilvy et al., 1990). Children at that age depend on adults to provide both a stimulating physical environment and collaborative activities, which offer opportunities for positive developmental experiences.

The special role of adult contact in children's cognitive and language development had been stressed by many authors (e.g. Schaffer, 1984; Wells, 1986). For ethnic minority children the quality of their interactions with adults at nursery school was likely to be of particular importance, since nursery school was not only the ethnic minority child's first encounter with the education system, but often also their first contact with a predominantly White English-speaking environment.

In reviewing this literature I was particularly charmed by an American doctoral thesis by Rosenzweig (1998) titled *I have a new friend in me: the effect of a multicultural/anti-bias curriculum on the development of social cognition in pre-schoolers*. Working with three and four-year-olds in a multicultural nursery setting, Rosenzweig helped each child develop a positive story about an imaginary friend of the same ethnicity, who had many positive characteristics. Then, she helped each

child “transfer” this super-person-like-them inside of themselves, as an invisible helper. I like the morphogenetic, critical realism implied by this approach, the beginning of the internal conversation which becomes reflexive, assisting assured, confident friendships.

### **6.6 Teacher-child interactions**

In a British study of staff attitudes and perceptions in multicultural nursery schools, Ogilvy and colleagues (1990) had shown that staff were less likely to respond contingently to these children than to indigenous i.e. White children. Rather, they adopted a controlling style of interaction as a blanket strategy, irrespective of individual differences in the children’s ability. Tizard et al., (1972), in their study of young children in long-stay residential nurseries, found that the way in which staff behaved and talked in an institution was influenced both by its organisational structure and by its aims. In a later study of staff behaviour in pre-school centres, Tizard and colleagues (1976), found that the avowed educational aims of pre-school centres were related to both the cognitive content of staff talk, and to children’s cognitive needs. Children’s test scores were highest in nurseries with clear educational aims, particularly those which incorporated daily language instruction sessions, and lowest in centres without educational aims, where staff talked to and taught the children less. Tizard & Hughes (1984) further showed that the home-school partnership was crucial, since parents are the first (and probably the best) teachers of their young children.

Bruner (1980) had earlier commented on ‘the absence of a sense of lively purpose in what they are doing’ in many pre-school staff (p.74) and lamented the paucity of adult-child talk. Ingram (1982) confirmed that individual children’s contact with adults in the day nurseries she studied was surprisingly low. She found, moreover, that there were significant differences in the amount and type of adult-child contact according to the child’s sex and ethnicity, with Black children, especially West Indian boys receiving little adult attention. Similarly Connolly (1998), in his study of racism, gender identities of young children in an inner city primary school discovered disturbing degrees of racism affecting the lives of five and six year old children. His data came from in-depth interviews using an ethnographic methodology which gave primacy to the voices of young children, giving them the space to articulate their own experiences and concerns. His findings showed not only that many young children were capable of dealing with quite complex ideas about ‘race’, but that they were



already doing so, exemplified by the fact that children's racialised attitudes and behaviours were inextricably bound up in everyday experience in classroom and playground.

His findings further support the ideas of Epstein (1993) and Siraj-Blatchford (1994) that with the right kind of analytical 'scaffolding', important work can be done in the positive building of children's racial attitudes and perceptions. He also noted that while such work was already going on with older children, his data suggested that it needed to incorporate young children at the start of their schooling careers.

It was therefore, I felt (in reviewing the literature prior to 2000), an important area for nursery school practitioners to address, given their direct involvement in activities with the under fives at the foundation stage of the curriculum in nursery settings, and in reception classes in schools. Adults' expectations of children appeared, in the literature published before 2000, as important and worth investigating, as their expectations and attitudes might inadvertently shape and influence the perceptions and behaviours of all the children they interact with at the foundation, preschool or kindergarten level.

### **6.7 Teachers' expectations**

Braun (1976) and Good (1987) commented on a potential influence on differential treatment of children, embedded in the expectations that teachers hold. Expectations of individual children's behaviour may be based on first impressions and/or any other available information pertaining to the child, such as knowledge of family background. Teachers actions may also be based on generalised beliefs held in relation to a particular social or ethnic group, which are then applied to individual members of that group (Rogers, 1982). This is another basis of prejudice: individuals are prejudged on the basis of their ethnic group membership and expected to behave in accordance with a stereotype.

Adams (1978) found racial stereotype could influence pre-school teachers' expectations of both children's academic performance and their social behaviour. For example on the basis of photographic evidence, staff pre-judged White children to be more intelligent and less disruptive than Black children. The British and American literature reviewed in 2002, further suggested that teachers' expectations and perceptions of their pupils might affect the type of teacher-pupil relationship and that

this effect could be strongest in the early years of schooling, influencing both the quantity and the quality of adult-child interaction (Rist, 1970; Brophy, 1980).

This idea of low-self esteem developing, and continuing in minority children in English schools was supported by findings from Bagley & Coard (1975), and Bagley et al. (1979). In this latter study however, a group of African-Caribbean children were identified who had adequate levels of self-esteem, and whose parents were highly critical of the English educational system: alienation unmasked, so to speak. Coard (1971) had identified practices in British schools in which African-Caribbean children had been falsely labelled as 'educationally sub-normal'. This linked to findings from a national study which showed that teacher stereotyping of pupils could lead to their poor scholastic performance, regardless of their ability (Pidgeon, 1970).

In further English research using photographs, Davey (1982) found that black children frequently 'preferred' the photographs of white children of similar age and sex, a 'bias' not shown by white children. These were results based on group testing of several thousand children, the person handing out and collecting the tests being white. These findings prompted Maxime, a black psychologist, to devise pictorial figures which she thought were more appropriate for enhancing minority children's identity, in multi-ethnic situations (Maxime, 1986 to 1991).

I used Maxime's books and pictures in my own work in counselling young children (Sawyer, 1999), work which led me to undertake the observational study of the multi-ethnic nursery school described later in this thesis. Wilson (1987) also used specially designed photographs as projective measures in her study of 'mixed race' children, and showed that several different types of 'colour preference' were expressed by children of black-white marriages. Bagley et al. (1993) also found, in work with transracially and interculturally adopted children, and in children of racially mixed marriages, various kinds of ethnic and colour identification were possible: but they could not show that any particular type of racial or ethnic identification was connected to psychological outcomes or adjustment in these children.

## 6.8 Loretta Young's English and cross-national work using the Preschool Racial Attitudes Measure (PRAM)

The monograph by Williams & Morland (1976) collected together the earlier American studies, both substantively and theoretically, and offered a developmental model for countering "colour bias" amongst young black children in America, suggesting that the growth of positive role models in the African-American community could result in the development of positive self-concepts in African-American youth: their results did offer a challenge to American educators to offer a curriculum that was free of racial stereotyping and "colour bias".

Young & Bagley (1982) carried out cross-cultural studies using the Williams & Morland Color Meanings Test (CMT) and Preschool Racial Attitudes Measure (PRAM) in 468 young children (aged 4 to 7) in London, and in rural Jamaica. The CMT measured preferences for various colours, whilst the PRAM elicited young children's evaluative perceptions of drawings of Black and White adults and children.

The tests were administered by Young, a female, Black Jamaican who had been resident in the UK for about 12 years when testing took place. Besides the tests of colour and ethnic perception, and choice, the children completed Ziller's (1972) self-esteem test for young children, which involved placing a figure representing "oneself" in relation to the figure of the "bad" boy or girl. Of the children tested, 117 were resident in rural Jamaica. The UK-based group included 100 who were "white English", 113 black children with parents whose origins were in the Caribbean, 23 black children whose parents were born in Africa, 30 children with parents of Cypriot origin, and 17 with Asian parents. The results (which across the ethnic groups, showed high levels of statistically significant variation) indicated that:

*The large majority of responses of white children fall into the pro-white range (consistent with adequate levels of self-esteem in this group) ... but only a small proportion of the responses of the UK West Indian Group (which includes 69 children with Jamaican parents) fall into the pro-black range. Similarly, only a small proportion of the responses of the children in rural Jamaica fall into this group. The only group to manifest more pro-black than pro-white bias is the small group of African children ... In the white English, West Indian, Asian, Cypriot and rural Jamaican groups there was*

*a significant tendency for pro-white bias to increase with age.* (Young & Bagley, 1982, p. 200)

The Ziller self-esteem measure showed significant cross-ethnic variations, and was associated with colour and ethnic preference – implying that choosing a figure which resembled one's own ethnic group was in some children associated to a certain degree, with 'better' self-esteem. However, these correlations rarely exceeded 0.2, and explained very little common variance. The validity of the Ziller test in children as young as these might be in question, an issue taken up by Stone (1979).

The apparent puzzle in these results was the strong tendency of black children in rural Jamaica to reject their identity in favour of the white figures, even though they rarely saw white people, and at that period had very little access to visual media. Young explains this by reference to the culture of Jamaica in which post-emancipation, "fair" people (i.e. light-skinned African-Caribbeans) had higher economic and social status in a society still rigidly stratified by racial layers (Wilson, 1973; Foner, 1977). Henriques (1968 & 1974), a Jamaican anthropologist observed:

*"My research over the last ten years in the Caribbean suggest the mythology of the superiority of the white is still being upheld in terms of marriage. That is to say a coloured or black man will generally tend, particularly in the middle classes, to marry a woman who is lighter than himself. This not only improves his own social status but creates greater opportunities for his children. It is in fact a historical pattern."* (1974, p. 113)

Young & Bagley (1989) extended their research using the CMT and the PRAM with 5 to 7 year-olds, to African children in Accra, Ghana, and to black children of Jamaican parents who had migrated from Jamaica to urban Toronto, Canada (around 100 children in each group). Results were interesting, showing first that the black Ghanaian children regarding black figures and ethnicity in a wholly positive light, clearly having a secure identity focussed on their own ethnic group. And the children of Jamaican parents in Toronto also had much more positive views of their personal ethnicity than did children in rural Jamaica, and in black children of Jamaican and Afro-Caribbean parents in London.

The authors, in discussing these results, point to the research by Thomas-Hope (1982) which compared adult samples of migrants from the English-speaking

Caribbean (including Jamaica) to England, America (New York and Boston), and Canada (mainly to Toronto). All of those she interviewed had generally similar educational and social class profiles before migrating. She compared their personal satisfaction with the achievement of the goals of their migration, which were chiefly to improve occupational and educational status for themselves and their children. Migrants to America and Canada were much more likely than immigrants to England to be “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with achieving the goals of their migration: some 50 percent of migrants to England expressed satisfaction with goal achievement, compared with over 85 per cent of those migrating to North America.

In discussion of these findings, Lowenthal’s (1967) study of West Indian migrants in New York was recalled: at that time Caribbean migrants made up some 12 percent of New York’s ethnically black population; but they made up one third of New York’s black professionals. Lowenthal, himself a Jew, dubbed these migrants “the black Jews of New York”. In Britain, unlike in Canada and America, a racist social structure had tried to push its Caribbean migrants into the status of an underclass.

#### **6.9 Maureen Stone’s *The Education of the Black Child in Britain* (1981)**

Maureen Stone’s book, based on her doctoral thesis, deserves to be better known. Stone (cousin of Bernard Coard, then imprisoned for life in Granada for being a Marxist), criticized the current policies of “multiracial education” which she saw as stemming from white liberal concerns about racialized minorities, whose place in the class system put them at greater disadvantage than racism per se. Stone criticized British work which purportedly saw African-Caribbean children as having poorer self-esteem and identity problems as a reflection of a racist social structure, arguing that such work (e.g. Milner, 1975) tended to pathologise black children. She examined these previous studies, showing that in fact many (and often the majority) of black children in these studies had perfectly ‘normal’ self-esteem and positive choices in the projective studies.

Stone studied African-Caribbean children in a variety of ‘cultural enrichment’ programmes in London, including Saturday Schools, and argued that Caribbean culture was rich and thriving in Britain. She used the Ziller and Piers-Harris measures of self-esteem with a variety of populations, and could not show that overall, there were significant differences in self-esteem profiles between various ethnic groups.

When Black children did underperform scholastically, or had identity problems, Stone blamed the failure of existing 'multiracial' education policies. Ultimately, she identified Britain's class system with its ritualized demeaning of the aspirations of the poorest classes, those intended to be 'the reserve army of labour', the underclass who would be recruited into low-wage employment when the forces of capital required – as the structural mechanism responsible for depressing the personal and academic aspirations of black children in Britain.

In this focus she draws on Paul Willis' (1978) impressive (but also neglected) study of how working class children in Britain 'learn to labour', a study cited by Banfield (2016) in his focus on critical realism for a Marxist study of education, deriving his analysis from Roy Bhaskar's earlier work. In reading Maureen Stone's study, one has a distinct sense that a critical realist approach would have strengthened her theoretical model, and ultimately, the impact of her study.

#### **6.10 Updates and critiques of the doll and figure studies of racial identity**

How children are socialized, in certain historical phases of social structures, to accept and 'internalize' society's stereotypes of them is usefully summarized by Milner (1983), who also analyses the stereotypes of "race" which the white, English schoolchild had absorbed throughout the days of empire. How do children of these colonies, born to immigrant parents, *avoid* internalizing these stereotypes? On this topic there is surprisingly little research in Europe and North America. Milner (1983), critically reviewing Maureen Stone's work, and reflecting on his earlier pessimistic studies using dolls, reported that there was a flux of change since his 1975 monograph which showed that many African-Caribbean children were internalising the stereotypes projected not only by their peers, but apparently by many institutions of society. Milner further commented on progress in teacher awareness, and the use of multicultural materials, as well as improvements in teacher training (Milner, 1996). Research flowing from the research group of the Indian-born academic, G.K. Verma at Manchester University (e.g. Verma & Bagley, 1982) was becoming widely known, and was increasingly available (and influential) in colleges concerned with teacher education.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Manchester may have been an exception: Tomlinson (2008) in her review of ethnicity and educational policies in England has observed " ...the minimal and grudging preparation of teachers to teach in a multi-ethnic society". (p. 179)

Youth culture itself was changing, and the music of *Rastafari* (African-rooted, Jamaican folk music) was becoming increasingly popular amongst youth of all cultures, as were cross-ethnic friendships, and eventually, marriages (Bagley & Young, 1984). Bagley et al. (1979) on the basis of several national studies of racist attitudes estimated that about a quarter of British adults were liberal and accepting of minorities of various kinds; but another quarter were extremely hostile, or racist, while the remaining 50 percent of the population had half-formed, unarticulated attitudes which could in theory be manipulated into “anti-immigrant” fugues by political demagogues.<sup>34</sup> Not surprisingly, it was the ‘non-racist’ quarter of the population who were most likely to be in a mixed marriage.<sup>35</sup> For minority people in Britain there has developed an enduring phalanx of ‘liberal whites’ who provide a sector of British social structure in which people of various ethnic and religious origins can mix on terms of acceptance and equality. By 2008, a quarter of the population who formed the racist group of the 1980s (and their now adult children) had evolved (according to various attitude surveys) into an Islamophobic sector of the population (Fenetke, 2009; Bagley, Al-Refai, Sawyerr & Abubaker, 2016).

#### **6.11 Ethnic mixing: Black and White are both beautiful**

British research on self-esteem and “race” since the 1990s has focused mainly on ‘mixed-race’ children, and adopted children whose ethnicity is different from that of their parents (Wilson, 1987; Bagley, 1995). In Britain a pressure-group called *Harmony*, founded in the 1960s, has thrived through various government and foundation grants, and lobbies educational and social service sectors on behalf of ‘mixed’ children. Tizard & Phoenix (2002) studied a group of children of black-white marriages, and argued that “mixed race” deserves to be category of identity which is unique, with individuals choosing what aspects of their racial and cultural heritages to blend and present to the world. The “misidentification” of the Blackness or Whiteness (of the mixed-race individual) according to context appears to be a more salient topic in America than in Britain (Wright, 2015).

The most recent census data (2011) for the England and Wales indicated that 48 percent of African-Caribbean males and 34 percent of African-Caribbean females

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<sup>34</sup> For example, in the “Brexit” fugue of xenophobia in the UK Referendum of 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Structural factors may be influential as well, such as growing up in a mixed-race community, and sharing cross-ethnic friendships in school (Rutland et al., 2005).

were in a partnership with a White (usually British) European partner. In England and Wales some nine percent of the population, around 2.3 millions, were in a mixed, black-white partnerships. These partners tended to be younger than the population average, and most had at least one “mixed race” child (Platt, 2009; ONS, 2014). The “Harmony Child” is common in many schools in British conurbations.

This apparently remarkable success in British ‘race relations’ has received very little attention from press, public, and university researchers, and the very normality of this mixing is, one supposes, an indicator of the assimilation of immigrants which politicians seem to desire (Bagley, Al-Refai, Sawyerr & Abubaker, 2016). One basis for the marital mixing of White European and African-Caribbean populations might be due to the fact that they generally share the same general value system, including for some, religious values (based on forms of Christianity). English-born people with heritage from the Indian sub-continent have a rate of intermarriage with white European residents of only about three percent (ONS, 2014), perhaps because of religious differences.

Most of the research on identity, self-esteem and ethnicity in young children since 2000 now comes from American scholars, who examine how ‘biracial’ children of mixed marriages; and children adopted across cultural or ethnic lines develop identity and self-esteem. Good recent examples of such research are Schmitt et al. (2015) on racial/ethnic identification of youth in foster care in America; and Yampolsky et al. (2016) on MULTIS, a multicultural identity scale for children and young people experiencing complex cultural environments, care or family situations. Garcia et al. (2015) develop the idea that “race” is a lived, dynamic and changing experience, with ethnic identity changing and developing as the range and nature of the individual’s interactions develop and change: this, in Archer’s (2003) critical realist model, may be seen as the positive process of morphogenesis. Yap et al. (2014) develop a rather similar model.

#### **6.12 Global self-esteem in adolescents and young adults**

Bachman and colleagues (2011) in a major overview of American data on adolescent self-esteem observed that:

*‘Global self-esteem’, an individual’s overall evaluation of self, is one of the most studied constructs in the social sciences. A wide and diverse literature that spans*



*disciplines and theoretical perspectives suggests that high self-esteem is positively, though not necessarily causally, associated with goals, expectancies, coping mechanisms and behaviors, that facilitate productive achievement and work experiences; and it is negatively associated with mental and physical health problems, substance abuse, and antisocial behaviour. (p. 447)*

Research available two decades earlier (e.g. Rosenberg, 1979) had already established this, and research on self-esteem since 1980 has taken a variety of directions.

Kaplan (1980) argued that individuals naturally seek out situations which maximise social support and praise for their actions – even if those giving positive feedback are “deviant” sub-groups whom they eventually join. In this model of “deviant behaviour in defense of the self”, self-esteem levels should tend to rise with age as individuals seek to “maximise social returns”, a thesis with some support from research studies (Rosenberg & Kaplan, 1982; Mason, 2001).

As William James advised, the child’s developing body and sensory system is at the core of the changing, ongoing identity. When catastrophes do occur in the form of “non-voluntary deviance”, such as an adult imposing himself sexually upon a child, that whole process of identity development for the child is disrupted and changed, and the long-term mental health of the child is imperilled (Bagley, 1996; Bagley & King, 2003). When physical and emotional abuse and neglect are added to sexual abuse, outcomes for children can be catastrophic (Bagley & Mallick, 2000). In the worst case, the child becomes the victim of what Schatzman (1973) called “soul murder” (Bagley, 1996).

That physical, emotional and sexual abuse may have profoundly negative effects on child and adolescent self-esteem has still not been fully absorbed in mainstream clinical and social psychology. In their major review of literature and concepts on the “social psychology of the self-concept” edited by Rosenberg & Kaplan in 1982, none of the 42 writers who contributed chapters, mentions child abuse as a factor influencing self-esteem. Some twenty years later in another major review of self-esteem research edited by Owens et al. (2001) none of the 18 contributors mentioned child abuse of any kind as having an impact on child, adolescent and adult self-esteem. The chapter by Rosenberg & Owens (2001) on “Low self-esteem people: a collective

portrait” painted a picture of people (identified within a population of more than 7,000 high school and college students, and amounting to about five percent of those studied) who as a group who were frequently depressed, often anxious, fearful, afraid, underachieving, avoiding risk, isolated and lonely. But the authors failed entirely to elucidate *why* this group had such very low self-esteem.

The failure to link self-esteem research to measures and concepts of child sexual abuse in the often very large samples of high school students which were being accessed by these researchers is puzzling. The idea that within-family sexual abuse could occur, and cause psychological devastation, had been introduced into the American ‘social problems’ literature by Bagley in 1969, and by the early 1980s the widespread prevalence of child sexual abuse, and the damage it could do to the developing child’s identity was well established in the literature in American sociology and social work (Finkelhor, 1979 & 1982), and psychiatry (Bagley, 1995).

This is an important theme in self-esteem research, to which I will return to in a later chapter, arguing from the English Northern Schools study, that it is sexual and physical abuse that is mainly responsible for “devastated self-esteem”, particularly in adolescent women.

### **6.13 Measuring self-esteem in various ethnic groups: research past and present**

The ethnic, religious or linguistic minority child has an added set of identity tasks, especially if the wider society stigmatises their minority identity in various ways. Sometimes the minority family can “pass”, not mentioning their minority religious status, even denying it when people call them ‘Paki’ or ‘Jew’. Lewin (1936) famously advised Jewish parents to take pride in being Jewish, a manifest identity which they and their children should carry into society with pride rather than concealment.

The ‘black pride’ movement of America beginning in the 1960s has taken a similar stance, with some success when we consider the self-esteem profiles of different ethnic groups studied by Rosenberg & Simmons (1976). They found, contrary to hypothesis, that African-American children did not have ‘poorer’ self-esteem than European-Americans – rather, African-Americans had created their own reference groups so far as feelings of self-worth were concerned. In critical realist terms, African

Americans have rewritten the script on “master-slave” relations: they have created a new ground of being, an ontology of freedom.

Today in Europe, Muslim children face a dilemma – to “pretend” to be part of the mainstream, trying to avoid Islamophobia: or to be a proud Muslim, bearing the message of peace of Prophet Muhammad (Ramadan, 2010). Wilkinson (2015), a critical realist scholar offers the model of “seriousness” in which Muslim adolescents in Britain “reimagine” themselves as true citizens of Europe, recreating themselves on the affective-cultural dimension of “success”.

## **6.14 British and North American research on adolescent self-esteem**

### *6.14.1 English and Canadian studies*

Surprisingly, there has not been much research on self-esteem and ethnicity in Britain since 2000, with a few notable exceptions. Robinson (2000) for example, used the RSES with adolescents in a multi-ethnic population admitted to residential care, and found that *within* ethnic groups, significant variation in scores was related to adjustment, although there were no significant differences *between* ethnic groups. Thomas et al. (2002) used the RSES in a questionnaire study of 722 English secondary school students, finding that ‘white’ European and ‘black’ African-Caribbean students had equally high levels of self-esteem; but Asian females in particular were significantly more like to have eating disorders, and poorer self-esteem.

Bagley & Mallick (2001) sought to establish the reliability and validity of the 10-item Rosenberg Self Esteem Inventory (RSES) in 1,330 English adolescents, using measures validated in previous Canadian work with several thousand adolescents (Bagley, Bolitho & Bertrand (1995 &1997). This Canadian research had established the factorial reliability of the RSES in all of the age and gender groups studied; and construct validity in terms of correlations with relevant scales from the Ontario Child Health Survey. Since this survey of Canadian high school students included a brief measure of sexual harassment and assault at school, or on the journey to school, the research was able to show that females in particular had poorer mental health and self-esteem profiles if they reported such sexual assaults.

In the first English replication of this work (Bagley & Mallick, 2001) it was not possible to include a measure of sexual assault. But the study did show that the RSES

was in psychometric terms, a reliable instrument when used with English adolescents. And face validity was established through correlations with Ontario Child Health Scales, which had been validated against an individually diagnosed population of English adolescents (Pace et al., 1999).

The second English replication of the Canadian work was able to utilise a more comprehensive measure of physical and sexual abuse, validated in previous Canadian work. This study is reported in a subsequent chapter of this thesis.

#### *6.14.2 American and international studies on global self-esteem, particularly the RSES*

Considerable research on self-esteem has been carried out in America, and internationally. Schmitt & Allik (2005) analysed data for the RSES in English, and in various translations, for young people in 53 nations, and report that although there were differences in mean levels across countries, in terms of validity (correlation with tests of adjustment, and various kinds of behaviour) the test was remarkably robust.

The authors of this review point to Rosenberg's (1979) important results and theories which show that African-Americans had *higher* levels of self-esteem than did European-Americans, a difference attributed both to the high levels of segregation of ethnic groups in American cities (so that the normative reference groups in home, community and school were for African-Americans, the positive values of their family, community and peers); and to the growing American movement to achieve structural equality for different ethnic groups, as was evidenced in Thomas-Hope's (1982) study, cited above. In Archer's Critical Realist account (2003), the recreation of black self-esteem and self-concept in the United States could be seen as both reflexive, and morphogenetic. As William James put it, "we become what we want to be". Thus, as Hughes & Demo (1989) showed, African Americans centred themselves on family, church, school, and community, and knowing that racial discrimination still existed, attributed failure to achieve goals not to themselves, but to a racist society.

Bachman et al. (2011) were able to access a national, cross-sectional data set of American adolescent sample at ages 14 (N=102,109), 16 (N=107,849) and 18 (N=107,421) (8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades respectively) sampled each year from 1991 to 2008. Results using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) were identical, so far as ethnic groups were concerned, in each year. First of all, RSES scale means were

invariant across the years 1991 to 2008. Within each year, rank ordering of RSES scores between ethnic groups was similar: African-Americans highest; Hispanics and European-Americans significantly lower; and Asian Americans lowest. The tendency for Asian-Americans to be self-effacing was judged to be a cultural trait, and was consistent with research from countries such as Japan and China. 'Despite' their somewhat lower self-esteem scores, Asians did better than the other two groups in terms of gaining entrance to college.<sup>36</sup> Bachman et al. (2011) in reporting these results, observe the tendency for African-American parents to develop a special kind of self-consciousness as a group with a history of being oppressed, but who retain a coherent and aspirant identity. 'Whites' in contrast are a very heterogeneous group, largely without ethnic coherence. In all ethnic groups females had significantly poorer self-esteem than males, but the authors do not advance any particular theory to account for this gender difference.

Commenting on the emerging British situation in the 1990s, Osuwu-Bempah & Howitt (1999) point to the "irony" of White youth having poorer self-esteem than Black youth, basing their comments on qualitative findings, and the fact that a disadvantaged group could have high levels of self-esteem in a still mainly racist culture.

In an important American study Erol & Orth (2011) first of all review the literature on a variety of factors known to be associated with self-esteem levels. Amongst these was gender (in 21 studies) females having significantly lower mean scores (i.e. poorer self-esteem) than males: but although statistically significant, there was considerable overlap in scores across the genders (correlations between RSES scores for male versus female groups usually < 0.2). Erol & Orth's data analysis was of a nationally representative sample of 7,100 young Americans systematically followed up from ages 14 to 30, at 14 data points (at 14, 16, 18 years and so on). Ethnic differences familiar in previous American work clearly emerged, but in each ethnic and gender group, self-esteem increased with age, levelling off by age 30. At each age, correlations of high self-esteem in each ethnic and gender group were remarkably similar: the 'high self-esteem' individuals were (according to other tests administered at the same time) extroverted, emotionally stable, and conscientious (from the Big Five Personality Test), low in risk taking, and in better health. The strongest predictor of self-esteem

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<sup>36</sup> Greene & Way (2005) showed that in a "growth curve" analysis with US students, Asian Americans' self-esteem levels gained significantly in the post-college phase.

was a sense of satisfaction in reaching one's goals at any point in time. Differences in self-esteem by gender, pertained within all ethnic groups, when all other psychological variables were controlled for. But in this, as in the other large-scale American studies, abusive or traumatic events in childhood were not measured.

The authors do not offer any explanation for their findings on gender differences in self-esteem: but similar findings on self-esteem and gender continue to emerge in international research. Mokses & Espnes (2012) found, for instance, in a Swedish study of 1,208 adolescents aged 13 to 18, that females, compared to males, had higher levels of depression, and poorer self-esteem. The correlation of depression and lower self-esteem was also significantly higher in females.

Bleidorn et al. (2015) offer the results of massive international study on gender and self-esteem, which combined a huge sample size, apparently offsetting problems of validity and reliability of the data collected, and in logical problems in making inferences as to the meaning, if any, of their findings. They used an internet site aimed at young people's issues, inviting respondents to, anonymously, complete a brief self-esteem scale, and to give details of their situation and circumstances, and their home country. Notwithstanding the impossibility of establishing the validity or truthfulness of the responses, the researchers analysed data from 985,937 of those who responded from 48 countries (including only 10% of the American responders, in order to give the inter-country comparisons some balance). The selected respondents were said to be aged 16 to 45, and for statistical purposes were divided into five age groupings. 130,383 of the respondents (49% female) were said to come from a geographical region called "Great Britain" (which, in terms of UK's political geography, would exclude Northern Ireland).

The brief measure of self-esteem, derived from and validated against the RSES, was converted to a standardized score with a mean of 50 for all respondents. The GB group scored 47.22 on this measure, which meant that they had significantly poorer self-esteem than nationals from many other countries. For all respondents, males had a score that was 1.85 points higher (at 51.85) than that of females, on the score normed 50 for both genders - a highly significant difference. However, the size of the gender RSES score differences varied significantly across the 48 nations selected. A variety of multivariate procedures were used to try and explain these

differences. Problematically, all of the comparisons were subject to the “ecological fallacy” (a fact not acknowledged by the authors), meaning that correlating, say, RSES scores (and gender differences on scores) with a country’s average GDP per head could be an artefactual correlation, with no implications for cause.

These methodological problems did not prevent the authors of this paper, lauded by the APA<sup>37</sup>, from advancing two theories. The first concerned ‘normative factors’ built into cultural socialization (and here they cite Williams & Best, 1990, on acquired stereotypes concerning class, race and gender – noting that people can shake off the racial stereotypes). The second hypothesis concerned structural factors, in that women in countries where females do not have to compete with men in the world of work were less likely to have lower self-esteem scores, since their reference and comparison groups were, apparently, different from those of men. (Traumatic or abusive events in childhood were not measured, although the anonymity of an internet site might have been a good place to ask about such events.)

These hypotheses concerning gender differences did not seem to advance or verify the ideas put forward by the much-cited paper by Kling et al. (1999) who reviewed 216 US studies including 97,172 individuals showing small but consistent, and statistically significant differences in self-esteem levels at all ages from adolescence to adulthood, women having slightly “poorer” self-esteem, the largest differences occurring in late adolescence (ages 14 to 18). They speculated, without supporting data, that young women put a greater stress than men on “being attractive”, and their subjective failure to achieve this was reflected in poorer self-esteem.

A different, and somewhat more productive meta-analysis was offered by Gentle et al. (2009) who analysed data from 428 studies on 32,486 young Americans who completed more complex measures of self-esteem (e.g. the Piers-Harris, the Coopersmith, and the Tennessee scales) which measured not only core self-evaluation (the RSES domain) but also various domains thought to influence core self-esteem. Overall, men had “better” self-esteem than did women, but in different domains, particular those relating to athletic prowess, physical appearance, and self-satisfaction. Women however appraised themselves more favourably in moral-ethical

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<sup>37</sup> APA (2016). *Self-esteem gender gap more pronounced in Western countries: basic trends in self-esteem appear universal but can be shaped by culture*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press Statement, January 4, 2016.

domains, and in areas relating to good behaviour. The authors concluded that slightly poorer overall levels of self-esteem in females were “reflected appraisals” of how young American men and women were expected to behave. In this analysis women are not deficient in self-esteem, but rather are more thoughtful and helpful. Clearly, these thoughtful, moral women would make good wives for their macho husbands.

#### **6.15 Experience of sexual abuse as a cause of impaired self-esteem in adolescent women?**

It is surprising that none of those speculating about differences in self-esteem (particularly RSES scores) have, publically at least, considered the possibility that these differences reflect the fact the child sexual abuse could be a major factor in differential levels of self-esteem between genders. This hypothesis assumes that (a) child sexual abuse (CSA) is likely to impair self-esteem in girls and adolescent women; and (b) this kind of abuse, and its likely effects is more likely to mar the lives of girls and adolescent women. Thus, differences in RSES scores between genders could be a function of (a) the differential incidence of CSA, females more likely to be victims; and (b) the greater negative impact that CSA has on female psychological development.

Surprisingly, too, my thesis supervisor Christopher Bagley had with his various colleagues, published a number of studies on the incidence and psychological impacts of CSA<sup>38</sup> - including, frequently, the negative impact which CSA had on self-esteem - but he had never advanced this seemingly straightforward thesis, that gender differences on RSES scores reflect the differential incidence and impact of sexual abuse. His response was that it had not occurred to him “to join the dots”, or to engage in lateral thinking which would connect his sexual victimization research with the findings of recent American self-esteem theorists concerning gender and ethnicity.

This was despite having published data from a survey of more than 1,000 female Canadian high school students which showed that sexual harassment, assault and abuse in school had a significant negative impact on self-esteem (measured by the RSES) in adolescent women (Bagley, Bertrand & Bolitho, 1995; Bagley, Bolitho

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<sup>38</sup> Bagley (1989, 1990, 1991b, 1995a & b, 1996a & b, 1997, 1991, 2002, 2003; Bagley, Bertrand & Bolitho, 1995; Bagley, Bolitho & Bertrand, 1997; Bagley & King, 2003; Bagley & LeChance, 2000; Bagley & Mallick, 2000 & 2001; Bagley & McDonald, 1984; Bagley & Ramsay, 1986; Bagley & Young, 1990, 1998; Bagley et al., 1995 & 1999).



& Bertrand, 1997). Bagley & Mallick (2001) partially replicated this Canadian work in 1,300 English adolescents, establishing the norms, factor structure, reliability, and face validity in terms of correlation with established mental health measures, of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and recommended it for use in further clinical work. But in that study, data on ethnicity or on 'community sexual assault' were not collected.

However, variables on ethnicity, self-esteem and some types of sexual assault or abuse were included in the yet unpublished follow-up study with 2,405 adolescents aged 11 to 18 attending English schools. These data, collected in the school year 2006 to 2007, were not analysed at that time because of the onset of Dr. Mallick's serious illness, and her subsequent death in 2007. I present, for the first time in any format, the results of the analysis of this data set, in a later chapter.

Bagley & Mallick (2000a & b) in their Canadian birth cohort followed up from birth to age 17 estimate from this work (and from parallel studies carried out in Alberta, Canada) that about 12 percent of women prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, experience unwanted, physical sexual assault or intrusion: in about half of these the sexual abuse will be chronic and severely intrusive of the young person's body. They show that about a half of this severely assaulted group subsequently had 'devastated self-esteem' and chronic psychiatric problems which required psychiatric therapy, and which could benefit from therapeutic group work aimed at enhancing self-esteem (Bagley & Young, 1998).

Antecedents in their Canadian longitudinal study, of becoming a chronic victim of sexual abuse were: prior events of physical and emotional abuse, early child health problems with some adverse neurological sequelae, and a family life marred by disruption, poverty and mother's multiple partners (who were often the sexual assailants of the child). The children were studied intensively at birth (since this was a perinatal sample, obtained through birth registrations) and at ages 5 and 17. The ethics of the longitudinal study meant that children considered to be at 'high risk' in terms of health and personal development had to be referred for intervention, but the long hiatus (between age 5 and age 17) meant that the researchers failed to pick up many cases where the child's problems were not apparent at age five. Only when the cohort were aged 17 were the researchers able to ask the young people directly about abusive events in their lives.

The figures they give on the amount of sexual abuse endured by women in childhood and adolescents could well be an underestimate: Bagley & Mallick (2000b) acknowledge that sample loss was twice as great in the families known to be under stress when the child was born and at age 5, compared with children in stable family situations. Women with children whose lives were unstable are difficult to retain in this kind of longitudinal survey. What was remarkable, perhaps, was that a half of children experiencing multiple types of abuse and assault managed to survive to age 17 in a 'normal' psychological state: nevertheless, they gave moving and detailed accounts of how they retained their psychological and physical integrity despite the many difficult situations they had had to endure (Bagley & King, 2003). These are the "resilient survivors" identified in various research studies (Wyatt, Newcomb & Riederle, 1993).<sup>39</sup> Bagley & King (2003) advance the controversial hypothesis that the frequent sexual harassment and sexual assault of children and adolescent women in school, family and society is a kind of ritualised assault in which a sector of 'lower class' females learn to become subordinated in their social and sexual roles.

Across the world, studies continue to be published showing that severe and chronic sexual abuse of a child or adolescent can seriously disrupt her identity development, with resulting levels of very poor self-esteem, chronic depression, various anxiety and psychosomatic disorders, and impaired sexual adjustment. Moreover, these effects extend well into adulthood and seem likely to impair adjustment across the life span. Fergusson et al. (2013) report for example, in their longitudinal study of 900 New Zealand women up to age 30, that chronic and intrusive sexual abuse occurring before the age of 18 was (after statistically controlling for social class, and various family factors) associated to a statistically significant extent with the following: episodes of major depression, chronic anxiety disorder, low self-esteem levels, suicidal ideation, dependence on illicit drugs, dependence on alcohol, post-traumatic stress disorder, early 'voluntary' sexual behaviour, number of sexual partners, welfare dependency, and poorer physical health. Some ten percent of the women had endured prolonged and intrusive sexual abuse, although only half of these

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<sup>39</sup> Males were, of course, researched in these Canadian samples. Boys experienced sexual abuse (almost always by males) at about half the frequency of females, and this appeared to have less impact on self-esteem levels. One problem identified however, was a statistically significant tendency for boys to become incipient adult offenders (Bagley, Wood & Young, 1994 ; Bagley, 2002).

had devastated adjustment. The other half were, to a greater or lesser degree, “survivors”.

The impact of CSA on the bases of self-esteem, and its recovery, is well-described by Krayer et al. (2015). In a qualitative, therapeutic study of 30 young adult women who had survived CSA, they identified three emergent themes concerning ‘views of the self’: The worthless self; the self as unknown; and the potential and developing self. They report:

*“Ambivalence and tension were present in all narratives. Individuals were challenged to integrate the sexual abuse experience in a constructive way and develop a more coherent perception of the self. The narrative method highlighted the dynamic nature of people’s experiences at the same time recognizing that the narratives themselves are in progress. Reasons to disclose, social support and interpersonal connexions are crucial at every turn.” (p. 148)*

This, I think is an important quotation, since it illustrates how at the heart of every piece of research, on equality, gender, or ethnic identity is a unique set of individuals who have important, personal stories to tell. It is these stories which, like analytical accounts, lie at the heart of the critical realist research paradigm. According to Collier (1994), at the end of his lengthy discussion of critical realist methodology in the social sciences:

*“... psychoanalysis ... should be treated as the paradigm of good practice in this area. It derives all its theories from the analysis in depth of particular individuals. Insofar as it generalizes, it generalizes about mechanisms and tendencies discovered in such analyses. It generates no statistical predictions whatever; if it corrects and revises and supplements its discoveries, it does so not on the basis of any statistical data (which it can always explain away), but on the basis of more depth inquiries into more symptoms of more people. The ‘more’ adds not statistical confirmation, but new data: it is different phenomena, not more of the same, that refine and complexify this science.” (p. 258)*

In this fascinating model of social science research, individuals in a longitudinal study (for example) are not merely generating crunchable ciphers for the researcher’s

computer: they are recreating themselves in a reflexive way, explaining their life's morphogenesis.<sup>40</sup>

My dilemma of course, is that much of the research I have been considering in this chapter is based on nuggets of data ripped from the lives of dehumanized individuals. Moreover, the research which I present in the chapter on the Northern Schools study suffers from the same positivist bias, the debasement of individuals as units of analysis in a statistical matrix. And I have no case material with which I can humanize this account. In mitigation, I note that Priscilla Alderson comments: "*Since learning about DCR [dialectical critical realism], I have revised some of my former ideas and discarded others, on the continuing journey of learning and change.*" (2013, p. 8)

But I am also comforted by the assertion that the "facts" of these statistical studies, are in Bhaskar's (1989; 2008) paradigm, 'value-saturated' in their assumptions, so that we can move from 'facts' to 'values' (and back) with ease. This, for me, makes social policy analysis much easier, and justifies the miscellany of "factual" studies (some of them virtually case studies) which I assemble in various sections of this thesis on Equality, in which I argue that an unequal society can bear oppressively on the lives of a sector of its children. In the DCR model, of course, the voices of children speaking against poverty, alienation and abuse must be heard in ways which are morphogenetic, and society-changing (Alderson, 2013 & 2016).

### **6.16 The social self, and the neglect and abuse of children**

Finally, I move away from the existential self (or the 'spiritual self', as James 1892/1985 termed it) in which the ego appraises itself, albeit in comparison with others, to the 'social self' whose nature reflects (but is not determined by) an individual's position in social structure, reflecting a person's economic role, or what Marx described as "relationship to the means of production". Marx argued that the individual whose subordinate role was as a low-wage employee, whose terms of contract and conditions of work were subordinated to an organisation's profit, was *alienated* by the nature and

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<sup>40</sup> My thesis supervisor Christopher Bagley has attempted to defend himself from this Critical Realist critique by pointing to the frequent "sexual stories" retold in his book on a humanist approach to child sexual abuse (Bagley, 1995). He cites Ken Plummer's book *Telling Sexual Stories* (1995): "No longer do people simply 'tell' their sexual stories to reveal the 'truth' of their own sexual lives; instead, they turn themselves into *socially organised biographical objects.*" (p. 34) Perhaps these stories can be psychodynamically aware pieces of dialectical critical realism?

exploitative conditions of labour, from his or her self. In the words of one of Brecht's stories, a couple had both reached 60. They were tired, exhausted, aged, ill, without hope, and now they faced death. 'Is this all there is?' they ask.<sup>41</sup>

This idea of alienation has been a concern for sociologists in the past 50 years (Churchich, 1990), who have described the state of powerlessness and normlessness which engulfs the exploited worker as one which engenders various forms of despair, mental illness, and unfocussed rebellion, as does Schmidt (2011). We argue in Appendix A on Equality that about a tenth of the English population form a permanent, alienated underclass, in which depression, mental illness, depressed aspirations, criminality and family breakdown co-occur (often in the same families, or individuals) in segregated areas of cities, awaiting the call from capital to enter the ranks of the employed, when capital's profit requires.

While the sexual abuse of children and adolescents occurs in all social classes and in all strata of society, it appears to occur much more frequently in the disorganised households of the sink estates, in which a woman's children from multiple partners are at elevated risk from sexual abuse by her new partners (Bagley & King, 2003). In this view, the ritual sexual subordination of young females in the underclass confirms them as sexual objects not only within the chronic underclass,<sup>42</sup> but also as recruits for the commercial sex industry (Bagley. 1995a).

### **6.17 Conclusions**

There is a considerable literature on self-esteem, self-concept and identity and these concepts have been of major interests for psychologists and sociologists since the early part of the last century. Self-esteem involves the evaluation of characteristics of the self in various ways, and what self-characteristics are evaluated by oneself, and others, and becomes increasingly complex as the child grows older, interacts with a wider range of people and peers, and has an increasingly complex cognitive schema for organising aspects of the perceived self.

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<sup>41</sup> Bertold Brecht (2003).

<sup>42</sup>A 2015 English study which "polled" some 2,000 women aged 18-plus, reported that 10% had experienced frequent "sexual touching, groping, flashing, sexual assault or rape" in or around the schools they had attended. Some two-thirds of victims never reported these assaults to anyone who could have intervened. This survey was carried out for or by the charity Plan UK. Few details of methodology were given in the press release reporting these results (Smith, 2016).

Minority group pre-schoolers are of particular concern, since in an institutionally racist society they may be socialised to accept and internalise the negative stereotypes which the wider society holds. This is a crucial issue for antiracist social and educational policies.

By about the age of seven, the child's set of self-evaluations become organized into a self-concept: that concept of who one is, how one behaves or should behave, how good and comely one is, how strong or weak, and so forth: this - becomes an enduring part of one's identity. A person's identity is both complex and unique, since the experiences of each human being are unique. Identity, in this theorisation, is the same as 'global self-concept'. Although facets of identity change with time and experience, and how the body (the 'me', the central part of identity) is regarded, is used, achieves, is injured, gives pleasure, gives pain, and ages - that central core of self-identity, the evaluating self, is relatively enduring.

Collier's (1994) account of Bhaskar's critical realism commends the model of research derived from psychoanalysis. This has led me back to Ernest Becker's (1971) psychodynamic sociology, and his weaving of threads from William James and Erving Goffman in the creation of an inner-outer world of self-hood and self-creation, and his use of Alfred Adler's psychoanalytic study of self-esteem: "The supreme law of life is this: the sense of worth of the self shall not be allowed to be diminished." (Adler, 1946, p. 356). When we add the Jungian paradigm of spiritual consciousness, we have a model of the child whose physical and emotional energy should be creatively expressed in ego tasks, in ways which are developmentally appropriate and which respect self and others, in seeking "the light" in oneself and in others, climbing, in morphogenic manner, to achieve the realisation of selfhood in a non-exploitive world.

## **Chapter 7: A Critical Realist Case Study of a Multi-Ethnic, Inner City Day Nursery: Children, Workers, Management and Bureaucracy in the Matrix of Change**

*My goal in writing this book was to present children's notions of racial and ethnic matters in their own terms, As an adult participant observer, however, I must confess that simply acting like a child does not give one the right to claim that one can learn exactly how a child conceives of such matters ... participating in the daily activities of a child allows one to experience and feel the elements of the child's complete universe – his or her social, cognitive, emotional, and physical spheres. Through these experiences, adults as participant observers in the culture of children is a pleasure and a privilege. It also offers the researcher the joy of revisiting the carefree, candid, and innocent times of childhood and conveying that journey to others. Robyn Holmes (1995, p. 110)*

### **7.1 Introduction**

Critical realism is a philosophical model for social research, which may be applied using a variety of methodologies and case study methods. It has been used to analyse the results of studies with children as patients, and children in care (Alderson, 2013 & 2016), in various educational settings (Shipway, 2011; Surra, 2011), and in case studies of industry and management (Easton, 2010).

I attempt, with mixed results, to apply this model later on, in this case study of an inner city nursery school: the study's original purpose was to examine how workers were transmitting learning goals established by central government, and how in the process they were addressing the development of ethnic identity in the children in their care. This study was undertaken 2002-3, but could not be continued, as the local authority closed, arbitrarily and without notice, the day care that I was studying. Later, analysing the materials that I had collected, I realised that in order to answer the basic research questions the methodology would have to be modified (following the critical realist reflexive model), and the work carried out should be treated as a guide for fresh research in this area.

## 7.2 The Research Setting

The nursery school which I studied closed several years ago is located in a City in Southern England. In 2007 according to an overview of living conditions in the City, 27 percent of the population (total population about 215,000) came from ethnic minority groups (including 12% Asian, 7.5% African-Caribbean, 4% mixed race). Twelve percent of enumeration districts in the borough fell into the national English criteria for 'the highest level of deprivation' for England, measured by levels of material poverty and unemployment, poor health, low educational attainments, crime and delinquency, and a degraded living environment. About half of the African-Caribbean population lived in these areas of high deprivation.

At the city's periphery is a low-income housing estate which I will call the Elgar Estate, after a famous musician. The Elgar Estate was (and remains) one of the most deprived urban area of an English city, according to various census indicators. Today, the press frequently focus on incidents of knife and gun crime, drug-dealing subcultures, dawn police raids etc.

Despite this, there is a strong communal spirit on the estate, and for the daytime visitor, few overt signs of violence, racial tension or inter-ethnic rivalry. Mixed black-white partnerships are common. Elgar turned out proudly with a street party to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, in June, 2016. Local residents claim that their area is falsely stigmatised by media.

At the time of the research (2002-4) I was working as a full time clinician in an all age NHS Mental Health Clinic concerned with the assessment and treatment of children adolescents, adults and families. We received referrals from various agencies concerned with residents of the Elgar Estate. The City's Social work and Education departments were responsible for nursery placements and the individual needs of children and families. The model was one of integrated care including health teams, social workers, educators, family centre workers and nursery practitioners.

These children were already placed in the focus nursery which I will call St. John's (StJ's). It was in this nursery that I established my video-recorded, observational work in 2002. Three years earlier I had published research which focussed on this same nursery, looking at the enhancement of ethnic identity and self-esteem in the minority group children in the centre (Sawyer, 1999).



As an introduction to the present Case Study, I reproduce an edited version of that book chapter here:

### **7.3 Working with black children and adolescents in need: Identity project on 'myself' with pre-schoolers at the day nursery (Sawyerr, 1999)**

#### ***Introduction***

*Providing assessments and therapeutic sessions to referred children and their families on site at a local authority nursery (which offers services to paying and non-paying parents/carers) has been challenging, enjoyable and a good learning process. Over the past five years I have struggled to find imaginative, creative, flexible and pragmatic ways of engaging and working with adults and children inside and outside of the nursery system. The following is a narrative account of this experience which could provide pointers for professionals working with children in different settings.*

#### **7.4 Location**

*The nursery was one of six nurseries run by the education department of [large urban area]. Its large building was established as a day nursery during the second world war. It offered the equivalent of 45 full-time places, and had the equivalent of nine full-time qualified NNEB and Nursery Nursing 'B Tech' nursery officers. It is located in a multicultural and multiracial community, where black and white families have lived and intermarried for several decades. Many of their children have attended the nursery and now so are their grandchildren. There were also British-born children from newly arrived immigrant families from Asia, North Africa and Eastern European countries whose parents spoke little or no English.*

*The nursery was staffed by African/African Caribbean, White Middle Eastern and Asian nursery officers (which to some extent reflects the racial and cultural backgrounds of the children at the nursery).*

*A key worker system operated within the nursery. The key worker's role was to ensure that the children and their parents/carers were offered stability and continuity. The key worker monitored each child's development and learning and set a series of personal goals for him/her. Parents were expected to work closely with their child's key worker, and together share information which could assist the child to develop to his/her full potential. Each child had a Care and Education Plan after three months of settling in;*

*this was reviewed every six months or more often as appropriate. Parents/carers and children were encouraged to contribute to these plans.*

*The nursery's philosophy was to provide a stimulating and safe environment for all the children. It had a structured programme of activities, each designed to allow the children to learn through fun, imagination and thoughtful guidance.*

### **7.5 Access to nursery placement**

*Access to the day nursery was by three routes:*

- *A referral by the social services department for children who are assessed as children "in need" of a place.*
- *Via the Early Years Development Plan for three and four- year- olds whose often single parents wanted places for reasons of their own career and social development..*
- *Privately, if there were places available, but on a fee-paying basis (fees were not usually pad by children in the first two categories).*

### **7.6 Early Years Curriculum**

*The Early Years Curriculum programmes are, according to government claims, 'broad, balanced and differentiated to meet the age and development needs of each child'. Programmes were displayed in the nursery and are planned around the six topics of the 'Desirable Learning Outcomes' and the Local Councils' Curriculum for the under-fives, namely: mathematics, language and literacy, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.*

*The nursery celebrates the various world and religious events as part of extending the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Some of the events which I celebrated include Eid, Diwali, Chinese New Year, Easter, Christmas, and St. Patrick's Day. These involve story reading, entertainment, displays, meals and parties in which the parents/carers are often asked to participate, as well as to share their knowledge and experiences with the staff. The nursery also provides services for children with special needs as far as possible.*

### **7.7 Identified need for the project**

*The need for the development of the identity project centring on Myself as a theme grew from an awareness within the staff team of the preschool age group (three to five-year-olds) that some children were either struggling with, or were unaware of their racial and cultural backgrounds, e.g. some children of “mixed – race” parentage were referring to themselves as white, and some black children were referring to themselves as “quarter caste”.*

- There were ambivalent feelings among some of the parents and staff about when and how to introduce the concept of self, “race”, culture and identity to the children.*
- There were apparent difficulties for minority ethnic and, in particular, black and mixed parentage children in identifying their skin colour, and with heritage and cultural issues.*
- Some children were receiving mixed messages from their parents/grandparents/carers and from some nursery staff about their racial and cultural identity.*
- Others were receiving no input from their parents/carers or staff about their racial and cultural identity.*

### **7.8 Attempts made by nursery staff to address the issues**

*The availability and easy access to multicultural activities, group outings, celebrations of world and religious events, reading materials and other resources in the nursery, did not appear to have made any substantial difference to the level of understanding of the children’s sense of self. For the most part, some white and some black staff members had assumed that, if the children were regularly exposed to relevant activities, resources and group discussions from workers of diverse ethnicities and cultures, they would “naturally” develop an awareness of the identity and concepts of self.*

*As the children’s lack of awareness and seeming confusion about their identity increased, it became clear to one of the black key workers in the pre-school group that definite action was needed to address these issues, and that outside specialist help was necessary.*

### **Previous attempts to address the issues**

*It is worth noting that three years earlier, I had identified some of these issues and had offered joint consultation sessions with a white colleague to the entire nursery staff team and management; I am black African. However, our efforts had been met with a lot of resistance. The consultation sessions were often cancelled on the scheduled days due to reported staff unavailability. In the event the consultation sessions had to end even though there had been approval and apparent commitment from senior management.*

*As my work with individual children and their families at the nursery continued (90 percent of which were referrals from the pre-school group), I began to encourage and engage with the key workers in joint sessions with the children on site as well as off-site. These involved observations of the parent-child sessions, family sessions (from behind the one-way screen with the families' consent), and in debriefing sessions. Over time the key workers began to develop a keener interest in the sessions, especially when they observed marked positive changes in the children's behaviour at nursery.*

### **7.9 Requests for specialist help**

*Following the identification of the issues by a key worker from the preschool group and the need for specialist help being recognized and agreed to from within the nursery system, a direct referral was made to myself by the concerned black key worker, with support from the white manager for consultation.*

### **7.10 The rationale for my choice of intervention**

*My assessment was that the identified children were not showing signs of "pathology", and therefore did not require individual therapy. They were, in my view, developing normally for children aged three to five years, showing curiosity about identity and self-concepts, as a normal part of socio-emotional development. Cognitively, they were demonstrating the beginnings of their acquisition of the ability to think, to notice small details and accurately observe discrepancies, and to make interesting associations. Part of children's normal language development involves asking "why" "when" and "how" questions of the significant adults in their lives, requiring simple answers and recounting the content of stories even though they may misinterpret facts or confused details.*

*In my professional view it was the nursery staff and some of the parents/carers who were 'feeling stuck' and needed support in understanding the issues and finding helpful ways of addressing them. Much clarity and collaborative work between the adults in the system when needed. Secondly, since these were normal development and identity stages that all children go through, it was important that both white and black children and their parents/carers be involved in the project.*

*Following a detailed referrals meeting with the three black key workers with their white manager and deputy manager, the schedule was developed for weekly two-hour consultation sessions. There was an agreement and commitment from the staff and management that:*

- the three key workers from the preschool group in the management staff would attend and actively participate in the weekly two-hour sessions;*
- an identity project centring on the theme "Myself" would be developed to address the issues affecting the children's sense of self; and*
- it was imperative to involve and engage all the parents/carers, children and staff in the preschool group in the project activities.*

#### **7.11 Aims and objectives**

*The main aims of the project were:*

- to help the children develop a strong image of themselves;*
- to help the children in the preschool group to look at themselves (including physical features) with their key workers and families and to feel more positive about themselves and their families;*
- to help the children know and feel comfortable with their racial and cultural identity;*
- to encourage awareness among the children about different racial and cultural backgrounds;*
- to prepare the children for the challenges of the school environment, to feel confident and proud of themselves, their racial and cultural identities, and those of their families; and*
- to raise awareness among the staff and parents within the whole nursery of the importance of the children's identity and development of pride and clarity in the children's sense of self.*

## 7.12 The consultation process

### Stage 1

*This involved four weeks of training workshops for the three key workers and two managers, before the start of the project, in which the following areas were explored:*

- *the meaning of “race,” culture, religion, and spirituality for each nursery officer.*
- *Which communities were considered to be minority ethnic communities in Britain today.*
- *The meaning of the term black: who is considered to be black? Where do black people come from? As they a homogeneous group or not? And if not, why not?*
- *The knowledge, guiding principles, values, beliefs and assumptions that nursery offices bring with them in their negotiations with parents/carers.*
- *The needs, cultural beliefs, values, knowledge and childrearing experiences and practices that parents/carers bring with them in their negotiations with nursery offices.*
- *The expectations of parents/carers of the nursery offices in relation to the children.*
- *The negotiation process, the knowledge, skills, aptitudes and experience needed to work cross culturally and interculturally, i.e. how to join in with and engage families from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds in the identity project centring on Myself.*

*Some exercises were given in the workshops to aid the understanding needed to accomplish the task.*

### Stage 2

*This involved a workshop in which the key concepts and materials to be used in the project were introduced:*

*Copies of Black Like Me, Workbook One by Dr Jocelyn Maxime were distributed to each worker. Some time was spent on adapting, redefining and elaborating on the activities on self and identity in the book to meet the specific needs of the children in the preschool group, given their age, multicultural backgrounds e.g. gathering*

information about grandparents, religion, dress worn on special occasions, languages spoken at home, favorite foods, foods eaten at home, etc.

*In Black Like Me, Workbook One, Dr Maxime prescribes the child's identity as African. However, in this project a variety of identity categories were listed and the parents/carers were asked to choose a category with their child that best describes the child's identity. For parents/carers who did not see the child as exclusively black, Asian or white, etc. they were asked to choose from an additional category which listed a series of terms describing mixed parentage identities, the terminology that they and their children felt was appropriate. They were asked to indicate the identity of each parent.*

*Plain exercise books, plastic mirrors, skin tone crayons, skin tone papers, colour pencils for eyes and hair, envelopes containing the suggestions/guidelines for 19 activities in a plastic case for storing the above materials were prepared for each parent/carer and the child.*

### *Stage 3*

*In this stage, the key nursery offices used the consultation session to plan a step-by-step programme on how the activities would be implemented with the children at nursery and with the parents/carers at home. The starting and finishing dates for the project were decided and each worker was given the task of drafting a letter to parents/carers about the project, indicating the purpose and duration of the project, in preparation for the next consultation session.*

### *Stage 4*

*Ideas from each staff member's draft letter to parents/carers about the project were incorporated into one letter, which was hand delivered to the parents/carers by the respective key workers on the Friday before the project was launched (the following Monday).*

### **7.13 Joint activities with parents/carers, children in key workers**

*The identity activities with the key workers, parents/carers and children were implemented over six-week period. All ten children (four girls and six boys) and the parents/carers agreed to participate in the project; no parent/carer from the pre-school group refused to participate with their child.*

*The plastic cases containing the materials and identity activities were given to the parents/carers each day with verbal explanations from the respective key worker prior to its completion at home with the child.*

*Some parents asked to spend some time at the nursery with your child in the key worker to complete each activity because of language and literacy difficulties. Others requested individual sessions with me before commencing the activities with your child, because of sensitive emotional issues that they felt they needed to work through for themselves e.g. being adopted and not knowing about their own biological parents and therefore feeling insecure about their own identity. For others still it was the realization that they needed to deal with their own feelings of anger and hurt in relation to their absent partners, in order to help their child to make sense of who they were and who they parents are and family members were.*

*The two part-time key workers had responsibility for three children each; the full-time key workers had responsibility for four.*

#### **7.14 The role of the key worker**

*Before the actual work started with the children, each key worker met with the parents/carers of their key children to:*

- Discuss the letter they had received about the project, introduce me and explained my role as consultant to the project as well as being an experienced and trained family and systemic psychotherapist who would be available at short notice on request for support and/or clarification and help in dealing with sensitive issues that may come up in their work with the children at home.*
- Discuss any immediate practical difficulties that the parents/carers felt may arise which would affect the completion of the activities with their child at home.*
- Go through the suggested guidelines and the list of 19 activities that would be used in the children's books.*
- Answer questions and address issues that they may have about the 19 activities to be completed.*
- Explain how the work would be done, what resources would be used, and to ask them whether or not they wanted to be involved in the project.*



### **7.15 The process**

*The project was carried out using the prepared materials/resources. Each child was allocated their own resources in the process is described below.*

- *The key workers pasted the suggestions/guidelines on the first page of each child's book.*
- *The parents/carers with their and child chose a photograph of their child and pasted it on the outer cover of the book at home.*
- *Each activity was pasted on a new page in the book by the key workers in sequence, one at a time, once the previous activity had been completed by the parents/carers and children.*
- *The key workers were responsible for sending the books home with the pasted activity sheet in them each day. The parents/carers were responsible for completing the activities at home each day with their child, signing the page, and for ensuring that the books were taken back to the nursery every morning.*
- *The key workers met with respective parents/carers and key child each morning for feedback on the activity completed, as well as at the end of each day to explain how the newly pasted activity was to be completed.*
- *The first two activities were completed by the parents/carers and their children either at home all, with special arrangement, at the nursery.*
- *Three of the activities which covered facial features, skin colour, and hair were completed at the nursery with the key workers, as negotiated with the parents/carers during their initial planning meeting. The children were given mirrors and books specifically about "self " to look through. They were given time to discuss the facial features of the characters in the books which then led to them looking at their own facial features and issues about themselves. The colour of their skin, eyes, hair texture, etc. were talked about. The children worked in pairs all individually with their key nursery worker. The sessions took place either in the group room all in a separate room. The time spent with each child varied from 15 to 30 minutes depending on how much work the child was able to do at one time.*
- *The sessions which took place in the nursery with the parents/carers, their children and their key workers, were led by the parents/carers. The key workers'*

*role was that of support and of giving guidance to the parents/carers when necessary, and not actually doing the activities with the children.*

*Each parent/carer was given an evaluation form to fill in at home on completion of all the activities with your child. These were returned promptly.*

#### **7.16 Presentation of achievement certificates**

*With some of the children starting school at their fifth birthday, a party and presentation ceremony were organized at the nursery for all the children in parents/carers to mark their achievement. Each child was presented with a personalized colourful certificate for completing all the activities to the identity project. Pictures were taken of each child receiving the certificate from the start. The parents/carers were called up alongside to the child, congratulated for completing all the activities with their child, and photographed with their child.*

*The certificate presentation ceremony was also videotaped. The ceremony ended with the key workers, management staff and the consultant joining in with the children and their parents/carers for an enjoyable Easter party celebration.*

**Activity 19 was completed by the parents/carers and children with ethnic background as follows:**

<i>Sex of child</i>	<i>Ethnic origin of child</i>	<i>Religion of child</i>	<i>Mothers' E O and religion</i>	<i>Fathers E O and religion</i>
<i>Female</i>	<i>Mixed - parentage</i>	<i>Protestant</i>	<i>Mixed Carrib/White (Protestant)</i>	<i>African Caribbean (Protestant)</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Mixed parentage</i>	<i>Protestant</i>	<i>White Finnish (Protestant)</i>	<i>White Polish (Jewish)</i>
<i>Female</i>	<i>African-Caribbean</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>African- Caribbean</i>	<i>African-Caribbean</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Pakistani</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Pakistani Muslim</i>	<i>Pakistani Muslim</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>White English (Catholic)</i>	<i>White Irish (Catholic)</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Mixed parentage</i>	<i>Protestant</i>	<i>White English (Protestant)</i>	<i>African-Caribbean (Protestant)</i>
<i>Female</i>	<i>Mixed-parentage</i>	<i>Protestant</i>	<i>White Swedish (Protestant)</i>	<i>African Nigerian (Protestant)</i>
<i>Female</i>	<i>African-Moroccan</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>African- Moroccan (Muslim)</i>	<i>African-Moroccan (Muslim)</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>African-Sudanese</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>African- Sudanese (Muslim)</i>	<i>African - Sudanese (Muslim)</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Mixed - parentage</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Mixed parentage Brazilian (Catholic)</i>	

#### *Stage 5*

*This involved a major review and evaluation of the entire project. The key workers, management staff and I met for half a day with our retainer assessment on the following areas of the project:*

- *The children's completed activity workbooks.*
- *The parents/carers evaluation forms.*
- *The key workers', managers' and the consultant's evaluation forms.*
- *Feedback from the parents/carers and children on the certificate presentation day and ceremony.*

*A discussion on the processes involved, lessons learnt and possible ways forward for future projects were carefully explored and noted.*

*A major presentation of the project was made to senior managers from the local authority's education department, social services and the NHS Trust. All the children's completed activity workbooks resource materials, completed evaluation forms, photographs and certificates were on display. They were also shown the video-tape of the certificate presentation ceremony.*

#### **7.17 Evaluation and recommendation**

*The overall assessment was that the project had been successful in meeting the outlined aims and objectives: The following areas were highlighted:*

- *Both written and verbal feedback from the parents/carers were very positive. All the parents/carers reported that the activities and processes involved had helped to them and their children to address key issues relating to who they were in a formalized way which they had previously been unable to deal with on their own.*
- *For some of the parents, issues around absent fathers which had been difficult for them to talk about with their children were addressed through the activities with much sensitivity and professional support.*
- *All the parents/carers requested more interactive activities ("homework") with the nursery staff for their children). They reported that the children were attentive and enjoyed completing the activities with them. It was meaningful and quality time was spent.*
- *There were also noticeable changes in the children's drawings of themselves and others at nursery e.g. particular attention being paid to skin tones, hair and eye colours and facial features in all the drawings subsequent to the project.*

- *The white children no longer left the drawings of themselves on white sheets of paper blank. They searched for the appropriate skin tone crayons for shading in the skin tone even though they were referred to by adults as “white”.*
- *Similarly, the black, Asian and mixed parentage children shaded in drawings of themselves with the appropriate skin tone but not black it in though some of them were referred to as “black” by adults.*
- *All ten children were more able to describe themselves, their identity i.e. “race”, culture, colour of their skin, nationality, language spoken at home, religion, clothes worn on special occasions and festivals where applicable, without any hesitation and with pride.*
- *They were also able, in group settings, to talk about observable similarities and differences in their skin tones, facial features, hair colours and textures in positive ways.*
- *The children took pride and great care in the handling of their Identity Activity Workbooks. There were no tone pages or marks in the books even though most of the books travelled daily between their homes and the nursery.*
- *The key workers and management staff acknowledged the value and importance of working jointly with parents/carers in addressing identity issues and concepts of self with preschool age children.*
- *The identity project provided the nursery officers and the consultant with vulnerable opportunities to learn first-hand from the parents and the children about their cultures, histories, values and beliefs. Most of the parents were very creative in the work that they did with their children. The process had the effect of bringing the parents/carers and professionals closer together to work in equal partnership.*
- *Both parents/carers and staff were unanimous in their recommendation that the identity project should become a formalized and integral part of the pre-school group curriculum at the nursery.*

*This recommendation was accepted [by St John’s Nursery, subject of the case study focussed on in this Chapter] and it became an integral part of the pre-school curriculum for this nursery. Plans were also underway for its implementation in the five other local authority nurseries in 1999 (the book chapter concluded).*

### **7.18 The video-recorded study, and interviews with key workers**

This work began in St. John's Nursery (StJ's), four years after the study reported above was completed at this nursery, and was reported on in my chapter in the book edited by Barn (1999). The detailed account of interactions between staff and children, and between children themselves are presented below. The interviews with key workers in the nursery, and its management team, are presented in Appendices C.

The purposes of this study were several. First of all was the "official" reason, which allowed the researcher to access the nursery using videotaped interactions: to assess how well the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority "early learning" goals were being implemented. Then there was the implicit goal of observing and drawing inferences on children's ethnic identity development, through analysing the interactions between nursery staff and children, and between the children themselves. Included in the observation matrix of video-recorded interactions were 11 staff members, and 22 children. Only one of the front-line workers was white, and the children themselves came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds including African-Caribbean, Middle Eastern, or were of mixed ethnicity.

The provision of preschool nursery care had been subcontracted, after competitive tender some years earlier to the company offering the service for the least cost. This company, 'Day Care Providers of DCP', was merged in 2011 with another commercial day care provider, and no longer exists by that title. StJ's was nearing the end of its 5-year contract with DCP, and I was informed that because of the possibility of a new competitive tendering process, only 27 of the 45 places were occupied at the time of the study. There was no intimation at any stage that StJ's would soon be closed, and there was every expectation that DCP would be awarded a continuation of the contract to run this therapeutic day nursery. DCP had declined to hire a trained kindergarten teacher, and so the task of delivering the Early Years curriculum was left to the NNEB-trained staff (whose hourly rate was much less than that of a trained teacher). The staff suggested that they were focussing more on child care, rather than on child learning, since they had no specific training in delivering the latter. Because of frequent staff sickness (an occupational hazard for day care staff, who often acquire minor infections from the children), age groups in the three separate rooms often had to be merged.

But even before the ending of the formal ending of the DCP's contract, StJ's was suddenly and arbitrarily closed, with little if any consultation with front-line workers, or parents of the children attending.

## **7.19 The Multi-ethnic Day Nursery Workers' Practice in their Natural Work Setting, and the Children's Verbal and Social Interactions**

### **7.19.1 Introduction**

The initial focus of the study was on the participant observation findings on (a) the practitioner to child interactions and responses in their natural work setting; and (b) the interactions and responses between individual children and groups of children in an inner-city, multi-ethnic day nursery setting. This report provides an account of the researcher's four-week videotaped participant observations of the daily interactions and activities of the 11 multi-ethnic day nursery practitioners and 22 under-five nursery children who together are the subject of this study. This study used an exploratory methodology, supplemented by interviews with key practitioners and managers.

All the observations took place during the nursery practitioners' implementation (in theory at least) of *The Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum* (QCA, 2000) to pre-school age children in the local authority day nursery located in a multi-cultural community in an economically deprived part of an affluent inner City borough.

The findings are based on the analysed videotaped participant observation data collected on the 11 nursery practitioners from multi-ethnic backgrounds and 22 pre-school age children, also from diverse ethnic backgrounds at a local authority day nursery in a multi ethnic community in an inner London borough, during their daily indoor and outdoor interactions and activities.

The initial aim of the study was to explore how 11 multi-ethnic nursery practitioners (Black African, Black Caribbean, White British, White Irish, White Eastern European, Filipino and Asian) in this study perceived the Foundation Stage Curriculum (QCA, 2000) and how their perceptions might influence the way they planned and implemented six of the ten Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum with 3- to 5 year-olds from multi-ethnic backgrounds (North African, Black African and Caribbean, White British and children of Mixed Parentage).

I had worked with this nursery staff and children four years earlier, in devising an ethnic identity enhancement programme, described in Sawyerr (1999) – the text of that study is reproduced above. The programme which I had devised, using ethnically sensitive materials, attitudes, methods and concepts, survived. The manager of the nursery who had been involved in the 1998 project retired the week before my study began. None of the workers I observed and interviewed had been in post at the time of my 1998 project, although I was confident that some of the concepts did survive in the current ethos of the nursery.

This research was guided by three investigative questions:

1. How do practitioners from multi-ethnic backgrounds working in a multi-ethnic local authority day nursery perceive the foundation stage curriculum for 3 to 5-year-olds children?
2. How are the practitioners' perceptions reflected in the way in which they plan and implement the Foundation Stage Curriculum which affects children's learning?
3. What are the potential implications of these interactions for children's learning and development including their self-esteem, self-concept and ethnic identity development in a multi-ethnic local authority day nursery?

This initial, qualitative, case study research approach in investigating these questions, reflected the uniqueness of the combination of the nursery practitioners, the mix of the children's ethnicity, and the location of the local authority day nursery in a multi-ethnic community.

In order to explore these research questions, I had to come into close contact with the practitioners while they were working in the day nursery. The purpose was to learn what their work involved and to observe them while they were working with the children and implementing the Foundation Stage Curriculum (QCA, 2000), as I wanted to gain access to and understand the nursery practitioners' feelings, spontaneous dialogues, discussions with each other, and their 'ideas' or rationales for their actions.

The participant observations were recorded by a video camera being placed safely either up on top of book shelves in the three group rooms during activities or on



a tripod stand during video recording sessions outdoors in the on-site local authority day nursery fenced-in playground.<sup>43</sup>

This meant that the researcher was also being videotaped alongside the nursery practitioners and children in activities, indoors as well as outdoors. In the context of the videotaping, I discovered that my videotaping of myself alongside the nursery practitioners, rather than being behind the video camera videotaping them had an immediate positive, observable, behavioural and attitudinal reaction from the practitioners. They immediately noted and individually commented spontaneously during the participant observation process in their group rooms, and outside the playground that they were rather surprised that researcher was videotaping herself. This meant of course that through “stepping into the frame” I had become a practitioner myself.

I will briefly describe the participant observation process and the steps that I took in structuring the large volume of videotaped observation data which would later enable me to focus on the key areas for data analysis and the development of themes.

#### **7.19.2 Observing, processing and analysing the data**

The participant observations (videotaped) took place continuously over a four-week period. It was five day week (Mondays to Fridays), and covered the practitioners' early shifts (7:45 AM to 4 PM) and late shifts (9:30 AM to 6:30 PM) indoors in each of the 3 group rooms and outdoors in the on-site playground. This was followed by a day each of participant observation of the cook and her assistant in the kitchen who also served the meals to the children, the deputy manager, the administrator and the cleaner, all on site.

During the first few days of my viewing of the participant observation videotapes, I became increasingly aware of the myriad of interactions that were going on all the time simultaneously in the preschool group room setting. The children were not static, they kept moving around the room and also from activity to activity. The video camera placed high up on the bookshelves or on the tripod stand captured these interactions on tape. Roberts-Holmes, (2011, p115) highlighting the potential for unstructured observations of young children in group settings, observes: '*In an early*

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<sup>43</sup> Appropriate ethical approval was obtained for this study, and full confidentiality for the children, workers and parents was assured.

*years setting there are literally hundreds of interactions going on all the time around you: practitioners talking with each other, and the children, the children talking and learning with each other, parents coming in and going, children moving around different activities, some children getting attention, whilst others are being ignored. For the first-time researcher it is all rather daunting. What are you going to focus on?’*

Keeping these suggestions in mind, I began by focusing as suggested in the methodological literature, on the three research questions to guide me with this selection of the relevant participant observations data that would enable me to analyse and structure the videotaped participant observations, in order to develop themes.

I begin the section by providing the reader with a brief overview of the day nursery, how nursery places are allocated, the practitioners and children’s ethnic backgrounds (defined by the practitioners), as well as the ratio of practitioner to child requirements in each of the three group rooms as this information is relevant for understanding the nursery practitioners’ practices.

This will be followed by the descriptions and examples of practitioners’ verbal and non-verbal behaviours, the routines and activities they provide, the interactions between practitioners and children, between children and their peers, and between practitioners and carers observed in the three group rooms and in the on-site playground.

The findings also include the non-group room practitioners’ observed involvement, i.e. on site practitioners in the management office (deputy manager), the administrator in the office, the cook and her assistant in the kitchen and the domestic cleaner on-site who all interact on a daily basis with the children, their parents and carers and with the group room nursery practitioners.

This provides detailed account of the observed practices of all the practitioners in the entire day nursery setting who interact with the children on a daily basis and the ways in which their individual contributions through interactions with the children and the children’s responses relate to three exploratory research questions. Obviously, what follows are selected highlights from more than 100 hours of videotaping in the nursery, as well as off-camera conversations and observations.

### 7.19.3 The nature of this study

This was an exploratory, qualitative research study approach that was broadly looking at how the nursery practitioners themselves from multi ethnic backgrounds perceived and implemented the foundation stage curriculum in a unique multi-ethnic local authority day nursery in a major English city, the children's responses to the practitioners, and how the children interacted with their peers. The implicit theme of the research was to explore the concepts of ethnicity implicit in the various interactions observed.

*The first research question* was: How do practitioners from multi ethnic backgrounds working in a multi-ethnic local authority day nursery perceive the Six Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, set out by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 2000) for 3 - 5 old children?

The six Early Learning Goals<sup>44</sup> focussed on in this study are:

1. Personal social and emotional development.
2. Communication, language and literacy.
3. Mathematical development.
4. Knowledge and understanding of the world.
5. Physical development.
6. Creative development.

*The second research question:*

How might the practitioners' perceptions influence the way in which they plan, and implement the Foundation Stage Curriculum of the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) which affects children's learning?

*The third research question:*

What were the possible implications for children's learning and development including their self-esteem, self-concept and ethnic identity development in a multi-ethnic London local authority day nursery? This last question focussed in particular on the

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<sup>44</sup> The Department for Education Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) document (2000) specifies 10 early learning goals. The additional four are: Social skills development; Positive attitudes towards learning; Attention skills, and task persistence; Reading and writing. It appears from this guidance document that a nursery could choose whether to implement six or ten goals, according to the nature of the children served. In the case of StJ's, the emphasis on support for children from families experiencing difficulty meant that "learning goals" were often not emphasised, especially as no trained kindergarten teacher was employed.

First Learning Goal, in the words of the QCA document: “Personal, social and emotional well-being, in particular ... supporting the transition to and between settings, promoting an inclusive ethos and provide opportunities for each child to become a valued member of that group and community so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted.” (QCA, 2000, p. 9).

The QCA document urges that: “No child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.” (QCA, 2000, p.12).

#### **7.19.4 A brief overview on how children are allocated nursery places**

The Day Nursery was registered for a total of 45 places. However, at the time of the participant observation in October 2002, the intake of children registered at the nursery had been restricted to 27 places (some children did not attend all day). The explanation given was that the nursery was under review in preparation for the end of the five-year contract with the private nursery chain, running the day nursery on behalf of the local authority.)

The day nursery was open for 48 - 50 weeks in a year, from Mondays to Fridays and from 7:45am- 6:30.pm. A maximum of five full-time places were allocated to fee paying children who were resident outside the Elgar Estate. They attended nursery from 7:45 AM to 6:30 PM Monday to Friday. Although there were 27 full-time places, the 22 assessed children with free places at nursery were generally given a half day of nursery places per day from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM, three days a week and only children with the highest priority needs (e.g. children whose names were on the child protection register, or who would have to be accommodated if their case had gone to court, or cases in which a court order for day care provision had been made) were allocated full day places starting at 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM five days a week.

The free nursery places were allocated to children residing within the borough and who with their families had been referred by health visitors, general practitioners, speech therapists or social workers and had been assessed by the local authority Children's Services Department and the Education Department and found to be 'Children in Need' as defined by the Children Act 1989, specifically in providing support for 'children in need': Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

The nursery was staffed in the three group rooms by key practitioners trained to the level of NVQ Child Care level 3, NNEB (Nursery Nurses Education Board) or BTEch, and one trainee at level 2 of the NVQ Child Care certificate. The nursery was managed by an NNEB trained manager and her deputy. The practitioners are all female.

#### **7.19.5 Children's ethnic background**

There were 27 children attending the day nursery: however 22 children attended regularly throughout the four week of participant observation (from the nursery daily attendance register records). Some children were off sick, some had travelled, some children stayed home with their older siblings during half term and some children only attended when their parents (with mental health problems) felt able to get up in good time in the mornings or afternoons to take them to nursery.

The practitioners reported a major change in the background of children attending the day nursery, from mainly Black African Caribbean, children of mixed parentage (Black fathers and White mothers) and White British children to a high intake of asylum seeking North African and refugee Arabic speaking and Muslim children attending the day nursery. This was visible during the videoed participant observation. It was also subsequently confirmed in the children's files that I read, under sections in the files labelled 'ethnic backgrounds'.

**Table 7.1 The nursery children's ethnic background**

<b>Number of children</b>	<b>Ethnic background</b>	<b>Religious background</b>
3	Moroccan heritage	Muslim
2	Sudanese heritage	Muslim
2	Somalia heritage	Muslim
2	Lebanese heritage	Muslim
2	Egyptian heritage	Muslim

6	Black African Caribbean	Christian
5	White British	Christian
2	Mixed parentage (Black British fathers and White British mothers)	Christian
3	Mixed parentage (siblings with an Afghan father and White British mother)	Muslim

### 7.19.6 Description of the observed practitioners, their professional roles and their ethnic backgrounds

A total of 11 full-time female practitioners on site at the local authority day nursery were observed and videoed during the four continuous weeks of the participant observation sessions. Some of the practitioners had been permanent staff of the local authority before the day nursery was tendered to a private agency for a five years. Although there were different agency temporary staff standing in on short notice for absent practitioners, their role was always transient and supplementary, therefore, they have not been included in this study.

The next table provides a breakdown of the practitioners who were part of the participant observation on site at the day nursery showing their designated roles.

**Table 7.2 The 11 observed Practitioners and their designated professional roles on site at the day nursery**

Number of practitioners	Designation in the day nursery
6	The key practitioners in the 3 group rooms
1	The deputy manager
2	The Cook and assistant Cook
1	The cleaner
1	The administrator

The next table numbers the practitioners sequentially according to the order in which the group rooms and non-group room practitioners were observed. It also provides the practitioners' self-defined ethnic identity backgrounds.

**Table 7.3 The ethnicity of the 11 practitioners observed on site carrying out their routine duties at the day nursery**

<b>Practitioners and their location in the day nursery</b>	<b>Self-defined ethnic background</b>
<b>Practitioner 1:</b> The sole key practitioner in the preschool group room	Black African Caribbean, Jamaican
<b>Practitioner 2:</b> One of two practitioners in the blue group room.	White British Irish
<b>Practitioner 3:</b> The only unqualified practitioner (in training) who floats between the preschool group room and the blue group room	Caribbean Jamaican
<b>Practitioner 4:</b> One of two practitioners in the blue group room	Indian, Kerela
<b>Practitioner 5:</b> One of two practitioners in the green group room	Black African. Kenyan
<b>Practitioner 6:</b> One of two practitioners in the green group room	Black African Caribbean Jamaican
<b>Practitioner 7:</b> The Deputy manager	White English Celtic
<b>Practitioner 8:</b> The cook	Black African (Sierra Leonean)
<b>Practitioner 9:</b> The Assistant cook	Black African, Nigerian
<b>Practitioner 10:</b> The Domestic cleaner	Filipino
<b>Practitioner 11:</b> Office administrator	White Eastern European

**Table 7.4. The schedule for the 4 consecutive weeks of participant observation at the day nursery**

<b>Date of observation</b>	<b>Location and duration of observation</b>	<b>Type of observation</b>
14/10/2002 - 18/10/2002	Preschool group room All day for 5 days	Video participants Observation indoors and outdoors
21/10/2002 - 25/10/2002	Blue group room All day for 5 days	Video participants Observation indoors and outdoors
28/10/2002 - 1/11/2002	Green group room All day for 5 days	Videos participants Observation indoors and outdoors
4/11/2002	Nursery kitchen All day for 1 day	Video participants Observation indoors
5/11/2002	Deputy manager & the Administrator's office All day for 1 day	Videod participant Observation indoors
6/11/2002	Staff meeting room 2 hours	Direct observation with handwritten notes
6/11/2002	1 hour meeting with 2 internal Inspectors on site at the day nursery	Direct observation with handwritten notes
6/11/2002	1 hour meeting with the day nursery cleaner on site	Direct observations with handwritten notes
7/11/2002 - 8/11/2002	Reading of documents on site at the day nursery. All day for 2 days	Direct observations with Handwritten notes
9/11/2002	Reading of referred children's files from the day nursery at the Mental Health NHS Trust	Handwritten notes

#### **7.19.7 Start of the videoed participant observations**

In order to make the observations structured and focused, I went through the videoed participant observation material carefully and repeatedly, familiarising myself with the data before transcribing, organising, anonymising sensitive data and indexing for easy retrieval and identification. I repeatedly reminded myself of the three research questions guiding the study namely:

How do practitioners from multi ethnic backgrounds working in a multi-ethnic local authority day nursery perceive the Six Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum?

How might the practitioners' perceptions influence the way in which they plan and implement the Foundation Stage Curriculum which affects children's learning?



What are the possible implications for children's learning and development including their self-esteem, self-concept and ethnic identity development in a multi-ethnic local authority day nursery?

In order to answer these questions, I developed the following headings during this process that enabled me to streamline and focus my observations on the relevant areas. In addition to the time of day, duration of the observation and the observation setting, the following headings were useful in structuring and presenting the findings of the videoed participant observation in this chapter. I noted from my discussions with the practitioners as well as my reading of the children's files and the review reports, there were great emphasis placed on planning, activities and interactions. So I adopted these key concepts as headings and added to it the development of self-concept, self-esteem and ethnic identity for my third investigative research question.

*Plan:* Whether a published written plan ( short-term, medium-term or long-term) was observed to be visibly and available in the group room setting and whether or not it was being followed and referred to by the practitioners (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, three monthly, six monthly or yearly plans).

*Activities:* A description of the content of the activities being implemented by the practitioners, the explanations, rationale and justification provided for implementing activities, whether the activities are structured or unstructured and their relevance to the 6 Early Learning Goals of the foundation stage curriculum.

*Interactions:* The types of interactions taking place, whether generated as a result of the activities being implemented by the practitioners or not e.g. adult to child interactions, child to adult interactions, adult to adult interactions, individual child to child or group interactions, verbal as well as non-verbal interactions.

#### **7.19.8 Development of self-concept, self-esteem and ethnic identity:**

Activities that practitioners consider to be of importance, activities given to these concepts in a multi-ethnic day nursery located in a multi-ethnic community, and whether or not practitioners focus on these areas generally or specifically were evaluated, as were the overall implications for the children's learning and development in this multi-ethnic local authority day nursery.

My initial observations were made in the blue group room (upstairs), where the two practitioners responsible for the early shift that day are based. None of the other two group rooms were open at that time in the day nursery, as practitioners take it in turns to work on early and late shifts. The practitioners cover the early shift from 7:45 AM to 4 PM and late shifts from 9:30 AM to 6:30 PM in their own group rooms. The Blue group room is for children aged 2.5 years – 3.5 years of age. There are 13 children out of the 27 children in the nursery in the Blue group room.

The 5 fee paying children attending day nursery between 7:45 AM -09:30am stayed in the blue group room till the practitioners for the preschool and green group rooms arrived at 09:30am to take the children to their respective group rooms.

Only the 5 fee paying parents are entitled to bring their children to the nursery for 7:45 AM and to collect their children by 6:30 PM in the evenings.

*Time and duration of the observation in the blue group room:*

*7:45 AM to 09:50 AM.*

*Practitioners Observed:* Both Female qualified NNEB trained.

*Ethnicity:* 1White Irish and 1 Indian

*Activities and Types of interactions*

During breakfast, the practitioners engaged the 5 fee paying children in conversation about the colours of the cups, the number of sliced toast on the table which encouraged the children to focus on colours as well as counting. E.g. one of the children pointing at me said:

*Child:* 'She's wearing a blue jumper with white circles like my mummy today'.

*Practitioner:* 'Is she? How many white circles can you see in her jumper?'

*Child:* '1, 2, 3, lots and lots and lots'.

*Practitioner:* 'Good boy ..., very clever boy. Everybody clap for .....

*Children's reactions:* All 5 children clapped their hands enthusiastically with the little boy who had made of the observation beaming with smiles. Following breakfast, the children played in the home corner, 3 on their own and other two played together.

One of the practitioners was attentive to answering the intercom to let the parents and practitioners in and out of the day nursery. The other practitioner's attention was divided between supervising the children in the room as they arrived

with their parents, and reminding the parents as they left the blue group room to shut the door behind them for the children's safety. When the practitioners from the Pre-school group room and the Green group room arrived at 9:30 AM, they greeted their colleagues and then had the following dialogue with the children.

*Practitioner A: 'Good morning children, how was your weekend?'*

*Children's group response: 'Very good thank you'*

*Practitioner B: 'My weekend was very good, I wonder whether you all had a good weekend?'*

*Children's group response: 'Yes we did'*

*Practitioner C: 'I am interested in what you all did children, what was interesting and which one you was naughty at home? Who is going to start now?'*

*Children:* The children laughed heartily and responded individually.

*Child 1: 'My mummy said I was good, cos I ate all my food and didn't give it to the dog so I didn't get into any trouble.'*

*Child 2: 'I went to see my nan and she gave me sweeties',*

*Child 3: 'My mummy took me and my sister to the movies and we had popcorn',*

*Child 4: 'I helped my dad to cook spaghetti and my mum said it was yummy'*

*Child 5: 'My mummy and daddy took me shopping and bought me this new shoes, I like them, see'.*

*Practitioner C: 'it sounds like you've all been very good over the weekend at home, are you all going to be good at nursery this week?'*

*Children: 'oh yes we are ....'*

*Practitioners' reaction to the involvement of the researcher*

The practitioners were very surprised to see me in the nursery. They each asked what I was doing at the nursery. They were surprise to learn from me that it was my first day as a research student there and informed me that although they were expecting me they had not been notified of my start date as a research student.

*Parents and carers*

The non-fee paying parents and their children started to arrive shortly after 9:30 AM. Each parent would stay on the corridor, open the blue group room door for their child to enter then hug each other and say goodbye. Some parents said hello and goodbye to me and the practitioners, others smiled and waved goodbye.

This was however in contrast to the fee paying parents who on arrival at 7:45 AM walked into the blue group room with their children, said hello to me and engaged in conversations with the practitioners while helping their children to take off their coats, hang the coats up, kiss their children, tell them when they would be collected, before saying goodbye to the children, me and the practitioners. They presented as more at ease with the practitioners and myself than the non-fee paying parents and carers.

*Session 9:30 AM- 9:50 AM*

The practitioners from the preschool group room and green group room organised their respective group room children and escorted them to their respective group rooms. The preschool group practitioner had four children out of the seven expected on the day in attendance. The other three children were not yet in attendance at the day nursery. Details of the preschool group are as follows:

*Number of key practitioners based in the preschool group room: 1.*

*Ethnicity of preschool group room practitioner:* Black African Caribbean, gender, female

*Number of children in the preschool group room: 8*

*Ethnicity of the preschool group children:* Lebanese, Somalian, Sudanese, Egyptian, Black African Caribbean, Mixed ethnicity:(mother English and father from Afghanistan) and White British.

*Gender of the children in the preschool group room:* 2 boys and 6 girls.

*Age of children:* Three and half (3.5) years of age to just before their fifth (5) birthday.

*The published planned activities for the preschool group room*

A schedule of the planned foundation stage curriculum activities was clearly displayed on the bulletin board in the preschool group room. However the schedule of the planned activities had expired as it only covered the previous week beginning on Monday 7/10/2002 and ended on the Friday 11/10/2002.

I was later informed that the local authority's inspection of the day nursery had taken place during the week of 7 October 2002 to 11 October 2002 and it was for that reason that: The start of my participant observation at the nursery had to be rescheduled for 14 October 2002. This explained why the published planned activities

for the implementation of the mandatory foundation stage curriculum was out of date. The practitioners published scheduled of planned activities, activities implemented, types of interactions and whether or not these relate to the foundation stage curriculum are presented in the table below

**Table 7.5 Week 1 Day 1: In preschool group room**

<b>Date and Time of day</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Published Plan followed</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Type of interactions</b>	<b>Foundation stage curriculum &amp; 6 Early Learning Goals</b>
14/10/200 2 09:50am	Pre-school group room	None	Unstructured activities. Free play session.	Children in home corner, some dressing up, some constructing blocks, looking through picture books, some playing in pairs others playing individually and moving from activity to activity. Practitioner setting up the room for drawing. Practitioner in group room on her own with children. She explains to researcher ratio is 1 practitioner to 8 children for 3 – 5 year olds.	Creative development  Social emotional development.
10: a.m.	Preschool group room	Not applicable	Mid-morning Ovaltine hot drink	Group interaction at the table between the practitioner and the children	Social and emotional development

10: 30 am	Pre-school room	None	Assistant cook Enters room and asks how many children are at nursery today in this group room.	Practitioner plays counting game with the children and names a child to give the answer. The assistant cook has a discussion with the practitioner about the number of children eating halal and vegetarian meals and writes their names and the numbers down in preparation for lunch.	mathematical development
11:45 - 12:30pm.	Pre-school group room	None	Lunch time Lunch served by practitioner to individual children from trolley after delivery by assistant cook.	Children sit round the table. They help practitioner by passing around cutlery. Counting the cutlery and plastic glasses. Dialogue between practitioner and group of children about what is for lunch, where food items have come from. How many potatoes each child wanted. Talked about rules on how to behave at the table, saying please and thank you. Not talking while eating, ask permission from practitioner to leave the	Social emotional development Knowledge and understanding of the world. Communication, language and literacy. Mathematical development

				table to go to the toilet to wash hands unsupervised.	
2:30	Return to Preschool group room.	None	<p>Children take off coats and hang them up on pegs.</p> <p>Afternoon snack sandwiches, cakes, crackers and cheeses, fruits are served to all children with a cold drink – juice, water or milk.</p>	<p>Children go to the toilet, then wash hands unsupervised. Some play on the corridor, then return to group room when practitioner calls out to them to hurry back into the room.</p> <p>Tea time snacks are served at the table followed by story time.</p> <p>All children sit on the mat beside the practitioner who sits on a low chair and reads a huge picturesque story book aloud. She turns the pages slowly, asks individual children questions related to the story. Some Children talk over each other, push each other, and argue with each other about the story. Practitioner asks children who are disruptive to move positions. She comforts</p>	<p>Social and emotional development</p> <p>Physical development</p> <p>Communication, language and literacy.</p> <p>Social emotional development</p>

3:30pm - 4:30	Pre-school group room		Going home time Non fee paying parents Enter the pre-school group room to take their children home.	children who present as upset. Children leaving group activity quietly and join parents. Parents inform practitioner of appointments, absence, lateness or early pick up time for the next day. Practitioner makes a note in a book.	
4:30-6pm	Pre-school group room	None	Practitioner is joined by another practitioner on a late shift  Children of fee paying parents Are brought to pre-school room.	Children are served cold drinks, taken to toilet and encouraged to play on own or in pairs quietly. Parents collect their children and help them put on their coats. All children leave the nursery.	Social emotional development  Creative development
6-6:30pm	Pre-school group room	None	Practitioner sets up general activities for next day in the home corner.	Cleaner checks with practitioner which equipment needs special cleaning. Practitioner leaves the nursery for home.	

*Development of self-concept, self-esteem and ethnic identity activities:* There were no specific activities observed or reported by the practitioner aimed at or intended for developing the children's self-concept, self-esteem and ethnic identity.

*End of day reflections with the practitioner:* At the end of the day I went through all of the day's activities with the practitioner during which she explained the activities that I



had observed and the aspects of the 6 early learning goals of the foundation stage curriculum which she had implemented as noted in the above table. She said she had not planned activities for developing the children's self-concept, self-esteem and ethnic identity as they were too young and that children at this age do not understand differences in ethnicity or experience racism at the nursery or at home and that children only have these negative experiences when they enter primary schools in bad communities.

I asked the practitioner whether the identity project on 'myself' is still being implemented in the preschool group room. She informed me of the following: *'Not really, because a lot of changes have taken place in this nursery. The families have changed you know, most of the Black and Mixed-race families have moved out since the high-rise council estates was pulled down and replaced by townhouses. The local authority has been housing refugee and asylum seeking large Muslim families in this area now. Their issues are complex and involves major language difficulties too so the need for the 'Myself' work with the children on their identity is not really relevant now.'*

#### *Observational findings*

*Week 1 Day 2: In Pre-school group room:* In order to be able to provide direct quotations from videoed dialogues and handwritten notes between the practitioners and the children and the practitioners and other adults, the observation findings will no longer be presented in tables (as in Table 5). I will also refer to the practitioners as numbered in Table 3.

#### *Preschool group room practitioner on early shift*

On the second day of the participant observations, the preschool group room practitioner 1, and (the unqualified practitioner) practitioner 3, who works as a floater between the preschool group room and the blue room upstairs were on the early shift in the preschool group room (2 practitioners are required in order to meet the practitioner and child ratio, when the number of children in the preschool group exceeds 8 children).

*7:45 AM -9:30 AM:* Five (5) fee paying children were in attendance in the preschool group room. The parents and children were warmly welcomed as they came

in, the children were served breakfast following which they were given specific toys and activities to play with in one corner of the preschool group room.

*At 9: 25 AM:* A practitioner from each of the other two group rooms (blue and green group rooms), collected their respective group room children and took them to their group rooms.

*At 9:30 AM:* Seven children out of the 8 were in attendance in the preschool group room. There was however a noticeable change in the setup in the preschool group room from the previous day. The activities set out were distinctively different from those of the previous day. There were brand-new musical instruments on display, with corresponding posters on the walls, special toys and reading materials on display that morning. The activities seemed focused on specific aspects of the Early Learning Goals, of the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000).

The children were clearly excited but were told by both practitioners not to touch or play with the activities on display. Practitioner 3 asked the children to wait for her instructions. One of the children asked the following: ‘..... *When can we play with these new toys please?*’

Before either of the practitioners could respond to the child, the deputy manager entered the preschool group room and informed them of a serious shortage of staff in the other two group rooms due to practitioners calling in sick that morning. The children just turning 3.5 years of age from the blue group room were brought into the preschool group room to enable the blue and green group room children to be combined into one group room to accommodate the staff shortage.

In addition she explained to me that although practitioner 3 in training on the NVQ level II course at college was being formally assessed by her college tutor that morning in the preschool group room, these changes were beyond her control and had to be accommodated.

There was noticeable tense and anxious expressions on the faces of both practitioners in the preschool group room and unease in the body language and behaviour of both practitioners especially practitioner 3 whose assessor was then present in the preschool group room and waiting to start a planned formal assessment of practitioner 3.

Practitioner 1 was required to take a back seat in the preschool group room while practitioner 3 took the lead in the activities with the children in the preschool group room during her assessment. Practitioner 1 however had to remain in the preschool group room throughout the assessment in a supervisory role. She explained to me that the children cannot be left on their own with an unqualified practitioner for any lengthy period of time, except to take children to the toilet.

I requested and was granted verbal permission by the NVQ College assessor and practitioner 3 to videotape the activities. The video recorder was already on the top bookshelf in the preschool with the camera directed at where practitioner three and a children's activities would be taking place. The agreement was that I would not show the face of the NVQ assessor from the community college in any viewing of the video tape outside of the day nursery

Practitioner 3 had put out specific planned activities for her assessment. These included musical instruments for the children to explore and play with in her assessment session. She also put out books and carried out a role-play activity involving shopping for books as well as a painting session with the children.

The addition of children from the blue group room aged 3.5 years was clearly not planned for. It became necessary for practitioner 3 to accommodate and to simultaneously involve more children in other activities in the preschool group room. The activities were all structured, focused and practitioner led. A clear typed laminated plan was clearly visible on the table near the displayed activities.

When the assessment came to an end, I asked clarifying questions of the assessor regarding the criteria and expectations of the assessment.

The assessor explained: *'Although specific tasks and goals had been earmarked to be completed, given the unpredictable nature of working with preschool age children in day nurseries, the expectation is that the trainee practitioner being assessed would make reasonable adjustments to the activities when the number of children increase or decrease during any assessment. This is part and parcel of working in day nurseries'*.

Practitioner 3 left the group room to get another practitioner from the blue group room to relieve her before leaving the preschool group room with her assessor for a

private discussion in the staff room on the outcome of her assessment. In the event it was later announced that she had passed the assessment.

After lunch, the deputy manager joined the 2 practitioners in the preschool group room to enable practitioner 1 to go for her lunch break.

*Handover discussion between practitioner 1 and the deputy manager:*

The following discussion took place between the deputy manager and the practitioner 1:  
*Deputy manager:* 'How many children do you have in preschool today? What are the names of the children expected to be picked up early for planned appointments? Are there any children who have complained of not feeling well? Have the parents or next of kin been notified? Have they been told that they will be contacted if the child's condition worsens? '.

*Practitioner 1:* 'The numbers have changed a lot today as you know. We had 7 to begin with then 3 children joined us from next door. 2 will be leaving because they only attend half-days but then another 2 may have to join us when the numbers go up for the afternoon next door beyond their ratio. None of the parents are scheduled to collect their children early today. None of the children here have complained of not feeling well today. I'll go now'.

As practitioner 1 left for her lunch break she turned to the children and said: 'Are you going to be nice for..... now? Don't give her a rough time okay? I'm going for my lunch break when I come back if the weather is good we will go outside to play on the slides okay?'

*Children:* responded in unison: 'We are always good....'

*Practitioner 1:* Shook her head smiling and muttered: 'That's alright then, you cheeky lot.'

#### *Activities and interactions*

The deputy manager did not look at the bulletin board for the scheduled planned activities. A second practitioner (temporary agency staff) in the preschool group room was busy attending to the children who were being collected by their parents as they only attend half-days. She however returned to the blue group room when the number of children remaining in the preschool group room returned to 8 as the ratio for

practitioner to children aged 3 to 5 years is 8 children. The deputy manager was left on her own with the eight children in the preschool group (8 is the maximum number of children age 3 to 5 years of age that can be supervised in a group room by one nursery practitioner). She encouraged the children to play in the home and book corners in unstructured activities which she announced and described as *'this is your free play time okay.'*

She then sat down behind a table in a central location in the group room where she could see all the children playing in different parts of the room. She went through her pile of paperwork which she worked on looking up intermittently to see what the children were doing. When they were being boisterous, she would ask them to slow down and be gentle with each other or intervene by physically separating them.

Some of the children played by themselves, others did so in pairs concentrating on particular activities in the home corner, such as dressing up, role playing doctors and nurses, and being the teacher.

Other children moved from activity to activity on their own, without exploring any of the activities for any length of time. A couple of the children wandered around aimlessly and were ignored by their peers when they tried to join them in their play activities.

The deputy manager was in the preschool group room for a little over an hour after which practitioner<sup>1</sup> returned to the preschool group room after her lunch break. The deputy manager informed the practitioner that the children scheduled to be collected by their parents had done so and that the other practitioner had returned to the blue group room. The deputy manager said goodbye to the children and left the preschool group room.

#### *Outdoor activities, practitioners and children's reaction to the video camera and children's group play*

On the practitioner's return from her lunch break, the children reminded her it was time for them to be taken outside to the playground to play on the slides as she had promised to do. The practitioner agreed to do so but reminded them they first had to put on their coats as it was quite cold outside. They were then escorted down the stairs to the playground at the back of the building. The preschool group children were the first group of children to arrive in the playground. Shortly afterwards the combined blue

and green group room children (due to the staff shortage in the morning), also joined them in the playground with their practitioners.

*The children's and the staff reaction to the researcher's presence in the playground*

The children from the blue and green group rooms walked towards me and asked me what I was doing at the nursery and why I had my video camera on the tripod stand in a (safe) corner in the playground. The practitioners from the combined blue and green group rooms also presented as being curious about my presence in the playground especially with my video camera on its tripod stand videotaping the playground activities. I waved to them and they waved back.

They initially appeared to be quite conscious of their verbal and physical interactions with the children being videoed. They would for example stare at the direction of the video camera when responding to the children both physically and verbally. However when they observed me reacting spontaneously to the children who physically fell over on the slides and who approached me for comforting as well as in conversation, while the video camera was still rolling, I overheard the practitioners who had presented as being guarded, saying to each other: *'Oh she is filming herself too, that's alright then.'*

Each practitioner responded by saying that they did not mind being videotaped, given the assurance I had given in the consent form that the videotapes would only be used for research purposes and would not be shown to researchers at the University or to the public.

Although I was not holding the video camera (it was on the tripod stand) and was interacting with the children who approached me, I could not join the practitioners who were standing grouped together at the far end of the playground. I remained at the other end of the playground for safety reasons, to prevent the video equipment from falling over curious children exploring the equipment. However as each individual practitioner walked towards me in their intervention and interactions with individual and small groups of children I took the opportunity to check with them again whether they felt comfortable with the playground activities and interactions involving themselves being videoed. Each practitioner again confirmed that they had no objections to being videotaped.

*Return from the playground activities to the preschool group room activities*

When the outside temperature began to drop and some of the children began to cough, sneeze and required their noses to be wiped by the practitioners, the preschool group practitioner announced that it was time for the preschool group children to return indoors to the warmth of preschool group room. Leaving the other children in the playground. The preschool group children were escorted upstairs where they took off their jackets and coats and then made themselves comfortable in the home corner in the group room.

Practitioner 3 returned to the preschool group room in the afternoon session with two children from the blue group room. She reported that 2 children who only attend in the afternoons had joined the blue group room so she had been assigned to the preschool group room with both children for the afternoon. After a brief discussion with practitioner 1 she set up 2 activities for the children and gave the children the choice of making play dough with her, or making clocks with practitioner 1.

Four children who wanted to make play dough joined her. They each took turns in assisting practitioner 3 with the mixing of the dry ingredients with water in the big water trough area of the group room. They kneaded the dough until it was smooth and ready for cutting into different shapes and sizes. During the process, practitioner 3 engaged the children (two boys and two girls) in discussion about the texture of the dry flour, it turning into a sticky mixture when water was added to the dry ingredients and how the feel of the mixture changed when it was kneaded into a smooth dough.

Practitioner 3 encouraged the children in conversation to make links to food items that they are familiar with which involved baking. The children named bread, cookies, pies and pasties. Practitioner 3 explained to them that while bread and the other food items would need to go into the oven to be baked, this particular type of play dough does not require any cooking. She also cautioned the children not to eat the play dough because it is not cooked and would lead to them having upset stomachs. The children picked up the play dough to smell it, the practitioner again reminded them not to eat it.

The children were asked by practitioner 3 to move to the mathematical corner in the room to look at the charts on the wall and to choose from the different shapes and colours the ones they would want to cut their play dough into. Each child was

assisted with the cutting of their play dough using the shape cutters. These were placed on trays and put away for drying so that they would be painted the following day. At the end of the activity the children washed and dried their hands in a large bowl of water in the room. Practitioner 3 explained to me that this was necessary to prevent the children from eating the remnant uncooked play dough stuck on their fingers.

*End of activity and interactions: reflections with practitioner 3*

I asked practitioner 3 why she had moved the children to the mathematical corner and asked them to choose the different shapes and colours for their play dough. She told me the following: *'Because these children know the different colours and shapes already. The colours they know very well but sometimes they get some of the shapes mixed up. For example they confuse rectangle and square, round and oblong and star and triangle. So if they are in front of the charts and have forgotten the name of the shape, they can point to the shape that they want and I can then call out the name of the shape which the child then repeats. This helps them to remember. Sometimes a child may not remember the name of the shape but the other children will say what the shape or colour is that is why I take them together as a group to explore the shapes and colours. These children know the difference between red and blue, black and white, round and square and so on. They recognise things that look the same and things that look different, including hair colour and skin colour. They will say black and white people but when you talk to them about the real colour they will talk about brown skin and pink skin. That's why I did it that way to help them out in case they have forgotten the names of the shapes or colours.'*

I noted from practitioner 3 who also self identifies as Black Caribbean Jamaican that her explanations, perceptions and implementation of the foundation stage curriculum through her choice of activities and interactions with the children, were very different from that of practitioner 1. Practitioner 3 in fact acknowledged that children in the preschool group room have the knowledge and ability to recognise differences in colours and shapes including skin colour. This confirmed Van Ausdale and Feagin's (2002) findings that nursery age children are aware of racial differences at that age.

Although both practitioners were Black and from the same ethnic and cultural background, their perceptions on child development and their Implementation of The Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000) was observed to be very different.



### *Making of clocks: activity and interactions*

Practitioner 1 took the remaining five children to the 'mathematical and the telling the time' corner at the other side of the room where a table had been set up by practitioner 3 with white cardboard like paper, pairs of children's safety scissors for cutting, crayons and felt tip pens.

Practitioner 1 invited each child individually to sit opposite her at the table and to look at the clock on the wall behind her. She then gave the child the white cardboard like paper and asked the child to choose a crayon and to draw a round big circle on it. She then gave a pair of scissors to the child to cut around the circle. Each child was encouraged to draw a small circle in the middle of the large circle. Each child wrote their name at the back of the clock drawing. All five children sat opposite the practitioner facing the clock on the wall with the practitioner going through the numbers on the face of the clock with the children starting from 1 to 12. At the end of which Practitioner 1 put away the children's activities and promised them it would be continued the following day.

### *Reactions to potential crisis*

The deputy manager hurriedly returned to the preschool group room and informed the practitioners not to allow any of the children to enter the upstairs toilet area as it was flooded with water. The children must be sent to the downstairs toilet but the downstairs staff must be told when a child is being sent downstairs so that they can keep an eye on the child for safety reasons.

She reported the following: *'When I got back to the office downstairs after relieving another staff for her lunch break, I found water dripping from the office ceiling onto my desk. When I came upstairs and looked in the toilet which is directly over the office I found the sink stuffed with tissue paper and the taps left running. The children in the blue group room had done this. I now have to mop the upstairs children's toilet as everything is swimming in water. This is not the first time that this has happened either.'*

The deputy manager returned to her mopping of the upstairs children's toilet. I followed her and was able to video her mopping the floor in the children's upstairs toilet. I enquired how she knew it was children from the blue group room who were

responsible for the flooding. She explained that as a rule the children in the blue group room are never allowed to go to the toilet on their own or unsupervised because of their younger age 2.5 years to rising 3.5 years. Only the preschool group children who were already 3.5 years of age, are allowed to use the toilet unsupervised. However since the shortage of staff she had observed that children are being sent to the toilet on their own even though she strongly believed that they are at that age, too young to cope with the responsibilities involved.

She went on to narrate the following: *'Some staff believe in pushing children into exploring and doing things for themselves. They believe that through exposure and experimenting on their own, children will acquire the necessary skills that they need to develop. I don't think that it works because they are underdeveloped physically, mentally, socially and emotionally and in need of guidance and support. They can turn the tap on but can't turn it off because they haven't developed the grip and strength to turn the taps off. So they wash their hands, wipe their hands, drop the tissue in the sink and leave the tap running. They don't see that they have done anything wrong so when they return to the group room they don't tell anyone that the tap needs to be turned off. We then have flooding and this is not the first time it has happened. It's part of the belief that some nursery officers generally have. You see some nursery officers strongly believe that children should be left to take the lead to explore things in the world. This includes some permanent staff and some agency staff too. It is difficult to get them to change their belief system, it's an on-going battle.'*

#### *Snack time*

The practitioners gathered the children around the table and served them their snack consisting of fruits, biscuits, milk and cold drinks. At the end of which the cups and plates were returned to the trolley for collection from the preschool group room by the kitchen assistant.

When the parents started to arrive to take their children home shortly after 3 PM, the practitioners got the children to sit in a circle. They sang familiar songs e.g. twinkle twinkle little star, wind the bobbin up, while waiting for their parents to collect them.

At the end of the practitioners' early shift, they escorted the children to the blue group room as those 2 practitioners were on the late shift. Both practitioners from the

preschool group room said goodbye to the children, returned to the preschool group room, set out activities for the next day and left for home.

*Foundation stage curriculum & 6 Early Learning Goals implemented through the activities:*

All aspects of the early learning goals to greater and less degrees were implemented through the observed practitioners activities and interactions namely: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; creative development.

I observed (in my notes) that there was a wide range of activities provided which in turn generated interactions, including adult to child, child to adult, child to child, adult to group of children and adult to adult interactions. But there were no observed or reported activities planned for or aimed at developing the children's development of their self-concept, self-esteem and ethnic identity.

*End of day reflections with practitioner 1*

In discussion with practitioner 1, I asked whether the identity programme on 'myself' is still part of the foundation stage curriculum at the nursery. She informed me of the following: *'Yes we are supposed to be doing the identity work on "myself" with the preschool group children but as you can see I am the only staff in this group room with the children and I am the key nursery officer for all eight children. There is lot of staff shortage due to sickness, people taking time off to do their written work at home and managers leaving. I have to do a lot of report writing on each of the children and I don't get the time to do so here. It is very difficult to do the identity work with the children properly especially involving the parents because it takes a lot of time. It is especially difficult now because things have changed and a lot of the parents don't speak English or understand English properly so the work is extra hard , plus I don't have the time to do it with them. We don't have a teacher at the nursery or any input from a teacher either. The other thing is that I don't really think that these children experience racism at this age you know. Not when they are at this nursery anyway, may be when they are much older and attend big school and mix with the big kids. I think they are too young to understand these things, that's my experience you know'.*

I asked practitioner 1 whether the children at age 3 to 5 years understand whether they are boys or girls. Her answer was: 'Yes'.

I then asked whether gender was part of their identity.

Her answer was: *'Yes, but I never thought of identity like that before you know.'*

*Day 3 of week 1 in the preschool group room*

There were 6 out of the 8 children in attendance in the preschool group room. 2 children were absent with no notice from the parents to the practitioner or the administrator for their absence

The practitioner set up tables in a section of the group room facing a mirror (plastic safety mirror) on the wall. She organised the children at the next table with multicultural books and pictures to look at. She informed the children that they were going to draw pictures of themselves and that they would be called to sit beside her at another table to do the drawing of themselves. She announced: *'We will be doing "Myself"'*

On her table she had a pile of blank skin-tone drawing papers, a round plastic open top container full of skin-tone crayons, and colouring crayons for the eyes in a separate container. The children were individually called by name and they took it in turns to sit on a chair opposite the practitioner at her table. She then gave the child the skin tone paper, asked the child to walk to the full-size mirror on the wall and asked the child to look closely in the mirror for the following. She asked each child;

*'What is the colour of your hair?'*

*'What is the colour of your eyes?'*

*'How many eyes do you have?'*

*'How many noses do you have?'*

*'How many lips do you have?'*

*'How many ears do you have?'*

If the child was able to answer the questions correctly she would move on to the next question. If they were unable to do so, she would repeat the same question and prompt the child by asking and gesturing with her fingers for example:

*'Do you see one or two eyes? Do you see one or two noses on your face?'*

When the child provided the correct answers she would ask the child to join her at the table and encourage the child to draw him or herself on the skin tone paper including those physical features.

She would then ask the child: *'What colour is your skin?'*

The darker complexioned children e.g. Black African: Somalian answered: *'Brown.'*

The lighter complexioned children e.g. Lebanese, Sudanese, Egyptian, and children of Mixed parentage e.g. (mother English and father from Afghanistan) and the White British children answered: *'White'*.

The practitioner did not clarify, explore or expand on their answers with them (which is an important aspect of the identity programme process e.g talking about the colour white and comparing it to skin tone colour which is not white, as also is talking about ethnicity and terminology used in describing individuals with different skin tones such as Black people and White people). She chose a number of skin tone crayons from the container, and put them next to the child's arm on the table and asked the child which skin tone crayon looked the same as their colour. The child would then point at the skin tone crayon that they see as similar to their skin colour. She would then ask the child the name of the crayon colour and the child would respond by describing the colour as either *pink, light brown, or brown* (in colour terms).

None of the children said *White* or *Black* when naming their skin tone crayons. The practitioner did not explore with any of the children why they had described themselves as Brown or White earlier. She then asked each child to draw themselves with that colour crayon, then shade their eyes with the choice of crayon, their hair with the appropriate colour and colour their lips with the appropriate colour crayon. Some children with brown eyes shaded their eyes blue.

Although practitioner 1 did not address this with that child with brown eyes who had shaded her eyes blue, the group of children watching began to talk amongst themselves that the child did not have blue eyes. She continued by sending the child back to look in the mirror, asking the child the following questions:

*'How many arms do you have?'*

*'How many fingers do you have on one hand?'*

*'How many hands do you have altogether?'*

*'How many fingers do you have on both hands?'*

*'How many legs do you have?'*

*'How many feet do you have?'*

*'How many toes do you have on each foot?'*

*'How many toes do you have on both feet?'*

She would follow the previous repertoire until the child was able to provide the correct answer. The child would then join her at the table and continue with the drawing. Some children drew stick pictures of themselves with a round head, spiky hair, stick fingers and toes and she would help them by reminding them to count the number of fingers and toes physically before drawing those parts. Other children drew non-stick, rounded pictures of themselves with circular eyes, curved eyebrows, rounded arms, legs with rounded fingers and toes. These children would then shade in the colour of their various body parts appropriately with the necessary prompts from the practitioner. At the end of each child's activity, the practitioner would ask the child to write their name at the bottom of the picture. All the children were able to write their names with guidance except one boy. After several failed attempts, the practitioner wrote the child's name on the back of his drawing. The practitioner praised each child for completing the activity before taking the completed drawings from them.

*The children's interactions with each other and the practitioner during the individualised activities*

When the 6 preschool group children were waiting their turn to draw their picture of themselves with the practitioner, they were initially quite talkative amongst themselves. However as the practitioner began the individual activity with the first child at the table and invited the child to stand in front of the mirror and to respond to her questions, the remaining 5 children began to take keen interest in the activity and interaction between the practitioner and that child.

Some children presented as impatient and blurted out the correct answers to the questions when individual children were either slow in providing the right answers or made mistakes in answering the questions while looking in the mirror. A couple of the children spontaneously offered suggestions while others made derogatory remarks such as: *'Everybody has two eyes silly'*, *'Nobody has two noses stupid'*, *'You don't have blue eyes, your eyes are black, you silly billy'*.

Other children laughed aloud which had a negative effect on the child in front of the mirror, who then appeared to be very nervous and embarrassed. The practitioner's immediate response was to pause the activity with the child in front of the mirror, while she addressed the group of children at the next table by telling them *'be quiet'*.

When they did not respond appropriately she raise the tone of her voice slightly and with a stern voice asked them by name: *'.... Are you now the teacher?'* When the disruption continued, she singled out those individual children by name and said: *'Don't be rude or unkind to other children.... It is not nice or polite, you know that don't you?'*

When two of the girls consistently interrupted and made fun of other individual children in front of the mirror, the practitioner told them: *'..... One more comment like that from you and you will lose your turn. You will not be able to join in the activity if this disruption continues you know'*. This had the desired positive effect as both girls immediately altered their negative attitudes and disruptive behaviours. However the observable issues such as the colour of eyes were not addressed by the practitioner with any of the children.

All 6 children in the preschool group room were asked at the end of the activities how they felt about their drawings, what they had learned and how they had felt when criticised by the group. They were encouraged to say sorry to each other for being impatient and disruptive and to shake hands with each other which they did spontaneously and willingly. Following this activity, the children were told it was time for them to use the toilet one at a time and to wash their hands and get ready for lunch.

*Lunchtime routines and activities*

Two tables were joined together and the children were asked to bring their chairs along to the lunch table, which they did. Lunch consisted of a main meal cooked on the premises, desert, water and fruit juices. At the end of the meal each child was asked to empty their plate into a large round plastic bowl and to put their dirty cutlery into a jug with water on a trolley. This was followed by a break during which the children took it in turns to go to the toilet and wash their hands before returning to the group room for the afternoon activities. The practitioner stood at the door to the room where she could see the children in the group room as well as those entering the children's toilets. The children chatted with her, touched her and smiled at her as they walked past her to enter the toilet. She reciprocated by smiling back and being tactile with them.

*Structured activities, individual, adult child interactions and group peer interactions*

After lunch the practitioner informed the children that it was raining heavily outside so they would not be able to play in the playground. The time would be used to discuss their individual drawings completed that morning with them. She informed the children that she would be inviting them individually to sit at the table next to her while the rest of the children sat on the mat around the table. She reminded them it would be important for them to listen carefully to each other's story about their drawing.

During the individual presentations, some children presented were able to describe what they were doing in their picture. The observing group of children contributed with comments such as: *'You did not colour your eyes black, your eyes are not really Brown'* or *'You didn't draw your curly hair'*

Others laughed at their peers' pictures and commented on whether their pictures had any resemblance to the child who drew the picture. It became very noisy and competitive with some children claiming that their picture was the best. The practitioner continued to invite individual children to sit beside her and to tell her the story about the picture that they had drawn of themselves.

When it was the turn of an articulate Black Somalian boy, the practitioner had the following dialogue with him:

*Practitioner:* 'It's your turn now M..... tell me about your picture and what you were doing in your picture this morning'.



*Child:* 'There's something in my big belly squashing me. That's why my belly is big'

*Practitioner:* 'So M..... What is inside your belly? I don't understand you?'

*Child:* 'A baby is playing in my belly'.

*Practitioner:* 'Really? Did you say you have a baby inside your belly? Do boys have babies in their bellies? It is not making any sense to me. Does it make sense to anyone? You have a baby in your tummy?'

The other children mainly, the girls' spontaneous reaction and interjections were: 'Only girls have babies in their tummies.'

*Child:* 'Not girls, only mums.'

*Practitioner:* 'That's true, boys don't have babies in their tummy do they? How come you said you have a baby in your belly?'

*Child:* 'I don't know. Now I don't have a baby in my tummy. But look at my eyes they are very big'

*Practitioner:* 'How come your eyes are so big?'

*Child:* 'Because I am staring'.

*Practitioner:* 'Why you staring? Who are you staring at with your really big eyes?'

*Child:* 'Oh, oh.'

*Reaction from the other children:* Laughter and general discussion about babies in women's tummies and why boys cannot have babies in their tummies.

*Practitioner:* 'Okay M... You can take your picture now to show to your mum when you go home today okay, good boy'.

The practitioner went through each drawing with the child who drew it and each child was given the opportunity to describe their drawn picture of themselves, and to talk through what they were doing in the picture. The rest of the children looking on, took keen interest in each other's picture and added their own comments to that of the practitioner's such as: '*It doesn't look like you*'; '*Your eyes are not blue they are black*'; '*My picture is nicer than your picture*'.

To these comments the practitioner would respond by saying: 'Everybody's picture is nice and have drawn them the way they see themselves or how they like to be seen. Is that Okay?' Some of the children who were still not in agreement with the practitioner's statement continued to disagree with her. She did not pursue this with these children but ignored them and moved on to another child's drawing.

As the activity was coming to a close the practitioner noticed that a very quiet boy who speaks very little English did not have his drawing and had not discussed his drawing. She searched the cupboard until she found his drawing. She invited the boy to sit beside her at the table and to talk about his drawing. The boy had scribbled small zigzag strokes and faint circle marks on his paper and could not verbally articulate what he had drawn. The other children became impatient with him and began to ask him a lot of questions, with some children laughing at his picture. The practitioner noticed that the boy had become very silent with his head hanging down. She immediately told the children that their behaviour was not nice and instructed them to leave the table and to start tidying up which they did. She went through the child's picture with him on his own without an audience.

At the end of the activity the practitioner informed me that the session had been an eye opener for her as she had never asked the children to specifically draw themselves in this way. She said that the children were used to drawing whatever objects they wanted and only discussed the drawings with their friends in the room. She reflected on how stimulating the discussions had been and the interest it had generated among the rest of the group of children.

#### *End of day reflections with practitioner 1*

I asked practitioner 1 about the critical comments that some of the children had made about individual children's drawings, their disagreement with her when she had tried to correct them and why she had not followed through with further explanations but had ignored their argument and moved on with the activities.

She said that children at that age (3.5 – 5 year olds) are not yet able to or capable of understanding certain concepts. It is therefore a futile exercise to continue arguing or explaining these concepts to them and that as they get older and enter school, their brain will develop at the right time and that as they get older they would be able to naturally understand these concepts. She said it would be premature to

force these children to grasp these concepts when their brain isn't developed enough to do so now.

She also talked about needing to do more individual work with the boy whose understanding of the English language as well as verbal expressive skills appeared to be very limited. She repeated the fact that she is the sole key practitioner for all 8 children in the preschool group room (meaning that she has responsibility for their progress, reviews, their individual and group plans as well as their reports), therefore she had to find ways of building the boy's confidence in class. She told me it is important that plans for his preparation for school takes place in his next review to enable him to get the necessary support and input before his fifth birthday when he leaves the day nursery and starts school.

I asked the practitioner how she would go about carrying out this task. She said she would begin by talking to the boy's parents about the child's presentation and performance in tasks, carry out further direct observations and record these in his file for planning purposes. She would discuss the observations with her line manager for her input and suggestion. A decision would be made regarding how soon a review would be necessary for planning purposes. This might involve a request for an assessment by the speech and language therapist as well as the health visitor to clarify whether it is a language only issue, a mild learning difficulty, a physical developmental delay, a combination of any of these or something else.

#### *Observation findings Week 1: Day 4*

The day nursery manager who had been off sick all week returned to work that day. There were however continued low staffing issues in the blue and green group rooms in the day nursery. Arrangements were made for agency staff to cover for the absent practitioners in both group rooms. There were 6 out of the 8 children in attendance in the preschool group room and therefore the staff shortage in the blue and green group rooms did not have an immediate impact on the preschool group room.

#### *Proposed plan for the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000) to be implemented*

There was no written or published plan of the structured activities to implement on the bulletin board for the practitioner, or in her absence for other practitioners to implement

for the week. The last published plan on the bulletin board remained was out dated at it related to the previous week.

During the children's free play in the home corner, some of the children got into a role-play involving shopping at a department store in a big mall. During this children initiated unstructured play activity, and girl who had been absent from day nursery the previous day informed the group: 'I had a nice time yesterday shopping with my mum and dad at IKEA. My mum said it was better to go yesterday because there aren't many people shopping and we can get parking but on the weekend it is very busy and it takes a long time to shop and pay. I got new cups and plates for myself.'

The practitioner listened to the conversation among the children but did not ask the child any questions about not attending nursery the previous day. She however later mentioned it to her colleague from the blue group room during the break and commented: '....Do you know X's parents were very naughty yesterday, they took X shopping to IKEA because they told her it is less crowded on a weekday. They did not bother to inform the day nursery about the child's absence you know'.

The Blue group room practitioner 2 replied: *'I know. It is annoying but you see, these parents don't consider day nursery as proper education, so why do we bother with this foundation stage stuff with all the planning and activities for inspection I don't know? These parents see nursery as free child minding service for their children to socialise while they have a break from the children. Therefore they don't see the need to inform anyone when they take the children out of day nursery. They do this all the time with the younger children in our room. Sometimes they don't bring the children to nursery because they can't be bothered to get out of bed and get dressed. They only stop when the children start school and attendance and the register becomes important. Especially when they get letters sent home about low attendance and lateness and they are asked to report to the head teachers.'*

The Preschool group practitioner 1 responded: *'It makes my job very difficult because I have 8 children to observe, assess, develop plans for and write reports on especially for the reviews. I had wanted to do some work with X that day but she wasn't here, where would I find the time to do all that work? With the staff shortage these days I can't even come upstairs to the staff room to catch up with my report writing you know'*

The Blue group room practitioner 2 observed: *'You just have to take some days off to do your write-ups at home you know. When the mother comes in to collect X, you just have to ask her to stay and arrange for coverage in the room and then meet with the mother and child and do your assessment and observation right then. That's how I managed to do all of mine because the parents don't keep the appointments you give them and you never know whether the children will attend nursery on a given day. All you do is prepare the plans for the inspections and you will be covered. Besides the deputy is also leaving soon so things will get worse timewise'*.

#### *Structured activities and interactions*

The practitioner set up 2 tables in the mathematics corner for the children and involved them in what she described to them as the 'Tell the time' and 'Working with shapes and textures' activities. This was a continuation of the previous day's structured activities that had been organised by the unqualified practitioner. Children who had cut out the play dough shapes were encouraged to paint them while the children who had cut out the cardboard paper circles for their clocks also added the numbers to the face of the clock plus the minute and hour hands to the face of their clocks. At the end of which the two groups of children swapped places and worked on the other activity they had previously not worked on.

#### *Interactions between practitioners and children*

The practitioner paid individual attention to each child's work. For the three children completing the play dough activity she discussed with them individually what colour they like the best, to select a fruit with the same colour from the plastic fruit bowl and to point out the shape on the board in the mathematics corner. She did a similar individual activity with the children who were working on their clocks by asking them to individually count from 1 to 12, to write these on a separate sheet of paper, and to use the clock on the wall to guide their work. She helped each child to fold the clock into four and write the number 12 at the centre top, the number 6 at the bottom opposite to the number 12, and to do the same with the numbers 3 and 9.

At the end of the activities she asked the children to think of songs that involve counting and involved them in a sing along session before tidy up time, going to the toilet and the routine washing of hands time. This was followed by setting up the table for lunch and having lunch. After lunch a practitioner from the blue group room relieved

the practitioner for her lunch break. There was the routine handover dialogue between the two practitioners.

The children were told it was free play time and that they could choose whatever activity or equipment they wanted in the room to play with. The practitioner checked on the children in the different parts of the room and then sat on a chair and went through some paperwork that she had brought with her.

On the practitioners return from her lunch break, she informed the children it was raining outside therefore playing on the slides in the playground was not going to be possible so they should continue with their free play. Some of the children went to the window to watch the rain.

Two of the practitioners and children from the blue group room joined the preschool group and announced that they were joining the preschool group for the rest of the afternoon. They also informed the children that the next day would be the manager's last day at the nursery as she was leaving. The blue group room was being prepared for the manager's leaving party.

The children were excited and hugged each other. The practitioners involved the children in drawing and cutting of shapes for posters for the manager's party for the next day. This was followed by a rehearsal session in which the children chose the songs they would like to sing at the party. The preschool group children asked if they could play the musical instruments they had been introduced to earlier on in the week, at the party and this was agreed to. There was a musical rehearsal session in which the blue group room children also joined in.

Each of the 3 practitioners present in the preschool group room interacted with and responded to all the children and did not make a distinction between the preschool group children and the blue group room children.

#### *Interactions between children*

The interactions between all the children were welcoming and amicable. Some of the preschool group children had younger siblings among the blue group room children who had joined them. The preschool group children generally presented as more protective of the younger children who had joined them. They played alongside each other nicely and gently with them and allowed them to join in their activities. The

younger children reciprocated well to hugs and kisses from the preschool group children. The afternoon activities ended with all the children sitting together on the rug for a sing along and storytelling time, during which the parents arrived and collected their children.

#### *Observational findings Week 1: Day 5*

All the children from the blue and green group rooms joined the children in the preschool group room in the morning with their practitioners. The practitioners explained to the children that the blue group room was being prepared for the manager's leaving party scheduled to start at 2 PM in the afternoon. Some of the practitioners from the two group rooms were helping with organising the room, the decorations, food and drink items. The parents, local authority office staff, other day nursery and clinic staff had also been invited as the manager had worked at the nursery for decades and was well-known and liked in the community.

One of the practitioners from the green group room pulled some tables and chairs together and covered the tables with newspaper. She mixed some paint, brought out some brushes and sheets of white paper and invited the children to sit around the table with her.

The green group room practitioner 5 then announced: *'I am going to be painting hands to make some posters for..... leaving party this afternoon. Who wants their hands painted? All those who wants their hands painted come and sit beside me at this table and I will paint your hands for you okay'*.

All the preschool group children sat at the table and had their hands painted and printed on the poster. Then the blue group children did the same. However when she invited the green group room children they each in turn refused to have their hands painted.

I noticed this and asked the practitioner why the children from her group room were refusing to have their hands painted. She responded: *'My children from the ..... room don't like messy stuff, they don't like to get their hands dirty at all and don't consider this painting of hands to be fun that is why each of them say no when I called them to come and sit beside me and to paint their hands. I don't argue with them or insist on them having their hands painted either because they will not sit still and it*

would only upset them. But I still ask them and give them the opportunity to say no to me. If I'd ask them to come and let me tickle their hands or kiss their hands they would gladly have done so because it's not messy it's not wet. When they move to the ..... room at age 2.5 years they will gradually learn to play with different textures, water, warm and cold, wet and dry objects and they will gradually find that wet things such as paint next to their skin or palm is not yucky any more. I believe in exposing the children to different experiences through listening, observing and discussion. It is also important to explore things with children, explain things to children and to give them opportunities to test things out, that is how children in my view learn not just by only exploring things on their own. Children need adult guidance, explanations, support and encouragement to make them feel confident in themselves and to explore and ask questions as well as for help. Then they begin to feel good about themselves and who they are. They are then able to take this attitude to primary school and to do well. I must add that the children here are mostly children in need. Some have emotional, language, speech, learning or developmental delays and require stimulation.'

Practitioner 5 announced: *Now it's the turn of the children to paint the adults hands for the party posters. Who wants to paint my hand, children?'*

One of the preschool group children offered to paint practitioner 5's hand and did so. Practitioner 5 involved all the children in a discussion about the posters, talking about sizes of hands and fingers, counting their fingers and clapping their hands.

#### *Adult and children's activities and interactions*

The rest of the practitioners in the room refused to have their hands painted so the children played a game of tag and managed to tag practitioner 3 who they then invited to the table with all the other children clapping their hands and laughing out loud as she had her hand painted for the poster. There was a lot of excitement and laughter in the room when this activity was going on. This was followed by the children having their hands washed and dried in the room. The posters were signed and hung up to dry on pegs before being taken to the blue group room to be added to the presents for the manager. The tables were cleared by practitioner 5 who took a lead role in the preschool group room. All the children were seated around the table and served their morning hot drinks. This was followed by the green and blue room group children being taken by the practitioners to use the upstairs and downstairs toilets. The preschool



group children went to the toilet on their own unsupervised. When all the children returned to the group room, practitioner 5 suggested activities for the children to be involved in and asked them to make a choice between drawing, putting together puzzles or choosing books from the book corner for her to read to them. The children chose the latter. She then asked them if they wanted to sit on the rug or on chairs. The children shouted: *'on the rug'*. She then asked three children one from each group room to select a story book for her to read out loud to the whole group which they did. She made the reading fun, by showing them the pictures and asking them to guess what happens next. This gave some of the children who were familiar with the story books the opportunity to tell the story. Sometimes she teased them by saying: *'Are you sure that's what happened or are you just making it up?'*

The children individually respond emphatically *'I am sure'*, or *'my mummy told me'*. This was followed by lunch with all the children in the preschool group room. After the lunch routines all the children and guests including their parents moved to the blue group room where the leaving party was held for the manager. Children from each group room were able to present the manager with their posters.

This was my final participant observation day in the preschool group room. The next section will be on the findings on the participant observation in the blue group room.

#### *Week 2: Participant observation findings in the blue group room*

I was welcomed to the blue group room by Practitioner 2 (British, Irish origin) and by Practitioner 4 (British, Indian origin). I was introduced to the 10 children out of the 13 children registered in the Blue group room (aged 2.5 to 3.5 years) who were in attendance and was informed that some of the children were away from nursery that week as it was half term for their older siblings, therefore some parents tended to keep their nursery age children at home.

The prescribed adult to child ratio was one practitioner to four children. As with the preschool group room, the published plan on the bulletin board was out of date and had not been replaced since the previous inspection. This was another clear example and evidence of how the nursery practitioners perception of the foundation stage curriculum impacted their implementation of the learning stage goals.

### *Activities and interactions*

The activities each day were part of a regular routine. The day starts with circle time during which the children are actively encouraged to each choose a nursery song for the whole group to sing. These are usually songs involving gestures e.g. twinkle twinkle little star, wind the bobbin up, five little ducks etc. This is followed by small group activities. The children have their hot drink, and this is followed by one of the practitioners taking the children to the toilet while the other practitioner sets up the room for such activities as counting and colouring with the whole group of children. This is usually followed by small group activities in which the group is divided into two or three small groups depending on the number of children in attendance on the day. One group gets involved at a table in a cutting activity with practitioner 2 while practitioner 4 involved the other half of the group in writing activity at the other table.

Practitioner 2 informed me during the videoed participant observation that the cutting activity is physical development which is an aspect of the foundation stage curriculum. The aim is to help the children to use their hands and fingers and to learn how to cut and write in small groups while learning to take turns. She explained that these are activities that had begun when the children were downstairs in the green group room where the same activities were started but were carried out on a one-to-one basis. These activities are then followed by lunch after which some of the children who had recently moved upstairs are taken back downstairs to the green group room to have their afternoon nap (their parents have insisted that they continue to have their routine naps in the afternoons). They are gradually weaned from taking their afternoon naps. This I was informed is negotiated by the key practitioner for the child with the parents during the review meetings, as the parents need to make the necessary adjustments at home which involves a change in the child's meals and bedtimes at home.

In the afternoons the children are taken to the playground to play and to interact with the older and younger children on the slides. The practitioners explained that this activity encourages and helps the children to develop their social skills and language development.

When they return to the group room they are taken to the toilet again and to wash their hands. If it's raining or too cold outside, then they are introduced to dry or wet activities involving different textures. However these activities are initially carried out individually and gradually extended to the children's involvement in small group activities. As the children settle in the blue group room, they are introduced to the home corner, book corner, puzzle corner and mathematical corner where they are initially supervised and gradually encouraged to play and explore the activities on their own or in pairs.

Later in the afternoons they have tea followed by another trip to the toilet after which they have another circle time during which the parents arrive to take them home. The activities are reported to be deliberately structured and aimed at extending the children's attention span.

However on days 3 to 5, practitioner1 from the preschool group room and practitioner 3 the floater for the preschool group room and blue group rooms were both reported 'off sick'. Practitioner 2 from the blue group room was asked to cover the preschool group room taking with her two of the older children from the blue group room as there were only six children in attendance in the preschool group room. Practitioner 5 from the green group room was also reported to be off sick on days 4 and 5.

Given the low level of staffing, the children (aged 1.5 to 2.5 years) from the green group room downstairs were brought upstairs to join the blue group room children for the three days with additional temporary agency staff input. The merging of the two group rooms had the effect of disrupting the routines, e.g. the green group room children needed to have their nap between 12:20 PM to 1:30 PM. The staff have to make the beds for them and settle them which is time-consuming. Some of the younger children also have their medication and inhalers administered which have to be signed for by two qualified practitioners. Accidental injuries such as scratches which tend to occur when the older and younger children are put together in one group room all day, also have to be noted in the incident book by a practitioner present and co-signed by another practitioner.

On day 3, three of the children refuse to eat their lunch which was curried chicken and rice, and said they did not like it. There was no discussion or exploration

of why they did not like their food. One of the practitioners went to the kitchen and brought sandwiches for three children.

Given that the manager had left the nursery the previous Friday and had not been replaced, the staff shortage and the merging of the two group rooms greatly affected the routines in the blue group room. The younger children from the green group room seemed to need a lot of physical comforting from the practitioners. This in turn appeared to be also unsettling for some of the older children who fluctuated between being bored and being boisterous and attention seeking. There was a general lack of structure and individual attention for the children

As a result of practitioners' absence due to sick leave it became difficult to observe or explore with which areas of the foundation stage curriculum they felt able to implement and to explore with them their perceptions on children's development at this stage.

#### *Week 3: Participant observations of the green group room*

I joined the two practitioners in the green group room downstairs on the early shift. They were: Practitioner 5, Black African, Kenyan; and Practitioner 6, Black African-Caribbean, Jamaican. There were a total of 5-6 children (aged 1.5 years to 2.5 years) in attendance at nursery most of the week. The adult to child ratio was one practitioner to three children (1:3). Published planned activities were posted on the bulletin board, with a plan for the week and a breakdown of activities for each day.

The green group room had been set up by the practitioners with colourful train set and a tent. They explained that the activities set out cover the following areas of the foundation stage curriculum: physical activity, creativity, mathematics, language and communication, social and emotional development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. The practitioners explained that the ships in the tent were the mathematical aspects of the Six Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Learning about the Fire Brigade was the knowledge and understanding of the world aspect. The children playing in there together and learning to take turns was the social and emotional aspect. Exploring the various activities was the creative aspect. The children running around and chasing each other was the physical development aspect.

On day two practitioner 5 was asked to cover the blue group room with an agency practitioner as practitioners 2 and 4 were away on a training course. This meant that practitioners 6 had to also work in the green group room with an agency practitioner, as two agency trained nursery practitioners are not expected to work on their own together with children who are not familiar with them

For most days, the routines for the five or six children in the green group room were no different to that of the preschool and blue room group rooms. The main difference was that these children had their lunch slightly earlier as the practitioners had to prepare them for their afternoon nap time. This involved making the beds, having their nappies changed, having to settle each individual child (by rubbing their backs) until they fell asleep. There were times when two of the children threw tantrums because they did not want to go to sleep and became defiant and disruptive. Then deputy manager had to physically assist the practitioners in settling the children.

Because these infants are in the early developmental stages, the practitioners interactions are intense as they are more related to the children's physical and biological needs e.g. hunger, toileting, playfulness, crying when hungry or to show discomfort. The practitioners anticipate as well as respond to the children's physical and emotional needs appropriately including cuddling and comforting them.

The practitioners also attend to the children's skin care needs. Practitioner 6 explained: *'We have to work very closely with the parents at this stage and around the children's care needs because they are the experts on the children. We need to take on board their cultural practices, the children's skin care needs e.g. creaming their bodies, combing or brushing their hair etc. We have to be sensitive to ethnic differences, religious practices, allergies and sleeping patterns. Children at this stage understand a lot of what we say to them even though the speech may not be clear or well-developed. They know whether their clothes are blue or pink and whether they are boys or girls. Our work with them is on a one-to-one basis so we need to find ways of reinforcing what is appropriate for the children taking into account the parents' wishes and feelings too.'*

#### *Green group room practitioners' perceptions*

Both practitioners raised the issue about the pending inspection due to be carried out by the agency responsible for running the day nursery. They anticipated that the

inspection would take place the following week either on the Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. They talked about the need for them to prepare the plan from Monday in the charts, and the rota for the changing of the children's nappies.

The practitioners expressed some concerns about the green group room children being moved to the blue group room frequently due to shortage of staff, and both practitioners said they found it to be unsettling for the children as they did not adapt well to the constant room changes. In their view it would be more helpful if the blue group room children who are older were brought downstairs to join the green group room children who have set routines including sleep times and feel more comfortable in their well set-up and familiar group room.

They also commented on the different belief systems within the day nursery practitioners which makes it difficult to cover or 'stand in' for absent practitioners in the other two group rooms upstairs with the older children in the absence of clearly defined plans and activities on the bulletin boards in those group rooms.

In their view practitioners tended to take the easy way out by not providing consistent structured activities based on the Foundation stage curriculum for the children. The consensus belief that the nursery practitioners held was that (in the words of a practitioner): *'Pre-school age children should be left to explore their environment and learn from it through experimentation and not resisted or forced to follow structured routines or curriculum from the government'*

#### **7.19.9 Individual and group interactions between the 22 multi-ethnic children at the local authority day nursery**

Each of the three group rooms had a mixture of children from the following nine ethnic backgrounds (ethnicity defined by practitioners and parents/carers).

**Table 7.6 Children’s ethnicity attending the day nursery**

Moroccan heritage
Sudanese heritage
Somalia heritage
Lebanese heritage
Egyptian heritage
Black African Caribbean
White British
Mixed parentage (Black British fathers and White British mothers)
Mixed parentage (siblings with an Afghan father and White British mother)

**Table 7.7 Nursery practitioners ratio to children at the day nursery**

Children’s age in group room	Number of staff	Number of children
0 – 2 years	1	3
2 -3 years	1	4
3.5 -5 years	1	8

Source: Nursery documents read 2002.

When practitioners in the three group rooms (preschool group room, blue group room and the green group room) are off sick or attending training sessions, the children have to be moved to the other group rooms.

The pattern however was always to move the younger children to the next older age group rooms and never the reverse (which the Green group room practitioners expressed concerns about). For example when there was shortage of staff in the green group room downstairs (children aged 1.5 years to 2.5 years), the green group room children and the remaining practitioner would be moved upstairs to join the children and three practitioners in the blue group room upstairs (children aged 2.5 to 3.5 years). When a practitioner from the blue group room was absent and when the number of children in the preschool group room was below eight children, the older children (3.5 year children) from the blue group room would be moved to the preschool group room to bring the number of children in the preschool group room to eight children as the ratio for practitioner and children in the preschool group room this one practitioner to

eight children. When two practitioners from the blue group room were away, all the children from the blue group room and their practitioner were moved to the preschool group room with an additional agency qualified nursery nurse practitioner.

#### *Indoor interactions between children*

None of the children was observed to be treated differently, based on their ethnicity, by their peers in the preschool group room, the blue group room or in the green group room, or when they were put together with other group room children.

The children's friendships were observed to be based on emotional needs and temperaments rather than on ethnicity e.g. whether they liked to be leaders or followers, whether they are naturally boisterous and spontaneous or quiet, shy and reserved, whether when feeling distressed they felt able to seek attention or comforting through crying aloud or putting on a sad face and walking to another child with outstretched open arms and physically seeking a cuddle or a hug.

The children with speech and language delay presented as quiet, played on their own and moved out of the way of the talkative and articulate children who often sat together chatting in pairs or in a group in the home corner during unstructured play activity sessions.

When the children were put together in a large group e.g. the green room group children and the blue group room children, the older children who speak the same dialect would ask the younger children questions e.g. in patois: what is wrong with them, why they are crying or what they wanted, and then inform the nursery practitioners in English. Some practitioners would respond by saying: 'X *Are you an interpreter now?*' And would then turn to the younger child and encourage them to speak in standard English to express their needs.

During week two of my participant observation sessions in the blue group room when the children from the green group room had joined them, the older children 3 – 3.5 year olds were given paper and crayons to draw a variety of vegetables and were shown pictures of the vegetables. Most of the children chose to draw pictures of tomatoes. The children were keen on getting the shapes of their vegetables to be the same shape. However one three-year-old girl repeatedly asked for the purple crayon which she used for colouring her tomato. The practitioners when discussing the children's drawings with them, did not ask the child why she had coloured her tomato



purple. I asked the child whether her drawing was that of a purple eggplant or tomato. She quickly informed me that it was a purple tomato because she wanted her tomato to be purple. Although all the other children's tomatoes were red, green and yellow, the same as in the pictures, there was no value attached to her drawing of a purple tomato.

In a later discussion with her key practitioner (White Irish) in the blue group room, she explained that the children experiment with different colours when drawing, even though they can tell the difference between the colours that they see in the pictures and can describe them as such correctly. She said: *'It is the adults that teach children that dark colours have lower value or status than pale or lighter colours, the same as in skin colour. That is why I did not ask the child why she had coloured her tomato purple. Even when they talk about blue eyes, green eyes and brown eyes, they do not see one as being superior to the others. Children at this age do not discriminate only the grown-ups do. That is why I don't believe it is necessary for children under five to be restricted to a pre-school curriculum like the Foundation stage curriculum. They should be allowed at this age to explore and experiment and discover things for themselves.'*

#### *Outdoor interactions between all children*

All the children knew each other even though they were usually in three separate group rooms. This is because the children from the different group rooms are taken outside by their group room practitioners to the playground on site at the day nursery around the same time to allow all the children to play, and learn to take turns on the slides and different outdoor equipment, and to socialize with each other.

Some of the older children preferred to play with the younger children and seem to have their favourite children. These were never on the lines of ethnicity but rather seemed to be based on the lines of personality e.g. some older children liked to give cuddles to the younger children. There were also boisterous energetic younger children who liked to play roughly with older children so they would run around in the playground, chase each other, go on the swings, slides and tunnels to see who is the fastest. Other children would seek the attention of each other by walking up to them quietly and asking *'would you like to be my friend'*. They would then build sand castles together, kick ball together, or play in the outside big dollhouse together.

There were also younger and older children who did not seem to get along and would often fight over balls and different equipment. This also did not seem to be based on ethnicity but rather seemed to be linked to temperament or wanting to be the leader or not wanting to share activities.

Overall there was no evidence to suggest that any of the children interacted with their peers based on their ethnicity and language, colour of eyes, hair or skin tone.

*Week 4, Day 1: Participant observation findings in kitchen with the cook and assistant cook*

Practitioner 8 is the cook- Black African, Sierra Leonean, self-defined. Practitioner 9 is an assistant cook – Black African, Nigerian, self-defined. Practitioners 8 and 9 welcomed me to the kitchen and gave me a uniform package containing an overall and hat to wear in the kitchen. Practitioner 8 started off by informing me of the following routines: *'We provide a mid-morning drink for all the children at 10 am but there's no counting of heads for this Ovaltine drink. At 10:30 am my assistant goes to the rooms to find out how many children i.e. in each room for lunch plus how many would be eating halal and how many eating vegetarian meals. This is in preparation for lunch. Lunch is served at 11:30 am to the green group room and at 11:45 am to the preschool and blue group room. Now hot food has to be served at 63°C to the children and cold food has to be served at 5°C to the children, that is salads and cold puddings. But there is no hotplate for keeping the food warm so I keep it warm in the oven after the food is cooked to ensure that the temperature is maintained for serving. There is a set menu that I follow it is typed up and it is for five weeks which I plan with the manager with room for adaptation in recognition of different cultural and religious festivals. I have to order special items for delivery a day ahead but I have problems with freezer space. I am very aware of the mixed ethnicity of the children at this nursery. I used to work in a school in this area for 6 – 7 years and never had to prepare halal food for the children. All we made were regular English dishes plus vegetarian meals which the Muslim children ate. Some of the Muslim children attending eat regular non-halal foods anyway. Now things are different we have to cater to the needs of the ethnic groups in the community'*.

I asked how she manages to do so and whether she is able to meet the needs of all the children. I also asked about an incident two weeks earlier in the blue group

room when three children refuse to eat the curried chicken and rice dish and had to be served sandwiches instead.

Practitioner 8 observed: *'This is a difficult and sensitive area because the parents of these children are very sensitive about the food we give the children. Some children are very picky so the parents only give them what they like to eat at home. They tell the key workers at the nursery about it and they also tell me about it. Sometimes the manager and the key workers would tell me when they are trying to work on introducing new foods to the children who are fussy eaters at home so that I can prepare these dishes for them. But since all these changes started taking place with the manager leaving and the deputy manager also leaving soon, there has been a lot of turmoil in this nursery. When staff are off sick information is not passed on to me to make adjustments especially when they put two group rooms together and the key workers are not there and nobody has time to check the files or check with me. The parents too have really changed. It used to be a lot of Black, Mixed- race and White families mainly attending this day nursery for generations. These parents would drop by and have a chat with me and the manager about the children if they are fussy eaters but now all this has changed and we have a lot of Muslim North African families whose children attend this nursery. They don't seem to feel comfortable in telling us about their likes and dislikes beforehand. We only hear about things when they make complaints to the head office. Sometimes they listen to the children and get things wrong. What I try doing these days is to go up myself and say hello to the children and ask them in the rooms jokingly whether they like my food and whether they eat all their food. I encourage them to tell me the things they don't like. When I'm around and I see the parents going by I open the kitchen door and say hello to them on the corridor. I also ask them for suggestions and recipes so that I can make their children happy. My belief is that children cannot learn when their stomach is empty and they are hungry. So I have a key role to play in this nursery to make sure that the children eat well and the parents and staff here are all happy with the food that I serve. It is very, very important. You see some of the new staff don't realise how important this is when you are dealing with people from different parts of the world you know.'*

*Participant observations : the deputy manager participant 7, in the admin office*

Participant 7 is White English Celtic (self-defined) and is the deputy manager.

She has been acting up as the temporary manager until she leaves the nursery. She has handed in her resignation and is leaving and to take on a new job in another Borough. Although practitioner 7 was on the early shift and had arranged for me to start the participant observation at 7:45 am, this had to be delayed due to an emergency situation that she had to attend to involving a parent at the nursery.

When we were able to meet shortly after 9:30 am, she informed me of the following incident: *'We can't videotape this meeting however you can take notes please because of the sensitive nature of this incident. Last Friday a Muslim father whose son is in the blue group room and entitled to a free nursery placement at 9:30 am, brought him to nursery very early before 9: a.m. Unfortunately a temporary agency practitioner let him in and allowed him to leave his son upstairs in the blue group room. A White English mother whose daughter also attends the blue group room noticed that the father had been allowed to leave his child at the nursery early. She therefore raised her concerns with the temporary agency practitioner who apparently responded negatively to her. The matter escalated resulting in complaint phone calls to the head office and the operational manager being notified. The father had again repeated the same behaviour by bringing his son to the nursery before 9 am. When I spoke to him and told him he was welcome as a one-off to take his son upstairs to the blue group room but he would have to stay with his son to 9:30 am before leaving him he became very angry with me and told me that apparently all the Islamic parents don't have any trust in the nursery and do not like the nursery. I listened to him and offered him a transfer to another nursery but he said it was too late as his son would be starting school soon. Although I pointed out to him that he would not be due to start school till just before his fifth birthday he again rejected the transfer offer and stormed upstairs to the blue group room with his son. I had to contact the operations manager again because I was not sure what the father might do so I had to stay put in this office until after he left. I think the agency staff had not handled the matter well with the other parent therefore she stirred things up by getting others involved so the father got to hear about it.'*

I asked about the expectations of the practitioners in the group rooms when parents bring children in before their scheduled time. She informed me that the practitioners are aware of the 5 fee paying children and their parents who are entitled to bring their children to nursery at 7:45 am. The practitioners' duty is to refer the parent

to the office to a manager and not to use their discretion no matter what the excuse is. She explained the process that parents go through when they apply for free nursery places for their children with me and informed me of the following incident: *'During the last 18 to 36 months, there has been a gradual increase in issues with the parents of Arabic speaking Islamic children attending this nursery. They do not necessarily live in the immediate vicinity although some of them do. This has resulted from the pulling down of the big estate which was a real maze and a hiding place for drug dealers. A lot of the African Caribbean and Mixed race (Black/White) families were relocated outside the area. Lots of the newly built town houses and low rise flats were given to refugee families from Islamic and Arabic speaking countries who have large families. There's a lot of mental health issues around these families. Some claim they have been tortured or persecuted. The women traditionally do not work, they stay at home with the children. Some of the men say they are not capable of working yet they do jobs that bring cash in hand. The nursery staff are convinced of this because of the parents, lifestyles. They drive BMW cars, Mercedes-Benz and their women do the same. When the children are given two and half days that is 2.5 days nursery places, the parents manage to use the system to request and get full time placements five days a week full time for their children. This often involves using medical reasons to meet the necessary nursery criteria for full-time free nursery placement. For example there are parents on file who have been diagnosed as being disabled and in wheelchairs yet these fathers walk into the nursery with their children every day. The children refer to them in our presence as their dad but when we question the adult they tell us they are the child's uncle. When we talk to the children on their own, they tell us it is the father and they describe their home situation and the fact that their fathers and mothers go to work. This is a sensitive matter which a lot of staff are aware of but have difficulty in dealing with because of the fear of being called racist. The other parents who live in the same area with these parents report these practices to us too but there is nothing we can do about it. This is why that father bringing his son in to nursery before 9 am when some of the parents were waiting outside the gates chatting with each other found it so difficult to hold back without saying anything. These issues were not present and the child care concerns were very different when it was just the Black, Mixed- race and White families involved with the nursery. I'll leave it at that.'*

The deputy manager informed me this was her last week at the nursery. She also confirmed that due to the management changes at the nursery it has not been possible for the Foundation Stage Curriculum to be implemented fully or satisfactorily by the current staff team. She added: *'Not because they are incompetent but because of the workload issues and the lack of support that they receive from management.'*

*Week 4, Days 3, 4 and 5: Participant observations:*

On day 3, I observed the staff meeting at the nursery. There were seven practitioners at the staff meeting. Most of the discussions related to routine issues such as shifts, diary issues, stationery cupboard issues, each group room being issued with a key to the front door and the availability of the personnel files on location at the day nursery. Under any other business, I asked about when a teacher's input to the nursery would be made available. The deputy manager informed me: *'There will not to be a teacher for each nursery, only for a cluster of nurseries. There is however no information about any teacher being employed yet so the prospect of there being a teacher available to the nursery soon is very remote.'*

*Further Issues*

In my observation in all the 3 group rooms, *planning* emerges as a central issue. I observed them to be overwhelmed with other practical duties and responsibilities, which made systematic, forward planning very difficult. Indeed, some staff members said that they did not believe there was any value in developing weekly, monthly, three monthly or six monthly plans only yearly plans, and admitted to only providing these plans for inspection purposes.

#### **7.19.10 The understanding practitioners have of their roles in children's learning**

Practitioners hold different beliefs and perceptions regarding how children learn and whether or not children are aware of differences in ethnicity and identities. Also whether or not all areas of the Foundation stage curriculum should be implemented at the preschool stage. These differences, expressed to me by practitioners and noted also (by the deputy manager during the flooding incident during week one in the preschool group room), were not on racial, ethnic or cultural lines.

However the findings indicate clear divisions in how child development is conceptualised by the practitioners. Some practitioners' interpretation and

implementation of the pre-school curriculum appear to be influenced by their subscription to a model of development which stresses a natural unfolding of behaviour according to age. This inner-directed development is thought to unfold according to what Piaget described as a fairly pre-set timetable into a series of universal stages. The other practitioners' perceptions, interpretation, delivery and implementation of the pre-school curriculum on the other hand appeared to be influenced by their subscription to a model which viewed the individual as a passive recipient of the environmental influence, a tabula rasa or blank slate to be written on by experience. Much behaviour is therefore thought to be learned, and each child is perceived as unique because each child's life experience is unique.

The significance of these diverging conceptualisation of children's development might have implications for how practitioners perceive, interpret, deliver and implement the pre-school curriculum in relation to constructs such as 'race', identity and ethnicity in a multi-cultural pre-school curriculum in multi-cultural Britain. However, these conclusions are based on a pilot study with a small sample, and deserve to be explored further using various methodologies.

#### *Practitioner absenteeism and its impact on children's learning*

There was a high level of sick leave and absence on short notice. This often resulted in the amalgamation of two age groups of children in one group room where their learning as well as physical needs including attention and supervision were not always adequately met or addressed. The younger children needed their nappies changed which takes time and attention from individual practitioners in the group room, and physically settling the younger children during the afternoon nap time. It was during the merger of the blue group room and green group room children due to staff shortage that the 2-2.5 year old children from the green group room were allowed to use the toilet unsupervised and they left the tap running which flooded the upstairs toilet and the manager's office below.

#### **7.19.11 Conclusions from the nursery school observation study**

The above findings (reflecting an underfunded staffing situation in a for-profit child care centre, contracted by "Southern City" because they offered the cheapest tender) could have implications for the planning of children's activities in achieving the Early Learning Goals, including their ethnic identity development, and aspects of self-

esteem and self-concept. These findings, if replicated, could have more general implications for Early Years Educators for improving the implementation of policy at the practical level.

The conclusions I reached, after analysing the video-taped interactions is that despite the underfunding and the frequent absences of staff, there was an overall atmosphere of friendliness and goodwill in the nursery, despite the often day-to-day chaos of groups doubling in size, overflowing toilets, puzzled and angry parents, children speaking little English: despite all of this the children were manifesting spontaneous friendships across ethnic and racial lines. "Colour of skin" or particular physical appearance mattered little to them: their world really was a rainbow world, one full of wonder and things to discover. The government-imposed learning goals didn't seem to interfere with the joyful wonder of these young Britons.

It is interesting to compare my conclusions with those of Holmes (1995), from an American study which I have only recently discovered. Robyn Holmes, for her doctoral research, joined in the interactions in several ethnically-mixed kindergarten classes (ages 5 to 6), asking children questions about "friendship". She concluded: *"The children's ability and willingness to offer solutions for racial harmony reflect the general climate of racial attitudes and beliefs observed in all of the schools [i.e. they were conscious of inter-ethnic tensions and prejudice which prevailed in Los Angeles at that time] ... but the kindergarten children of this study exhibited little animosity or prejudice towards classmates from racial and ethnic outgroups. This finding appears to be in line with the developmental research suggesting that racial tensions increase generally with age ... Hence the racial cleavage that emerges in the latter elementary grades was not observed with these young children."* (Holmes, 1995, p. 107)

## **7.20 Conclusions from the Interview Study (Appendix C)**

My conclusions from the interviews with 11 front-line workers, and managers were:

*"Looking back, with some awe and nostalgia, at the findings of "the experiment" which involved myself as the interacting stranger, the provoker of perspective, the recording angel (sic), I recall that some of the practitioners I interviewed, when asked directly about their beliefs and perceptions on the purpose of the day nurseries as well as the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000) provided answers (to which I had somewhat*



arrogantly assumed was an appropriate question) in ways which did confront my curiosity with common sense:

1. *From these practitioners' perspectives there needed to be an acceptance that most children, especially those who had been assessed as 'children in need' in local authority day nurseries required more caring and less teaching between the ages of three to five years, in order to prepare them for school.*
2. *These practitioners believed that the change from a child developmental curriculum to an outcome curriculum (through the requirement for all registered day nurseries to implement the mandatory Foundation Stage Curriculum with its 'Early Learning Goals'), had meant that they had to plan, assess and teach children skills, which they judged were inappropriate for many children.*
3. *Despite practitioners' attendance at curriculum planning training sessions, they continued to adhere to "common-sense and humanity", and were reluctant in accepting the new manipulations of nursery provision. They continued to believe that they were not trained to teach reading and writing skills, or to teach anything other than basic numeracy. Moreover, they did not think that teaching those subjects to such young children was necessary.*
4. *The operations manager (the off-site manager for the DCP commercial chain which profited from keeping costs as low as possible, including the failure to ensure stable staff coverage during staff sickness), the manager, and the deputy manager, all accepted as particularly challenging the ... implementation of the foundation stage curriculum. Their objections were grounded to a greater degree in their professional training, than were the "common-sense" objections of the front-line workers. Nevertheless, the group room practitioners were very clear that the training sessions they had attended were unfocused and unhelpful in the areas of curriculum planning, or in helping them to understand and implement the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum in areas that they had never had training in, and which involved teaching, planning and assessment.*
5. *... both Ethnic Minority and White practitioners, including the preschool group practitioner who is Black and works on her own in the preschool group room, said that they did not believe or perceive children under the age of five to be cognitively capable of understanding or experiencing (and indeed, expressing)*

*racist, cultural or ethnic stereotypes at this age – this was certainly what their “common sense” view of childhood told them, and it had certainly not been contradicted in any of their training modules.*

6. *These practitioners also believed that discrimination and racist attitudes evolved either at home, or when children attended primary school.”*

### **7.21 Arbitrary closure of St. John’s, and the ending of my initial research project**

Following the collection of a large amount of video-recorded and interview data, I concentrated for two months on transcribing and analysing this material. During this time I learned (from my professional role in the NHS child and adolescent mental health clinic) that both the manager and her deputy at StJ’s had resigned within a month of one another. The reasons for this were unclear. A temporary manager was appointed from elsewhere in the day care company running StJ’s. This temporary manager declined to give me access to undertake further research. A new permanent manager was appointed (one of the existing staff at StJ’s, but she quickly resigned, apparently because of internal tensions). For the next eight months the nursery was administered by a series of temporary managers, which hindered the planning of further research.

Then, when I attempted to visit StJ’s in my clinical role, I was astonished to find the building closed, with workmen making internal refurbishments or changes. I found that most of the clinic-referred children had been placed in other nurseries run by the commercial chain, which had also absorbed some of the front-line workers. The NHS clinic had not been informed of this closure. The City’s social work department were informed of the changes only when they were about to occur, and had not been consulted about the impact these changes might have on the welfare and case-planning for the children involved. I subsequently talked to some of these workers, and to parents and carers of children: they all reported in various degrees, surprise, distress, bewilderment, and bitterness at the sudden and arbitrary nature of the changes.

Soon afterwards, I learned that StJ’s had been leased to the national agency delivering Sure Start child care centres, allowing considerable profit to the Local

Authority (according to documents I obtained through freedom of information methods – see Appendix D).

### **7.22 The Local Authority documents: an exercise in ‘newspeak’**

*Appendix D* contains the full text of the confidential documents I obtained from the Council’s archive some years after the events in question, through a freedom of information request. This Appendix contains two documents considered by the ‘Cabinet Members’ of the Social Services and the Education committees of the Local Authority in 2004-5.

### **7.23 Document One in Appendix D**

The first document was a plan for the delivery of all nursery provision in the City in the light of the national government’s Sure Start children’s centre initiatives. The second document was concerned with the specific grounds for closing StJ’s, moving the children elsewhere, and renting the premises to the national government for a Sure Start centre, for the sum of £375,000 for the next five years.

The announcement of a large budget by New Labour for its Sure Start child centres was rolled out, following pilot work in 1999, and expanded through the White Paper *Every Child Matters* (HMG, 2003) into Sure Start centres for all children from birth onwards until aged 3, and later until aged 5. Up to the end of the New Labour government, nearly a billion pounds a year had been allocated to Sure Start in England and Wales. *Sure Start* implied a new way in which ‘children at risk’ could be addressed by local authority social work departments. Instead of a case plan based on detailed health, welfare and educational assessments, Sure Start centres, established in any area in which 10 percent or more of the population fell into an ecologically-defined area of economic and social deprivation, were open to *all* families in the area, regardless of the family’s individual circumstances.

In some Sure Start centres, social work and health services were integrated, but this was by no means guaranteed, so the services offered across England and Wales were uneven in quality and quantity (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016 in Appendices A and E, appended to this thesis). Offering social support on a group, rather than on an individual basis meant that social work services were often delivered in a new way. And since enrolment of a young child in the local Sure Start centre was not compulsory, some families would inevitably have “fallen through” the social safety net.

The Documents in Appendix D which the City Council used to justify the closing of St. J's are skilfully written, and truth, half-truth, and deceit are neatly woven together by anonymous writers, who impress one as honorary graduates of the Ministry of Truth. The first false assertion of the document was that Sure Start child care (SSCC) would be better for children needing intensive support in the early years, rather than the traditional model of clinical identification of the child's needs, and an individual programme plan which included a nursery place. The second assertion was that all interested parties in health, educational and social services, and the parents of children in the nursery to be closed, had been informed and consulted beforehand, and their views considered. The third false assertion was that in addition to group meetings, parents of affected children had been given individual consultation and counselling.

On the closure of StJ's, and carrying out some minor refurbishments, and then allowing occupancy by the national government SSCC agency, the City obtained a payment of £375,500 for a 5-year occupancy by SSCC. (the City retained the lease of the building, and now that they are closing Sure Start in the City, the old StJ's building is let lucratively, as commercial offices). The two Documents in Appendix D were aimed at persuading the City Cabinet Members on Social Service and Education committees to vote for the SSCC contract (in the event, it was 'noddod through' the full council meeting, without the press, apparently, noticing this).

Document 1 (1.3) declared: *"The re-letting of this contract now provides an opportunity to take a further step in the direction of a more inclusive approach. It builds on the development of services for parents such as family centre services, Sure Start children's centres and other services directed at tackling the difficulties that parents experience in caring for the children. The new services will support a more family focussed approach so that parents will receive support in addition to the day care provision for their children."* The "weasel words" here are "builds on" and "support a more family focussed approach". Both of these statements were untrue: SSCC replaced the model of case-centred, family-focussed child care with one which was voluntary and contained no social work support (other than through referral to existing statutory services). Sure Start in itself was an excellent concept, but only if it ran parallel to and in co-operation with existing social and health services. As an alternative programme, it was likely to spread scarce resources too thinly, offering day

care to many families who did not need such care for any economic or therapeutic reasons.

Document 1 continued (1.6): *“There is good evidence that many children in need who previously received day nursery places are more appropriately placed in universal nursery school provision. All children benefit from educational input and this has informed government’s policy to provide nursery school provision for all 2-year olds, and the government plans to extend this [to older children].”* The document fails to reference any studies providing this “good evidence” (probably because no such evidence existed, certainly in my reading of the clinical and research literature). No evaluative studies of Sure Start were available when this document was written. It is merely pseudo academic-speak to support political decisions, without any verifiable supporting evidence. This was a policy proposal pretending to be evidence-based, when in fact no such evidence existed.

Document 1 declared that: *“4.3 ... for most children in need, the traditional day nursery place did not significantly impact on the child care issues which led to a child being identified as a child in need in the first place. 4.4 There is now considerable evidence to show that effective integrated early years service have a more positive and long term impact on the lives of children and families than ‘stand alone’ day nursery provision. This leads to necessary and significant changes in day nursery service that will be provided under a new contract.”*

Let’s analyse this Ministry of Truth newspeak. The document asserts that “the traditional day nursery place did not significantly impact on the child care issues ...”. No academic research was cited to support this view, probably because none existed. Moreover, the document did not consult the integrated teams working with the children placed in the StJ’s nursery, who would have explained how inter-professional assessment and case planning did in fact aim to address the problems of children and their families. The calumny of this document is the assertion that: “There is now considerable evidence to show that effective integrated early years service have more positive and long-term impact ... than ‘stand alone’ day nursery provision.” First of all there was not “considerable evidence” from the research literature to support this assertion (and no supporting evidence or references were cited): in fact, there was no evidence at all. The statement was only true in a circular fashion i.e. “effective services

are effective". To assert that the StJ's children were 'standing alone' without psychological or social support was a denial of the truth, but if accepted would certainly justify the Cabinet Members in voting for this lucrative closure.

*"6.2 It is estimated that in the future the Social and Community Services Department will need to commission .. a significant reduction in the number of places in the Day Nursery Service Contract ... Children-in-Need places should be less than 10% of all places."* The document assumes (without evidence) that far fewer children will be individually assessed as being in need of therapeutic day care placement, this function being taken on increasingly by Sure Start. This would represent an additional, but uncostered, benefit to the City.

*"8.1 The City Council in partnership with DCP will ensure that the needs of individual service users are met as far as possible, through a clear information strategy and consultation about their individual needs ... Each child will have a planned transition to another appropriate resource."* This supposed "information strategy and consultation" if it ever existed, did not involve the child care centres and their managers, or the parents of the children they served, or the children's social workers, or their mental health referral sources. There was, according to the nursery staff I interviewed later "no planned transition".

*"9.1 Finance. The total cost of Day Nurseries on 2004-5 is £1,569,309, including the saving of £375,000 through the leasing of St.J's to Sure Start."* Clearly, money was the driver in this obfuscating policy document.

#### **7.24 Document 2 in Appendix D**

*"4.1.4 A needs analysis has been undertaken to identify the numbers of children who will be provided with a fully funded day nursery place in future. The number takes into account all those children who are assessed as experiencing significant harm and those at risk of harm."* Whoever carried out this mysterious "needs analysis", did not consult the City's Social Work department, or the health services involved, or the nursery managers. The cryptic "needs analysis" did not produce any kind of written report, so far as I can discover.

*"9.1 DCP began a consultation at St.J's nursery in December 2003. The outcome of this was that staff feel positive about the move and are anxious to complete the*

*process as soon as possible.*” I could find no one who recalled any such consultation. The order for closure came “like a bolt from the blue.”

*“9.2 Officers from Social and Community Services, and Educational Services met with staff and parents of children attending St.J’s nursery on 15 January 2004. At this meeting the parents were reassured that their child’s allocated nursery place would continue at an alternative nursery of their choice. They were also offered the opportunity to talk with a DCP’s senior manager about their own circumstances on an individual basis.”* I could find no social worker, nursery manager or staff member, or parent, who had any recollection of such a meeting ever having occurred. No parent attended, and none was offered individual consultation.

I have to conclude that the documents presented to Cabinet Members to vote upon were a skilful concoction of invented facts, half-truths, and non-truths, and that saving a considerable amount of money was the principle driver. The precious children of St.J’s were sold for 375,000 pieces of silver. This would be a valuable lesson learned in their ongoing master-slave relationship.

#### **7.25 The Agents in the Critical Realist matrix in the Nursery School Case Study (NSCS)**

These agents are several-fold in nature:

First are the *national government controllers* of policy concerning nursery education, who devise, Gradgrind-like, learning goals with which the playfulness of innocent children must be infected. These children are absorbing public money, so the brave new world of nursery education must prepare them for subjugation, to a life of school examinations and controlled achievement, being prepared to take their place in the ranks of productive workers, the precariat, or of ‘workers-in-waiting’.

Then there are the *absentee managers* who at the stroke of a pen, following an obscure vote, close the nursery knowing that this will bring a large financial reward for the City: the children are not freed because of this closure, their bonds of friendship and relationship are merely broken as they are reallocated to different holding pens. This brave new world of nursery education gives them a lesson in being fired, just as later being excluded from school will teach them the lesson that they are expendable, and must join the reserve army of pupils.

Then are the *local managers* who in a semi-privatised system of day care balance resources, programme delivery and profit, must ensure that the costs of 'nursery education' do not exceed the profits to be made.

Next are the *onsite managers*, making sure that the nursery is an ordered and productive institution, that the children are socialized for calmness and co-operation, with inklings of the world of examinations and trials to come.

Then there are the *onsite workers*, a mixed ethnic bunch like the children they lovingly tend and control, trying to fulfil the tasks given to them from above in controlling, feeding and educating their charges. They are underpaid, undertrained, insecure, frequently sick, overtaxed because of the low worker-child ratio, and liable to become redundant.

Then there are *the parents*, struggling with debt, mental illness, cultural alienation as refugees whose children have been marked as needing special help and supervision in learning to conform. For them, Bhaskar's master-slave struggle has already been lost.

*The children:* oh, the children, full of hope and fear, of bounce and playfulness, witty and enquiring, at the threshold of life ... of life on the Elgar Estate and all its turmoils. Soon they too will be stopped and searched, and will be excluded from school, will become unemployed, will become bewildered and impoverished parents. Only a few will escape.

*The researcher:* yes, she too is an actor in the research matrix, briefly entering the lives of children and workers, having unknown effects.

### **7.26 The Dialectical Critical Realist (DCR) model**

I experienced two problems in applying the DCR model. The first concerned the choosing of what elements from Roy Bhaskar's original formulations to use in constructing the analytical model. The second, was is knowing what research "facts" to place into the model, at what level, and in making inferences about the dialectical process. The researcher must also establish the ontological basis, the realism of the case study. And she must also decide on the epistemological and value basis for *underlabouring*, which metaphorically is a form of 'music in the base line' which provides the moral basis for the case study.



It will be clear from earlier chapters that my underlabouring ethic is that of Child-Centred Humanism (CCH). This value principle asserts that every human institution, and every human action should be evaluated by the principle of “children first”. That is, all institutions and actions should be moulded to serve the needs, interests and rights of children.

Easton (2010) urges that every critical realist case study must ‘stand on its own’, and refer to a universe of events which may, however, have implications for the other universes, or nations. Thus Sarra’s (2011) critical realist account of Aboriginal identity in an Australian community school has implications for both identity development in ethnic minorities in other parts of the world, and also for the methodology of studies of identity and belonging in other spheres. Following Easton (2011) I have constructed the following matrix of the Agents in the case study, whose roles and functions interact with each other, at different levels in the MELD analysis, within the dialectical matrix.

<b>Object</b>	<b>Causal Powers</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Events</b>
Children	Attendance (or ‘made to attend’)	Playing, Learning, growing	Observed, recorded, planned for, removed
Workers	Organise, play with, lead children	Meeting children’s needs	Enact case plans, fired, hired
Managers	Admission of children, plan, control	Control of centre	Choosing children, meeting parents & case workers,
Parents	Obeying social workers	Obedience to social values	Centre’s closure, removal of children

Researcher	Attendance	Observing & recording	Viewing record, writing reports, making models
Bureaucrats	(With)holding funds, ordering syllabus	Control at local and national level	Close centre, move children
Society	Symbolic approval of rituals of control	Approves, through 'democracy' of the system of control	Agents of social control of children outside of centre

The structure and capitalist organisation of society is the reality of “absence”, defined by Norrie (2011) as meaning “absence of being” which is the basic level of ontology that dialectical critical realism addresses, “the elimination of constraints and ills.” This is the first level 1M, in the MELD schema. “Thus, 1M is the initial critical realist ground of non-identity, meaning irreducible, real difference in the world ... This is then radicalised by the 2E account of negativity, related to the totality of 3L, and submitted to the importance of praxis at 4D. It is the move to 2E that most directly implicates absence, for the move is constituted by introducing negativity into critical realism. Absence is the underlying concept that unifies the second edge that dialectical thinking adds to critical realism.” (Norrie, 2011, p. 28)

At level 1, although children should be the centres of concern, they are “absent” in a variety of ritualised ways. In the St John’s case study they are the products of the nursery factory whom society wishes both to control and profit from. Their true worth is recognized only by the frontline nursery workers, who belong to the same age and ethnic groups as the children’s mothers. These workers were only recently children themselves. Soon, like the children they would be transported into new settings of subordination. Their consciousness is one of puzzled negativity, for they (like their parents) cannot understand the systems of capital, bureaucracy and power that manipulate them. Alderson (2013) paints a picture of about-to-be-deported unaccompanied teenage refugees from Afghanistan: “They were to be returned like parcels, non-persons, illustrating 2E in absence, leaving and loss, negative experiences and relationships. In their non-status as citizens, they were ‘helplessly’ thrown into specific time-space-cause contexts that are overwhelmed by negative Power2.” (p. 76) In Bhaskarian sociology, Level 2E in the four-fold MELD paradigm should be the beginning of hope, of realisation of how oppressive forces can be

unmasked, how the master-slave domination may be unseated. In St. John's nursery, as with these Afghan minors, hope was dashed at this second level.

Older children may form a group consciousness, a pride in themselves as "Strong and Smart" (Sarra, 2011); adults may join the dialectic of political movement and dissent. "Movement and process in MELD 2E" in Alderson's (2013) account of DCR and childhood "relate to research processes as they weave through the interpersonal child-adult-relationships. Hermeneutic research attends to performance: how children present and manage their bodies, learn and practice healthy behaviours, talk about normality and comparisons with their peers' bodies, respond to minor illness and injury and social events ... However, in some studies, children's real embodied ontology can then seem to be lost within social performance." (p. 80) The "seeds of hope" which the dialectical process has sown in 2E so often fail to germinate, as the brightness and bounce of childhood is flattened by the transportation of children into the grey and barren fields of adulthood. This, I fear will be the case with the St.J's children. Where are they now?

In constructing this DCR case study, and looking for case examples in the work of Alderson (2013 & 2016) in the world of childhood, I realised how frequently very young, sick or marginalised children fail without firm advocacy and help from pioneering adults, to develop consciousness of themselves in a dialectical process. The best example of "success" in this regard that I can find is Wilkinson's (2015) account of adolescents' consciousness-releasing within the metaphysic of Islam. Other things are happening in the world of older children. Willis (2004) found that the lads were still 'learning to labour' 25 years after his original study, but with middle class aspirations, and electronic toys. And in terms of Bourdieu's habitus, "bright" working class boys deny that they are working class and enjoy a state of false consciousness which Stahl (2013) calls "habitus disjunctures".

The third level of the critical realist MELD model is 3L *totality*, which refers to the interlinked structures which are concerned with childhood, and childhood policy. This includes schools and their curricula, the forcing of children to take frequent tests and examinations, the success or failure of government agencies to end child poverty, the failure to provide vocational education, and the failure to provide decent paying jobs for all young adults. Alderson (2016) refers to Maslow's (1968) account of

movement of the body 'from nature to culture', a culture which (in child-centred humanism) should provide a rich field for the flowering of the person, a self-actualization.

Alderson (2016) gives numerous illustrations of how social structures connive with powerful interests of state and capital to prevent this from happening: *"DCR drives towards resolving problems and contradictions of both epistemology (ignorance, error) and also of practical ontology (injustice, constraints). Yet if 1M began with misunderstanding and mis-identifiers, and if interviews at 2E increased problems instead of negating them, then 3L analysis shows more clearly how many totalities in and between the social and the natural worlds are split and incomplete. This affects progress at 4D."* (Alderson, 2016, pp 46-7). The paper we have written, reviewing inequality and exclusion in British social structures in the period 1968 to 2008 (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016, Appendix A) attempts to address these many aspects of social structure which prevent the self-actualization of British youth. And of course, these structures will block the self-actualization of most, and probably all, of the St. John's children I have studied.

The fourth level in the MELD model is termed 4D, *critical reflection*, is concerned with the flourishing, the self-actualization, the morphogenesis of individuals in the matrices of social structure: *"Transformative agency's emancipation aims for the free society where each individual's flourishing depends on everyone's flourishing. 4D works to overcome the false sense of the self as separate and isolated. We relate to the world and to other people through recognising what we share in common (Bhaskar, 2002b). The key questions concern identity (who am I?) and agency (what am I to do)."* (Alderson, 2016, p. 46) These crucial questions of "who am I" and "what am I to do" are facing "my" children from St. John's, who are now young adults. It frustrates and saddens me that I am not able to advise them, or to advise children like them. As a colleague and I wrote in another context in 2002: "To develop intimacy, to develop closeness of whatever kind, one has to be prepared to take chances and risk vulnerability." (Mason & Sawyer, 2002, xix)

Here is Baskhar's (2008) **MELD Framework** applied to my Day Care case study (insofar as I understand the dialectical critical realist model).

**M: Level 1M**

The first moment, of non-identity, and becoming 'conscious' of reality.

*The Agents* at this level are: The children of St. John's; their parents; the front-line workers; the managers; the stranger (myself); the referring care systems, of social work and mental health; the faceless bureaucrats ordering who shall be admitted and on what grounds, and when the nursery shall be removed from the children; the absent power-holders who order a "curriculum" for young children, who must pay by their results; and the economic system of capital which controls the level of social service expenditures through the local and national government's budgetary system.

*The Actions:* The voices of the most powerless, children, parents, front-line workers puzzling their way through the day; the worried managers, sensing that the bureaucracy is up to no good, their only power being to move to another post; the bureaucrats planning and effecting closure of St.J's through "false rhetoric", falsifying the way things really were, creating a "false consciousness" which enabled the profitable closure of St.J's.

**E: Level 2E** The second edge 'negativity', moving from absence, and the transition into intervention (Bhaskar, 2008) involves: " ... absenting of contradictions, constraints, ills and untruths ... leading to emergence, change and transition." (Alderson, 2013, p. 30). This ideal was not achieved at St.J's. Children, parents and front-line workers remained 'slaves', the managers remained 'overseers' and the absent controllers remained hidden. When the 'slaves' were sold off, they were unable to complain, or gather together any rhetoric of protest. What was apparent however was that the children themselves were, through natural morphogenesis of interaction and friendship, creating and recreating one another as social beings, unaffected in any negative way by ethnicity and colour. To paraphrase Orwell's (1949) character Winston in the novel *Ninety Eighty-Four*: "If there is morphogenesis, it lies with the proles" - the under-workers, the 'poor whites', the bearers of natural morality and friendship, these yet uncorrupted beings.

**L: Level 3L** is the totality of social structure. The events surrounding St.J's show that the social structure and its powerful sub-systems were unmoved by the plight of those below them. It was firm, intact, hard, manipulative, controlling. In an about-to-be-transformed or modified system, the subordinated agents would "know" who their oppressors were. In St.J's, in Elgar, I found no evidence of this. The oppressed agents

might, in Brechtian terms, know that “there is more to life than this”, that things need not be this way. That, I guess, was all they knew.

**D: Level 4D** concerns praxis, self-transformative agency, *Power1*, and the dialectic that is “the pulse of freedom”: in the case of the Elgar Estate this would involve the recognition by the agents of the nature of their exploitation, seeking ways to change that system, or at least to avoid its impositions of power. “4D can be part of a recurring process (Bhaskar 2000, 8-9) rather than an ending, and it urges a return to 1M to restart the MELD process with the more accurate, deeper insights that have been gained.” (Alderson, 2016 p. 48) Perhaps children who later on went to the idealistic Sure Start centres would, in this model, enter a self-transformative process.

But powerful negative forces of social structure had closed Sure Start in the City by 2015.<sup>45</sup>

Britain’s social structure in 2016 presents young people with “Malign MELD” (Alderson, 2016, p. 46). “MELD aims towards benign creative freedom. Yet the MELD schema can also clarify perverse processes (Bhaskar, 2000 8-9) in what could be called malign MELD, just as negative, coercive power is the shadow side of creative, emancipating power.” (Alderson, 2016, p. 46). Chief amongst the malign agencies preventing human morphogenesis at the 4E level is the ideology that binds together the self-interested bodies of state power, and global capitalism’s interests.

This pervasive, alienating ideology is transmitted inter-generationally through a variety of institutions, including schools and colleges. The form of the “masking tape” changes with technology, and cultural change (Willis, 2004). Paradoxically perhaps, critical realism as a theory of social structure can in the present case study, take us no further than 2E of MELD, consciousness within certain groups of oppressive and alienating sub-systems. At the structural level (3L) a powerful social system is able to manipulate ideas and ideologies, and manipulate certain groups to its electoral advantage. Archer’s (2003) morphogenesis takes place mainly at level 2E, and concerns sub-groups (e.g. green activists, progressive educationists, anti-war factions, religious groups) while having little impact on the 3L power structures except

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<sup>45</sup> On the closure of Sure Start centres, and the negative effects of such closure on children and families, see Torjeson (2016) and Sammons et al. (2015).

in winning minor concessions on policy, but leaving the structures of international capitalism intact.

The ideal world of 4M remains a distant dream. In this regard, as Norrie (2011) observes, DCR does not replace or contend with Marx's theories of class oppression, alienation and false consciousness but rather complements them, and gives them fresh impetus. Underlabouring this process, humanising the struggles of power, must be a humanism that puts children's interests first in all of human interests and actions, even when overtly at least, though they appear only indirectly to affect children. We can however, following T.H. Green's ideology, tolerate capitalist enterprise so long as it is transparent, moderate and guarantees the rights and welfare of the world's children.

### **7.27 Elgar Estate: A new study?**

Learning lessons from this case study, I offer the outline of a new study which would employ a critical realist model, initiated and evaluated over several years. I take the model from Sarra (2011) who over several years from a position of relative power (principal of a community school) initiated changes which made all of his Aboriginal pupils "strong and smart".

Firstly, I have learned that a proper DCR case study cannot be a one-person enterprise. It needs to be well-funded and long-term in nature to enable the employment of several workers: first of all, a social geographer would map the patterns of disadvantage of "King's Ward" in which the Elgar estate is sited. This mapping would use traditional models of social and behavioural ecology in showing where particular types of disadvantage clustered, in what types of housing, and with what types of event, such as child care referrals, delinquency and adult crime, and mental illness (which may co-occur in the same families, or individuals). This kind of mapping can lead to focussed interventions. It is pertinent to observe that the eminent social geographer and educator Alice Coleman in her *Utopia on Trial* (1990) used the Elgar Estate and its (then) tower blocks as evidence of malign town planning.

A Family Service Unit model (Starkey, 2002) could put extra resources into supporting families experiencing "generations of trouble". An ethnographer would also act independently as a community organiser, mobilising consciousness of the causes of disadvantage, and the morphogenesis of disadvantaged children, adolescents and

adults. A youth worker would focus on the development of young people, including the gaining of pride in their ethnicities, religious and national origins. The primary and secondary schools serving King's Ward would receive extra resources (more teachers, and in-house counsellors and social workers) so that there would be integration between school, social work and clinical services, and community action, as advocated by Williams & Pritchard (2004).

Students at secondary school would be screened for self-reported events of physical and sexual abuse, and offered individual counselling for low self-esteem and identity confusion (which is the theme of the empirical research reported in the next chapter of this thesis).

The research team would also act as an advocacy group with local and national agencies, fostering neighbourhood action committees on issues of concern. A project such as this needs a tough and enduring leader. It's the kind of project whose long-term funding might come from one of the voluntary foundations (e.g. Rowntree, Cadbury, Nuffield, Leverhulme).

## **7.28 Conclusions**

The original purpose of this study, carried out in 2002 to 2004, was to build on my earlier research in St. John's nursery in a deprived urban zone, the Elgar Estate in a City in southern England. In this earlier research I had explored and tried to enhance ideas of ethnicity and identity in the mixed ethnic population of the nursery, many of whom had been placed in the day nursery by the City's social services, following the recommendations of health visitors, general practitioners, paediatricians. Some of the children were subsequently referred to the NHS Mental Health Service I was working in for assessments and therapeutic work. I developed materials which could be used in nurseries with multi-ethnic populations, and one of these was St. John's, in which I began a video-recorded, observational study of interactions between nursery staff and the children, firstly with the aim of seeing how the Early Learning goals of the government-led curriculum were being implemented, and also how interactions between staff and students, and between children themselves, reflected ideas and evaluations concerning ethnicity. I also interviewed 11 staff members and managers on these issues.



This was intended to be the beginning of a longer-term study. Analysis of the interactions did not indicate negative concepts of ethnicity on the part of staff, many of whom were themselves from ethnic minority groups. Nor were negative feelings about colour and ethnicity expressed by children in their everyday interactions. This could have reflected several factors: the negative opinions of ethnic perceptions and evaluations in young children could have been declining, and later research particularly that from America, has shown this to be so. Furthermore, StJ's nursery had already engaged in a programme of education concerning positive aspects of ethnicity. And my presence in the nursery as a Black African woman may have influenced responses.

Both interviews and recorded interactions revealed tensions concerning the implementation of the government-imposed 'Early Learning Goals'. Staff complained that these were not relevant since they were often working on a care plan for individual children, which addressed their emotional behavioural and affective needs, rather than on their cognitive development as "young learners". The nursery did not have a trained kindergarten teacher on staff, and nursery-trained staff had not this kind of education in their professional training.

When I attempted to continue with work at StJ's, I found that the nursery had been suddenly closed, and very little notice of this had been given to parents, children, and staff. I later discovered that the reason for this was that the City Council had contracted with the national Sure Start child care centre programme, for a significant financial reward. Documents I obtained from the archives of the City Council showed that there was obfuscation and deceit in the writing of these documents, which alleged that consultation had been undertaken with parents and staff: but none of those I contacted could recall any such consultation. The council documents moreover, fudged academic evidence, claiming that the Sure Start model was superior to the existing model of clinical referral. I argued that the two models should be complementary, rather than Sure Start eclipsing existing service models.

I have attempted to construct a Critical Realist model for analysing these findings, using Marxian and Child-Centred Humanism assumptions. My attempts to apply the DCR model were largely unsuccessful, in that I was unable to move beyond the first two levels of Roy Bhaskar's four-level MELD hierarchy of the path to the fourth

level, emancipation. It was clear that forces of social structure which served the interests of a bureaucratic, capitalist-oriented system had masked the nature of the alienation of the 'ordinary' world of the parents (minority groups, refugees, poor whites) and the under-regarded world of nursery care.

I conclude therefore that a Critical Realist model for the morphogenesis of the Elgar Estate must be long-term, well-staffed, and well-funded and should actively engage in "conscious-raising" of the residents, and active lobbying for them and with them, in the political arena, as a means of confronting the "false consciousness" imposed on their alienated condition.

## **Chapter 8: Child Maltreatment and Mental Health: A Review**

### **Were there Ethnic Differences in Self-Esteem in English Adolescents in 2006-2007? Might the Differential Experience of Sexual Abuse Explain Gender Differences in Self-Esteem?**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

The data-set analysed below stemmed from the collaboration of Dr. Kanka Mallick of Manchester Metropolitan University, and Professor Christopher Bagley of the Manchester Educational Research Network. These researchers had previously collaborated on a number of studies of self-esteem, ethnicity, and child sexual abuse (CSA) (Bagley & Mallick 1995; 2000 a & b; Bagley et al, 2000). The findings of data collected in the school year of 2006-7 were not analysed or published at that time or subsequently, because Dr. Mallick was taken ill in 2006, and tragically died in December, 2007.<sup>46</sup>

Students in some of the schools took part in a qualitative study reported by Al-Refai & Bagley (2008) on the citizenship education curriculum, and participation in RE and PSHE classes by Muslim and Non-Muslim students. None of these latter findings are relevant for the present data analysis, apart from the conclusion that Muslim students generally had excellent adaptation to school and community roles.

The aim of the study presented here was to extend the previous work of Mallick and Bagley in English schools on levels of self-esteem, using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and its validation, and to include ethnicity, and some data on prior sexual and physical abuse, in order to replicate and extend Canadian and international work (Bagley et al., 2000). The measures completed by students aged 11 to 18 included the RSES, the self-completion Ontario Child Health Scales validated in England with children and adolescents with known psychiatric diagnoses (Pace et al., 1999), and an adaption of a measure of physical and sexual abuse used in Canadian work (Bagley, 1996a), and developed further by Dr. Dan Offord and colleagues at McMaster University, Ontario (MacMillan et al., 2001).

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<sup>46</sup> See [www.kanka-gajendra.org](http://www.kanka-gajendra.org) for details of the "giving back" activities carried out in Britain and India, in memory of Kanka.

## **8.2 British research on child maltreatment, school-based harassment and assault, and child sexual abuse and its implications for mental health and adjustment**

*“There has been little research carried out in the United Kingdom aimed at providing a holistic explanation of the victim experiences of young people within the school and community environments.”* (Jackson et al., 2016 p.343)

One of the purposes of the research was to examine, through self-report measures completed by secondary school students, whether they had experienced episodes of physical and sexual assault and abuse, in various settings, and what the clinical correlates of such experiences might be, in terms of self-completed measures of self-esteem, and mental health. The initial purpose of asking questions about physical and sexual harassment and assault was to replicate the Canadian high school studies of Bagley and colleagues (1995 & 1997), which had shown the link between such events and poorer mental health in female high school students (but not in males).

In the English replication (reported below), Mallick and Bagley had aimed to extend the questions about the location of physical and sexual maltreatment from the school environment into the wider community, including abuse which might be home or family-centred. But for ethical reasons, the researchers felt unable to ask specific questions about who was responsible for the abuse. If the researchers had learned about within-family abuse, they would have been morally and legally obliged to follow this up with a formal report to the authorities, which was not possible within the context of a population of high school students who were assured of anonymity in the completion of group-administered questionnaires.

### **8.2.1 Earlier British research on forms of child abuse, its incidence and its long-term effects**

Compared with North America, the British literature on child maltreatment, its nature, effects, treatment and prevention is relatively small. But the published work is of good quality, and offers several avenues for further research and intervention strategies. The first located study is that of Baker & Duncan (1985) who reported findings from a brief question about sexual assaults in childhood, included within a questionnaire enquiring about a range of public opinion matters and private issues, in a national random sample of 2,019 individuals: 12 per cent of women, and 8 percent of men

recalled such abusive events, but no further details were available. The next study of note comes from Scotland (Gillham et al., 1998). This research team examined a large data set of referrals for child maltreatment (physical abuse and neglect, and sexual abuse) in Glasgow in the early-1990s, measured against a backdrop of a sudden rise in unemployment. They found a clear link between a rise in abuse referrals, and a rise in unemployment, especially in traditionally low-income areas. This research is important, since it links to the ecological accounts of social and educational deprivation discussed in previous chapters. This “sub-cultural” effect also emerged in the English work of Coid et al (2001) who in research with 1,207 women registered with general medical practices in London, found that those who in childhood had experienced combinations of physical and sexual abuse, were four times more likely than other women of similar age and social class background, to have been subject, as adults, to domestic violence, and/or rape in various settings.

In contrast, Oaksford & Frude (2001) studied 213 English female undergraduates, using questionnaires, and found that 28 (13%) had experienced various types of sexual abuse in their childhood or teenage years. They comment on the generally good mental health of this group, and the fact that they were successfully coping with tertiary education. This and other research shows that there can be “survivors” of even the grossest forms of abuse, provided that it is not combined with other forms of abuse. Thus in the large-scale follow-up of a large cohort identified child victims of CSA (probably combined with other forms of abuse) in Britain, 12.4 percent had diagnosable psychiatric disorders, compared with 3.2 per cent of individually matched, non-abused controls (Spataro et al., 2004).

One alarming feature of children and adolescents experiencing chronic chaos at home in terms of witnessing family violence, substance abuse, and the physical and sexual assaults of others and experiencing such assaults themselves, is that of *running from home* (Meltzer et al, 2012). These researchers examined the life-histories of a subsample of 2,247 individuals in the English Psychiatric Morbidity Survey, and reported that seven percent of this group had run from home before the age of 16 – the rate in girls was double that in boys. In this population of runaways, 45 percent had been physically maltreated prior to running, 25 per cent witnessed frequent family violence, and nine percent were subjected to sexual penetration. After running, both

males and females were at high risk for suicidal behaviour, and of being drawn into the worlds of commercial sex, drug use, and drug-dealing.

### 8.2.2 The NSPCC Studies

The studies commissioned by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) between 1998 and 2009 are the most comprehensive available studies on the prevalence of child maltreatment, and the social contexts in which it takes place (May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005; Radford et al., 2011; Radford, 2013; Radford et al., 2013). The first NSPCC survey was of a random sample of 1,998 British adults aged 18-24. The second survey in 2009 was more ambitious and asked questions about prior events of abuse not only of young adults, but also of the parents and caretakers of some 4,000 children.

The comparison of the young adult samples of 1998 and 2008-9 is instructive, since the same set of questions applied to large random samples of the British population at both points in time, clearly showed that the prevalence of various forms of physical abuse, physical and emotional neglect and sexual violence was *declining*, and this welcome movement was clear statistically significant. I reproduce some of these results below:

	Any physical violence		Any coercive sexual abuse	
	1998	2009	1998	2009
Males	13.4%	10.9%	3.7%	1.6%
Females	13.1%	9.0%	9.9%	8.5%
'Middle class'	11.5%	9.0%	5.7%	4.3%
'Working class'	18.2%	13.1%	10.2%	7.2%
2-parent family	10.2%	7.9%	5.3%	3.2%
Other/in care	15.7%	15.7%	12.7%	9.7%

*Source of data in above Table: Radford et al. (2011).*

This research shows that there is indeed a class bias in the experience of physical and sexual abuse, which also occurs with greater frequency in disorganized family settings. The small but significant decline in the amount of sexual abuse might be due to greater media publicity about high-profile abusers (children knowing more

about, and being able to avoid CSA), and greater awareness of teachers and other professionals, as well as the introduction of relevant teaching in schools about avoiding CSA. But that is speculation, and difficult to prove.

Lorraine Radford and her team included a number of mental health measures in the 2009 survey of young adults, and reported, for example, a six-fold increase in suicidal ideas and self-harm in prior victims of CSA: *“There were strong associations between maltreatment, sexual abuse and physical violence with poorer emotional well-being, including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, demonstrating the need for prevention and earlier intervention to protect young people from harm.”* (p. 122).

### **8.3 ‘Poly-victims’ and the possibility of enduring neurological changes caused by child maltreatment**

The idea of children being victims of multiple types of abuse, and as a result are at much greater risk of adverse mental health problems was identified in the review by Finkelhor et al. (2007) who coined the term poly-victimization. This idea had also been developed by Bagley & Mallick (2000 a & b) in their Canadian longitudinal study of a cohort studied from birth to age 17. They identified several interacting predictors of poor mental health at age 17: developmental problems identified at birth (including CNS problems), emotional abuse of the child and/or physical abuse and/or sexual abuse. According to their developmental model the marginal child is often emotionally neglected and abused in the preschool period, with overlapping physical punishments and abuse, with sexual abuse occurring from about eight years through to adolescence.

Such children already had very low self-esteem before the sexual abuse began, and they lacked feelings of competence and self-worth which would have enabled them to seek help. Children with good self-esteem, and no prior history of emotional and physical abuse, were usually able to report, and/or put a stop to, initial attempts at sexual exploitation. That was why, Bagley & Mallick (2000b) argued, brief episodes of sexual abuse did not usually impair the child’s mental health and self-esteem. These and similar findings were confirmed in the review by Anda et al. (2006) which showed: “...the enduring effects of abuse and related adverse experiences in childhood ... from studies of neurobiology and epidemiology.”

According to Radford et al. (2011) in their English national survey, there is *an overlap between types of abuse, emotional, physical and sexual*: “Children and young people who are poly-victims are an extremely vulnerable group. Early identification of, and intervention with these young people is needed to prevent both immediate and long-term problems.” (p. 122) In commenting further on these results, and reviewing more recent studies, Radford (2013) observed that: “Self-blame, self-harm and suicide are commonly mentioned as consequences of sexual abuse.” She cites the challenging American research of Alexander (2011) that prolonged and severe sexual abuse in childhood creates a “neurological syndrome” in which epigenetic pathways may be biochemically triggered in the nervous system causing brain changes, which lead to a life of prolonged sadness, incipient terrors, chronic guilt, and self-debasing activities which may be lifelong in nature.<sup>47</sup>

Chou (2012) confirmed the enduring, negative effects of child sexual abuse on *older people* in an English community sample of 3,493 individuals aged over 50, including many who were 70 or older. CSA (defined as sexual touching or penetration over a relatively long period, occurring in 8%) was significantly linked across the lifespan to anxiety and depression (which were often comorbid), PTSD, suicidal ideas and self-harm, and periods of psychiatric hospitalization. The combination of different types of abuse was particularly likely to predict lifelong psychiatric morbidity.

Bebbington et al. (2011b) found that in the 7,353 adults in an English survey of psychiatric morbidity, the development of psychosis was *ten times* the expected rate in those experiencing prolonged and intrusive sexual abuse up to age 16. The development of chronic and severe depression and anxiety was a predictor of the development of this psychosis. The prior abuse is causally implicated in the development of this most serious form of mental illness, the authors conclude, and epigenetic factors may be involved in that the chronically abused child has developed a chronic neurological disorder, in which the psyche “withdraws” from everyday interactions and information processing.

The neurological problems imposed on the CNS of the developing child who is subjected to prolonged, severe and multiple forms of abuse have been identified in

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<sup>47</sup> When I was undergoing my nurse training in Britain, I was told of an old lady who had carried the guilt of child sexual abuse all her life, and now very ill, could only die peacefully if she could be “forgiven” for the sin of her childhood victimization.



the American work of Teicher et al. (2012) who studied 183 young adults, using MRI brain scans: 16 percent had been subjected to three or more kinds of abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, experiencing parental violence) for prolonged periods. Teicher et al. observe that “The exquisite vulnerability of the hippocampus to the ravages of stress is one of the key translational neuroscience discoveries of the twentieth century.” Their work showed “reduced volume in the hippocampal subfields CA3, dentate gyrus, and subiculum” in these poly-victims.

#### **8.4 The physical and sexual abuse of children is an international public health problem**

That child physical and sexual abuse is an international problem of public health is shown by Gilbert et al. (2009) who examined studies using comparable methodology in “high income countries” (including the UK), and concluded that about 8 percent of children will suffer physical abuse, 10 percent will experience physical or emotional neglect, and 7 percent of females and 3 percent of males will experience prolonged, often penetrative, sexual abuse. Moreover, these events have mental health sequels in adulthood which are very costly for the individuals, and for health and social care systems. Yet these events, they point out, are hardly recognised as major public health problems, and systems of prevention, and the identification and treatment of child victims are not well-developed in any country.

*The extent of these problems in Britain* has been emphasised by the research of Bebbington et al. (2011) whose team surveyed British 7,353 adults who completed a laptop questionnaire, on unwanted sexual contacts up to age 16: 11.1 percent of women, and 5.3 percent in males recalled such abuse. These figures included brief and non-recurring sexual assaults: nevertheless, the mental health burden upon some victims in adult life made this, clearly, “a public health problem”. The authors note too that the rate of sexual abuse doubled when the child was not in a conventional two-parent family. As Radford et al. (2011) showed, sexual assaults of the classic incestuous type are actually quite rare: when CSA did occur within families, it was usually older brothers, or “mother’s boyfriend” who were the perpetrators.

## 8.5 Child sexual abuse takes place in community settings, rather than in the family

The epidemiological work reviewed above suggests that most sexual assault of children and adolescents takes place outside of conventional family settings, or is by unrelated adults who have access to women and children in disorganised families. Victims may have been physically and sexually abused and emotionally neglected within disorganised one-parent families under stress (e.g. Gillham et al., 1998), but sexual victimisation is most likely to take place in community, school, or other settings. It is clear from the literature in forensic psychiatry (e.g. Pritchard & Bagley, 2001 & 2002; Bagley & Pritchard, 2000) that persistent sex offenders and paedophiles prey on vulnerable children in various settings, and may become very adept at doing so, with multiple victims.

The risks to vulnerable children is emphasised in the important research of Lereva et al. (2015) in their report of the 4,026 individuals retained in the Avon Birth Cohort study, followed up to age 24. Parents gave information of their social situations, and their relationships with the focus child at ages 8, 10 and 13 in terms of their child's experience of physical, emotional and sexual harm. While parents often admitted to their imperfections as carers in terms of physical and emotional care, it was rare for them to admit to any within-family sexual exploitation of the child, although they did report this when it was perpetrated outside of the family. Interviewed as young adults, the children in this birth cohort largely corroborated parental reports.

This study showed that single events of sexual assault were not usually harmful for the child's mental health (perhaps because the ethical procedures of the research required adequate therapy or referral when abuse was detected in one of the earlier data sweeps). Parental reports of events of physical abuse (e.g. parentally inflicted "punishments") were not associated with lasting mental health problems. However, the researchers found a *synergistic effect* for maltreatment at home combined with bullying and physical and sexual assaults carried out in or around the school. Many children and adolescents could, seemingly, survive within-family abuse and neglect: but when this was combined with bullying, harassment and assault in school settings there was a significant mental health burden in terms of depression (8%), anxiety (10%) and suicidality (9%).

The authors comment on these results: *“The insufficiency of resources for bullying compared with those for family maltreatment requires attention. It is important for schools, health services and other agencies to co-ordinate their responses to bullying, and research is needed to assess such interagency policies and procedures.”* (Lereva et al., 2015, p. 525)

One implication of this research is that schools as institutions (e.g. through teacher, counsellor and social work resources) can help these vulnerable and often marginalised students to have a supportive peer network, which is clearly a crucial part of their psychological recovery. Instead, the abused child is often a loner, a misfit, a suitable person to be excluded from peer networks, a person to be sneered at, bullied, hit, sexually molested and even raped. From Lereva et al’s (2015) research, this is clearly a particular problem for female victims. Finkelhor & Tucker (2015) who edited the special issue of the journal in which Lereva’s research was published, comment on both American, and this British research: *“Molestation, rape, exposure to domestic violence, corporal punishment, physical abuse, bullying, sexual molestation ... all overlap. ‘Peer violence’ is part of this ‘maltreatment syndrome.’”* (p. 481)

In important epidemiological work from the UK, Catone et al. (2015) report findings from two national surveys of randomly selected populations aged 16-plus (total numbers in the samples more than 19,000). They found a statistically significant link between being a chronic victim of bullying (usually during and after the period of school attendance), and the emergences of auditory and visual hallucinations, and incipient or probable psychosis. Controlling for a variety of potentially intervening factors, only a history of child sexual abuse appeared to have any causal significance. A picture emerges of the victimised child or adolescence whose depression and social alienation in school makes him or her a frequent target for bullying: the adolescent victim is “scared stiff”, not knowing where the next blow will come from, fearing threats from every quarter, which builds into a paranoid state. The psychiatric team carrying out this research advocate more vigorous, school-based programmes to intervene on behalf of bullied victims in ways “ ... which might ameliorate the course of psychosis.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Another form of bullying, that using various kinds of electronic media, also impacts negatively on young victims (Slonje et al., 2016).

## 8.6 Peer settings, support, and abuse

How *peers can help or impair mental health* is illustrated by Connell & Dishion's (2006) American research, which focussed on 176 vulnerable parents and their 10-14 years old children, interviewing both parent and child(ren) at monthly intervals, about personal stresses, and peer group relations, over a 9-month period. Stressed children tended to have poor peer relationships, often became depressed as a result, and also sometimes moved into delinquency. *"As expected depressed mood was higher for girls, and more prevalent for older adolescents. The results suggest that peer processes may be linked in time to the development of depression, especially among high-risk adolescents."* (p. 150). These authors also note that "best friend" nominations often changed several times over a school year. Social relationships in the high school are fragile, ephemeral, and crucially important. But the depressed adolescent is all too often marginalized and even rejected in such peer contacts.

That the young person's world outside the family can be of crucial importance is emphasised by the English study by Jackson et al. (2016) of 730 13 to 16 year olds, the study reflecting that fact that "There has been little research carried out in the United Kingdom aimed at providing a holistic exploration of the victim experiences of young people within the school and community environments." (p. 343) The study found that many of the adolescents had experienced some form of victimization outside of the family, within the past year. One in three had property vandalised or stolen; one in two had experienced verbal harassment or physical bullying; one in 28 experienced "dating violence" including rape and sexual assault, and one in seven had been victims of sexual assault or harassment in school settings. Moreover, these types of assault on person or property tended to overlap. Bagley & King (2003) reflecting on their Canadian research suggest that it is likely that the female victims of multiple assaults were marginal to peer networks, and thus became marked for victimisation in school: once sexually assaulted the adolescent girl gains the reputation of being "an easy lay" or a "slag", subject to verbal and physical assaults from both males and females.

Girls themselves may be involved in the bullying and sexual harassment of other girls, according to the interesting work in two London comprehensives by Jamal et al. (2015) which used a qualitative design in examining the "social ecology" of bullying spaces, which often involved sexual rivalries, and sexual denigration of peers.

While this may seem depressing, Farah Jamal (2015) adopts the logic of empowerment for change in the girls she worked with, using “empowerment” models derived from Bourdieu and Giddens.

### **8.7 Male victims**

Male victims of sexual and physical assault in childhood and adolescence have been less intensively studied, but several studies suggest that they may be better able to “shrug off” physical assaults, and the attempts at sexual assault by older males. Only when the boy’s sexuality is put in doubt (e.g. ‘enjoying’ imposed gay sex) are there likely to be early reactions in terms of suicidality and self harm (Bagley & D’Augelli, 2000; Bagley & Tremblay, 2000 a & b). Young transgender males who are seduced by unscrupulous, older males, gay or otherwise, have greatly increased rates of self-harm, drug-use, and school absences.

The English work by Salter et al. (2003) which followed up 224 male victims of sexual assault in childhood and adolescence found that in a 7 to 19 year follow-up after the original referral for psychiatric treatment at a paediatric hospital, 26 (11.6%) had become sexual abusers themselves (of both male and female children). Statistically significant predictors of this “victim-to-abuser” cycle were material and emotional neglect in childhood, and being sexually assaulted by a female. A psychodynamic explanation might invoke the idea of oedipal guilt in the young boy, and his inability to have sexual relations with adult women.<sup>49</sup>

MacMillan et al. (2001) in their Ontario research with 7,016 individuals aged 15 to 64 found that a history of “physical abuse” in the childhood of males was much less likely to have adverse, long-term effects on mental health than was such abuse imposed on females. For women who had experienced both physical and sexual abuse in childhood, outcomes were particularly poor.

Two major *British longitudinal studies* have yielded information which confirms English epidemiological work on the long-term negative effects of child abuse of various kinds. The National Child Development Study is a study of more than 10,000 individuals born in a single week, in March, 1958 and has yielded numerous reports of early antecedents of factors in child and adult development. Clark et al. (2011)

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<sup>49</sup> For case examples, and possible psychodynamic explanations of the relatively rare phenomenon of consummated incest, see Bagley (1969) and Pincus & Dare (1980).

reported that by the time the cohort was aged 45, there were clear links between earlier sexual and physical abuse, and adult psychopathology, especially when the two types of abuse were combined. Michael Rutter's longitudinal cohort of children born in 1968 found that by 2009 "harsh parenting", and CSA in various settings were linked to adult neuroticism and suicidality, especially when the two types of abuse were combined (Pickles et al., 2010).

The first notable British longitudinal study of a birth cohort was of several thousand children born in 1946. No adult recall studies of abusive events in childhood have been published, but one study of the cohort (Hatch & Wadsworth, 2008) gives us cause for concern. This study followed up into middle age adolescents (within the total cohort of 4.600 individuals studied) who were "very anxious" or "very sad", without enquiring into possible reasons, although socioeconomic factors did not explain any of the variance. Around five per cent of the cohort were identified as having lifelong problems of "social integration", reflecting the depression and anxiety of their childhood years. This group appeared to have very low self-esteem, lacked social confidence, had poor educational outcomes (despite their generally average social class backgrounds), did not often enter higher education, obtain professional qualifications, or follow rewarding careers. Of the very depressed and/or anxious adolescents 70 percent had poor mental health at age 53. I would hypothesise that this group had experienced severe and prolonged sexual and/or physical abuse in their childhood years.

Colman et al. (2014) examined perinatal factors in this cohort, and later economic and social deprivations in childhood, including stressful events such as parental loss – but physical and sexual abuse were not studied. They found that a combined equation including low birth weight, childhood poverty, and childhood stressors was highly predictive of clinical depression at ages 46 or 53. Again, I would suggest that physical and sexual abuse could have a major role in these mental health outcomes.

### **8.8 Ethnic minorities and abuse histories in Britain**

Sexual and physical assaults experienced by *ethnic minorities* have not received much attention in British research. The national studies reported by Radford et al. (2011 & 2013) report that the category "Ethnic not white" was 8.1 percent in 1998, and 15.2

percent in the 2009 national survey. However, data on experience of physical and sexual assault within this minority population was not presented in their analyses. This raises the intriguing possibility that the decline in the prevalence of such assaults between 1998 and 2009 might be due to groups such as those of Asian heritage having low rates of abuse. Moghal et al. (1995) did comment on the possible reasons for lower rate of child sexual abuse in Asian populations in Northern cities in England. Cultural factors and religious norms could protect children in such communities; or there could be an extreme reluctance to report abuse, for a variety of reasons. Bebbington et al. (2011a) reported “no association” between ethnicity and experience of child sexual abuse in their national sample. Their definition of “ethnicity” seems to be over-inclusive, however.

Large scale English surveys of random samples of the population face the problem that unless the ‘stratified random’ model is used, certain ethnic minorities (who tend to live in urban clusters) will be missed, or will be underrepresented. This was not the case in Bellis et al.’s (2014) English sample of 3,885 adults, which showed that “adverse childhood events” (ACES) when occurring in combination in an individual (which they usually did), were strong predictors of later psychopathology, substance misuse, and poor personal health care. They were able to recruit a sufficient number of “Asians” (7.9%) to allow for statistical analysis. This heterogeneous ethnic group experienced, in childhood, parental separation, family violence, and physical and sexual abuse at much lower rates than the “white” population, social class controlled. The rate of child sexual abuse recalled by Asians was 3.2%, compared with 6.2% in whites, for example.

However, Bellis et al. (2013) who randomly selected 11,500 adults in the North West region of England were unable to obtain enough ethnic minorities for meaningful statistical analysis, due to their failure to use stratified methods (i.e. oversampling in areas of known ethnic density). Their research is relevant for this thesis however, since it was conducted in the same geographical area as that in which the Northern Schools were situated. Bellis et al. showed that “child sexual abuse” was associated with a three-fold reduction in adult levels of “trust, confidence, optimism and safety”.

In the Northern Schools data set reported on below, I have had the opportunity to examine self-reported abuse, and its correlations in an 'Asian heritage' population, whose cultural antecedents were mainly in the Indian sub-continent.

### **8.9 Further English epidemiological studies of the long-term sequels of child maltreatment**

Large scale, methodologically sophisticated English studies using large samples continue to appear, and emphasise that childhood victimization is a major, but still unaddressed, public health problem. Bellis et al. (2014b) used a specifically public health model in designing and analysing the results of a national English survey of 3,885 adults aged 18 to 69, focussing on "adverse childhood events" (ACES) which included parental quarrelling and violence, parental absence, family violence directed towards child, verbal abuse of child, sexual assaults on the child, mental illness and/or drug and alcohol misuse in a caretaker, criminal conviction and imprisonment of a caretaker or sibling: 8.3% of those surveyed had experienced four or more of these adverse events in childhood.

Such a history was associated with a greatly elevated risk of poor adult mental health, substance abuse, and behavioural problems including criminality in the adult lives of those who had experienced highly stressed childhoods. These problems were manifested in particular individuals living in deprived urban areas. In reading yet another depressing English national survey, one is prompted to pose the unanswered questions: What of the children of these now adult victims? What is this new generation's history of abuse, in the "cycle of deprivation" described by Rutter & Madge (1976)? What kinds of schools were the children in this cycle of deprivation attending, and how could these schools identify and address their problems, and break the 'cycle of alienation' described by Williams & Pritchard (2006)?

Using their public health model, Bellis et al. (2014b) show that ACES explained: 11.9% of adult binge drinking; 5% of heroin use; 38% of unwanted teenaged pregnancy; and 14% of poor diet and poor personal health care. Reducing the incidence of adverse childhood events they argue, would be a highly productive public health strategy. On adverse mental health outcomes, they argue that: "*Links between such behaviours and childhood circumstances are likely to operate through the impact of ACES on the developing brain and its stress regulatory systems, which affect factors*



*such as emotional regulation and fear response, and this may predispose individuals to health-harming behaviours.” (p. 90)*

### **8.10 Problems of questionnaires on child maltreatment**

It is important to comment on the difficulties of asking questions about sexual abuse that have occurred in studies recalling such abuse in childhood and adolescence (Hardt & Rutter, 2002). The most frequent method employed is that of “adult recall”, asking adults to give details of such events in either face-to-face interviews, or in anonymised questionnaires<sup>50</sup>. Such methods are (presumably) likely to underestimate the actual incidence of such abuse if respondents find the questions embarrassing or troubling, and fail to report abuse when it did in fact occur (it seems unlikely that respondents would fabricate such accounts – Hardt & Rutter, 2002). This is an artefact working “against significance”, since in the language of epidemiology, an unknown number of probands would be included in the control or contrast group.

Brown et al. (2007) addressed these issues in validation work with the “Childhood Experiences of Care and Abuse” (CECA) scale which they had devised for their English (London-based) epidemiological work with women with serious, chronic depression compared with non-depressed controls. The CECA was completed by 118 pairs of sisters who had grown up together, and their accounts of family maltreatment were compared. Probands (depressed women) tended to underestimate parental maltreatment (another artefact working against significance). Nevertheless, Brown et al. (2007) conclude that their instrument is probably one of the best available for epidemiological purposes.

Ontario-based researchers also justified the ethics of approaching children in gathering data on child maltreatment, seeing the children and young persons in the light of an “active agency” model, as human beings capable of reviewing and commenting on events in their lives, and who may be set on particular paths of healing and resistance. (Tonmyr et al., 2014)

In its Canadian development, the measure of physical and sexual maltreatment and abuse used in the Northern Schools study has had to face many of the problems

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<sup>50</sup> Requesting informants to use a laptop to answer sensitive questions was first used by Bagley & Ramsay (1986) in their random sample studying suicidality and childhood abusive events recalled by Alberta adults aged 18 to 27. Such technology is now widely used in such studies.

familiar to those trying to develop measures in this field, including the ethical one of how to offer advice and help to those who do reveal past abuse, and currently have poor mental health (Bagley, 1990 to 1999; Bagley & King, 2003; Bagley & McDonald, 1984; Bagley & Mallick, 1999; Bagley & Ramsay, 1986; Bagley & Young, 1998). English researchers have tended to ask about physical and sexual assaults up to age 16, although it seems more appropriate to screen for the whole time that most spend in school, up to age 18. Differently worded questions may elicit different kinds of response, and there is some debate about distinguishing between “unwanted” sexual contact (e.g. the rape of a 17-year-old), and the “consenting” but illegal sexual intercourse of a 13-year-old.

Asking about who the abuser was may create a reluctance to reveal abuse if the victim had been threatened, or wished to protect someone. In the study reported below, two short questions were asked, which did not ask “victims” to be specific about who the other person(s) might be. This short, non-complex questionnaire was, according to development work and a cross-validation study with established clinical profiles, at least 90 percent valid in eliciting “true” events of physical and sexual maltreatment (Walsh et al, 2008). Tanaka et al., (2012) found that the CEVQ short-form had excellent reliability when individuals were retested two weeks later. In the longitudinal Ontario Child Health Study. Tanaka et al. report that the scale had “back validation” through its correlation with adult measures of mental health in a large population of adults – and combinations of physical and sexual maltreatment were particularly likely to have adverse psychiatric sequels.

We have to accept that there will always be inaccuracy of measurement in a sensitive field such as this, but note that recent Canadian work with the short-form of the CEVQ (Childhood Experience of Violence Scale) did obtain acceptable concordance in accounts of their childhood’s family life, when adult sibling accounts were compared (MacMillan et al., 2013).

The “true identity” of an individual is the personal property of a unique person, and we must respect an individual’s right to reveal or conceal aspects of that identity, according to their personal choice. In the Northern Schools study some three percent of respondents completed only part of the Maltreatment section (none revealing abuse) or left it blank. The original researchers had assumed that in those cases no

abuse had occurred, and coded the questionnaire that way. This could have been a mistake, but the original questionnaires were destroyed immediately coding had taken place.

### **8.11 Conclusions from the literature review on child and adolescent maltreatment**

It is clear that in Britain, as elsewhere in the developed world, the maltreatment and neglect of children, physically, sexually, emotionally, is an important public health problem with lifelong negative consequences in terms of depression, anxiety, suicidality, psychosomatic disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, psychosis, substance misuse, and self-defeating lifestyles. While up to a half of child and adolescent victims survive without manifesting overt psychological symptoms, a half do not. Combinations of abuse, physical and sexual are particularly likely to have adverse mental health outcomes: about four percent of females, and about two percent of males will have experienced chronic, intrusive (penetrative) sexual abuse combined with either physical abuse, emotional abuse, or all of these. The recent British research confirms the results of the Canadian longitudinal work of Bagley & Mallick (2000a & b).

While the British researchers, who are mainly child and adult psychiatrists, focus on diagnosable mental health conditions, there are grounds for assuming that an individual with depression, anxiety and self-harm falling into the clinical domain, would also have very low self-esteem. In terms of William James (1890) model of the body being at the centre of self-concept and self-esteem: the violation of the child's body through physical and sexual abuse interferes profoundly with core developments of the self-concept, and the evaluative construct of self-esteem, the innate feelings of 'goodness' or 'badness' by which the child develops a self-schema. The abused child acquires an identity which moves on a particular trajectory, one of watchfulness, fear, nightmare, nervousness, a pattern "burned into the brain", even causing permanent structural brain changes which last a lifetime.

At school other children "know" that this child is different: this child has been dominated, and in school they are once again dominated. School should be a haven, but too often it is an arena of fear in which the child is again bullied, sneered at, hit, sexually handled, lewdly suggested, forced unwillingly in her state of learned

helplessness into further dominated and sexualized relationships. Her very *will* is raped. In the worst case, her body belongs not to her but to others, to kick around and prod as they please. In the worst case, they attempt to murder this kid's soul, and the psychotic core of her being is the only respite, the only safety she has. She is like the American Indian whose culture the British raped and enslaved, and psychosis or self-harm is her only way out. But Black kids, I assert, have *juk* in their soul. They hit back, they survive<sup>51</sup>.

The *dramatis persona* of the victim which I have sketched may seem exaggerated and over-dramatized. But is it? For one in twenty five children in this land it seems a frightful reality, as the evidence I have reviewed seems to show: and school cultures can make things worse rather than better. Will the Northern Schools study yield any different results?

### **8.12 The Northern Schools Study**

All of the ten schools participating were in urban areas of the North West of England: Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Warrington and Lancashire. A quarter of the secondary schools approached agreed to participate, allowing access to some (but not all) classes in each school for group testing. It was easier to gain access to older students, especially in post-exam time slots. The final sample was 'over-weighted' by older students, although the researchers had not aimed at obtaining a random sample of students: rather, given the difficulties in persuading schools to participate in an era of increasing curriculum rigidity and examination pressures, the number of students participating (2,025) was considered adequate both for representativeness of a sector of Northern schools in England, and for multivariate data analyses.

Since one of the original purposes of the questionnaire was to examine attitudes and adjustment of students with origins in the Indian sub-continent, and Muslim students in particular, schools containing a relatively high proportion of these students were approached. This survey of English schools then, is not nationally representative, but pertains to a multicultural sector of education in North Western England. It should be borne in mind too that the sample of older students would be

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<sup>51</sup> I have a theory that the excess of black adolescents who are excluded from school results from their revolt against the "master-slave" relationship (elaborated by Bhaskar, 2008) in British secondary schools. The black child is not "just another brick in the wall". Wright et al. (2000) in writing about 'race, class and gender in exclusion from school' do address these possibilities, in a valuable qualitative study.

biased to an unknown extent by the fact that students whose attendance at school is intermittent, or who had dropped out altogether, or who had been transferred to special educational units, would be under-represented. If (as we fear) frequently absent or excluded students contain a disproportionate number with abuse histories, we will have actually underestimated both the prevalence of abuse, and its negative behavioural sequels.

#### **8.12.1 Questionnaire administration**

The questionnaire was kept as brief as possible, and was completed by the average student within 30 minutes or less. It contained the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), three scales from the Ontario Child Health Study measuring Anxiety, Depression, and Conduct Problems (4 questions in each scale, 12 in total); a measure of self-described ethnicity; and a brief measure of physical and sexual abuse. Only two questions on abuse were used, which were the main questions in an instrument subsequently validated in terms of known clinical and personal interview data (Walsh et al., 2008).

There were clearly ethical problems in asking young people to reveal abuse when there was no direct plan to intervene. In order to partially address this, a brief and easy to remember website was included in the questionnaire, which directed users to local and national sources of help, including the telephone resource of Child Line. School counsellors were also alerted in case the questions had stimulated help-seeking behaviour. In addition, a number of the schools planned to address abuse issues in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) classes. The questions on physical and sexual assault and abuse focussed on the school and on the school environment and the journey to school, but also asked about “any other place” where abuse might have occurred. It was thus intended to elicit information on incidents of school-based abuse, but also took into account serious abuse occurring elsewhere, including domestic settings.

Students were instructed not to write their names on the questionnaire, and were assured that no individual could be identified, although they could talk to teachers about the questionnaire if they wanted. Only age, gender, ethnicity and religious affiliation were asked for. Information on ethnicity was sought by means of a specially devised questionnaire. Following the statement: “People today often say they come

from different ethnic groups. Which of the following (if any) applies to you?" Options were "white British, Irish or European", "black British – heritage African or Caribbean", "Asian – heritage Pakistan, India or Bangladesh", "Other", or "Mixed". Students who ticked more than one category were placed in the final grouping, which for analytic purposes was described as "Other/Mixed". Pilot work with the questionnaire indicated that only about four percent of students were likely to place themselves in categories which the observer thought were unusual: but if a White pupil wanted to identify as Black, we accepted that as a valid, subjective choice.

The full self-esteem measure (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, or RSES) and the three Ontario Child Health Scales (measuring depression, conduct problems, and anxiety problems) are not reproduced here for copyright reasons. These OCH scales were known from previous work in North America and England, to have reasonable validity for psychometric purposes. One of the purposes of the research in the Northern Schools study was to establish the face validity of the RSES in terms of its correlation with other measures, and its internal structure and reliability as a coherent scale.

A subsidiary purpose of the research was to explore some of the mental health profiles of contrasted ethnic groups in English secondary schools.

### **8.13 Results from The Northern Schools Study**

Tables 8.1 and 8.2 show that the 10-item Rosenberg scale (RSES) has excellent internal reliability and scale coherence, across the four age and gender groups within which it was analysed. The 'gender gap', with males having rather 'better' self-esteem levels than females is clearly present, and is concordant with findings from previous studies in America, Canada and Britain.

Table 3 shows that the difference in RSES scale means, when compared between males and females, reaches a high level of statistical significance. Ethnic groups within males also tend to have higher RSES scores than females from similar ethnic groups. Within males, there is no statistically significant variation in RSES scores across ethnic groups. However, within the female sample, there is a statistically significant variation of RSES scores by ethnic groups. The 'black' ethnic group (with cultural origins in Africa and the Caribbean) have the highest levels of self-esteem

compared with other females, and this is statistically significant when they are compared with the 'white' group (those with cultural origins in Britain, Ireland or Europe). The reasons for this are not clear, but are of some ethnographic research interest.

What is clear (Table 8.7) is that girls who do not report sexual assault or abuse in their lives have *similar levels of self-esteem to their male peers*. This is an important finding, and should be considered by future researchers using the RSES to explore differential levels of self-esteem in various groups, including both gender and ethnic groups.

In the present study, boys' reports of sexual abuse were less in frequency than such reports from girls (Tables 8.5 to 8.7), and they also seemed more likely to survive such abuse psychologically. Boys likewise seemed "tough" enough to survive forms of physical assault and abuse, even though they reacted with elements of conduct disorder. The amount of physical assault and abuse endured by girls in this survey is alarming, and physical assault too has negative associations with self-esteem levels. Girls who had been both physically and sexually abused were particularly likely to have "devastated self-esteem", as well as clinical profiles on the measures of depression and anxiety.<sup>52</sup> Some girls in this devastated' category had zero scores on the RSES, and scores more than two standard deviations above the depression and anxiety disorder scale means.

Although experiencing sexual abuse diminished self-esteem, and increased levels of depression and anxiety to a significant degree in females (but not in males), it was the combination of sexual and physical abuse that was particularly damaging for self-esteem in females in both of the age groups (11-14 and 15-18) considered (Tables 7 to 8). Ethnicity clearly made a difference in the proportions of females who were experiencing sexual and physical abuse, and rates of physical abuse or assault were very much lower in Black and Asian females. Combined sexual and physical abuse was markedly different across ethnic groups: 9% of white females had such a history, compared with less than 2% in minority ethnic groups. These were highly

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<sup>52</sup> The RSES cut-off point for measuring "devastated self-esteem" was chosen as the level which was most predictive of "high" (scores in the highest quintile) on the measures of depression and anxiety: i.e. had fewest false negatives and positives. All students in this category had depression and anxiety scores at least one standard deviation above the female population mean.

significant differences, but they applied only to the female population of Northern Schools, and not to males, for reasons which are not clear.

Although the trend for females to experience greater amounts of child maltreatment, and to react to it more adversely than males is in line with other research, the general lack of statistical significance in the results from comparisons within the male group is somewhat puzzling.



**Table 8.1: General Factor of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Items in 1,021 Males in English Secondary Schools, 2006-7**

Scale items (abbreviated)	All 1,021 Males	522 males 15-18	499 males 11-14
1. Satisfied with self	3.07	3.17	2.99
2. No good at all	3.01	3.08	2.96
3. Have good qualities	3.01	3.04	2.96
4. Can do things as well as others	2.90	2.99	2.87
5. Not much to be proud of	3.00	3.03	2.99
6. I feel useless	2.94	2.99	2.92
7. I'm a person of worth	3.01	3.05	2.95
8. Don't respect myself	3.04	3.06	3.00
9. I'm a failure	3.06	3.08	3.04
10. Positive self-regard	3.53	3.57	3.48
Scale mean	30.57	30.96	30.16
Standard deviation	5.27	5.12	5.40
Alpha (scale consistency)	0.83	0.83	0.80
Percent with 'very poor' SE (score <21)	3.62%	3.26%	3.83%

Note: RSES scale items in this table paraphrased and shortened, for copyright reasons. Items scored on a 4-point scale from 'very unlike me' (scored 1) to 'very like me' (scored 4). Scores for negatively worded items were reversed, so the higher the scale total, the better the self-esteem. Minimum possible score 10, maximum possible score 40.

**Table 8.2: General Factor of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Items in 1,004 females in English Secondary Schools, 2006-7**

Scale items (abbreviated)	All 1,004 Females	522 females 15-18	482 females 11-14
1. Satisfied with self	2.90	2.86	2.93
2. No good at all	2.81	.65	.64
3. Have good qualities	2.86	.67	.70
4. Can do things as well as others	2.88	.59	.53
5. Not much to be proud of	2.83	.65	.64
6. I feel useless	2.81	.66	.64
7. I'm a person of worth	2.80	.66	.62
8. Don't respect myself	2.86	.59	.64
9. I'm a failure	2.85	.69	.70
10. Positive self-regard	2.92	.75	.70
Scale mean	28.52	28.98	28.25
Standard deviation	5.47	5.12	5.48
Alpha (scale consistency)	0.85	0.86	0.81
Percent with 'very poor' SE (score <21)	7.57%	6.89%	8.37%

Note: RSES scale items paraphrased and shortened in the above Table. Items were scored on a 4-point scale from 'very like me' to 'very unlike me'. Scores for negatively worded items were reversed, so the higher the scale total, the better the self-esteem. Minimum possible score 10, maximum possible score 40.

**Table 8.3: The Ontario Child Health Scales Completed by English School Students in 2006-2007**

Scale	Mean (SD)			
	Males 11-14 499	Males 15-18 522	Females 11-14 482	Females 15-18 522
Anxiety	3.0 (.69)	2.9 (.66)	5.3 (1.8)	5.1 (1.9)
r with RSES	0.44	0.39	0.49	0.46
Depression	2.4 (.80)	2.2 (.69)	3.7 (1.25)	3.9 (2.0)
r with RSES	0.36	0.38	0.43	0.47
Conduct Disorder	3.7 (.90)	3.6 (.97)	1.8 (.82)	2.0 (0.97)
r with RSES	0.23	0.19	0.25	0.22

*Note:* Example of Anxiety Scale item "I am too fearful or anxious." Example of Depression Scale item "I am unhappy, sad, or depressed." Example of Conduct Disorder Scale item "I get in many fights." Each scale contains four items, and was scored: 0 = "Never/Not True"; 1 = "Sometimes or somewhat true"; 2 = "Often or Very True" (minimum score 0, maximum score 12, for each scale).

Because of direction of scoring, correlations in table above are negative e.g high self-esteem individuals tend not to be anxious or depressed. Correlations of 0.20 and beyond are significant at the 1 percent level.

**Table 8.4: RSES Scores by Self-Described Ethnicity of 2,025 English Students, 2006-7**

Gender Group	All 1,021 Males	All 1,004 Females
RSES (SD)	30.52 (5.47)	28.54 (SD 5.47)
"White", English or European Born	Males 552(54.1%)	Females 554(54.2%)
RSES (SD)	30.80 (5.31)	28.47 (5.39)
"Black", English/Caribbean/African Born	Males 99(9.7%)	Females 99(9.9%)
RSES (SD)	30.76 (5.96)	30.07 (5.71)
"Asian", Parental Heritage Indian Sub-Continent	Males 291(28.4%)	Females 281(28.0%)
RSES	30.24(6.19)	28.90 (5.90)
Other/ Mixed Ethnicity	Males 62(6.1%)	Females 60(6.0%)
RSES (SD)	30.28 (5.45)	29.80 (5.31)

Notes: Ethnicity was not stated by 1.8% of respondents. The higher the RSES score, the better the self-esteem level.

*Statistical significance of comparisons:* For all males versus all females, comparison of the two RSES means:  $T=8.59$ ,  $P<.00001$ . Males have significantly higher self-esteem than females.

Within *males*, no ethnic group differed significantly in self-esteem level compared to any other male ethnic group, by ANOVA across groups, or in any *post hoc* T-test comparison of pairs of groups (1-way ANOVA,  $F=0.681$ ,  $P=0.564$ , not significant).

Within *females*, self-esteem varied significantly by ANOVA across ethnic groups (1-way ANOVA,  $F=3.266$ ,  $P=.011$ ). "Blacks" had significantly better self-esteem than "whites" ( $T=3.42$ ,  $P=.001$ ). "Black" versus "Asian"  $T=1.85$ ,  $P=.065$ , just outside the 5% value. No other *post hoc* comparison between pairs of ethnic groups reached statistical significance.

Note: ANOVA is an acronym for Analysis of Variance.

**Table 8.5: Physical Assault and Abuse in English School Students, 2006-2007**

Before you were 18, how many times did someone slap you on the face, head or ears; or hit or spank you with something like a hard object or a belt?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>One or Two times</i>	<i>Three to Four times</i>	<i>More than Five Times</i>
Males	80.94%	5.01%	6.01%	8.04%
11-14				
Males	74.91%	6.90%	8.04%	10.15%
15-18				
Females	80.08%	4.98%	6.02%	8.92%
11-14				
Females	75.12%	5.93%	5.93%	13.02%
15-18				

"Physical assault" 5+ times: All males 9.1% (N=93) compared to All Females, 10.9% (N=110) (P>.1, NS).

**Table 8.6: Sexual Assault and Abuse in English School Students, 2006-2007**

Before you were 18, did anyone ever do any of the following things when you didn't want them to:

Touch the private parts of your body, or make you touch their private parts, or threaten to have sex with you, or force themselves sexually on you?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>One or Two Times</i>	<i>Three to Four Times</i>	<i>More than Five Times</i>
Males	91.99%	4.01%	1.00%	3.00%
11-14				
Males	91.02%	4.02%	1.91%	3.06%
15-18				
Females	80.92%	7.05%	4.98%	7.05%
11-14				
Females				
15-18	75.09%	9.96%	7.85%	7.09%

"Sexual assault" 3+ times: All Males, 4.5% (N=46); All Females, 13.6% (N=136) (P<.0001, statistically significant).

**Table 8.7: RSES Scores by Sexual and Physical Abuse Incidence in Females in the English Secondary Schools Study: Comparison with Male RSES Scores**

	RSES (SD)	Depression	Anxiety	Conduct Problems
'Sexually abused' Females (N 136)	17.91 (5.88)	4.66 (1.71)	7.21 (1.8)	2.19 (0.73)
'Not sexually abused' Females (N 868)	30.21 (5.57)	3.67 (1.90)	4.88 (1.12)	1.86 (0.54)
'Physically abused' Females (N 88)	13.10 (6.34)	3.88 (0.8)	7.06 (1.60)	2.46 (1.81)
'Not physically abused' Females (N 916)	30.26 (5.79)	3.70 (0.9)	4.92 (0.93)	1.85 (0.53)
All Males (N 1,021)	30.57 (5.47)	2.29 (0.49)	2.95 (0.70)	3.65 (0.93)
Males 'not sexually abused' (N 980)	30.55 (5.49)	2.15 (0.70)	2.90 (0.71)	3.61 (0.92)

*Definitions of 'Abuse':*

Three or more events of unwanted sexual contact; and 5 or more events physical abuse up to age of 18. Cut-off points chosen since they maximise differences between the abused and the non-abused groups in terms of RSES scores, and Ontario Child Health Scale means, in females. In males, experience of physical and sexual assault had no significant association with the RSES, or with clinical profiles.

*RSES: Statistical significance:*

"Sexually abused" versus "Non sexually abused" females T=22.77, p<.000

"Physically abused" versus "Non physically abused" females T=24.53, p<.000

"Non sexually abused females" versus "All males T=1.21, p<.227, NS

Separate analysis by age groupings gave similar results.

**Table 8.7 (continued)**

*Depression in females : Statistical Significance*

“Sexually abused” versus “Non sexually abused” females: T=6.58, p<.000

“Physically abused” versus “Not physically abused” females: T=1.99, p=.051

*Anxiety Disorder: Statistical Significance*

“Sexually abused” versus “Non sexually abused” females: T=22.29, p<.000

“Physically abused” versus “Non physically abused” females: T=12.36. p<.000

*Statistical Significance – further comparisons*

In none of the comparisons did differences on Conduct Disorder score reach statistical significance, when the various abuse groups were compared, in females or in males. Likewise, male RSES scores, and Depression and Anxiety Disorder Scores had no statistically significant variation across the sexual and physical abuse categories. Comparing RSES scores in males and females by combined physical and sexual abuse histories, did not add to the significance of the analysis, substantively or in statistical terms.



**Table 8.8: Sexual and Physical Assaults by Ethnicity in the Secondary School Students**

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*Sexual Abuse/Assault Experienced by Females:*

All: 130/954 (13.6%). White: 88/554 (15.2%). Black: 8/99 (8.1%). Asian 29/281 (11.9%).

Other/Mixed: 5/60 (8.3%).

Chi-squared (3 d.f.) across the four ethnic sub-groups: 9.08, p=.0282.

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*Physical Abuse/Assault Experienced by Females:*

All: 87/954 (9.1%). White: 80/554 (14.4%). Black: 2/99 (2.0%). Asian: 4/281 (1.4%)

Other/Mixed: 1/60 (1.7%).

Chi-squared (3 d.f.) across four ethnic sub-groups: 49.64, p=.0000.

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*Both Physical and Sexual Assault Experienced by Females:*

All: 56/954 (5.5%). White: 50/554 (9.02%). Black: 2/99 (2.0%). Asian: 4/281 (1.4%).

Other/Mixed: 0/60 (0.0%).

Chi-squared (3 d.f.) across four ethnic sub-groups: 27.36, p=.0000.

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Sexual, Physical and Combined Assaults had no statistically significant variation across Ethnicity in Males in any age group. For Females, analysis by age categories (11-14/15-18) yielded no additionally significant findings.

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**Table 8.9: Exploring the Profiles of Two Schools Marked by Different Levels of Sexual and Physical Abuse of Females, Achievement, Poverty, and Female Adjustment**

Variables Compared	City School (250 girls)	United School (297 girls)
% Free School Meals*	40%	12%
GCSE 5 'C+ Grades'*	23%	54%
% 'White'*	84%	31%
% 'Black'	5%	10%
% 'Asian'	8%	55%
% 'Mixed/Other'	3%	4%
RSES Mean Score	25.10	30.09
Depression mean	3.95	3.18
Anxiety disorder mean	5.56	4.60
Conduct disorder mean	1.81	0.50
Sexually abused	18.8%	10.8%
Physically abused	17.2%	2.3%
Abused sexually and physically	11.6%	1.7%
"Ego Devastated" (very low Self-Esteem, high Depression & Anxiety)	12.8%	0.8%

\*Data on free school meals and GCSE passes relate to whole school (which served both boys and girls), information given by the school and not by pupils, and refer to the previous school year. Percent falling into different ethnic groups derived from information given in the student self-completion questionnaires by the girls themselves. High score on RSES indicates better self-esteem. High score on Depression & Anxiety scales indicates poorer adjustment. 'Devastate' group had RSES scores of 21 or less, and Depression and Anxiety scores at least one standard deviation above the mean for all females.

*Statistical significance:* Using the non-parametric Sign Test (< vs >), on nine items indicating disadvantage, poor adjustment or abuse, City School pupils scored worse than those in United School,  $p < .002$ . 'City' and 'United' are names derived from famous soccer teams; neither school was connected with, or was actually close to the soccer stadium in question.

#### **8.14 Discussion of results**

First of all, the original idea of Mallick and Bagley to replicate their work (Bagley & Mallick, 2001) on the widely used Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) in a new sample of English high school students has been fulfilled. The scale has clear factorial reliability and internal consistency in age and gender groups. The RSES has face validity too, in terms of its correlation with validated mental health measures, in particular the Anxiety and Depression scales developed in the Ontario Child Health Study, and validated through self-completion by an English clinical group with known diagnoses.

Research reviewed in the previous chapter on self-esteem shows that in most world cultures, males regard themselves more favourably, and have 'higher' scores on the RSES. A variety of cultural, social and psychological reasons have been advanced to explain this, but none has been proved, or tested in any definitive way. In the Northern Schools studied, reported above, males did have significantly higher RSES scores than females. But why?

In looking at past findings of the effects of child maltreatment (physical and sexual abuse and exploitation) it was clear that such maltreatment was frequently linked to "depressed self-esteem", which has formed the basis for emerging clinical conditions such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicidality, and even psychosis. Yet no research which I can locate has actually "controlled for" the potential effects of maltreatment in explaining gender differences in self-esteem. The Northern Schools data set has given me the opportunity to explore this idea.

The study (which I did not design, but have the first access to, in analysing the variables employed) used a measure developed in Canada, the Childhood Experiences of Violence Questionnaire Short Form (CEVQ ), an instrument of established reliability and validity.

A comparison of results from Canadian work (MacMillan et al., 2013) and the Northern Schools Study is instructive:

	Severe physical abuse	Sexual abuse	Both types of abuse
Canadian females (969 adults)	18.3%	22.1%	11.6%
English Schools Females (954 11-18)	13.6%	9.1%	5.5%

The main reason for the lower rate of reported abuse in the English sample is presumably because the average age is much lower (about 15.3 years, and did not include older students absent from or excluded from school) than that of the adult Canadian cohort. I speculate on the dismal possibility that these girls would in their remaining years before becoming adults, have had to endure many more abusive events in their lives. It's a further possibility that the absent students were particularly likely to have been abuse victims, so this study will have underestimated both prevalence of CSA, and its negative sequels.

It was clear from inspecting the tabulated data that some schools were salient in terms of their ethnic profile, as well as being salient on scores of measures of adjustment, and in females' experience of sexual and physical abuse. I was struck by two schools (described in Table 8.9 as 'City School' and 'United School') a few miles distant from each other, in the same urban conurbation. City School served a mainly white student population who lived in relatively poor quality council housing, built to house families resettled from slum redevelopment. United School had a majority of students whose ethnic heritage was from the Indian sub-continent. The students mainly lived in pre-war terraced housing, or in pockets of relatively new council houses and flats. Most of the Asian-heritage students were Muslim.

Statistical profiles of the two schools were markedly different: 40 per cent of City School students were eligible for free meals, compared with 12 percent of those attending the United School. In the year previous to the research, more than half of students at this school obtained five or more 'good' GCSEs, compared with only 23 percent of those attending City School. On all of the indicators of adjustment, girls at

City School scored less favourably, and more had been sexually or physically abused. The combination of physical and sexual abuse (as in all of the other Northern Schools) was reflected in very poor self-esteem, and in markedly higher scores on the measures of depression and anxiety. Particularly striking was the number in City School whom I have described as being “ego devastated” with very low self-esteem, and markedly elevated scores on depression and anxiety. I fear for the future of these girls, who without help, intervention and support (which they would have been unlikely to obtain) would drift into futures marked by the negative adjustments which the review of literature earlier in this chapter has identified.

Although the data did not extend to neighbourhood variables, I would speculate that City School is serving an urban subculture, probably marked by chronic patterns of intergenerational maladaptation, mental illness and crime in adults, dysfunctional parenting, and abused girls become dysfunctional adults.

I have been struck by the large scale epidemiological and public health research on child maltreatment that has been published recently Britain in the past 15 years. This research is costly and difficult to undertake when national sampling is involved. Yet there is a dearth of neighbourhood and community studies, and studies of the schools that serve deprived neighbourhoods as possible centres of support and welfare (or its converse, when chronic patterns of bullying and victimisation occur) in “breaking the cycle” of deprivation, abuse, and adults’ dysfunctional behaviour (Williams & Pritchard, 2006). Ecological, ethnographic and neighbourhood research must be a major priority in future work.

#### **8.15 Critical realist conclusions: The ‘Missing Children’**

The above study was undertaken, and the data (or ‘things’) were generated before the surviving researcher, Christopher Bagley, had been influenced by the critical realist research paradigm of studies of childhood (Archer, 2008; Alderson, 2013 & 2016). It may be instructive to focus on these findings through a critical realist lens. First of all, the original research was framed within an implicit positivist paradigm, assuming that the research “instruments” were valid, and the results falsifiable in terms of implicit null hypotheses. But such a research model fails to address the basic humanity of the actors in their struggle for identity in achieving fulfilled, meaningful lives.

“The missing children” are like the ones described by Alderson (2013 & 2016) in her critical realist accounts of childhood: the vulnerable and wounded children whom research ignores, and who are not dignified with an identity. Alderson (2013) is scathing in her critique of research on child victims “when epistemology predominates over ontology” (p. 80) In contrast, hermeneutic research in the critical research model “... attends to performance: how children present and manage their bodies, learn and practise healthy behaviour.” (p. 80) Winter’s (2011) text on helping children to become ‘themselves’, following child abuse, through what CR theorists call “absence” (meaning reflexive change) is a model of enabling children to expand their lives. In the case studies that Winter’s research presents, young people in care review their “life histories”, and plan with social workers what their future may be.

Further research and practice must begin with a clear value base, such as that of *child-centred humanism*, which seeks to address alienation at the very beginning of the research. The research process itself should be a dialectical process which seeks to unmask alienation, through case studies which enable the actors (both researchers, and their engaged audience) to *understand* (*Ich verstehe*, as Weber would put it) the wrap of alienation.

Consider “Margaret”, a 15-year-old student at “City High School”, in the study of students in secondary schools, described above. She had endured maximum levels of physical and sexual abuse: she had ‘devastated’ self-esteem (a virtual absence of any feelings of self-worth), and was very depressed and extremely anxious. Yet we know her as a cipher, knowing only her gender and her ethnic background (white English). A critical realist approach would have focussed on City High School as an intensively researched case study, with the ethnographic researcher conducting extensive interviews with students about their lives, acting over a period of a year as a teacher and a counsellor whom students could approach. Students like Margaret need to begin a dialectic questioning of their fate, accusing their abusers, and the oppressive systems which mask and allow abuse, and permit the negation of women’s aspirations, their natural state of their being as fulfilled, self-actualizing humans .

Ideas about “cause” do not, ultimately, come from the statistical manipulation of variables in a matrix, but from an ontological understanding of “reality”, and the

totality of the interactions of the lives of Margaret and her fellow students not merely in school, but in the entire community, or ecology, in which they live. The lives and the community of these students were, and almost certainly still are, masked in the alienation of silence, cloaked in *non-being* (Bhaskar, 2008; Archer, 2014). 'Self-esteem' is a cipher, a mysterious marker, but is collectivised by researchers into a description of reality (like "gender", "ethnicity", "systems of abuse"). We wish to release individuals who, in dialectical terms, can interrogate their past and their present, to become, morphogenetically, new people (Archer, 2003); that is, *becoming* new beings in the final level of Bhaskar's (2008) application of dialectical realism to his initial model of critical realism (Norrie, 2010). Priscilla Alderson (2013, p. 126) calls this escape from child abuse an escape from alienation, the flourishing of the child's inner being.

Individuals 'present themselves' in everyday life (Goffman, 1969; Shulman, 2016) as individuals who are variously: joyful, defeated, bad, insane, winners, losers or as Margaret Archer would prefer it, sometimes as newly self-created individuals, the increasing number who are 'coming out' from the legacies of child abuse, and mental illness (Bagley & King, 2003 & 2005).

## *IV Conclusions*

### **Chapter 9: Drawing the Strands Together**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

It is becoming increasingly common for social scientists to give an account of their personal biography, for this may allow insight into their choice of research topic, their selection of methodology, their use and selection of evidence, and the conclusions they draw. The individual is part of the research matrix that she or he studies, and inevitably has influence upon it, or at least on how it is interpreted, and written about. The Aboriginal researcher Chris Sarra (2011) in his critical realist account of reform in the community school of which he was principal, informs us that telling one's life story, one's history of "walk about" is essential in Aboriginal interactions, and he devotes 12 pages of his book in telling this story (and published an autobiography two years later). The Black British researcher Chris Mullard (1973) published his autobiography (of being a 'mixed-race' kid in racist Britain) before going on to publish major scholarly works on race in Britain (Mullard, 1985). Chris Searle (2001) in writing about the inclusive school, also gives an autobiographical account of his life as a head teacher. In reading these works we understand Searle, Sarra and Mullard more fully, both intellectually and morally, in a critical humanist mode.

My intellectual concerns developed in this thesis (reflecting "My African Journey"), began in the 1990s when, working in an urban all age NHS Mental Health clinic I experienced black and ethnic minority children presenting with identity issues, children who were confused or denied their ethnicity, as well as demonstrating other behavioural difficulties. I devised a programme of identity enhancement, which was pioneered in "St. John's" day nursery in which through the combined recommendations of the clinical, educational and social services, children who were placed, with various specialised goals for their improved mental health and identity formation benefited. The publication of this programme (Sawyer, 1999) was well received, and was adopted by all six of the local authority's nurseries. In 2002 I formulated an action research programme at StJ's, in which I video-recorded myself, the children, the workers, as well as the managers over a 4-week period. The purpose of this research was to examine how government-prescribed "early learning goals"



were being implemented, and how the workers' interactions in this regard were relevant to the development of positive identities in the children. For various reasons this programme of research could not be continued.

## 9.2 Historical review

Returning to the recorded material more than a decade later, I decided to frame the results within the context of a review of Equality issues – social class, ethnicity and gender - in Britain over a 40-year period, 1968 to 2008, taking into account numerous governmental policy changes in the fields of ethnicity, education, and self-esteem development in minority children, as well as exploring some of the reasons why girls appear to have lower self-esteem levels than boys, and why Black and Ethnic Minority children and adolescents in Britain no longer seem to have issues with self-concept and self-esteem.

I have broadened my focus to take a perspective on *equality issues* affecting children and adolescents, which impinge on the lives of a variety of groups: ethnic and religious minorities, economically disadvantaged groups, and gender groups. Although the thesis is historical in focus, I began by a review of recent research on social class in Britain, and Savage's (2015) seven-fold classification, based on a group's access to economic, social and cultural resources. At the lowest level in these seven strata are the *Precariat*, some 15 percent of the British population whose access to economic resources is precarious, whose social capital is minimal, and whose cultural capital is severely restricted by factors such as their low educational levels. Further recent studies point to sectors of the minimally qualified precariat youth who are variously termed NEETS (not in education, employment or training), Chavs, or Yobs. I deploy a Marxist model of global capitalism to theorise the "usefulness" of this marginalised group for the capitalist system: they are useful as a 'reserve army of labour', available when in times of boom capitalism needs a supply of cheap labour, whose very insecurity ensures that their wages shall be kept low, and their tenure shall be made short.

My argument, further, is that "poor whites" are identity-disadvantaged, unlike ethnic and religious minorities in Britain many of whom have a strong and ethnic and religious heritage, and a desire and feeling of duty to be upwardly mobile, or at least to create those chances for their children. At the present time ethnic and religious

minorities are underrepresented in the precariat: I predict that in a couple of generations very few will remain in this lowest stratum, as Heath (2014) has predicted for Muslim minorities in Britain. Of course, disadvantaged white youth have a right to nurture, dignity and respect, and this may come from social policy action interventions, such as the basic living wage, advocated by Standing (2014) in his writing on this group.

### **9.3 Critical Realism: an intellectual adventure**

My intellectual adventures in the complex and challenging intellectual world of Roy Bhaskar's critical realism are explored in Chapter 3. Critical realism is an integrative philosophy of social research, and offers the possibility of integrating Marxist and spiritual assumptions in qualitative and quantitative research in humanistic ways, based on identifying aspects of a social structure that is "real", and not socially or linguistically constructed. This value-based account of what is real in society allows the researcher to construct models of dialectical critical realism, which enable individuals to not only personally reflect, but to also through social interactions, to build a consciousness which is liberating, and can expose the false ideologies which blame the stigmatised underclasses, or ethnic minority groups, for their perceived faults. Critical realism is commended as an ideal model for studying (and changing) schools. Within critical realism is the idea of "underlabouring" the process of subjecting social institutions and social interactions to critical scrutiny by evaluating those institutions and interactions through an ontologically grounded value base. The model chosen for that process in this thesis is termed *Child-Centred Humanism* (CCH).

### **9.4 Child-Centred Humanism, and child and adolescent self-esteem and self-actualisation**

The psychological well-being of the child needs to be carefully nurtured, I have approached this obligation as a developmental psychologist and systemic and family psychotherapist throughout my practice with children and adolescents. During my work with referred children in nursery education in the 1990's, I was aware of the challenges which a broader system of institutional racism could impose on the developing child's ethnic identity. The literature on the development of ethnic identity in children, and their later development of 'global' self-esteem is reviewed. Pleasingly, the research literature suggests that far from African-American (and by inference, African-Caribbean) children having low self-esteem, they had developed, as ethnic

and cultural groups, a self-esteem that is more favourable than that of their white peers (Bergner, 2009; Gibson et al., 2015). The reasons for this were several: the Black Pride movement was influential in America, and at the same time African Americans took support from their traditional reference groups in family, community and peers. Studies on black children attributing negative characteristics to black dolls and figures in standardised tests are now rarely published, either for political reasons, or because replications were failing to yield significance results. My (online) literature search yielded only one recent study according to the identifiers “color” and “dolls”, and other relevant search terms. This study by Wong & Hines (2015) found that preschool boys liked all colours except pink; girls liked the colour pink most; boys chose as their favourite toy anything with wheels; and girls chose dolls. Racism in children’s symbolic play may be disappearing, but genderism is alive and well.<sup>53</sup>

The most widely used scale measuring global self-esteem is the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), which has been translated into many languages, and has been validated cross-culturally in terms of its ability to predict various behaviours, and its correlation with psychiatric diagnoses, and with other validated measures of personal distress. In America, African-Americans now have the highest levels of self-esteem, but persistent gender differences in all cultural and ethnic groups in America, Canada, England and other countries remain. Why females have significantly lower RSES scores than males has not been satisfactorily explained in any research study. Examining evidence on child maltreatment, and sexual abuse in particular, I observe a number of studies showing that such events in childhood and adolescence resulted in depressed levels of self-esteem. Since girls and adolescent women are those most likely to suffer these effects, it is argued that if prior events of abuse and its effects are taken into account, gender differences should disappear – a hypothesis that was sustained in the Northern Schools study, summarised later.

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<sup>53</sup> Doll studies are still being used occasionally, by those working in the field of self-esteem enhancement of groups other than African Americans eg. Stokes-Guinan (2011).

### 9.5 The multicultural nursery

I have attempted to apply a critical realist model to a case study of an urban multicultural local authority day nursery in London, carried out in 2002-4. The original study was not conceived within a CR framework, but aimed to follow up through observations and interviews with staff and managers, on how staff were implementing some of the Early Learning Goals imposed on nurseries by government. Implicit in my observations was an enquiry into how well a programme for identity enhancement that I had initiated in the nursery (St. John's or StJ's) four years earlier, was now working. That earlier work had prepared multicultural materials for use by staff in order to enhance ethnic identity, and a positive sense of their cultural background in the children they cared for. StJ's served the Elgar Estate, a socially and economically deprived city area.

The results from the initial period of fieldwork indicated that staff noticed apparent tension between the learning goals they were supposed to follow, and the individualised care-plan devised for each child, in collaboration with the educational and social services involved with the child and his or her family. As for the interactions between staff and children, and between children themselves I could find no evidence of the formal or informal transmission of negative views concerning colour or ethnicity. The children freely interacted regardless of their ethnic origins.

The happy state of StJ's was brutally terminated, without notice, when the Council decided to close the nursery, refurbish it, and let it to the national government's Sure Start children's centre programme, which was beginning to unroll across England and Wales. The city earned a considerable fee from Sure Start for allowing this to happen, and justified the closure of StJ's in a document which was clouded in obfuscation. I interpreted this as part of the process of alienation which oppressed the lives of many of the population of the "Elgar Estate".

I have tried to fit these findings within a Critical Realist framework, but with only partial success. I found, as had Alderson (2013) that it is challenging to fit one's previous research into a CR framework when the original research was carried out before the researcher was familiar with a dialectical critical realist perspective. Critical realism is a model built on *ontology* (the 'real' nature of being and of social structure) and then analyses the actions of 'agents' in that framework in leaving behind

'absence', a form of concealed being or alienation, through a reflexive basis founded in dialectical critical realism which leads to self-actualization, morphogenesis, and upward social mobility. I was unable to describe such a process of liberation or the unmasking of alienation in my case study, because the structures of oppression and false ideology were too powerful, too strong.

Instead, I have constructed an ideal study which would be long-term and well-funded, with a variety of professionals, researchers, community workers and social activists who from the outset will proceed on a critical realist model of work on the Elgar Estate, one of Britain's most depressed urban areas, on a path of political challenge against the alienating forces which keep its population in check.

#### **9.6 Adolescent self-esteem, gender, ethnicity: recipes for failure and success**

On the Elgar Estate there are doubtless many child and adolescent victims of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. I can make this assertion from a review of the epidemiological literature on child maltreatment in Britain, which shows (a) about 12 per cent of girls and adolescent women experience unwanted sexual assaults, and for half this abuse will be intrusive of the child's body, and long-term; (b) for up to five per cent of the population childhood and adolescents, their lives will be marred by a combination of physical, emotional and sexual abuse – a combination of events which will likely have negative long-term consequences for self-esteem, mental health, and social adjustments. "Poly-victimisation" is particularly likely to occur in disrupted families who are part of the cycle of deprivation, and to live in low-income housing of the type that exists on the Elgar Estate. Because of the prevalence of negative adult outcomes (severe depression, suicidal behaviour, anxiety, PTSD, psychosis, alcoholism and addiction, unwanted pregnancies, instability of relationships, educational and occupational behaviour) public health advocates argue that a nation which prevents such early abuse, or offers prompt and effective treatment when abuse does occur, would earn considerable moral and fiscal credibility. In Britain today there is no sign of any such preventive or therapeutic programmes; rather, in times of economic constraint, mental health programmes for adolescents and adults are being pared, not improved.

Schools can be important agencies for the abused child to find support from a teacher or counsellor, who can then organise supportive programmes for the child or

adolescent – including guided peer support. But, as we have argued elsewhere (Sawyer & Bagley, 2016) in an age of underfunding, school class sizes are increasing, and teacher's lives are increasingly stressed by a variety of factors, which means that they are less able to respond to the individual needs of their pupils. The informal culture of the school, its system of friendships, interactions, social controls, informal punishments, persecution and bullying can, some studies show, make the psychological situation of the abused child worse, and she becomes the chronic victim of harassment, bullying and sexual assault, often with very negative consequences for her long term social and psychological adjustment.

At the family level, some research seems to show that there is a progression of events which undermine the self-esteem of the child: at first she is physically and or emotionally neglected and abused, which undermine the development of adequate self-esteem. The low self-esteem child who is approached by a sexually predatory adult will already have developed feelings of worthlessness, and will have poor ego defences, and no trusted adult to whom she can turn to for help to have the abuse stopped. A skilled abuser may alienate her further from conventional social relationships; this may be a repeated pattern for adolescents recruited into the sex industry. Certain areas of cities (typically on "sink estates") are prey to predatory sexual abusers.

I am writing here on the evidence concerning "white girls". What of ethnic minority children in Britain, from African-Caribbean, and Asian-origin families? British research to the present time has not offered much information on this, although it is clear that the incidence of child abuse in minority families may be significantly lower than in mainstream (white, indigenous) families, the processes of abuse and exploitation outlined above do occur in minority children.

Some of these issues are explored in the analysis of data from the Northern Schools study. This data-set, collected from 10 secondary schools in Northern England in 2006-7 has not been analysed before, so the results I presented are new to the literature on self-esteem, child maltreatment, and ethnicity. The results from 2,025 students aged 11 to 18 show that the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is a factorially valid and internally reliable measure across age and gender groups. It has face validity in terms of its correlation with measures of child and adolescent

adjustment. The results confirmed American and Canadian research, in that males had significantly “higher” levels of self-esteem than females. However, within females (but not in males) RSES scores had statistically significant variation across ethnic groups, black females in particular having higher self-esteem than white females. Reasons for this emerged when findings on child maltreatment were analysed. White females had significantly higher levels of such maltreatment, which correlated with depressed levels of self-esteem. When RSES data for all males and females in the Northern Schools study were compared, taking account of histories of child maltreatment, differences in self-esteem between genders failed to reach statistical significance.

Identifying students who had “devastated self-esteem” (extremely low levels of self-esteem, often associated with high levels of depression and anxiety) the study found that such adolescent women often had a history of chronic abuse, both physical and sexual, imposed on their childhoods. Some five per cent of females fell into this category, but they were unevenly distributed across the schools studied. We identified two schools within the same urban conurbation which had differing profiles of self-esteem, especially in female students, and much higher levels of devastated self-esteem, anxiety and depression, as well as high levels of sexual and physical abuse of females. One school, whose pupils were mainly White had salient profiles on these indicators of abuse, disadvantage and poor self-esteem. The contrasted school, which had mainly Black and Asian students, had relatively good levels of self-esteem, low levels of abuse histories, and adverse psychological profiles. I argued that such schools should be the focus of ethnographic case studies, which could be moulded within the critical realist framework of knowledge generation, and social change.

### **9.7 Final conclusions: an inclusive society?**

My conclusions concern the advocacy of an *inclusive society*. At the present time, the United Kingdom stands out amongst affluent nations as having high levels of income inequality, a high proportion of the population who are in poverty, with low rates of upward social mobility. In such a society immigrants and ethnic minorities will struggle to be upwardly mobile, and they may face discrimination in employment and promotion (as do women). High levels of inequality are dynamically linked to high levels of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia. Blaming victims for their lack of success is, I argue,

one of the functions through which the holders of wealth and power retain their status and position in society.

The review of recent history (1968 to 2008) on selected studies and episodes of history concerning ethnicity, equality and identity show that some aspects of British social structure are changing quite rapidly, while others maintain their basic character, in which for example, high levels of child morbidity and mortality are embedded in the class system.

African Caribbean ethnic groups are rising above the lowest sector of employment, achieving some upward mobility, but still have many rungs to rise. Mixed Black-White marriages are increasingly common, and a "liberal" sector of whites are interacting on terms of equality with black minorities. Black children and adolescents, according to various projective and self-completion measures, no longer devalue their identity or their self-esteem. My work in the period of 1998 to 2003 may have been part of that process of social change.

A strong racist or xenophobic element remains in British society however, although its venom has been somewhat diverted from attacking African-Caribbeans (and their black and mixed-race children) as a cultural group, into a new kind of ethnicism which attacks (figuratively and literally) Asian, African and Middle Eastern English communities and individuals who are Muslim, or simply "foreign".

Schools have been passive rather than active in the anti-racist movement. Schools as institutions have been under stress because of changing curricula, frequency of government imposed examinations, and underfunding. Class sizes are becoming larger, and this can undermine effective teaching. In the child-centred humanist philosophy, which "underlabours" the critical realist appraisal of social institutions concerned with equality, teachers should be able to know the children they teach as individuals, with unique sets of potentials and needs. When class sizes exceed 25, this is hardly possible. Britain's entrenched social class system, which ritualises the folkways of class membership, debases the possibilities for child-centred humanism.

Ethnic and religious minorities in Britain are in many cases, helping themselves by enhancing their life's path through the conscious memory of the deprivation of earlier generations, and the desire to advance socially and occupationally through



education, with cultural support for their minority group status. The 'poor whites' have fewer such "ethnic identities" on which to draw, in seeking to be upwardly mobile. It is these 'poor whites' who are variously described as "chavs", "yobs", "NEETS", "the precariat" - "the reserve army of labour" who frequently fail to rise from the alienation imposed upon them by the British class system. Ethnic minorities are (other factors being equal, such as fairness in employment practices) likely to rise occupationally, year by year, since it may be useful for a class-based economy to have "ethnic pockets" of labour who become increasingly skilled, and specialised in their work.

A persistent problem in British society is that of child maltreatment, which occurs in all social classes but certainly occurs most frequently amongst the poorest groups of society, whose family disorganisation is transmitted across generations, in certain sub-zones of the city. The female who is both sexually and physically abused (and emotionally abused as well, although this could not be measure in the Northern Schools study) will also be failed by her school's peer culture and her teachers, and is likely to go on to parent a new generation of victims. Research has shown that this cycle can be broken, and that doing so is highly cost effective. In 2016, this message had not been absorbed by national government, and is unlikely to be acted upon.

I turn, last of all, to the critical realist model of social research. The CR literature mostly addresses theoretical domains, which is appropriate for a newly emerging philosophy of social research. Applied studies using the model of dialectical critical realism (DCR) are relatively few. After the event, I have found it difficult to apply DCR concepts to my own research, so I have proposed an ideal study which is community and school based, long-term and well-funded, and has active DCR goals of reaching for praxis, and the morphogenetic model of social change. Looking at the alienation which is imposed on the lives of the lowest social class group, the precariat, I offer a DCR framework for the whole of British society, using the four levels of analysis which make up Baskhar's (2008) MELD framework of analysis.

<b>DCR Level</b>	<b>The Reality</b>
<i>Level 1M</i> 'Moral realism': harms and benefits are real and all-pervasive. These are experienced by individuals and sub-groups in varying ways ' ... because humans are vulnerable, sensitive, social beings, able to suffer and to flourish, moral realism is part of daily life.' (Archer, 2003; Bhaskar, 1986)	Class-dominated Britain serves the interests of Capital imposing alienation and absence upon sub-cultures, and maltreatment upon its precariat, who suffer in various ways, attempting to be 'socially mobile', but on capitalism's terms
<i>Level 2E</i> is the edge of transition, actively negating absences, aspiring to 'a transformational model of social activity', unmasking the 'master-slave' relationship (Bhaskar, 1993)	Child-centred humanism exposes the numerous absences imposed by class oppression, and in research tries to avoid 'moving the deck-chairs on the Titanic': rather 'planting' seeds of hope' (Archer, 2016)
<i>Level 3L</i> is the totality of change, including new totalities resulting from 2E change activism: 'connects past, present and future to illuminate how ... the younger generation all matter now.' (Archer, 2016)	Social structure is in flux, changing, adapting, resocialising alienated youth, with its own "urban" philosophy. Powerful class interests counteract change strategies through media, and material bribery ('the toys' or cultural capital of the Class above).
<i>Level 4D</i> involves critical reflexive analysis or morphogenesis by individuals. This process leads to 'transformative praxis', in which individual flourishing depends on everyone flourishing. 'Malign Meld' (Bhaskar, 2008) occurs when 'capitalism strikes back' and imposes new forms of masked alienation	"Breakthroughs" come piecemeal through pressure groups who are part of the class struggle on behalf of children's values e.g. ethnic minority consciousness, some schools, religious groups, Green value groups, "Fabian" scholar-activists. Progress is fragmented, since Capital's counter agents offer powerful trinkets to divert the proles.

The nursery school children, within their degraded urban community whom I studied in 2002 to 2004, and the secondary school students in the Northern Schools in 2006 to 2007 whose questionnaire data I analysed fit into the above table, of course. But we have been unable to speak for them, to act for them, to offer them any kind of way forward to escape from the hard hand of capitalism. Their alienation remains unmasked.

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(Note: this Bibliography contains works referred to either in the main Thesis, and/or in one of the Appended documents).

## **Appendix A**

Excluded Youth In Britain: Historical Review Of Research And Policy On Inequality, Education, Health, Family Support, And Community Development 1968-2008<sup>54</sup>

**Alice Sawyerr and Christopher Bagley**

***The Manchester Educational Research Network***

***June, 2016.***

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<sup>54</sup> This is a revised and updated version of a paper which appeared on the web site of The Manchester Educational Research Network in 2008.

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### *One: Overview*

Britain offered the promise of a quality education from preschool to university, but currently youth in the population who formed a more or less permanent underclass (at least ten percent of the population) rarely took full advantage of these educational opportunities, due to a variety of negative pressures in their lives. Up to 2008, Britain was one of the world's wealthiest countries, both in terms of gross national income, and average income per head – but this wealth was distributed much more unequally than in all countries of the developed world, with the exception of the United States. In Britain, health indicators – rates of illness and death from various diseases and “accidents” in the first two decades of life - illustrated the chronic disadvantages experienced by the poorest income quintile of the population. Differences between rich and poor families in this regard were actually increasing. The poor remained poor and in poorer health, decade upon decade, while the incomes and good health of the richest quintile improved year by year. The rich were becoming richer, but the poor remained poor (Goldthorpe & Jackson, 2007; Blanden et al., 2007; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

There were powerful structural problems within British society which created enduring economic poverty, and which persisted between generations, with its associated educational poverty: at least half of children from families in the poorest income quintile endured second-rate conditions of living, second-rate educational provision, and restricted occupational opportunities. These were “the excluded youth” of Britain. This sector of the population also suffered disproportionately from chronically poor health, maladaptive behaviour, exclusions from school because of their “special educational needs”, and various long-term neurological disorders.

Children from the underclass were much more likely to live in areas of large cities in Britain marked by social or poor housing, high levels of criminality, intergenerational family problems, and psychiatric illness in adults. The schools which serve their “sink” estates were often of poor quality, “crumbling schools” with high rates of teacher turnover, and the lack of specialist teachers in maths, science and languages in secondary schools. Classes in these schools were often too large for effective teaching, and teacher morale was often low. ‘Troublesome’ pupils from these schools were often subject to temporary or permanent exclusion from the educational system, and if they completed schooling they only atypically gained examination successes which enabled them to proceed to college or university. They were likely to become a chronically unemployed underclass, leading disorganized

lifestyles marked by petty criminality, as well the drift into begetting the next generation of the underclass.

Britain could offer focussed school-based educational and social work intervention services for families and children otherwise destined for school exclusion and educational failure. These demonstration projects have shown that although such interventions are costly in the short term they are nevertheless frequently successful in diverting young people from depressed and self-defeating lifestyles. Because of the criminal justice and social service costs saved, in the long-run these interventions have profound psychological and fiscal benefits.

The 'poverty of education' in Britain in the period under review was illustrated by international comparisons which highlighted Britain's comparative failure on a number of indicators of achievement, health and well-being in children and adolescents. Two groups were identified as having especially high levels of stress and failure within the educational system: children growing up in (or having recently left) residential child care; and children with 'special educational needs'. High levels of permanent and temporary school exclusions identified an educational system which practiced *exclusion* rather than inclusion. Children were particularly likely to be excluded from mainstream schools on grounds of alleged disruption, poor academic performance, disability of various kinds, or the simple fact of being bullied. Britain, in although a signatory to the UN Commission on the Rights of Disabled Children (2006), in practice violated this convention through its high levels of educational exclusion of children because of their cognitive, emotional or behavioural challenges. The plight of children with autistic spectrum disorders was particularly dire in this regard. Children labelled as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered suffered severe harm from bullying and assaults, and consequent threats to their mental health.

International literature on school class sizes has been reviewed, showing clearly that in smaller classes (16 or less) teachers could focus on the learning, emotional and behavioural needs of each pupil, without the need for forced exclusions. However, in Britain many school classes contained 30 or more pupils, and in secondary schools classes could be up to 60 in size, because of lack of specialist teachers in mathematics and science. It was argued that one of the crucial investments needed in a rich nation is one that of halving school class sizes.

We commended the government's Sure Start initiatives for under-fives in families in deprived areas, but almost certainly these programmes although successful in some applications, are underfunded and not comprehensive enough in scope to be fully effective. We describe an alternative type of intervention in which social workers and specialist

teachers are attached to primary and secondary schools serving deprived areas. Such interventions can be highly cost-effective in reducing school exclusions, problem behaviours in school and community, school drop-out and later problems such as unwanted pregnancy, drug use, unemployment and criminality. Here, we argue, is a way of preventing children of the poorest families becoming the next generation of the underclass.

### *Two: Theoretical Perspectives*

This historical overview takes a Marxian perspective on the sociology of education, and our position is similar to that of Collier (2002) who saw a fruitful marriage of Marxian concepts with those of Dialectical Critical Realism in Roy Bhaskar's (1992/2008) development of Hegel and Marx's ideas of alienation and its unmasking. We follow critical realists (e.g. Bhaskar, 2008; (Archer, 2007; Alderson, 2013 & 2016) on the sociology of Emile Durkheim, seeing societies and cultures as organic wholes, in which values and actions are interrelated within integrated social groupings in which the tendency to accept a central set of values may be accepted uncritically, even by those for whom such value systems offer profound disadvantages. As Marx for example. observed, the oppressions and dysfunctions of capitalism remain "unmasked" (Avineri, 1970). We follow too Bhaskar's (2008) extension of Marx's ideas of alienation into dialectical critical realism, whose ultimate aim is to remove the layers of "false consciousness" which cloud effective action for positive social change. In Marxian critical realism, the sociological theories of Weber and Durkheim are integrated within the liberating model of dialectical critical realism (Creaven, 2007)

Britain is a society in which an unequal social order, one based on class exploitation, is melded by a set of values both explicit and implicit, and by many rituals, religious observances, folkways and forms of speech, which make fractures between social class groups and their "masked alienation" difficult to understand or act upon.

Our vision of an ideal society is one which both maximises personal freedom through state intervention - an idea derived from the philosophy of T.H. Green - but also enhances that freedom through welfare reform (Greengarten, 1981). Translated into the modern era, this is the post-socialist philosophy of New Labour, in which the state's role is that of addressing not only individual liberty, but also in the ending of curbs on freedom imposed by lack of income, poor housing, poor health, and inferior education. The origin of this idea of *freedom from want* (in addition to J.S. Mill's idea of freedom to engage in a wide variety of actions) lies in the Beveridge Report of 1942, which proposed a programme for "social insurance and allied services", which has still been only partly realised.



The sociologist Peter Townsend has explored extensively in his empirical work the idea of *relative poverty*. While absolute poverty in countries such as India and Nepal has profoundly deleterious effects on child welfare (Bagley, 2008a; Simkhada and Bagley, 2008), even having basic needs met is not a formula for good child and family welfare when families in the poorest sector of society of a capitalist society are profoundly disadvantaged, relative not only to the richest fifth of the population, but relative also to the majority of the population as well.

It is the politics of despair, not of envy, which are likely to blight the lives of the relatively poor (Townsend, 1970 and 1979). Systems of welfare, far from lifting the lot of the poor to that of the average citizen, often served to depress the lives of families with children.

Townsend and Davidson (1992) drew on their previous work undertaken with medical colleagues (in "The Black Report") showing that economic deprivation and poor health are intimately and directly linked: poverty causes depressed and despairing lifestyles, conditions of work leading to higher injury and death rates, and environmental conditions which cause premature deaths at all ages. We review evidence showing that even in 2008 lower income and associated social class groupings were associated with significantly poorer health and higher death rates in children – and, moreover, these differences were increasing.

Another strand in the arguments about poverty and social exclusion of British youth derives from a fascination with the urban sociology derived from Robert Park and his colleagues in Chicago (Abbott, 1999). We are fascinated by the mapping and correlation of different aspects of social adaptation and social conditions within urban areas (usually, city wards and enumeration districts), examining data to see if rates of poverty and childhood accidents, and delinquency for example, occur within the same neighbourhoods, probably fuelled by the same social forces. While these correlations do not imply direct cause, they invite fuller case studies.

In Britain in the decade 1996 to 2005, the sector of youth with the highest failure rates in secondary schools were the poor whites, who saw many of the hard-working and ambitious children of immigrants overtaking them in schools, and in economic settings. These "poor white" individuals were likely to be those who were most hostile to their ethnic minority peers. Their racism emerged from a form of status deprivation (Runciman & Bagley, 1971; Bagley et al., 1979). This idea of reactionary ideas emerging from the relative deprivation of the precariat is also observed by Standing (2014) and Goodwin and Heath (2016).

The reason why relative deprivation in an affluent society creates both resentment, anger and despair is intriguing, and we must probably look to social psychological theory, such

as that advanced by Wilkinson & Pickett (2009) in their important book *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. We note however Alderson's (2013) critique: that explaining the ills engendered by relative poverty can in fact be victim-blaming rather than system-blaming. Alderson implies that we should consider a Marxian approach examining who gains from inequality in society, rather than engaging in a psychological analysis of the impact on 'the losers'. Indeed, Alderson (2013, p. 108) is critical of Wilkinson's apparent attempt to **pathologise** the poor, using animal models of stress caused by intense competition.

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The fact that the segregated, underclass is the *victim in being pathologised* should not lead us into the semantic slippage of assuming that because "the poor" are often "mad or bad", that they are also blameworthy, and need to be controlled or oppressed. This underclass is caused by, is a function of, the capitalist system of exploitation (Standing, 2014).

While we strive hard not to blame the poor, we do throughout this document advocate support and help for the poor and their children, to protect them from the worst of the ills imposed by the capitalist state. We frequently stray into the language of accountancy, dwelling on cost-benefit analysis. Spending a small amount of money on social service and educational support, will yield great financial reward in the medium to long run. Why is this message so hard for governments to accept? Perhaps they do not, in the final analysis, wish to radically interfere with the system of capital and class privilege which Britain, more than any other European nation, enjoys.

### *Three: Social Class, Inequality and the Crisis in British Education*

For those struggling to provide universal, inclusive, free quality education at primary and secondary levels worldwide, the British case was (in 2008) paradoxical. Pupils were allowed to stay in school and take public examinations until the age of 18, and were encouraged to apply for college and university entrance (Dutton et al., 2005). For the large majority of students from the disadvantaged social classes, comprising about a fifth of the nation, the possibility of entering tertiary education was however a vain hope (HEFCE, 2005).

In addition an important minority of pupils at secondary level were temporarily or permanently excluded from school (or permanently exclude themselves) because of their alienation from school and learning, or because of problems of behaviour and underachievement which made them unacceptable to their schools, who in consequence suspended or permanently expelled them. Cumulatively since 1996 at least 200,000 (more than two per cent) of students under age 17 had been permanently or temporarily excluded from school by the end of 2007 (ONS,

2009).<sup>55</sup>

The rate of these exclusions was significantly higher in areas of Britain marked by poor or social-tenancy housing, areas in which a high proportion of parents were living in poverty, marked by various indicators of social deprivation (NLT, 1998; Reed, 2004). For youth of Afro-Caribbean descent, permanent exclusion rates were three times those in other ethnic minorities, a practice described as reflecting a school culture of 'institutional racism' (Wanless, 2006; Strand, 2008; Craig, 2009).

The number of rejected, dispirited or discouraged pupils who never take any public examinations at age 16 had by late 2005 reached a record level in Britain, with 12.6 percent of adolescents leaving school without any public examination successes. These young people either became permanently unemployed, or took unskilled jobs (Bekhradnia, 2006). According to OECD figures (2006 & 2007) Britain ranked poorly (rank 27 out of 30 OECD industrialized nations) in terms of young people staying in school or further education beyond the age of 16. GCSE failure rates, disproportionately high in children from poverty backgrounds and from schools serving depressed neighbourhoods "expose the increasing gap between rich and poor" (Garner, 2008a).

Fimister (2001) in a review of Britain's "wasted youth" undertaken for the Child Poverty Action Group pulled together evidence showing the health and educational disadvantages of being born into a family marked by economic poverty. Such families were particularly likely to live in blighted neighbourhoods, marked by an excess of poor housing. The collection of research papers edited by Fimister (2001) was offered to the New Labour government as a blueprint for change in crucial areas of social policy. Writing seven years later, we noted that New Labour had taken up very few of these challenges.

#### *Four: The Paradox: Education Inequality in a Wealthy Country*

Britain was one of richest countries in the world according to average GNP per citizen (Brewer et al., 2005; OECD, 2006), and by 2007 ranked fifth among the world's top seven richest nations (World Bank, 2008# ONS, 2009).

However, the distribution of this wealth was more unequal than in most European nations (Hobson, 2001; Bradshaw & Chen, 2002). Britain ranked 51<sup>st</sup> on the inequality index (i.e. had a high score on the Gini Coefficient, which measures unequal distribution of wealth) in the 124 countries included in international comparisons (UN, 2005). Nordic and some former Communist countries as well as Japan had the most equal distributions of national

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<sup>55</sup> In a 'back to the future' footnote: Stahl (2015) reports that 333,000 pupils were 'temporarily' excluded in the year 2010-11.

wealth. Britain's distribution of national wealth had been becoming more unequal: in 1976 the poorest 50 percent of the British population owned only eight percent of national wealth; by 2003 this had fallen to seven percent (HM Revenue & Customs, 2006). OECD data for 2006-7 indicated that Britain was becoming more unequal, with the richest 10 percent possessing nine times more wealth than the poorest 10 percent of the population (Booth, 2008a).

There was a strong correlation in 21 major industrialized countries between higher Gini scores (indicating a greater income gap between rich and poor) and diminished life expectancy (De Vogli et al, 2005). This correlation (0.87) was unaffected by the availability of a universal, free health service in any particular country, including Britain which ranked strongly in terms of inequality of income distribution. In part a high Gini score is due to the failure of social security and welfare payments in Britain to have had very much influence on patterns of income inequality (Bradshaw & Chen, 2002). Britain's Minister for Social Inclusion [sic] (Armstrong, 2006) conceded that 3.66 million adults (some nine percent of the population) had five or more chronic disadvantages, including high rates of relative poverty, poor housing, chronic unemployment, poor health, and living in an environmentally deprived neighbourhood. In international measurements, the link between infant mortality and income inequality in Britain was actually increasing, relative to other developed nations (Collison et al., 2007).

#### *Five: Poverty, Social Deprivation and Inequality in Britain*

Although there is high average wealth per head in Britain, such wealth is more unequally distributed than in many comparable countries (Shaw, 2004). This is reflected in a persistent, self-perpetuating underclass whose poor educational and occupational achievements, and often disorganised behaviour was frequently transmitted from generation to generation – Bagley (2002) summarized some of this evidence in a book on 'the child abusers', and argued that adults who had grown up in poverty-laden, neglectful and abusing homes were particularly likely to become abusive or neglecting parents themselves.

Economic poverty in Britain is relative rather than absolute (Townsend, 1979). Few individuals starve, although the number of homeless families appeared to be growing, and many families endured poor quality, rented accommodation. British government data indicated that by June, 2004 the number of homeless families seeking emergency accommodation had reached an all time high at 97,280 in the previous quarter, an overall increase of 135 per cent since 1997 (ODPM, 2004).

Neustatter (2004) reviewed a variety of statistical resources on poverty and deprivation affecting young people in Britain. UNICEF figures indicated that although Britain in terms of total wealth stood near the top in world rankings, Britain stood nineteenth in the world league of proportion of families with children in marked poverty, a higher percentage in relative poverty than in countries such as Turkey, Poland and Hungary. Britain imprisoned more young people (population adjusted rates) than any other European country except Russia, and there was, Neustatter argued, a direct link between poverty and deprivation, and with delinquent behaviour in young people. These young delinquents were particularly likely to have failed at all levels of schooling, were particularly likely to be truants, and to be permanently excluded from regular schooling.

Narey (2008) reported data showing that there has been a five-fold increase in the locking up of children aged 10 to 14 since 1997, many being incarcerated for trivial offences. Only Russia, of developed nations, held a greater proportion of this age group in jail at any one time. The cost of incarcerating a child for one year was £185,000, and if this sum had been used on behavioural support, counselling, family support and diversion programmes, the drift into more serious criminality could well have been avoided (RESET, 2007). Many children in the system of child detention were “written off” at age 12, the implicit assumption being that they could never be reformed because of their disorganised or abusive family backgrounds. (Narey, 2008). Together with the young delinquents in these child detention centres are numbers of children who had committed no crime, but who had mental health problems, were suicidal or were considered to be sexually promiscuous (Brogi & Bagley, 1998). Very often these were children from poverty backgrounds, victimized because of behaviours associated with coming from economically poor or disorganized families. Later many were likely to drift through the child care system, into young offender jails, through to the adult jail system. Narey’s (2008) figures indicated that only some five percent of the £445 millions spent in the previous year by the Youth Justice Board went to preventive programmes, the bulk being spent on incarceration.

A United Nations report (Bowcott, 2008) criticized Britain as a nation that was intolerant of children, marked by a set of public attitudes which might cause rather than reflect youth alienation, and imprisoned youth for whom rehabilitation and diversion programmes would be much more efficient.

#### *Six: Inequality and Relative Poverty in Britain*

Increasing affluence in British society has not been associated with a ‘trickle down’ of wealth, and income inequalities in Britain had increased rather than diminished (Glennerster, Hills, Piachaud & Webb, 2005). In their major study of poverty in the United

Kingdom, replicating Rowntree's work of a hundred years earlier Glennerster et al. (2005) found pockets of extreme poverty all over Britain, associated with low wages, unemployment, and other indicators of social deprivation including underachievement of school pupils. In assessing social policy alternatives they noted the continued failure of government initiatives to end poverty, and offer the following "pessimistic" outcome if government initiatives continued to fail:

"On a bleaker, pessimistic view, any success in tackling underlying inequalities would come too slowly to counter continuing polarisation of economic opportunities. Those without access to capital, home ownership and good education for their children, would fall further behind – widening wealth inequalities would continue to reinforce intergenerational links, for instance those with most wealth purchase houses near good schools. Even if policy succeeded in raising the skills of some young people, the lowest wages would still be set by an increasingly cut-throat global market."

It is salutary that proportionately, more families in Britain lived in relative poverty than in any other country in the unenlarged European Union (Policy Action Team, 2000). Brewer & Gregg (2003) reviewed the British evidence, and looking at various definitions of poverty and concluded that: "Over the past 20 years the incidence of relative poverty among Britain's children has tripled." The relative poverty measure which is now generally accepted is that a family in poverty had an income of less than 60 per cent of the median income for the country as a whole. A family in which a parent relied on state benefits or on minimum-wage earnings would inevitably have fallen into this band of poverty. Struggling with this low level of income was likely to put a significant strain on a family's psychological coping resources. At least ten per cent of British families fell within this poverty sector (Glennerster et al., 2005). Despite a number of policy initiatives by the national government, relative child poverty had diminished less than politicians had hoped, for a variety of fiscal reasons (Brewer, Goodman, Shaw & Shepherd, 2005).

Data for 2005-6 indicated that relative poverty (incomes less than 60 percent of the national median income) had increased from the previous year, with 12.7 million adults and 3.8 million children being in such relative poverty. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies research, the causes of this rise were the failure of 'family credits' and of the minimum wage to keep pace with the rise in average wages, and the general cost of living (Adam, Brewer & Shepherd, 2006; Adam, 2007; Brewer et al. 2009). For the fiscal year 2006-7 the numbers of children living in families with incomes below the poverty line had again increased, this time by some 100,000, meaning that the official goal of halving the amount of child poverty by 2010 could not be realised (Booth, 2008b). It should be mentioned that the criterion for a child to be eligible for free school meals is a family income which was at

least £2000 a year below the official poverty line (Curtis, 2008d). This meant that in many schools there were pupils (more than a million in the UK as a whole) from economically poor families who did not receive a free school lunch.

Government goals in 2008 were to significantly reduce child poverty by 2020, but this goal would not be met if current economic trends prevailed (Hirsch & Sutherland, 2009). There was an unexpected rise in child poverty in the period 2004-2007, largely due to the failure of tax-based measures supposed to help working parents (Gentleman, 2009). Effectively, a missing £2.2 billions needed to be transferred to economically poor families in the period 2004-2007 by welfare and fiscal systems of child and family poverty were to be reduced in line with earlier government promises (Hirsch & Sutherland, 2009). Using 2007-8 figures for estimated levels of unemployment for the next decade, these authors calculated that the proportion of children in poverty in 2020 would be about the same as the percentage in 2010. However, because of high levels of unemployment, families that remained within this intergenerational cycle of poverty would be deeper in poverty. These effects were thought likely to have multiple, negative effects on family welfare and adjustment. Hirsch & Sutherland (2009) advocated therefore vigorous programmes of skill training which, with free child care, could enable adults and adolescents to enter the work force productively. Given an economic recession that began in 2008, it is likely that by 2020 the numbers who are “deeply in poverty” because of chronic unemployment and inadequate welfare payments will have increased significantly (Hirsch & Sutherland, 2009). Within this chronically poor, deskilled group the numbers in absolute poverty might well have increased. In 2009 the numbers who were unemployed and therefore in relative poverty, had increased by more than a million over two years. The job-seekers allowance (£64.30 a week, or £50.95 a week for the under 25s) was only 10.5 percent of the average wage, compared with such allowances which were 21 percent of the average wage in 1979, and 22 percent in 1912 when the unemployment insurance system was introduced in Britain (Bradshaw & Lynes, 2009).

The evidence indicated that by 2008 in each British city there were areas of ‘social exclusion’ where live a high proportion of economically poor people living in low-quality housing (previously identified by Bagley, 1984). There appeared to be both a policy allocation of stressed families into low-rent public housing, and a movement into poor quality, low-rent housing in the private sector by the marginally coping. In 2005 in Greater Manchester for example, there were large areas of public housing with many boarded-up buildings, in which truanting or excluded youth squatted or pursued recreations which included drug-using and dealing. One-third of children in Britain’s North West region (which includes Greater Manchester) lived below the official poverty line (Carter, 2005). In five

boroughs of Greater Manchester the proportion living at or below the official 'relative poverty' line was over fifty percent (Osuh, 2005). It is not coincidental that in these areas marked by poor housing and much family poverty, elementary school class sizes were often very large – 18.1 percent of classes had 30 or more children, and more than 5,000 children across Greater Manchester were in elementary school classes of 35 or more (Haile, 2005). Adolescents in these areas of Manchester had particularly low levels of GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) passes at age 16 (Leeming, 2007).

Bennett (2005) reviewed evidence claiming that: "Labour ... failed to transform the life chances of Britain's poorest children, despite a succession of initiatives costing billions of pounds. By the age of six, clever children from poor homes have already fallen behind less-able pupils in the classroom, according to a progress report on Labour's eight years in power." (Bennett, 2005). Numbers of children in families living in "relative poverty" (family income less than 60% of the national median income) had increased to 12.7 millions in the accounting year 2005-6, compared to 12.1 millions in the previous accounting year (Seager, 2007). The number of children in these economically poor families had risen in the same period by 3.8 percent. The official goal of halving the rate of child poverty by 2010 appeared to have no possibility of achievement (Booth, 2008).

When we translate these dismal indicators of economic deprivation for families with children into rates of physical and emotional maltreatment of children in Britain, we can see how crucial economic deprivation may be in undermining family life. Sidebotham et al. (2006), for example, followed up 14,256 children in a longitudinal cohort, and identified two per cent who were maltreated in the first five years of life, to an extent requiring social service interventions. Significant factors predicting maltreatment were having a single parent, or having two youthful parents; low educational achievement in parents; psychiatric illness in a parent; high levels of material deprivation; residence in public housing or frequent moves of residence; and lack of supportive social networks. These findings replicate those made in several previous studies (Bagley, 2002).

In studying children in primary and secondary schools in deprived urban areas, we noticed a marked tendency for poverty, child maltreatment and neglect, and social disorganization to be transmitted across several generations in stressed families living in particular sectors in urban areas (Bagley and Pritchard, 1998 a & b). Given the number of teenaged mothers in these deprived groups, it was not uncommon for schools to remember the parents and even the grandparents of these children as "problem pupils" in their own time at school.

Ballard (2008) the incoming president of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers observed this trend in rural as well as in urban settings. According to the evidence, he



reviewed at least a tenth of children in modern Britain continued to live in near-Third World conditions, short of basics such as food, clothing and proper housing. He observed: "Poverty is the scourge of our society. It is unacceptable to me that children from poor families are treated as if they were feckless and idle, as if poverty was their fault ... These children must become our collective responsibility." He observed that in his 30 years of teaching in rural Somerset he had seen grandchildren of earlier pupils pass through the same schools, trapped in the same levels of poverty. "There still remain children living in systemically poor families, and I mean really poor, not just a bit short of the readies, poorly housed, poorly clothed, culturally isolated and deprived. In rural communities, the lack of aspiration and opportunity is more acute. The lack of affordable housing and lack of well-paid work forces young people and families to find homes and jobs away from rural areas, ultimately leading to the closure of playgroups, schools and youth services."

The statistics on relative poverty showed a marked north-south division in Britain, with families and children in midland, Welsh, northern and Scottish regions much more likely to experience poverty than families in the South East of Britain – a gap which was widening and was now more marked than at any time in the past sixty years (Martin & Kitson, 2008).

An important study by Noden & West (2009a) followed up 550,000 pupils whose abilities were assessed at age 11, in order to examine the potential impact of poverty (measured by a child receiving free school meals) on GCSE success at age 16. Despite having high scores on the SAT test at age 11, the top ten percent of pupils from poverty backgrounds did significantly poorer in terms of obtaining five GCSEs at grade 3 or better (including English and mathematics) at age 16, than did their "less bright but economically better off peers". Overall, 22 percent of the "ever in receipt of free school meal group" achieved five good GCSEs, compared with 52 percent of the remainder. This research reinforces the findings from many other British studies: belonging to families in the poorest social classes in Britain has a profoundly negative effect on children's life chances.

#### *Seven: Health, Income and Social Class*

Health indicators measured according to income, or social and occupational class groupings are a useful and telling way of measuring social deprivation. In modern Britain some 3,000 annual deaths of children aged 0 to 14 were associated with economic poverty, reflected in poor perinatal care, sudden infant death syndrome, other infant deaths associated with infectious disease, and deaths from 'accidents' – dying in fires, and being struck by motor vehicles (Bagley, 1992; Baker et al., 1998; Smith, 2003; Kyffin et al., 2004; Sethi et al, 2007). The evidence indicated that poorer quality, older housing, overcrowding and degraded environments were associated with a greater incidence of accidents and

fires, infectious illnesses in children and young people, as well as with poorer use of preventive health services. Children of the unskilled manual social classes in Britain were twice as likely to die in an 'accident' compared to those in middle class families (Rahman et al., 2000).

A comprehensive UK study by Mitchell et al. (2000) confirmed the strong link between poverty and increased rates of child morbidity and mortality: "Redistribution of wealth would have the greatest absolute effect because it could improve the lives of the largest number of people. Eradication of child poverty would have the greatest relative effect (in terms of the proportion of lives saved)." That the potential for intervention can be highly cost-effective is illustrated by the experimental studies of Howden-Chapman et al. (2007), which provided insulation to the houses of 2,200 individuals, compared with a similar number of comparable individuals who did not receive such insulation. After a year the 'insulated housing' individuals had significantly fewer cases of respiratory disorder, fewer days off school and work for respiratory illness, fewer GP consultations, and fewer hospital admissions. In a subsequent study Howden-Chapman et al. (2008) provided additional heating to families with 409 asthmatic children, and controls with similar medical problems. Children in the heated houses had significantly fewer days off school, better general health, fewer respiratory tract infections, and fewer episodes of night coughing.

Government figures (Elliott, 2005) indicated that between 1997 and 2005 the child mortality gap between rich and poor families in Britain had widened. By 2005 parents in the lowest income quintile were 19 per cent more likely to have a child die from any cause in the first five years of life than were parents in the highest income quintile. Infant mortality rates had a strong statistical link to earlier mortality at any age in surviving members of low income families. A report from Scotland (Scottish Office, 2005) indicated that in the most deprived urban areas, childhood (0-14) 'accidents' were three times the rate in the most advantaged areas. Just over half of these 'accidents' involved a child pedestrian.

An English study (Heyderman et al., 2004) showed that meningitis deaths in children (0-4) were three times higher in the lowest income quintile families, compared with children from the wealthiest fifth of the population. In Scotland too the "poverty gap" had, in terms of child health, widened: In a review of more than one million low birth weight babies born in Scotland it was found that women from economically poor families were 2.4 times more likely than women from the wealthiest quintile to have a child with birth weight less than 2,500 grams, a known factor in adverse child development (Scottish Office, 2006).

Child mortality and morbidity were linked to many indicators of social deprivation and social disorganisation, including the incidence of one-parent families, educational under-

achievement, school exclusions, and secondary schools which had high staff turnover and class-sizes which were too large for effective teaching. Deprived children become deprived parents, and the cycle of poverty and disadvantage affected each subsequent generation (DoH, 1998; Boateng, 2000). Just as lack of wealth and educational under-achievement are often socially inherited, so was the tendency to commit crime, to be a single mother in the teenaged years, the tendency to have poorer pre- and post-natal care, and to be homeless, spurring the cycle of child deprivation into the next generation (SEU, 2000 a,b,c).

A report from the British Medical Association (BMA, 1999) found that the income and health gap between the highest and lowest social classes in Britain had increased significantly in the previous decade. In Britain's poorest social classes the proportion of underweight babies and associated perinatal morbidity and mortality was the highest in any developed country, higher than in countries such as Slovenia and Albania. Observing that children born in the poorest sector of the British population were 70 per cent more likely to die or suffer serious disease or life-threatening accidents in the first five years of life than children in other social classes, the report comments: "The first five years of life are absolutely critical to the development of children's bodies, minds and personalities. Deprivation early in life causes life-long damage, delinquency and despair ... Poorer children are more prone to accident and injury because they often have nowhere to play but the street or a dangerous room such as the kitchen. They live on estates where there are broken glass, needles and other dangerous objects." The report estimates that each £1 spent on improving the conditions of child health in the early years would ultimately save £8 in later health care costs.

Dyer (2005) using government data, indicated that the social class differentiation in 'disease free years' remains unchanged over a decade – in other words, children and young people in the poorest social classes have chronic illness rates which continued to be significantly greater, compared with children of the wealthier social classes. Although differences in death rates had diminished somewhat over time when social classes were compared, those in the poorest social classes died, on average 6.0 years earlier than those in the most advantaged social class areas. Put another way, children of the well off were becoming healthier, but yet in 2002 children of the very poor had not increased their chances of surviving or avoiding serious accident and disease in their early years.

Data from the 2001 census indicated that the most economically deprived quintile of the British population had an incidence of low birth-weight deliveries (<1500 grams), and long-term childhood illnesses that was twice the incidence of such conditions in the most advantaged fifth of the population (McFarlane, Stafford & Moser, 2004). Life expectancy in

the most disadvantaged wards in parts of Greater Manchester, for example was ten years lower than in the most advantaged (Woodhouse, 2005).

A study by Petrou et al. (2006) showed that British children under 10 in the poorest segment of families (Class V) had death rates which are 40 percent higher than those of children from the richest group of families (in Social Classes I and II). This longitudinal study of 117,212 individuals showed that non-fatal respiratory disease, poisoning and accidents had the same social class bias.

In a comparison of “external” causes of mortality in children aged 0 to 15 for the census years 1981 and 2001, Edwards et al. (2006) showed that although deaths from fires, poisoning, pedestrian and cycle “accidents” and from unexplained causes (e.g. SIDS) had more than halved over twenty years, in the poorest class (in which a male parent was absent, had never worked, or was long-term unemployed) child death rates had not declined over 20 years. Compared with Professional and Managerial Classes I and II, this “underclass” of the unemployed Class V group experienced pedestrian deaths in children at 20.6 times the upper class rate; child cyclist deaths at 27.5 times the upper class rate; deaths in fires at 37.7 times the upper class rate; and 'undetermined' (including SIDS) deaths 32.6 times the upper class rate.

Further work by Edwards et al. (2008) studied all hospital admissions for serious injury involving children 0 to 15 in the period 1999 to 2004. This study found that children from the most deprived areas (according to census indicators) were 4.1 times as likely to be seriously injured as pedestrians, and 4.7 times as likely to be injured as cyclists, compared to children living in the most advantaged areas.

Blair et al. (2006) analysed a longitudinal cohort in order to identify 369 SIDS deaths occurring in their longitudinal study comparing cohorts between 1984 and 2003, compared with 1,300 controls with non-fatal illness gathered from hospital records. While the rate of SIDS had reduced markedly over 20 years in middle class and stable working-class families (probably due to public health messages and perinatal advice given to new mothers) the causes of SIDS amenable to parent education were increasingly relevant in the poorest socio-economic groups living in the most disorganized families. Thus the proportion of SIDS caused by parent co-sleeping with a child had risen from 12 to 50 percent, and the number of mothers with a SIDS infant who smoked during and after pregnancy had increased from 57 to 86 percent. Both co-sleeping and parental smoking were causally related to the tragedy of sudden infant death, and had a much higher incidence in the poorest social classes.

A review by the British Medical Association (BMA, 2006) on diagnosable and treatable *mental health conditions* in children and adolescents under 16 suggested an overall prevalence rate of about ten percent, ranging from internalizing disorders involving anxiety, depression and self-harm, through to externalizing disorders involving extreme aggression, destructiveness and hyperactivity. Some major causes of these disorders identified were high levels of economic deprivation, poor perinatal care, inadequate parenting in adults who themselves often had mental illness of various kinds, chronic family poverty, and welfare dependency (Wilkinson, 2005). All too often these young people would become adults with a variety of dysfunctional behaviours which reflected their disorganized childhood, their movements into and out of alternative care, and their experience of abuse and neglect of various kinds (Bagley and King, 2003; Bagley, 2002).

Goodman et al. (2002) in a major interview study with several thousand British children found that some eight percent had a serious psychiatric disorder, a rate which had doubled over three decades. These tended to be chronic illnesses, particularly with regard to conduct disorder. The rates of psychiatric disorders varied significantly with developing higher rates of addiction, alcoholism, poor sexual health, and suicidal behaviours in adolescence and beyond. The “usual suspects” were identified as aetiological factors – poverty, low birth weight, neighbourhood deprivation, youthful parents, and disorganized family life. The Avon longitudinal study of some 6,300 children indicated that by their early teens, up to ten percent had one or more indicators of psychotic illness (Horwood et al., 2008). Significant background factors in this symptom pattern were poor intellectual achievements, being bullied at school, birth to a younger mother, and a family history of depression.

Scott & Maughan (2008) in a major inquiry on the well-being of children gathered together a wide range of evidence, including that from several specially commissioned surveys. They confirmed that rates of emotional and conduct disorder in children aged 16 or less had at least doubled in the past 25 years, and at least a million children in Britain had a diagnosable psychiatric disorder, which tended to be chronic in nature (Goodman et al., 2002). The major reason they adduce is the increasing amount of income inequality in Britain, and the pressures this brings to bear on young parents. Poor mental health is associated with both poverty and deprivation in parents (especially mothers), family disorganization, and drug and alcohol use in older siblings and parents (Meltzer et al., 2000; ONS, 2009). Poor parental mental health was transmitted to their children, which was in turn transmitted in many cases, to the next generation when those children became adults.

The official review of *Social Trends* issued by the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2009) charted the continuation of child poverty, poor housing linked (almost certainly in causal

terms) with the risk of being injured or killed in pedestrian or cycling accidents in children and adolescents. While the number of children living in a high degree of relative poverty had fallen to 22 percent in 2007, from a peak of 28 percent in 1999 these poverty rates were well below government policy targets (ONS, 2009). No less than 31 percent of British children according to the ONS survey of Britain for 2006-2007 continued to live in 'non-decent' homes, marked by problems of upkeep of fabric, poor insulation, and heating problems

Friedli's (2009) research on increasing rates of self-harm and attempted suicide in young people in Britain meshed with this research, to paint a dismal picture of a generation a significant minority of whom were growing up poor, angry and sad in a wealthy country. The number of calls to crisis help lines by adolescents had increased by more than a quarter in one decade, the increase being greatest amongst boys (ONS, 2009).

This section offers the conclusion that chronic poverty in isolated (but frequently occurring) subcultures, mostly urban but sometimes rural, was causally associated with high rates of illness (both physical and psychological), and death in children and adolescents, relative to those in stable working class, middle class and upper working class families. Moreover, it is argued, scholastic failure is also linked to the conditions of family life which undermine health. Indeed, poor health and intellectual disability are closely linked.

#### *Eight: Poor Health and Intellectual Disability*

In an important study, Emerson and Hatton (2007) examined data for a representative sample of 12,160 British children under 17 located within the Department of Work and Pensions' 'families with children' study. They found that children with intellectual disability were significantly more likely to have poor health on many different measures: 31 percent of these "poor health" pictures were attributed to the socio-economic disadvantages endured by their parents.

A possible explanation of findings such as these comes from the American research of Farah et al. (2006) which showed that "being poor can damage your brain". Growing up in poverty was associated with a variety of cognitive disadvantages and differential brain functions (often associated with learning difficulties and other conditions such as ADHD - attention-deficit hyperactive disorder). The disadvantages of the poor which made them experience schooling (in behavioural and learning terms) differentially were not attributable to genetic factors, but to adverse conditions of pregnancy and birth, poor diet, early illness of various kinds, abuse and neglect, and environmental toxins.

#### *Nine: The Increase of Relative Poverty and Persistence of Poor Health: Public Health and Social System Interventions*

Analysis of Census and Household Survey data on deprived families and communities in Britain by Meen et al. (2005) shows that cycles of deprivation are very difficult to break; virtually every local authority in the north of Britain contained persistently enduring zones of extreme deprivation in terms of housing type and individual characteristics marked by poverty, chronic unemployment, and personal disorganisation (indicated by high levels of crime, delinquency, drug use, and mental illness).

Any young people who can, move out of such areas, but few want to move into such areas marked by vandalism and frequent community violence, and even in an era of housing shortage many houses on these 'sink estates' remain abandoned, and are often vandalised.

A comprehensive overview of available data on income inequality and health indicators in Britain up to 2004 concluded that despite the stated policy intentions of government, income inequalities had increased steadily in the previous two decades, and the gap in life expectancy between the highest and lowest social classes had actually grown, just as differences in scholastic achievement between social class and income groups were, in parallel, growing larger (Shaw, Davey-Smith & Dorling, 2005).

A study from the National Audit Office (NAO, 2007a) found that 16 percent of Britons lived in a household where no-one was working or seeking work, a group in danger of "... drifting into a spiral of joblessness, poverty, ill-health and crime" which was often transmitted to children of such families. Permanently jobless households were found in particular, in depressed urban areas of London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester. Dorling (2007) in an analysis of 40 years of British census data showed that the poverty gap between low and high income groups was by 2005 greater than at any time since 1968, the largest increase occurring in the previous fifteen years. Moreover, this research showed, there are pockets containing families with very low incomes in most British cities, and it was likely that the schools which serve these areas would have to grapple with problems of high teacher turnover, and a higher than average proportion of truanting, rebellious and poorly achieving pupils (Lawlor, 2007).

Toynbee and Walker (2008) pointed to figures showing that the wealthiest ten percent of Britons owned 47 percent of national wealth in 2002, a figure that had risen to 54 percent in 2006. The poorest ten percent owned about three percent of national wealth at these two points in time. Thus, the rich are becoming richer, but the poor remain poor.

The Wanless Report (2004) analysed the nature of health inequalities in Britain, and proposed the achievement of a number of goals which included: halving the rate of child

poverty by 2010, eradicating it by 2020; reducing inequalities in health by reducing measured infant mortality by 10 percent, and increasing life expectancy at birth by the same margin, by 2010; improving life chances of children by reducing the conception rate in under-18s by 50 percent, by 2010; and reducing the number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents by 50 percent by 2010. However, research by the National Audit Office (NAO, 2009) indicated that death rates in child pedestrians and cyclists were actually increasing, especially in deprived urban areas. By the time this review ended, there was no indication whatever, that any of the Wanless goals would be achieved.

Godlee (2007) cited available international data which showed that “the healthiest and happiest societies are those with the most equal distribution of income”. According to her data Britain was not amongst these “healthy societies”, and none of the goals set by Wanless had any possibility of achievement within the time frames he advocated. Indeed, the rate of relative child poverty had increased rather than diminished (Seager, 2007), reflected in high levels of child mortality (in those aged 0 to 4) compared with other developed nations (Collison et al., 2007).

Professor Sir Ian Kennedy, Chair of the British Health Care Commission, in February, 2007 issued a report on “unintentional injuries to children” in Britain, through the Audit Commission. The cost of such admissions to Accident and Emergency Departments in hospitals was around £146 millions a year. Deaths from such serious injuries (burns, poisoning, severe child abuse, falling down stairs, road traffic accidents were a major cause of death in childhood, and were 13 times as frequent in the poorer social classes, than in families from other social classes. Kennedy found that national and local governments and health care systems had no plans in place to prevent such deaths. None of the initiatives which he advocated in February 2007 had, at the time that this review ended (May, 2009) been undertaken.

By 2007 more than 75,000 pedestrians and cyclists of all ages had been killed or seriously injured on British roads, the increase in fatalities over two years being 11 percent (NAO, 2009). Britain ranked seventeenth out of 24 OECD countries on the population-adjusted measure of the high number of child pedestrians killed. “There is a disproportionately high level of pedestrian and cycle casualties in deprived areas,” this report concluded. Similar findings have been made in studies in Canada and Britain (Bagley, 1992 & 1993a).

O'Dowd and Coombes (2008) in a review of a decade of government data on death rates by income group, found that although the life expectancy for the poorest group had increased slightly in the past ten years for those surviving beyond age five, poorer people were now significantly more likely to die prematurely than the average English person.



Babies born to the poorest quintile of families were 17 percent more likely to die at or soon after birth than the English average. Ten years previously this figure had been 13 percent, indicating that in relative terms the chances of dying early in children in the poorest classes was increasing.

The WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (Marmot, 2008) presented data which showed the profound gap in mortality and morbidity between social classes in Britain. For example, a male child born in the poorest part of Glasgow had a life expectancy of 54 years, compared with a child born a few miles away in Glasgow's wealthiest area who had a life expectancy of 82 years. Similar differences existed in many British cities. Causes of curtailed life expectancy were deaths in the first year of life due to adverse perinatal events, and deaths of children due to poisoning, accidents, falls, and being struck by motor vehicles; in adolescence and beyond the poorer were at greater risk of deaths from smoking and its consequences, poor diet, diabetes, suicide and drug overdoses. The WHO commission pointed out that a number of countries – Australia, Sweden, Canada and Italy – had markedly reduced these causes of premature deaths in the previous two decades, by means of social and public health interventions. Clearly, Britain could do better. This Report made the forthright comment that In Britain there was a “toxic combination of low income, poor education, bad housing and unhealthy diets.” These social injustices, particularly those involving child poverty, were according to Marmot's analysis, systemically linked to class inequalities, housing deprivation and insecurity, poorer mental health, poor education and deprivation across the lifespan, disadvantages transmitted between generations.

This section concluded with a bleak summary: in Britain up to 2008 some 10 per cent of families with children suffered chronic poverty which placed great strain on a family's social and psychological resources. Within such families, who tended to live in poorer housing in 'socially excluded' zones of the city, there were disproportionate numbers of children who suffered poorer health, higher death rates from various causes, higher rates of physical neglect and abuse, delinquency, and underachievement in school associated with poorer quality education in crowded classes.

These pupils, not surprisingly often achieved at a level which the pressurised schools found unacceptable, and such students were more often excluded because of challenging behaviour, underachievement, or 'special needs' of various kinds. Children from these economically poor families were significantly more likely to enter a cycle of poverty, in which family life was marked by disruption of parental bonds, addiction to drugs and alcohol, unwanted children, and criminality. Social policies to prevent this were either meagre, or effective for only a minority of the targeted populations.

*Ten: Expenditures on Education in Britain: The Poverty of Education*

Primary and secondary education in Britain was (like welfare services) significantly under-funded in comparison with other wealthy countries, and the number of pupils per teacher in publicly-funded schools in Britain was actually rising (Haile, 2005; Paton, 2008c). Amongst the 30 OECD nations, Britain had one of the highest number of pupils per teacher amongst the 30 leading industrialised nations (OECD, 2006 & 2008; Civitas, 2008).

Those countries spending the highest proportion of national wealth on publicly-funded education were the Nordic countries. Significant increases in spending on education in Britain were however promised (Brown, 2006), and further OECD and international comparisons (OECD, 2007; ONS, 2009) showed that Britain's proportion of GNP apportioned to education (at 5.6 percent) was now closer to that of her OECD partners (average 6.2 percent). However, Britain was unusual in enrolling children into full time education at aged five (most nations enrol children at age six) and when this factor is adjusted for, Britain's expenditure on education for older pupils was appreciably worse than many of her OECD partners.

A report from the British Centre for Economic Performance in 2004 (Chevalier & Dolton, 2004) found that the drift of teachers from the profession was outstripping the number of new recruits. Main reasons given by departing teachers were low pay, stress, and problems of teaching large classes which contained too many disruptive students. The problem was a circular one: as more teachers left the profession, classes became larger, and stress levels became worse, and in consequence more teachers left the profession.

Curtis et al. (2008) in a study of state secondary schools in which a high proportion went on to the Russell Group of universities (Britain's 'Ivy League') found that large sixth forms were one of the factors associated with success in this regard. Such schools were, apparently, able to recruit and retain well-qualified maths, physics and other specialist teachers with good degrees, for sixth form courses which could lead to university success for students. Giving written answers to Parliamentary Questions, the Secretary of State for Education conceded that only three percent of pupils from the poorest sector (qualifying for free school meals) obtained GCSE Advanced Level passes at a sufficient level which would make them eligible for entry to a Russell Group university. Only one in 16 of these economically poor students stayed in school beyond the age of 16, so they frequently failed to take any of the examinations which would qualify them for entry to any type of tertiary education (Hansard, 2008).

The Parliamentary Answer also conceded that in three of Britain's poorest boroughs in 2007, not a single pupil was entered for the externally moderated physics examination (GCSE), open to all pupils at the age of 16. In the country as a whole 7 percent of students were not entered for any kind of external examination in mathematics, and when the population who had dropped out permanently before age 16 is counted, the estimate of "innumerate" students is about 10 percent of pupils in their mid-teens (Garner, 2008c). At least 6,000 pupils "disappear" each year, leaving school at age 14 or earlier (Skidmore, 2008) - often following episodes of exclusion because of difficult behaviour, academic failure, or diagnosis of 'special needs'. Cumulatively, these 'disappeared' students total more than 100,000 of those aged 18 or less. Some will be drawing benefits, some will graduate to a life of crime, and some teenaged girls will have become pregnant. Schools lack the social work resources which would enable them to follow up these pupils who are particularly likely to live in deprived areas (Tomlinson, 2009). But their numbers serve to remind us that if they had been counted in the educational achievements of deprived schools, the average achievements of these schools would have been even lower.

#### *Eleven: The Crisis in Teaching Mathematics and Physics*

While the shortage of teachers was greatest at primary level according to a CEP (2004) report, parallel work had highlighted a crisis in science teaching at the secondary level in Britain (Williams, 2004). The Engineering and Technology Board indicated that although graduates in science, engineering and technology had in the past contributed 27 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, there was now a significant shortage of specialist science teachers. In consequence fewer secondary school students took advanced public examinations in these subjects, and some university departments of physics, chemistry, engineering and mathematics appeared to be threatened with down-sizing or closure as a result, with an estimated closure of one third of science departments in British universities.

This in turn fed into the recruitment crisis of science and mathematics teachers in British schools, to the point where many secondary schools in less privileged areas did not have teachers with a degree in physics or mathematics, and in consequence they could not offer these subjects in the advanced level examinations for university entrance (Smithers & Robinson, 2006). Summarizing research by Alan Smithers, Curtis (2008) indicated that by June, 2008, 26 percent more physics teachers were leaving the profession than were entering teacher training courses with a degree in physics. Physics teachers probably choose the most rewarding schools in which to teach, and not surprisingly they were opting most often for independent schools, and high achieving state schools. Under-performing state secondary schools (in terms of low levels of examination successes at ages 16-plus) were those most likely to have no qualified physics teacher (Curtis, 2008).

By February 2007 because of a national shortage of mathematics teachers in secondary schools, it was becoming increasingly common for class sizes to 'double up' into groups of 60 or more for lecture type instruction, which appeared to work for the brightest pupils, but not for the least able (Hackett, 2007). The same report indicated that a quarter of maths classes for 11 to 14-year-olds in British schools were taken by teachers who had no degree level qualifications in mathematics, and not even an advanced sub-degree course take as part of B.Ed preparation. Those training as primary school teachers are required to take an examination in the first year of their B.Ed in basic mathematics, achieving 60 percent on an examination which is the equivalent to the GCSE ordinary school leaving examination in mathematics. According to answers to Parliamentary questions, the failure rate of trainee teachers on this examination had increased steadily since 2001, and by 2006 56 percent of teachers failed the examination on their first sitting. Resits are permitted, and one trainee teacher finally obtained the required mark after 27 resits (Khan, 2008).

A government programme called *Learn Direct* which aimed to help adults achieve acceptable goals in literacy and mathematics found in a survey of 1,000 British adults, that one in ten had not even basic mathematical skills, which when generalised to the population as a whole was estimated to cost about £820 millions per annum in lost productivity, and inability to acquire vocational skills (Smithers, 2007). Similar problems were expected to beset the teaching of modern languages and history in secondary schools (Smithers & Bowden, 2005). In Greater Manchester the number of pupils aged 14+ studying a foreign language fell from 50 to 33 percent in a single year (Warden, 2005). In Scotland, the number of pupils opting for German in the intermediate school certificate has fallen by 40 percent in ten years, although those taking French had fallen by only six percent (Mackinnon, 2009).

In 2007 the government announced the development of 14 new diploma courses, which could be organised through the integration of existing GCSE and Advanced-level courses (taken at ages 15 to 18), but with additional academic and vocational components. Considerable dismay was expressed by the educational and vocational community at the fact that the proposed Diploma in Science has been abandoned or delayed (Garner, 2007e). As the *New Scientist* (2007) commented in an editorial: "The proportion of teenagers choosing to study physics at ages 16 and 18 is in free fall. The situation in engineering and maths is little better and in chemistry things are beginning to decline too."

Figures for those completing teacher training courses and entering the teaching profession (Smithers and Robinson, 2008) indicated that only 68.9% of those training as mathematics teachers finally entered the profession, and only 63% of those training to teach modern languages finally chose teaching as a profession. It appears that many teacher trainees drop out during their initial course, while many others choose alternative professions. The

reasons for this was not entirely clear, but it might be that after their initial, lengthy 'teaching practice' these individuals became disillusioned at the prospect of a lifetime of work in pressurized or unrewarding careers.

University applications for the one-year postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) from graduates in mathematics and physics fell once again in 2008 by a record 22 percent, meaning that schools would find even greater difficulty in recruiting teachers qualified to teach these subjects in Autumn, 2009 (Lipsett, 2008). Whether, at a time of reduced job opportunities for graduates in other sectors more would turn (or return) to teaching was not clear.

One outcome of the lack of teachers with degrees in mathematics capable of teaching GCSE examinations at Ordinary and Advanced level has been to "double up" classes in the school assembly hall, teaching 60 or 70 pupils at a time – an acceptable practice according to the Minister for Schools (Lipsett & Curtis, 2008). Given these practices it was not difficult to understand why many able students might "fail" mathematics at GCSE levels, through puzzlement, boredom or alienation.

Another solution to the problem of the lack of well-qualified mathematics teachers is to make the public examinations which students must take easier – the process which cynics term "dumbing down". Marks (2008) showed definitively how this has could happen by analysing public examination papers in mathematics for the period 1951 to 2006. He found that the curriculum had become "broader and shallower", and a definite fail in 1960 (with a mark of 20%) would yield a C-grade pass in 2006.

The crisis of quality in maths and science teaching was reflected in the knowledge in these areas manifested by B.Ed and PGCE students at university, where around half of trainee teachers had to resit their initial college examination in basic numeracy (Khan, 2008). Cassidy (2008) reported research by Christine Gilbert, Chief Inspector of Schools showing that less than half of secondary school teachers who taught GCSE classes up to A-level standard actually had a degree in mathematics. This presented schools with the dilemma of asking minimally qualified teachers to instruct smaller classes, or doubling up classes which could be instructed by a well-qualified teacher. Gilbert suggested that about half of all school classes in maths "are not good enough". Instruction is confined to drills and rote learning for the narrow purpose of passing examinations. The "excitement" of discovering numerical and spatial relationships and their applications in the real world was missing (Gilbert, 2008). In an international study of mathematics ability in final year B.Ed students Burghes (2008) found that the British students scored least on the standardised tests, while students in China scored highest.

A colleague who is head of undergraduate mathematics degrees at a northern university informed us that an advanced level GCSE in Mathematics is no longer the equivalent of the old Advanced Level examination, and students now spend their first term of instruction in bringing them up to the old A-Level standard.

According to a report from OFQUAL (Office for Quality Assurance in Education) secondary school science too is “dumbed down”, with multiple choice questions inviting responses based on rote learning rather than on experimentally based reasoning. As a result, many independent schools were opting for the IGCSE, the international general certificate of secondary education with much higher standards than the new GCSE examination.

The new Academies were by 2008, being advanced as offering a solution, through their specialisms, to the problems of low achievements in particular subjects. But research by Alan Smithers of Buckingham University, reported by Garner (2009c) indicated that a quarter of the 310 British schools nominally specialising in science and technology failed to enter a single candidate for the GCSE in physics, chemistry or biology in 2008. The pupils were however, often entered for the ‘general science’ GCSE, which was, apparently, an easier option than a specialist examination such as physics. These schools entered only 4.8 percent of their pupils for a modern language GCSE in that year. Of the 350 specialist schools focussing on foreign language teaching, only 4.3 per cent entered pupils for the relatively easy general science GCSE.

#### *Twelve: The Crisis in Teaching*

One reason why teaching school pupils is becoming an increasingly unattractive profession in Britain is the chaotic raft of policies which beset schools at all levels, leading to confusion of roles and increased pressure to achieve in passing narrowly assessed achievement tests, at the expense of an educational programme in which teachers could commit themselves to offering broader programmes of education which could engage both teacher and pupil (Pring, 2006).

There appeared for example, to be confusion in the organisation of the history syllabus in primary and secondary schools, leaving many pupils without a clear sense of the continuity of the historical events. In secondary schools 70 percent of students give up the study of history by the age of 14 (Garner, 2007c).

A study of teachers in officially designated “failing schools” (in terms of low academic achievements, and exclusions of “difficult” pupils) found that 80 percent of these teachers had “drifted into their posts”, and many were not qualified in the subjects they were designated to teach (Lawlor, 2007). Nine percent of teachers in these schools left each year, a much higher proportion than in ‘successful’ schools. These so-called failing schools

with high teacher turnover served pupils from the poorest economic areas. Lawlor (2007) advocated special payments for well-qualified and dedicated teachers in these schools, which might then attract the best, and not the worst teachers in the profession. This idea, of paying teachers a £10,000 enticement fee (the so-called 'golden handcuffs' bonus) appears to have been adopted by government as part of its Narrowing the Gap programme (Morgan, 2009). How many schools would be included in this programme was unclear, but responses from teachers to The Times Educational Supplement (TES, 2009d) were not encouraging – as one teacher said, no amount of money would encourage him to go back to a school where he was abused and threatened by pupils and parents alike, with his car parked at school being vandalised.

#### *Thirteen: Failing Schools and Working Class Youth*

A study for the Rowntree Foundation (Cassen & Kingdon, 2007) of pupils who failed to achieve any GCSE passes in the A to C range (the traditional matriculation level), or only grade G passes (174,000 of all 16-year-olds) found that 80 percent of these young people were white males – their GCSE achievements were about a third less than females from similar social class backgrounds. While Bangladeshi and Afro-Caribbean youth also tended to under-perform in GCSE examinations, this was a function of their social class disadvantage, rather than of problems of motivation, and compared to white youth, Afro-Caribbean boys from economically depressed backgrounds were performing well. Pupils from Indian and Chinese backgrounds outperformed all other groups on the GCSE examinations. Further research (Cabinet Office, 2008) suggested that pupils of Bangladeshi origin, though initially handicapped in their language skills at age 7, were above average performers on numeracy and literacy tests at age 14.

It is white males from the poorest backgrounds, served by the least well-equipped, smaller state secondary schools, who were likely to form the core of the small army of economically depressed youth, many dependent on state support and minor crime for their continued income. Fifteen urban centres had particularly poor achievements in GCSE examinations, and in Manchester 15 percent of all pupils failed completely in public examinations, compared with five percent in the country as a whole. In Manchester, children whose first language was not English had depressed performance in English language tests at age eight; but by age 16 they were outperforming their monolingual peers (Leeming, 2007).

In her Annual Report, the Director of OFSTED, the government Office for Standards in Education (Gilbert, 2007b) found that although the number of "inadequate" or failing secondary schools had fallen from 13 to 10 percent of all schools, these 10 percent were nevertheless institutions which year on year, produced a high number of underachieving

pupils, many of whom had failed to reach the required reading and arithmetic standards in their primary schools, and went on to leave secondary school with few or no GCSE passes, failing in turn to enter the world of work, further education or training. These 'failing' schools typically served areas of high social and economic deprivation in urban areas. Many of these 200,000 teenagers leaving school each year with minimum academic or vocational skills belonged to white working class groups, and it was notable that ethnic minorities who attended these schools did not usually leave school without examination successes. Rather, they carried into education strong motivation to succeed given by their families, as research on pupils from Muslim backgrounds who were educated in state secondary schools had also (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2008).

One indicator of the problem of British schools was the reluctance of senior teachers to take on the role of head teacher, despite the sometimes high salaries offered. The National Audit Office reported in 2006 that a fifth of all secondary schools in England and Wales did not have a permanent head teacher. An important reason for this was the very high levels of stress involved in managing an underachieving school containing many rebellious and underachieving pupils, particularly in areas of high poverty (Blair, 2006a).

A comparison of 30 industrialised countries (OECD, 2006) indicated that Britain, despite its national wealth, was near the bottom of this league in retaining students in education or training after age 16. OECD reported that these largely unqualified school-leavers faced considerable penalties in the labour market, which was one factor in the unequal distribution of earnings in Britain. There was a significant weakness, according to OECD, in apprenticeship education in Britain, and a dearth of technically skilled workers. Many skilled posts had to be filled by migrant workers from Europe and elsewhere.

Browne (2006) drew on government data to show that the number of unemployed adolescents aged 16 to 19, had increased from 665,000 in 1997 to 702,000 in 2005. For those aged 16 to 17, one in four were unemployed (43% in London) - these were youth who had few if any examination passes, had often truanted from, or been excluded from schooling.

On average, educational achievements in Britain were slipping behind other nations to a greater extent, year by year. Smithers (2007) examined data from the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA) and showed that between 2000 and 2003, the achievements of British 15-year olds on standardized scholastic tests had deteriorated relative to many other countries, and Britain ranked an overall fifteenth amongst the nations participating in PISA. The decline in performance on mathematical skills was particularly marked, Britain's ranking falling from ninth to nineteenth amongst the 33 participating



nations, over a three year period. Moreover, these figures for Britain were likely to *underestimate* levels of achievement, because of the high rates of truancy and drop-out amongst British youth (Micklewright & Schnepf, 2006). The PISA data showed that pupils in private, fee-paying schools had very good mean achievements when compared to other nations, and another reason for Britain's poor overall performance in state schools was likely to be that the brightest pupils were 'creamed off' by the private sector.

In addition, since aware, middle class parents were often able to obtain admission for their children into the highest quality state and voluntary-aided faith schools, the poorest quality secondary schools were likely to receive a disproportionate number of the most disadvantaged students (Clark, 2008a).

Students with the poorest health profiles were also often those with the poorest achievement profiles, coming disproportionately from areas of urban blight marked by disorganized behaviours, poorly performing schools and poor life chances in terms of health, adjustment, achievement and behaviour.

#### *Fourteen: Britain's Crumbling Schools and Underfunded Colleges*

Britain's 'crumbling schools' were another cause of teacher alienation in Britain (NASUWT, 2008). Browne (2008) cites government data which showed in January, 2008 that a promised £45 Billion programme to refurbish or rebuild 3,500 British schools by 2020 has been abandoned. Only 14 of the 100 promised new-build schools had any prospect of completion within the next two years. This was despite the fact that many schools, were in structural terms, "not fit for purpose" (DfES, 2004b). In Wales a survey of members by a teachers' union found that the fabric in nearly a half was "poor" or "very poor" (Mourant, 2007).

What this means in practice came from a survey of its 250,000 members by a leading teachers' union (NASUWT, 2008). Some schools had leaking roofs, and broken windows: in one fifth of schools water dripped from walls and ceilings when it rained heavily. In a third of schools floors were frequently slippery. One fifth of classrooms were poorly lit. One third had no access to fresh drinking water for pupils; many schools were poorly ventilated, 'baking hot' in summer, and freezing in winter. The comprehensive Cambridge Primary Education Review (Noden & West, 2009b) found that poor quality building structures were common, and resulted in problems of temperature control, ventilation and acoustics. Teachers would leave these schools as soon as they were able, and these buildings were certainly not conducive to productive learning. It is likely, although there is no direct evidence from the Cambridge Review, that the only teachers who would remain employed in conditions such as these would be either the most dedicated, or the least able, unable

to find unemployment elsewhere. A national survey indicated that a half of state schools in Britain had “unsatisfactory” toilet facilities (Frankel, 2009). The situation was particularly bad for female pupils, with toilet doors that did not lock, not enough toilets for pupils to use during breaks, and overflowing sanitary bins.

In Stockport in Greater Manchester some schools were actually in danger of being closed because of their poor structural condition, according to a local authority report (Dawson, 2008). Funding for immediate maintenance work costing £800,000 was unavailable from central government; nor was the £31 millions promised, but not now available for more long-term maintenance and building projects. In Greater Manchester at least 86 percent (903 of 1,043 state and voluntary aided schools) still had asbestos in walls and roofs; in Stockport the proportion was 123 out of 135 schools - 91 percent (Keegan 2009).

Given the widespread nature of the “crumbling schools” phenomenon, the existence of such schools may not play any causal role in pupil disaffection. It may account however, for the desire of so many teachers to leave the profession, or for the best teachers to seek employment in the private education sector. Asbestos residues exist in the majority of British schools, and one local authority hit upon the ingenious solution of prosecuting a head teacher because he had violated Health and Safety Regulations by allowing asbestos to remain in his school. Although the court held that the teacher should not be punished for this crime, it was held that he was legally responsible (Barker, 2008). A teacher who had taught in such a school for 30 years, and was now dying of asbestosis, successfully sued her local authority for the damage caused to her lungs (Marley, 2009).

Apparently, during the “credit crunch” the PFI (Private Funding Initiative) for school refurbishment had sometimes failed because potential contractors were unable to obtain loan capital in the wider market which they could then redeploy (at profit with fees and interest paid by government) for school rebuilding. Schools had been told by the national government “to plan for an austere future” in building, and in the hiring of teachers, since the national education budget could not be increased (Paton, 2009a). The only new funding available for school building was now directed to the new Academies, which were meant to demonstrate the government’s progressive new educational policy (Garner, 2008d).

One solution which local authorities were attempting was to meet the challenge of decaying school fabric by closing primary schools that were in a severe state of disrepair, requiring the excluded students to attend schools with better fabric some distance away. This had the negative effect of requiring young children to make long journeys to the new school, which sometimes accommodated the influx by means of increasing the number of children per teacher. This had its own negative consequences, as we shall see in the section on

class-teacher ratio below. However, some schools were in such bad repair that parents and teachers had actively petitioned their local authority to relocate pupils in a nearby school (Madden, 2009). But in Glasgow 25 schools in Glasgow were scheduled to close, the majority of these closures being strongly opposed by parents (Buie, 2009).

Further education and sixth form colleges had experienced their own building programme crises, in the withdrawal of promised funding for college expansion. Sir Andrew Foster chaired a government review of funding increases for FE colleges and as a result the colleges in England and Wales were offered funding of more than a billion pounds. Plans were drawn, architects commissioned, and building work begun. But then in January 2009 funding was suddenly withdrawn, since potential partners withdrew from PFI arrangements, and the government was unwilling to make up this funding with direct grants.

A case study of a single FE college (TES, 2009a) showed that the Learning and Skills Foundation (LSF) had provided £86 millions of initial funding for this college, which set in train a variety of planning and building preparation projects, leaving £15.1 millions to be raised by the college through commercial arrangements underwritten by a PFI to complete the final building phase. But the PFIs were now without funds, meaning that the college had to recruit 850 fewer students than planned for 2011-2012, as well as 2,600 fewer adult learners, the majority on government "high priority learner" programmes for the young unemployed. The consequences for the local economy were the loss of 167 FTE teaching posts within the community, and the loss of 630 jobs in the wider community including those which would have been taken by trained and educated students, as well as the loss of 400 temporary construction jobs (TES, 2009 b & c). Many colleges were apparently facing bankruptcy, since they had borrowed or drawn on reserves heavily in order to meet start-up costs for programmes now which seem to have little possibility of realisation.

#### *Fifteen: Some Consequences of Under-Education and Social Exclusion*

Hales et al. (2006) in a sociological study of unemployed teenagers found that in some urban areas many were drawn into gang culture, in which drug marketing and even firearm use played a significant role, as well as street crime and other robberies to provide a means of livelihood more attractive than the government's "New Deal" programme. Cultures of illegal drug marketing were found to be well-established in London, Manchester and Liverpool. Many of these youths were likely graduate into the prison system, and a government report (Cabinet Office, 2006) anticipated that the prison population in all age groups in Britain would increase from 80,000 to 100,000 in five years, this increase being largely the result of increasing numbers of unemployed young men for whom crime has become the best form of livelihood, despite the occasional incarcerations involved.

Britain already had the highest rate of imprisonment (142 of all ages per 1000) of all EU countries (the EU average was 90 per 1000 – BBC, 2005). Between 2005 and 2007 the number of young people (aged less than 18) in prison in Britain increased by 26 percent, with the rate of imprisonment for the young (less than 18) being 23 per 100,000 compared with 6 per 100,000 in France, 2 per 100,000 in Spain and 0.2 per 100,000 in Finland (Cambell & Travis, 2007). The problems of these incarcerated adolescents and young men and women, frequently begin in economically poor homes, homes stressed by social and interpersonal breakdown, and in their poor schools serving economically poor neighbourhoods (Neustatter, 2004).

A report by the government's Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 2006) examined existing studies as well as official data to show that:

Firstly: Imprisoning adolescents and young adults did not deter them from reoffending – within two years 75 percent who had served short sentences for burglary and theft will have reoffended.

Secondly: Prison could often make things worse – youngsters diverted into community service and further education programmes rather than prison, had lower reoffending rates than youngsters who were locked up.

Thirdly: Programmes which did work addressed homelessness, unemployment, drug and alcohol use, poor literacy and lack of skills, and mental health problems.

But as Meen et al. (2006) argue, members of this underclass tended to live in the most deprived areas of the city, and community regeneration programmes in these areas was both very expensive, and prone to fail. Economic forecasting estimated that by 2020 the 3.4 million unskilled jobs in Britain would have shrunk to 600,000, while the economy required an increase in the number of skilled personnel from 14 million to 20 million (McLeod, 2007). The outlook for unskilled school leavers who had few if any examination successes at age 16 was likely to become bleaker year by year, and unless they were offered new and successful programmes of vocational education, it was likely that Britain's only way of meeting skill shortages was through further recruitment from overseas.

A report from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ, 2006) used data from the Office of National Statistics to focus on these issues. The report showed that there were 1.24 millions in the age group 15 to 24 who had few educational qualifications, and who had received no occupational or vocational training, the numbers in this "unschooled and unemployed" group of 15 to 17-year-olds having risen by one-third since 1997. Many of these young people, according to this report, formed 'a white underclass' with lifestyles marred by chronic unemployment, delinquency, drug use, begetting fatherless children, and eventual

imprisonment. This underclass, according to the report, tended to be self-perpetuating with children from these marginal and disorganised families forming the underclass of the next generation.

Despite protests by the New Labour Government, it could hardly be denied that educational policy and practice were failing in Britain, and this formed the platform of a policy proposal of the Conservative Opposition, the encouragement of Swedish-style 'quality' schools which would be sponsored in the poorest areas, in view of the fact that some 45 percent of persistent truants come from poverty backgrounds, although they made up only about 14 percent of all pupils (Curtis, 2008).

These pupils were chronic underachievers, bored, alienated, and dropped out of school early, lacking the confidence to take public examinations or to attend technical colleges post-16. There were (and remain) major structural problems here, which would need political and economic assaults on many fronts if the lot of this permanent underclass was to be changed. No one political party is to blame for these educational failures, which probably stem from policies going back many years, which had ensured that Britain remained a class-dominated culture.

#### *Sixteen: Children in Care – A Special Group with Special Needs*

There is strong evidence that public policies had significantly failed to address the educational and mental health needs of children removed from disrupted, abusive or neglecting families into alternative care. A Children's Act of 2000 placed stronger obligations on local authorities to support children leaving care at the statutory age of 16, but this had according to the research reviewed by Sergeant (2006) made little difference. According to Sergeant, each year up to 2005 some 6,000 left the formal care system: 87 percent had experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect within their family of origin. Of children in care, 45 percent had a definable and treatable mental health disorder (BMA, 2007).

The residential children's homes into which such children were removed were too often 'centres of chaos' staffed by untrained workers who often remained in such employment for a relatively brief time. Foster homes were a better alternative, but these were in short supply and if foster parents and child do not get along, the child would be returned to the residential system. Only five percent of foster parents had full professional training which would enable them to cope with the needs of traumatised children; only 20 percent of staff in children's homes had relevant professional qualifications (Bennett, 2006; Sergeant, 2006).

It was not unusual for a child in care to have at least five different placements from infancy to mid-teens. Adoption is a good alternative (Bagley et al., 1992) but laws giving stronger rights to biological parents to withhold their consent to adoption, or to have custody for temporary periods, make adoption possible only for a small number of children removed into care. When they left formal care at age 16, a quarter of girls were pregnant, and a half would be unsupported single mothers by age 18 (Sergeant, 2006). One quarter of men under 25 who were in prison had been in care; one third of young, homeless people were graduates of the care system. They had left care for a world in which social and family supports were few, and these care leavers were vulnerable to multiple new stresses.

The educational achievements of care leavers at age 16 were low: only 12 percent obtained five 'good' GCSE passes (at grades A to C, including English and Mathematics), compared with 56 percent of children growing up in more stable homes (Gilbert, 2007b). More than a third of the care group were not entered for any public examinations, and were probably semi-literate, having experienced frequent changes of schooling, as well as enforced school exclusions (DfES, 2006). Only 60 (1%) of the some 6000 care leavers in any one year would go on to college or university, compared with at least a quarter of the mainstream population (Sergeant, 2006). Children in care and those leaving care needed extra educational help, support and counselling at all ages; but they received much less than the average child. Leaving care at age 16 without a supportive family network was often linked to recruitment into urban gangs, being pimped, and drug-using subcultures, who offered a kind of alternative family (DfES, 2006; Harker, 2007).

The government response to Sergeant's *Centre for Policy Studies Report* (2006) was to some extent promising (DfES, 2006). While the grosser deficiencies of the care system would remain, professional foster families providing care children up to the age of 21 were promised, as well as grants for books and equipment when attending college, free transport for college attendance, and a £2000 bursary towards university costs (Bennett, 2006). The number of professional foster homes for children in care up to age 21 was still very small however, relative to the large numbers in care and could serve less than a quarter of the more than 6000 16-year-olds who "graduated" from care each year (Bennett, 2008). The professional foster parent was likely to lose a payment of more than £20,000 a year as a professional foster parent, receiving instead a much smaller lodging allowance on behalf of the foster child if the 16-year-old remained living with their foster family. Many foster parents would, it seems, under these circumstances turn to new foster children, and the former foster child would have to make their own way in the world of work and independent lodging, largely unsupported by any professional social care facilities. Their drift into maladjustment or crime is one result of this.

Many children in the care system exhibited profound mental health problems, reflecting not only the original abuse and/or neglect which led to them being removed to care, but also in many cases their drift through the care system – becoming bonded to a set of carers, only to have that bond broken when the foster carers were unable or unwilling to continue with the care arrangements (Bagley 1992 & 2002). A survey by Meltzer et al. (2003) of the mental health needs of 2,500 English children in various foster and child care settings found that 45 percent had a diagnosable psychiatric condition: the overlapping diagnoses were conduct disorder (37%), emotional disorder (12%); and hyperactivity or ADHD (7%). Of those with a psychiatric disorder 87 percent were struggling with school subjects, and 30 percent had been “statemented” – that is, they were flagged for special inputs by their schools. The prevalence of 45 percent of foster children with a diagnosable mental health condition should be compared with the prevalence of 9 percent in the general population of children and adolescents, established by the same research team (Goodman et al., 2002).

The Mubarek Report (Riddell, 2006) on a vulnerable young offenders cites data showing that seven out of ten of the 19,000 young people aged 18 to 20 who left prison in one year, were back in prison within two years. It seems that the young offender system, like the child care system, offered little in the way of education, therapy and reform. Former children in care receive no special education and support when they entered prison.

The government announced a further programme for children in care called *Care Matters*, in November, 2008. However, according to a report from the Parliamentary Select Committee on Children, Schools and Families in April, 2009 (Sheerman, 2009) this had so far had little impact, and according to this Committee, the situation might be worse than previously thought, in that local authority children’s homes (containing 29% of all children in care) were often themselves neglectful and even abusive of the children they housed. Staff turnover was high, salaries for care workers were low, and workers were poorly qualified or trained. More than 1,000 children of the approximately 59,500 currently in care had had at least 10 different foster placements, and ten children were identified who had experienced at least 50 foster home and residential centre placings. It is rare for a child to have a single foster care placing once he or she has been taken into care. Foster parents were often not qualified for their difficult task, and were able to reject any child whom they perceive as “difficult”. The foster care system for this vulnerable group, concluded the Select Committee, was making things worse rather than better. “We have to go further and faster and be more radical” the Committee concluded.

Since a well-publicised case in 2008 of a child (‘Baby P’) murdered after social workers declined to move him from abusive parents into care, the number of children moved into

local authority care had increased by 38 percent in one year (CAFCASS, 2009). By March, 2009 more than 700 children a month (a record number) were being removed into the care system. There was some evidence that some of these were panicked reactions by social workers, anxious to avoid charges of professional neglect. The weakness of the foster care model has been illustrated by the fact that in Wales (and presumably elsewhere in Britain) more than two-thirds of foster carers are aged 50-plus, while only eight per cent are in their thirties (Lewis, 2009). There is an acknowledged shortage of several hundred foster carers across Britain. While permanent adoption of some children moved into temporary care can have excellent outcomes (Bagley, Young & Scully, 1993), the movement of children in and out of care situations, according to the caprice of both biological parents and of social workers, can be very harmful to a child's development. The task of caring for 'looked after' children in care is challenging and calls for the highest levels of professional competence (Golding et al., 2006). These professional inputs were in the period under review, unfortunately, atypical.

There has been some British interest in the "social pedagogy" model of child care practised in much of Europe. In Germany for example, around 80 percent of 'looked after' children lived in highly professional group homes in which the child's needs were assessed and catered for through continuing professional effort (with a high staff-child ratio). In this model the child was treated holistically as an individual with multiple psychological, learning and relationship needs; the group home is also supported by a holistic model in which children's relationships with each other and with staff receive skilled support (Cameron & Moss, 2011).

The final, crucial question remained unanswered: why are a quarter of young men in prison, graduates of the care system? Why do so many drift into chaotic lifestyles through which the next generation of children in care is generated? Why has the care experience so frequently not helped them to overcome the effects of earlier separations, neglect and abuse, and their consequent mental health problems? These are crucially important research and policy questions.

*Seventeen: Children with Special Educational Needs: An Educational System in Disarray*

The 1972 Education Act gave all children in Britain a right to education, regardless of the severity of their disabilities (Warnock, 2008). The concept of the ineducable child was abolished, and new principles of universal education were debated. A *Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children* was formed in 1974, guided by Dame Mary Warnock, its chair and chief author. The committee's report was finally published in 1979. One of the crucial recommendations was that a 'statement' should be made of the need



that any child had for special educational measures. Such 'statements' were to be based on a comprehensive assessment of the child's needs and potentialities:

"The statement of special educational need was seen in contrast to the medical model, according to which some children are 'normal', others are 'handicapped'. Our idea was that there are common educational goals – independence, enjoyment, and understanding – towards which all children, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, should aim. We suggested that for some children the path towards these goals was smooth and easy, whereas for others it was beset by obstacles. They encountered special difficulties on the path towards the common goals. Every human being has certain needs and difficulties, so this approach was inclusive rather than exclusive." (Warnock, 2008).

'Statements' were intended to confer a right to special provision on the children who received them, and imposed a corresponding duty on their local authorities to provide it. While it was clear that severely disabled children needed special help, this was less clear for some of the children with milder disabilities. Warnock (1979) had estimated that about two percent of children would need to be supported by 'statemented' assessments, a dossier which would follow the child, enabling education authorities to offer the best form of individualized educational programme., and to assess and add to further statements of special educational need. Warnock's proposals were accepted by the government in passing the Education Act of 1981. However, the original aims of the 1981 Act had not been fulfilled, and by 2006 a significantly higher proportion of children were classified as having a 'special educational need' (Warnock, 2008; ONS, 2009).

For many children the process of statementing was a disciplinary procedure, an early warning of the possibility of temporary or permanent exclusion from school of a child whom teachers had difficulty with, or whose poor examination results would detract from the school's publicly declared examination successes. Children with dyslexia, and with autism had become particularly vulnerable to the dual process of being further statemented, and then excluded.

Dyson (2001) points to the paradox of statementing policy – there was a fundamental contradiction in the British educational system between "an intention to treat all learners as essentially the same and an equal but opposite intention to treat them as different." One way to overcome these tensions, Warnock (2008) argued, was the setting up of 'specialist schools' under the same roof as regular schools. The problem with this policy might be that such special schools would have lower status, and parents would resist the transfer of their child to a such an 'inner school'.

An alternative considered by Warnock (2008) were specialist schools on separate campuses in which children with more severe learning problems could focus on subjects such as IT and Performing Arts. Warnock suggested that such well-endowed schools should be open to the community at evenings and weekends: "Indeed small specialist schools of the kind described would be inclusive in an important sense of the word for children who currently suffer from feelings of exclusion within mainstream schools ... I believe that small specialist schools could engender this feeling [of belonging] ... for many children who now lack it." (Warnock, 2008)

Lady Warnock's plea for specialized school units – separate from mainstream schools, or contained within regular schools – were controversial. A group of policy advocates within the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education had cogently argued the case for the complete integration of children with special needs (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Rustemier, 2008a & b; Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). Following systematic reviews of the evidence on inclusion of children with special educational needs, these researchers argue that segregated children had poorer academic outcomes, impaired self-confidence and fewer social skills, fewer occupational choices, and negative labelling as a result of segregation.

In an ideal educational system, classes would be small (less than 15), teachers would be highly trained in instruction and management techniques, and would be assisted by classroom assistants within the integrated classroom. Each child would be carefully assessed, and would have individualized learning goals with access to an individual computer, programmed to assist the achievement of these goals. British schools are however grossly under-funded, and at the present time only a small number of private schools can offer this ideal model which can optimise the education for the child with special need.

A report to House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee (Halpin, 2006) described an educational system for the 1.23 million children with special educational needs (including sensory and cognitive challenges; autistic spectrum diagnoses; and emotional and behavioural problems often reflecting abusive and disorganised families) as "not fit for purpose". Neither efforts at mainstreaming, nor efforts to provide separate, specialist schools in the public sector were in overall terms, successful. While the number of specialist schools for SEN children has fallen dramatically following an Act of 2001 which aimed to establish a fully inclusive educational system, in practice chronic under-funding has meant that the inclusive educational system in Britain has effectively failed (Bagley, 2008b).

The only way a parent with a child with autism or severe dyslexia can obtain adequate educational provision from the state system is through litigation; many who can afford to, sue their local authority or instead opt for private education (Bagley, 2008b). A few local authorities do provide a good service; but most do not (Halpin, 2006; Clarke, 2008b). A single statistic on pupil exclusion illustrates the profound injustice of Britain's SEN system: 87 per cent of children excluded from primary school had special educational needs prior to that exclusion; the comparable figure for secondary schools was 60 per cent, according to the Commons Select Committee. Less than one per cent of pupils who do not have prior special educational needs are ever excluded from school.

A survey by the National Union of Teachers (Garner, 2007a) of its members found that only nine percent were fully trained and confident in accepting children with learning difficulties in their main-streamed classroom; and 74 percent said that they had no classroom aides who could help them in addressing the needs of SEN pupils. The NUT indicated that government had failed to provide funds for both adequate teacher training, and classroom provision which could enable SEN pupils to be main-streamed.

The profound irony of this British failure to offer an adequate inclusive education for all children, without discriminating against their needs and aspirations is that Britain is a signatory to the UN Disability Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons, adopted in December, 2006. Article 24 of this agreement confirms the right of all children to the following:

1. No exclusion from the general educational system for any pupil;
2. Access to inclusive education within the pupil's local community;
3. Reasonable accommodation of individual needs;
4. Support should be given within general educational systems to facilitate effective education, including individualized support measures.

Britain, one of the world's richest economies, had singularly failed to meet these UN guidelines. Britain's signature on the UN agreement is nothing more than an act of hypocrisy. Only when no child is excluded from mainstream schooling because of their special educational needs could Britain be said to begin to fulfil its obligations to children beset with cognitive, behavioural, emotional and sensory challenges.

Aynsley-Green (2006) the Children's Commissioner for England observed for example, that the educational system served the country's 90,000 children with 'autistic spectrum' disorders particularly poorly: 60 percent of children in this category were not in the type of educational setting which adequately served their needs. He observed: "It is ... appalling

and shameful for our country, one of the richest economies in the world, to have so many children that are not being looked after and given the resources they needed.” The Commons Select Committee on Education found (2006) that although many special schools had been closed by local authorities, the policies for inclusion of autistic children, and others with cognitive challenges in mainstream schools were very variable in quality and scope.

The failure of policies for the integration of children with special needs in mainstream education is reflected in a dismal indicator: the prevalence of bullying (verbal and physical persecution and discrimination) experienced by ‘special needs’ children at the hands of their so-called normal peers (Bagley, 2008b). According to Office for Standards in Education surveys of 150,000 pupils, 48 percent had been verbally or physically bullied in the previous year (Paton, 2009b).

A House of Commons Select Committee enquiry found that 38 percent of children with autism-spectrum conditions had been severely bullied within the previous six months (Meikle, 2007). One way in which schools reportedly dealt with ‘the problem’ of such bullied children was to exclude them from school ‘on health and safety grounds’, leaving the culture of bullying intact. Verbal harassment of main-streamed children with learning difficulties seems to be universal, and according to a MENCAP survey, sixty percent of such children were also physically hurt by bullies (Garner, 2007d).

The dismal conclusion was that currently, British schools did not have the resources to protect or properly integrate main-streamed children with learning problems, and autistic spectrum disorders (Bagley, 2008b). In the school year 2006-7, 55 percent of children excluded from school had been stated as having special needs, an increase of 45 percent over four years (Garner, 2007g): 23,300 of the 164,450 children for whom statements of special need were on file.

#### *Eighteen: Problems of Dyslexia and Number Difficulty*

While there is likely to be an overlap between formally diagnosed dyslexia and failure to achieve reading standards, the officially diagnosed population with dyslexia numbered only about 76,000, far too small to make up the 10 percent or more of 11-year-olds who appeared to be reading “failures”, in relative or absolute terms. One explanation came from a study funded by the British Dyslexia Association which commissioned research by a Hull University Team (Singleton, 2008). This research tested 1,341 seven and eleven-year-olds

who had recently undergone the National Curriculum reading tests. Generalising from these findings to the national population, the research suggests that the numbers with some kind of “problem” in their neurologically-based perceptual and information processing strategies which make the acquisition of reading skills difficult when exposed to conventional methods of teaching, was nearer two millions than 76,000.

This is an extremely important finding, since if replicated it would suggest that rather than suffering some kind of neurological pathology, the large majority of these two million children have ways of perceiving and processing symbolic data which although entirely normal as a basis for learning, are nevertheless ignored by conventional modes of teaching. Strategies in reading require at least seven different kinds of assessment and teaching strategy (Abisgold, 2008), but in large classes, under-prepared or under-trained teachers were simply unable to cope with the learning needs of important subgroups who required a more individualised type of instruction. This suggestion should be borne in mind which we consider the section on problems of large class sizes in the sections below.

The work by Gross (2006) is relevant and important here. She has shown that more than five percent of children may never acquire the ability to read unless they are offered careful diagnostic work, and individualized tutoring. The cost of this individualized programme is about £2,500 per child, but is likely to be highly cost effective when set against the costs of servicing children and adults who have never acquired the skills of basic literacy.

It is acknowledged that English is a particularly difficult language in which to learn to read and spell, because of its irregular phonic system, compared to more regular systems in a number of European languages (Bell, 2002 & 2004). Bell (2008) argues that English schoolchildren have to learn 800 “unspellable” words by the age of 11, an argument for the form of spelling as advocated, for example, by George Bernard Shaw, who made the case for an alphabet consisting of 48 letters, which is easy to memorize, and would cope with the now expanded English word spellings.

Neurological evidence is becoming available which shows that some pupils perceive and process numbers in ways which may make their acquisition of numeracy, in a minority of cases at least, rather difficult (Ansari et al., 2006) Jacob & Nieder, 2009; Ischebeck et al., 2009). This also has implications for teacher training, individual testing of pupils, and individualized instruction strategies.

#### *Nineteen: Achievement and School Failure in Britain: Some International Comparisons*

The first international research of note is that by Blanden and colleagues (Blanden & Gregg, 2004; Blanden & Machin, 2004 a & b; Blanden, Gregg & Machin, 2005) which compared the degree to which children from economically poor families were successful in upward

social class mobility (from childhood to adulthood) in eight countries: Britain, United States, Canada, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Countries with a high amount of upward mobility of children born into poorer social classes into higher education and into economically successful roles, were judged to be more open and egalitarian cultures. In contrast, the degree to which social class of birth determined adult economic success was seen to be the mark of an inegalitarian culture (ONS, 2009). In order to measure this, data from British longitudinal surveys were acquired, and available data-sets from the eight countries were accessed for purposes of comparison. Children in each data-set were followed up into mid-life.

Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and The Netherlands were found to be the most 'open' societies, with high degrees of upward mobility in children who were born into economically poor families. Canada was also largely successful in fostering upward mobility. Germany held a middle position, but children from Britain and the United States fared badly. Being born poor in these latter two countries was a major determinant of growing up poor, and remaining poor in adult life, with impaired educational and economic achievement. In America it was African-Americans who were most likely to be caught in this poverty trap (Hertzog, 2004). But in Britain it was the wealth of parents (or lack of wealth) which was the major determinant of adult achievement and income, regardless of ethnicity. Interesting findings from the British data indicated that the situation had been getting *worse* over time in that the correlation between parental income and child's income when adult, increased significantly in those born between 1958 and 1970.

The reasons for this can only be speculated upon. One possibility is a policy change in British secondary education. Up to the 1970s 'bright' working class children were able to win scholarships to Grammar Schools which provided good quality education which in turn could lead to entry into university and the professions. But later policy abolished the role of Grammar Schools which became 'Comprehensive Schools', with the implicit policy of 'dumbing down' to accommodate the needs and aspirations of the less able students.

At the same time wealthier parents became much more likely to pay for their children's education in a parallel private system, or to support them to stay in 'better' schools and sixth-form colleges until the age of 18. The final consequence had been the emergence of a number of 'sink schools' serving areas of urban blight, sometimes offering poor quality instructional environments. To be sure, some state schools offer excellent instruction at the secondary level, but frequently middle class parents strategically located their residence so as to be in the catchment areas of these well-performing state schools.

A survey by the Sutton Trust using data generated by the National Foundation for Educational Research on GCSE success and social class profiles of pupils' parents, confirmed earlier research (Sieghart, 1999), that "the middle classes fill our best state schools" (Taylor, 2005).

Longitudinal Scottish research of 8,500 individuals confirmed the link between parent's and child's social class, which indicated lack of upward mobility in children from the poorest families (Paterson & Iannelli, 2006). This finding was further corroborated by English data on GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) passes classified by pupils in receipt of free school meals, a traditional poverty indicator. The data obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (Garner, 2008a) showed that poverty of a parent (inability to pay for school meals) was strongly linked to poverty of achievement in their child, as measured by failure to achieve any GCSE passes at age 16. The index of poverty was associated too, with prior failure in externally monitored tests, and with truanting.

In Britain, middle class parents were able to be geographically mobile in choosing the best state schools; could purchase private education; and could manipulate social networks (i.e. draw on social capital) which ensured that their child had the most advantageous employment opportunities after school-leaving and graduation. Research on publicly-funded 'faith schools' (Anglican and Catholic) which controlled their own admissions (a third of all publicly-funded schools in Britain) had shown that they were ten times more likely than non-faith schools to exercise bias in favour of the entry of middle class pupils (IPPR, 2007).

One reason for this is that despite being in theory fully state-funded, a number of these "voluntary aided" schools charge parents fees for such luxuries as textbooks, computers, and classroom furniture (Ross, 2008). These are fees that economically poor parents can ill afford. The reason that these faith schools within the state system can ask parents to pay fees is that they serve a largely middle class parent group, who can afford to pay for the best kind of education, at the expense of the poor. Parents are often desperate to find a school with high quality standards at the transfer to secondary schooling when their child is 11 (Asthana, 2008). Being allocated to a "poor quality" secondary school in a nearby neighbourhood may set in train not only legal appeals (costing up to £2,000) but also lobbying of heads of 'good' schools, which are often religious ones (Allen & West, 2008).

Religious schools for their part may enquire about parental social class and family composition as a semi-legal way of screening out pupils who might be low achievers. This would account for the fact that religious secondary schools (Anglican and Roman Catholic foundations) admitted 10 percent fewer pupils eligible for free school meals (a commonly

used criterion of poverty background) than do non-faith state schools. Another form of bias occurs when religious schools with a good sixth form tradition, charged up to £50 to transfer in of a pupil at age 16 (Hunter, 2008).

Children attending non-faith schools serving poor quality housing estates are, by implication, receiving a third class education. In 2005 according to government inspection reports at least one million primary school children were taught in “poorly performing schools” (Taylor, 2006). By 2007 the number of failing schools “in special measures” had increased by a fifth, so that according to the Office for Standards in Education one in eight secondary schools, and one in four primary schools was judged to be offering an inadequate level of education (Blair, 2007). Very few of these schools fell into the category of “voluntary aided” faith schools, the large majority of these “failing schools” being ones that served economically poor neighbourhoods, with a high proportion of pupils failing to achieve success in public examinations.

In a survey of educational achievements of school students conducted by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004) Britain ranked fifteenth in achievements in reading, science and mathematics amongst the 41 countries who submitted data, despite Britain being, at that time, third or fourth in world rankings for wealth per head of population. This statistic was another indicator of the ‘poverty of education’ in Britain, a pattern of under-funding of an important resource in a wealthy country.

In fact, there were grounds for supposing that these figures overestimate the achievements of British pupils (Smithers, 2004). This was because some schools deliberately excluded, suspended or expelled students who were underachieving, apparently in many cases to improve their school’s achievement profile. If the achievements of this small army of excluded (and truanting) pupils were included, Britain’s ranking would, apparently, be closer to twenty fifth than fifteenth out of the 44 countries surveyed.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation Directorate (OECD) figures for 2006 indicated that Britain devoted 5.7 percent of her national income to educational expenditures, compared to an average of 6.2 percent in all of the 41 countries studied. OECD indicated that in the age group 25 to 34, Britain ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in the proportions who had completed secondary education and had gone on to college or university. OECD’s periodic survey of the United Kingdom’s economic performance (Hoeller et al., 2007) focussed specifically on educational expenditures and performance. Within a comparison of the 12 wealthiest OECD countries the UK ranked last in terms of upward social mobility that was fostered by educational achievements. The best performing countries were Denmark, Austria, Finland



and Canada. This economic survey commented that, reflecting these marked and chronic income inequalities:

“Students in Britain ... continue to perform particularly poorly relative to students in the best performing educational systems. Overall the socio-economic gaps in Britain remain large. One explanation may be that local authorities and schools are not distributing deprivation funds as intended, resulting in outcomes which can be seen as inequitable. Stronger measures may be required to correct this imbalance ...”

The measures advocated in the OECD Report of Hoeller et al. (2007) included recruiting the best teachers for poorly performing schools through salary incentives, giving more focussed funding for equipment, fabric and class size reductions, providing subsidized routes into training and employment for poorly performing students, and enhancing local community development through better local transport links, and tax subsidies to encourage more local employment.

#### *Twenty: Some Reasons for British Underachievement*

Some reasons for British underachievement have been adduced by a leading British education expert (Wragg, 2004). Schools in Britain were subject to a heavy-handed bureaucratic control through a prescribed National Curriculum, with formal examinations for pupils at ages 7, 11 and 14. Schools were frequently inspected and their performance in the periodic tests were publicly ranked. Far from ensuring higher levels of achievement and learning, the opposite seemed to have resulted, with high levels of teacher malaise in under-funded schools with large classes of dispirited pupils. Subjects such as music, games, history and physical education were increasingly left out of the curriculum to make way for yet more classes of formal instruction in government-required instruction in 'basic skills'.

In 2007 The General Teaching Council for England and Wales, an independent advocacy body, submitted to the House of Commons Select Committee enquiry on pupil assessment, the opinion that all formal examinations prior to age 16 should be ended. The arguments in favour of this policy were that frequent, externally monitored examinations (at ages 7, 11 and 14) distorted patterns of teaching and the search for a broad, inclusive curriculum - such examinations often alienated pupils, especially the least able who often left school (or absented themselves) by age 16. The GTC pointed to the positive experience of education in Wales, where several local educational authorities had abandoned such frequent testing (Woodward, 2007).

Ironically, SATs (Standard Assessment Tests at ages 7, 11 and 14) had been used by the National Audit Office to identify 402 primary and secondary schools in England (some three percent of all schools, containing about 200,000 pupils) which were not just failing, but were chronically producing catastrophically poor outcomes in their pupils, with more than half failing in basic tests of numeracy, literacy and general subjects before age 16. All of these “exceptionally failing” schools were in inner city or decaying urban areas.

Harley and Tymms (2008) reviewed evidence which showed that the understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the study of science has declined significantly since 1995, a reflection, they argued, of the rote learning imposed by SATs which was undermining children’s “natural curiosity” about the natural world. This in turn led to markedly fewer pupils taking science in the public examinations which are precursors to university entry.

Partly because of the publicity surrounding published league tables and the ‘shaming’ of underachieving schools in the standardized examinations at ages 7, 11 and 14, there was strong pressure to exclude learning-disabled, disruptive, and emotionally maladjusted pupils. It was perhaps no coincidence that in the summer term in which government SATS (Standard Assessment Tests) were held, the number of excluded pupils reached a peak - more than 9,000 pupils were permanently excluded from school in 2003, the majority of them in the summer term (Blair, 2004).

The main reasons given for these expulsions were pupil misbehaviour, but this was intimately linked to failure to take advantage of the instruction offered, and previous failure on formal tests of achievement. By 2005 the number of permanently excluded pupils in the previous year had risen to 9,880, with 334,000 pupils receiving ‘fixed term’ exclusions or suspensions (Literacy Trust, 2006). Permanent exclusions prior to public examinations were particularly likely to occur in the new ‘city academies’, set up to replace ‘failing’ inner-city schools, apparently in order to artificially enhance the public examination record of the new academies (Garner, 2007b).

The top country in the international league tables on comparable tests of reading, science and mathematics was Finland (sharing honours with several Scandinavian countries). This prompted Curtis (2004) to examine Finnish school policies which might explain this. She cites Prof. Erno Lehtinen, education policy advisor to the Finnish parliament. According to Lehtinen the idea that schools should be run from the centre, or even have their test results published was unthinkable in Finland. The only public examinations were those taken by students at age 18. Secondary schools were entirely comprehensive, taking all ability bands, and they attempted to teach to the student’s highest potential. Private schools were unknown in this small country. Teachers themselves had high status and salaries (on a par

with lawyers and doctors), and all were qualified at the master's level or beyond. Schools themselves had priority in government funding, and class sizes were much smaller than in Britain.

Finland also had an excellent record in its educational policies for the reception and absorption of children of immigrants and refugees in comparison with several other European countries, including Britain (Matinheikki-Kokko & Pitkanen, 2002). Britain's comparative failure in the integration of children of immigrants is demonstrated by the exclusion statistics (DfES, 2004a). These showed that the highest rates of exclusion were of Gypsy and Roma children, followed by students with cultural origins in the Caribbean, this latter group being more than three times as likely as any other ethnic group to be excluded from school (Wanless, 2006).

The influence of parental income upon child test scores is demonstrated in the work of Blanden and Machin (2004b). Using data from large scale British longitudinal surveys, they examined the progress of the 'brightest' children in the economically poorest cohort of children at age 3, in comparison with test performance levels in children of the richest quintile of parents. By age five, the bright, working class children had dropped from a score equivalent to the 88<sup>th</sup> percentile at age three to 65<sup>th</sup> percentile (compared to norms for the whole group) at age five. By age seven the 'dullest' section of children of the wealthy had overtaken the cognitive performance levels of the very bright children of the poor at age three. The message from this and other data reviewed by Blanden and Machin (2004b) is that parental social class is a major determinant of scholastic success, a process that begins early in a child's life and becomes more pronounced as advantage piles upon advantage, and vice versa for the poorest social classes. These trends were not observed in similar types of data from Canada and the Nordic countries, including Finland.

In conclusion, the poor scholastic performance of British children in state schools had multiple causes – a variety of social background factors, large classes, teacher malaise, underfunded schools, and a rigid curriculum with frequent testing. Chronically failing schools were likely to serve economically poor areas, and successful teachers with marketable skills were unlikely to stay very long in such schools. Suspensions and temporary and permanent exclusions was one way of coping with chronic disorder in marginal schools. However, given the resources allocated to education the underperformance and poor motivation of British children in comparison with those in other countries is somewhat puzzling. A case study of Finland, which consistently came top of the international league tables in terms of achievement provided interesting explanations. British underachievement seemed deeply rooted within its class system, and longitudinal research showed that initially "bright" children from the poorest economic groups rapidly

lost their scholastic advantages, while “dull” children very soon become scholastically advantaged.

#### *Twenty One: Illiterate School Leavers?*

Of particular concern with regard to mainstream British students were reports from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI, 2004 & 2008) of newly-recruited school leavers. Cumulatively since 1997, two million school leavers had by 2007 “insufficient skills in literacy and mathematics” which would enable them to advance occupationally – they were judged to be fit only for the lowest level of occupation, since they had failed to achieve adequate basic skills in their schooling. Overall, 47 per cent of British firms were dissatisfied with the educational quality of the school-leavers they recruited. These figures did not include the small army of permanently excluded (or self-excluding) pupils, who rarely entered the job market in any capacity. These figures are consonant with a 1999 report from the Basic Skills Agency (Moser, 1999) which found that one fifth of British adults had “severe problems” with basic literacy and numeracy, with skills in these areas lower than in any other European country except Poland and Ireland. Government data (Smithers, 2006) indicated that some 12 million British workers could not read beyond the level expected of 11-year-olds in the national literacy tests. In contrast, in other developed European countries (including Germany) the problem of functionally illiterate school-leavers was virtually absent (Machin, 2005).

Further data suggest that about four millions aged 16 to 19 had only the reading skills expected of an 11-year-old (Bignell, 2006). About a million adolescents left school each year with these limited reading skills, and most were likely to have attended ‘sub-standard’ secondary schools in economically poor neighbourhoods (Taylor, 2006). The cost in terms of ‘failed productivity’ of an adolescent with few or mediocre public examination passes at age 16 was, within 20 years, £49,000 per individual in 2006 costs, or more than £2 billions in total (TOL, 2006). As the Confederation for British Industry argued, early interventions to prevent this ‘drift into illiteracy’ might be highly cost-effective.

This thesis is further underlined by work by Jean Gross (2006) for The National Literacy Trust. This showed that more than five percent of children failed to acquire any reading skills in the primary school, and this fed into a downward spiral of lack of confidence, school drop-out, delinquency and welfare dependency. These costs over three decades would on average, exceed £50,000 per individual. Gross proposed a programme of early identification of children unable to read, with focussed diagnostic work and individualized instruction. This would likely cost about £2,500 per child, but likely to be very cost effective in the long run.

Further economic research suggests that at current prices each of these 'delinquent careers' will over the lifetime of the individual, cost the state in excess of £64,000 in costs of crime, imprisonment, welfare benefits, payments to single mothers, and lack of taxable incomes (Brookes et al., 2007; Clark, 2008b). Assuming that a quarter of "failing students" will make maximal demands on state services for their care, imprisonment and control, the lifetime costs of frequent truants from secondary school (absent for at least five weeks) together with the costs over their lifetime of excluded students gave a total figure of £800 millions per annum (at current costs) in the costs of these 'failed' students in their adolescent and adult years (Brookes et al., 2007). The report calculates that for each £1 spent on enhanced social and instructional programmes, the lifetime savings will be about £11.50, at current costs.,

A report by the government body OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) in 2008 indicated that a fifth of all of pupils in state schools failed to achieve the basic levels set for achievement in English and Mathematics (Judd, 2008). These children, the report stated, were likely to go on to make up a high proportion of the so-called NEET adolescents (16 to 24 year-olds who were "Not in Education, Employment or Training"). Moreover, a high proportion of this NEET group (some 200,000 in total – Gilbert, 2007a) lived in areas of economic deprivation, where many adults of all ages were dependent on state benefits (Thomas & Dorling, 2007). The data imply that welfare dependency begins in adolescence and often continues throughout the life cycle in urban areas marked by chronic levels of disadvantage. A 2007 report (Prince's Trust, 2007) estimated that in many urban areas at least a fifth of youth aged 16 to 24 fell into the NEET category, and the costs of their economic dependency and of their potential criminal careers could be at least £2 billions over their lifetime. This makes any kind of intervention which could prevent entry into criminal lifestyles cost effective.

A review by the Confederation of British Industries (Cridland, 2008) found that the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds "not in education, employment or training" had remained unchanged over 25 years, and in this regard Britain ranked 24<sup>th</sup> amongst 28 developed countries, exceeded only by Greece, Italy, Mexico and Turkey. Halving the number of NEETS would save £250 Millions a year in later benefit payments, and would significantly add to Britain's productivity through adding to numbers of skilled people in the workforce.

The national Cambridge Review of Primary Education (Noden & West, 2009b) gathered together a mass of evidence which showed that the seeds of scholastic failure were sown in the primary school, in which the focus on creative literacy was all too often sacrificed in favour on a narrow and slavish pursuit of preparation for government examinations, at the expense of a broad-based curriculum in which the excitement of learning would not be lost.

In conclusion to this section, the evidence shows that at least a tenth of British school-leavers have few examination passes, and only minimal competence in basic literacy and numeracy. They are in danger of joining the large group of NEETS (aged 16 plus, who are not in employment or training, and face a lifetime of welfare dependency). European comparisons indicate that this is a British phenomenon, and reflects Britain's rigid class structure and lack of upward social mobility. When measured against lifetime social service costs, individualised educational programmes for this underachieving group, though expensive in the short-term, would be highly cost effective within a few years.

The economic recession beginning in 2008 was likely to have made the situation of unemployed teenagers worse. A survey of 500 firms by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD, 2009) found that only one in five would consider recruiting school-leavers for employment in 2009. The numbers aged 16 to 25 who were unemployed and drawing the "job seeker's allowance" was 450,000 in May, 2009, an increase of 80 percent over the previous year. These figures were likely to swell with the ranks of newly unemployed school and college leavers in July, 2009. Youth without qualification are those least likely to be hired, and to become permanently unemployed.

#### *Twenty Two: The Fate of Excluded Students*

Parsons (1999) identified the educational exclusion of British children as a major social problem, with far reaching implications for policy makers in education and in other fields. Figures on exclusions from British schools for 2003-4 showed a six percent increase in the numbers excluded. Many of these 344,510 students were approaching the final year examination stage, examinations which they would never take (Halpin, 2005; Smithers, 2005). Figures for the school year 2005-6 indicated yet another rise in the number of exclusions, to 434,280 (Garner, 2007f; Woolcock, 2008). New government policy required that a school which permanently excludes a student must accept another one in his or her stead. What this effectively meant was that as soon as a new Academy school opened, pupils who were seen as slow, unwilling or disruptive learners were immediately expelled and their places taken by "more promising" students (Major, 2008). What followed was a drift down of unpromising students between secondary schools until eventually the least promising individuals were partially absorbed by the lowest quality schools. But significant numbers of these most alienated teenagers dropped out of schooling permanently, many by the age of 14 – but there was little sociological evidence on the fate of these "disappeared" populations (Skidmore, 2008). Another strategy used by schools to respond to the "no exclusions" directive was to "suspend" unacceptable pupils for a specific time period (Garner, 2009a). It is likely that some of these students would get the message very soon, and might suspend themselves permanently.

What happens to excluded students in Britain? The answer to this important question was not very clear, since the government's Department for Education and Skills (2004) acknowledged that each year educational systems 'lose track' of some 10,000 students before they are aged 16. Some who are 'known about' are temporarily expelled, and find places in other schools, and this has been attributed to school policies which aim to enhance achievement profiles by expelling under-performing pupils (Brighouse, 2004). The fate of permanently excluded students is less clear - such pupils are usually referred either to special 'referral units'. These referral units offer remedial courses in basic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic) and vocational training. However, the atmosphere in these centres is often less than professional, and students are frequently absent ("... provision for pupils who were excluded or placed in temporary, specialized provision was of very variable quality ..." Gilbert, 2006). In her annual report for 2007, the Director of OFSTED (Gilbert, 2007b) found that although 52 percent of the pupil referral units were "good", in 20 percent there was very poor quality, with frequent absenteeism by the referred pupils. Gilbert (2009) commented on OFSTED's inspection of Pupil Referral Units for excluded youth that only a half were providing an adequate education. Oftentimes a youth had to wait for weeks for a vacancy in a PRU to become available.

Data on school exclusions for 2006-7 (Clark, 2008b) for England and Wales showed a slightly changing picture. The number of pupils temporarily or permanently excluded from schooling in 2006 numbered 343,840 (DfES, 2007): 10,239 of these pupils had been permanently excluded (Brookes et al., 2007). The number of secondary school pupils permanently excluded from school has fallen by some seven percent, but this was largely due to changes to government policy which although allowing pupils to be permanently expelled, did require that other schools should attempt to educate these alienated pupils.

The result is that the final destination for these frequently excluded pupils are those secondary schools serving the most depressed, most alienated and least achieving pupils. These, as we stressed earlier, are often schools with a high teacher turnover and larger classes which serve the most depressed urban areas. 2008 government data showed an increase in limited term exclusions (up by about four percent) on the grounds of frequent aggression (including attacks on teachers), sexual assaults (male on female), racist language, and physical and verbal attacks on peers and teachers. Again, these disturbed pupils sink to the bottom of the school hierarchy, and many, although not permanently excluded are frequently absent – much to the relief of their teachers.

Permanent drop-out (and voluntary absenteeism) is often not followed up. It is likely that many of the permanently excluded form a cadre of street youth, alienated and depressed, making money from petty crime from early adolescence onwards, and increasingly

becoming prey to drug pushers and those who wish to sexually exploit the young (Bagley & Pritchard, 1998a; Bagley & King, 2003).

Some schools in Britain's major conurbations serve areas marked by economic depression, and social and ethnic divisions. Drop-out (or expulsion) rates from these schools are high, and youth aged less than 16 were not eligible for any kind of financial support from the state. At 16 they might be eligible for a weekly grant (about £30) which was less than a third of the minimum wage for young people in work. The alternative for some of these young people was participation in drug using and distribution subcultures, with associated thefts to pay for drug use, and the carrying of knives and guns which resulted in high rates of severe injuries and fatalities in these disaffected youth (Batmangheldj, 2007).

Singh (2007), Chair of the Prime Minister's *Commission on Integration and Cohesion* advocated a form of "national service" for young people who could opt for a period of work in an area of social, civic or military service. This was an idealistic solution, but it seemed unlikely to be of relevance for youth of school age who rarely attended the schools in which they are nominally affiliated.

Parsons (2009) and Woodcock & Fishburn (2009) showed that the situation regarding school exclusions appeared to be worsening. The new government policy of allowing only short-term exclusions rather than permanent expulsions from schooling had resulted in a "revolving door" in which excluded students returned after a week or two, but were often expelled once again. There were 176,000 of these "multiple short term exclusions" in 2007-8. Investigation of pupil referral units (PRUs), which expelled and excluded students should in theory attend, revealed an unsatisfactory picture. Communication between schools and the PRUs was poor, and many youth stayed at home or wandered the streets because the PRUs had not been informed of their existence. A single PRU could serve a city, so problems of transport might also prevent youth attendance. "Lack of funding resources means that some pupil referral units are overwhelmed and can only offer a few hours a week to teenagers. At some units pupils turn up for only a couple of hours a week." (Woodcock & Fisburn, 2009). According to government figures, nearly 15,000 children were excluded more than five times in a single year.

Further data showed "an alarming link between exclusion and prison." According to the Prison Reform Trust, 86 percent of imprisoned young offenders (aged less than 18) had been previously excluded from school. Parsons comments that: "These kids are often on the edge of the criminal justice system before they are excluded. Exclusion will push them further." Parsons (2009) argued that only a minority of PRUs offered an adequate educational programme. "Exclusion from school, either permanently or for a fixed period,



is a quiet mockery of the government's *Every Child Matters* policy." Parsons offered a number of "strategic alternatives" to exclusion, all of which although expensive in the short run, could produce human and financial savings if they could prevent at least some of these youth from drifting into a life of delinquency and crime. Narey (2009) comments: "Once you take someone out of a class of 30 children, they can prosper very well in a smaller class and have a good chance in life. Once a child is excluded permanently, or repeatedly for a fixed term, it is very difficult to prevent later criminal careers."

In a later section of this document we will outline in detail an experimental British programme which had marked success in retaining youth in school who would otherwise have been excluded, preventing their drift into crime. Before this we would like to outline evidence from some remarkable American studies on reduction in class sizes, and individualized tuition for 'failing students', since this work has important implications on how educational practices in Britain should be framed and reformed.

#### *Twenty Three: The Tennessee and Texas Educational Experiments on School Class Size*

The State of Tennessee, in America's deep south, is not noted for its progressive social policies, yet the "Tennessee class size experiment" is both notable and famous. This experiment began in 1985 (Picus, 2000), and was soon followed by somewhat similar experiments in California and Washington State. The Tennessee experiment began by selecting a school district with a relatively high proportion of disadvantaged and underachieving schools and students, and matching the district for purposes of comparison with a demographically similar district. In the focus district, class sizes in Kindergarten through to Grade 3 (containing children aged 5 to 8) were reduced from 25-plus to less than 18, usually to 15 in each class. Children in focus and control classes were then tested regularly until Grade 8 (average age 14).

Results were both spectacular and important (Achilles, 1997; Finn & Achilles, 1999; Picus, 2000). Compared with control children who remained in larger classes, the several thousand pupils in the reduced-size classes had significant gains on tests of basic ability and in learning of general subjects; they were more fluent and proficient in writing, listening and speaking; they displayed more creativity and types of divergent thinking; they were less likely to engage in fighting, shoving, pushing and crowding others in class; they had fewer fears about being ridiculed or bullied; they were better motivated and had significantly better self-concept; they participated more in voluntary activities; they were generally more eager and enthusiastic about school and schooling; and they were less likely to be absent from school.

Although the reduced class sizes did not extend beyond grade 3 (age 8), follow-up when the focus pupils were aged 14 showed that they had retained their significant gains. Pupils from disadvantaged social backgrounds made the most gains (compared with similar children in the control schools) and these previously disadvantaged children retained their achievements and motivation in the long run (Finn et al., 2005).

Observation of teachers in the reduced-size classes showed that they still taught using their traditional methods; but they were able to give their pupils much higher levels of individual attention, and were able to focus on pupils who were potentially disruptive or underachieving, without sacrificing levels of instruction for remaining children in the class. It was important however that reductions in funding for equipment, support services and space were not made in order to fund the extra number of teachers required (Picus, 2000). Further follow-up of the original 95,000 children in more than 100 schools in the original class size reduction experiment found that the K-3 cohort, even though they entered regular class sizes following Grade 3, were more likely to remain in school until the age of 18, and were more likely to apply for college or university entrance (Achilles, 1999).

The most detailed follow up of the STARS programme by Finn et al. (2005) of 5,335 students to late adolescence showed that small class size (less than 20 per class) in the first four years of schooling had strong and highly significant effects on numbers graduating from high school. This effect was particularly strong with regards to pupils who came from economically poor backgrounds. Amongst those graduating from high school (76.3% in those who had attended large classes, 87.8% in those who attended small classes) measured reading and mathematical ability was significantly higher at age 18.

Results from the California, Indiana and Washington reduced-class size experiments provided similar results, and teachers, educational administrators and public alike have become enthusiastic supporters of K-3 class size reductions, which are now widespread in the United States. Reducing class sizes in the early years of schooling is expensive, and by 2000 the Federal government was subsidizing costs within 20 States at the level of about \$1.2 billions, since it was clear that class-size reductions are cost effective in the longer term (Krueger, 1999).

The individualized instruction model, and dividing larger classes into smaller groups, developed in Texas can be an adjunct to, or an alternative to the class size reduction model (Slavin, 1990). While several American states have deployed the individualized instruction strategy for elementary and junior high schools (Kindergarten to Grade 8) with an above average proportion of disadvantaged pupils, that in Texas has been described and evaluated the most systematically (Farkas, 1996 & 2000).

In these experiments 'failing' students identified by teachers are given supplementary instruction of about 40 minutes a day on three to four days a week. The tutors were usually university and college students who are given short courses of preparation, and they then use specially prepared materials for reading instruction. Continuous evaluation on the child's progress by the tutor led to a highly individualized curriculum approach. Children in these specialized individual instruction programmes acquired reading levels which were nearly twice those of matched controls who merely received standardized educational instruction. By 2000 similar programmes were operating in six US States (ECS, 2002).

The lessons from the Tennessee class size experiments are salutary – in small classes teachers are able to give more individualized attention to the learning needs of pupils, as well as addressing very early on, problems of poor behaviour. In very small classes (15 or less) pupils feel more responsible and are less alienated. They achieve better, are more motivated to complete school and have better self-concept with regard to the learning environment. The alternate model from Texas of individualized instruction for some pupils also has demonstrated effectiveness.

In another American study, Allhusen et al. (2004) examined in detail how teachers and their 651 pupils behaved in US first grade classes. The smaller classes received significantly more "high quality instruction", and the pupils in these smaller classes achieved a higher level of literacy skills. Teachers gave pupils in small classes "more emotional support", while the pupils in turn demonstrated more closeness to their teacher, and less externalising or hyperactive behaviour.

The American Education Association (NEA, 2008) summarized the available American research as follows: "Teachers with small classes can spend time and energy helping each child succeed. Smaller classes also enhance safety, discipline and order in the classroom. When qualified teachers teach smaller classes in modern schools, kids learn more. It's common sense, and the research proves it works to increase student achievement." The optimum level for a school class is 15, says the NEA.

#### *Twenty Four: Achievement and School Class Sizes in Britain*

For some time the myth prevailed in British educational policy that "class size doesn't matter", and it was the qualifications, experience and dedication of the teacher that was most important (OFSTED, 1995). Of course, well-qualified and highly motivated teachers are important, but unfortunately the morale of British teachers had been undermined (up to 2008-9) because of poor pay, difficult working conditions and the popular perception that teaching is an unrewarding profession, not just in financial terms.

While a legal regulation in 1998 specified that early school classes in Britain should be no larger than 30, in practice class sizes in the primary school are often much larger than this. A 1999 report indicated that in Inner London, class sizes were the largest in the country, twice the level in countries such as Norway and Finland (Foster, 1999). In Bangladesh, a prominent NGO The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), offered primary education in many areas based on a maximum of 23 children a class in rural primary schools (Nath, 2008).

The connection between class size and school exclusions is, we argue, linked to the fact that teachers in Britain are often unable to address the learning problems of bored, alienated and potentially rebellious students. It is no coincidence that the highest proportion of exclusions from school occur in local authority areas which have the poorest teacher-pupil ratios. Again, there is a vicious circle here – in these areas which have the lowest achieving and most poorly behaved students, teacher turnover is highest and in consequence classes frequently become very large because of chronic teacher shortage.

In Britain Iacovou (2001) has argued that previous British research on classroom pupils were assigned to small classes - often it had been pupils with educational difficulties, underachievement due to underlying cognitive problems, and/or behavioural maladjustment who had been assigned to very small classes. Including the achievements of these pupils with those who were retained in larger classes gave a skewed result, showing that larger classes contained more highly achieving pupils - but this finding was an artefact of referral procedures. It has been acknowledged by researchers that children in private schools in Britain, where class sizes are on average less than half of those in publicly-funded schools have much higher achievements than pupils in the state system: but this effect has usually been attributed to the social class bias in the student intake of private schools.

Iacovou's (2001) British research followed up some 12,100 children in the National Child Development Study, a cohort of children born in one week in 1958, and who were studied systematically at birth and ages 7, 11 and beyond. First of all, she found as expected that pupils assigned to lower streams in primary schooling had poorer initial reading ability, and these lower streams had smaller numbers of children. Iacovou found that smaller class size – resulting from the normal variation in numbers in regular streams, not that resulting from any specific experiment - was associated, when streaming policy and a variety of other social factors were controlled for, with higher achievement.. The smaller class-size effect accounted for an enhancement of about one-third of a standard deviation in reading test scores, a highly significant result. This important finding suggests that even quite small levels of class size reduction can have positive effects.

Furthermore, a reduction in class size of eight pupils below the average was associated with a highly significant 40 per cent increase (of one standard deviation) in reading scores, slightly larger than the achievement advantage of coming from an advantaged social class, and ten times the advantage bestowed by having a mother with an additional year of completed education. The advantage in reading ability through being in a smaller class at age 7 was retained at age 11, particularly in children from larger families. While the variation in class sizes in this British study reflected a naturally occurring variation in the policies and resources of different schools, and was not the result of a carefully contrived experiment as in the Tennessee STARS project, the effect size in enhancement of achievements was quite similar to those observed by Achilles (1996) in Tennessee.

Dustman et al. (2002) analyzed a sub-sample from the National Child Development Study, of 4,000 participants living in England and Wales, followed up at ages 16, 23, 32 and 42. They found that even quite small reductions in class size significantly increased the possibility of a child staying on in school after 16, other factors (including attendance at grammar school) controlled for. Staying on at school increased the chances of attending college or university, reflected in significantly higher mean earnings over the individual's lifetime.

The British NCDS study reflected an era of very large classes (average primary school class sizes were 35.9), and since that time average primary school class sizes have fallen to a little over 30. There are strong grounds for supposing however that since the STARS experiment and the NCDS statistical study produced similar results in school achievement, the social advantages produced by the Tennessee experiment (better morale, higher self-concept, better behaviour, higher motivation, lower school drop-out) would also occur in pupils in smaller classes in Britain. This suggestion is important for the discussion in a later section on school exclusions and their sequels in our 'two-schools experiment'.

We note in this context the results of a study which focussed on the individual cognitive needs of boys in four inner-city primary schools in London. These underachieving boys made significant gains in achievement as a result of the inputs (CLPE, 2004). These findings tend to replicate those of the Texas individualized reading programmes, and show that individualized educational inputs could also significantly influence the enhancement of academic achievements of British pupils.

Preliminary results were available from a large experimental study which has focussed on 235 children aged four to seven in state schools, in small classes (average size 19 children) who were compared with children in large classes (average size 33 children). This research

by Blatchford et al. (2003) found that children in the larger classes were more often distracted, and spent more time 'off task'.

In the monograph emerging from this project, the largest experimental study of class size effects in Britain (effectively, a replication of the American STARS project) 10,000 experimental and control pupils in 500 classes, in 300 schools were followed up from the time of their initial enrolment (at ages 4 to 5) until the end of Key Stage One (at ages 6 and 7). Key findings were:

1. There is a "disruption effect" when children move from reception classes into larger classes in Year 1 which is magnified when they move into a bigger class. Therefore, Blatchford urges, class sizes should remain stable (and ideally, small in size) from reception into future years of education.
2. Large groupings within classes can have an adverse effect on the amount and quality of teaching and the quality of pupils' work and concentration. Best outcomes are when teachers, with the aid of classroom assistants, divide children into smaller groups. Classroom assistants in and of themselves do not improve pupils' concentration and reading skills, unless classes are small at the outset.
3. In smaller classes there is more teacher support for learning and "less pupil inattentiveness and off-task behaviour". Children in larger classes spend more time interacting with each other, and less time attending to their teacher, and to work tasks.

Overall there were significant gains in literacy skills in the smaller classes. The optimum level for effective teaching was a class size of less than 20, the study concludes. This not only helped the teacher to instruct more effectively, but also helped them to individualize teaching for SEN pupils.

Blatchford (2003) concludes: "There may also be longer term effects of class size differences, beyond that evident from study of the first three years of school, and in the current research we are following the same children over the next stage of their schooling i.e. from 7-11 years (KS2) and documenting both class sizes and educational achievement." (p. 144) The results of this research have begun to emerge, but fall outside of the time frame of this review..

Research by Croxford and Raffe (2007) which examined data for a cohort of British adolescents in the period 1984 to 2002, found that Scottish adolescents were significantly more likely to attend university or college (at a rate of 37%), than were English adolescents (at a rate of 25%). Statistical analyses suggest that a major cause of this disparity were the larger secondary school class sizes in English schools (26 pupils per teacher on average)

compared with Scottish adolescents (23 pupils per teacher), which were linked in the first instance to proportions of pupils staying at school until 18. These findings like the earlier NCDS studies suggested that even small reductions in class size could yield favorable, long-term outcomes in achievement.

Blatchford et al. (2007) used a multi-method, qualitative and quantitative study with this cohort, in studying teacher-student interaction when children were aged 7 to 11. Sixteen 'small' classes (fewer than 25 students per teacher) were compared with 31 'large' classes (31 or more students per teacher). "Results showed that there was more individual attention in smaller classes, a more active role for pupils, and beneficial effects on quality of teaching." Valuable results from longer term follow-up work with this cohort have been published, but in a time frame beyond the scope of this review.

Further Scottish initiatives (Chapman, 2007) underline the paucity of educational provision in Britain (by 2006, 22,800 pupils in English schools were contained in classes larger than 30). The new Scottish policy should result in nursery and primary education classes (for those aged 4 to 8 years) which would have no more than 18 pupils per class. Nursery education for the four-year-olds would be free. These policy initiatives would begin in the most deprived areas, and would cost an additional £25 millions a year, compared to previous educational spending in Scotland. In 2007, Scotland had 31 percent fewer pupils per teacher than England and Wales (ONS, 2008).

The overall effects of the school class size studies are clear. In smaller classes teachers are more able to focus on the individual emotional, behavioural and learning needs of each pupil. Pupils are less distracted and overactive, and are more likely to concentrate on the learning process. Even when pupils move on to larger classes in secondary school, the early advantages from small classes at the primary level are retained, and they are significantly more likely to stay on in school to 18, and achieve at a higher level in formal examinations.

The British government by 2008-9 was struggling to keep school classes below 30 per teacher. Even with a teaching assistant, it was difficult to see how a teacher could instruct effectively in such an environment. Inevitably, some children who desperately needed the teacher's focussed attention would be neglected.

State-funded English schools in the period under review rarely offered their pupils the advantages of small class sizes, and it was left to the private sector of education, affordable only for well-off parents, to provide what should have been a basic educational right for all children. The under-funding of schooling in Britain (and particularly in England) is another

aspect of the structures of social class, by which many of the poor and underachieving remain poor and underachieving throughout their life cycle.

The figures for the academic year 2006-2007 collected by OECD (OECD, 2008) indicated that in Britain more than 23,000 infants were still taught in classes which exceeded 31 pupils. Class sizes at all ages in Britain were, on average, 13.1 percent greater than the average for all of the other OECD nations. The situation in England (but not in Scotland) with regard to class sizes is getting worse rather than better. Data for the academic year 2007-2008 indicated the 24,820 children in primary schools in England and Wales were being taught in classes of 31 or larger, an increase of 1,610 compared with the previous year (Noden & West, 2009b). This, the Cambridge Review of Primary Education showed, had a depressing influence on children's achievement on basic numeracy and literacy tasks. Teachers of larger classes were less able to focus on class management and on difficult or distracting behavior of individual pupils. Both pupils and teachers were more often absent from these very large classes, which often seemed to be infected by a feeling of malaise. It is unclear whether this was because of high numbers of children from "problem" backgrounds combined with teachers who simply could not cope, or were at the end of their useful professional life, or some combinations of these factors. These teachers often soldiered on bravely, perhaps making envious glances towards schools in the private sector in which class sizes rarely exceeded fifteen.

In March 2008, the Minister for Schools was "jeered" at the annual meeting of a teachers' union when he maintained that primary class sizes of 38 were acceptable, provided a teacher's aide was present; and that secondary school mathematics classes of 70 were "perfectly acceptable" (Lipsett & Curtis, 2008). In May, 2009 the Department for Children, Schools and Families released figures showing that the number of children aged 5 to 7 in classes of more than thirty had doubled in the previous year, and there were now 930 of these "oversize" classes in the country. These numbers were expected to rise because of demographic changes, and government failure to allocate additional funds for class size reduction (Garner, 2009b).

#### *Twenty Five: The Private Schools Option*

According to the OECD (2007 & 2008) overviews of educational statistics in the 29 OECD nations, Britain ranked 24<sup>th</sup> in terms of school class size in state-funded primary schools, with an average of 25.8 pupils per teacher. According to these data Britain had more pupils attending privately funded schools, which were entirely independent of any state funding, than any other OECD nation. These privately funded schools (which normally charge fees for a child's attendance), are chosen by a significant number of the upper and middle



classes in Britain. In these private, fee-paying schools, average class sizes were often less than half of those in state-funded schools.

Freedman, research analyst for *The Independent Schools Council* (Freedman, 2006) showed that as expected the large majority of parents who sent their children to these well-endowed, small class-size schools come from the well-paid middle and upper classes. Nevertheless, around a quarter of pupils come from parents with below average incomes, implying that they were prepared to make sacrifices in order to give their children a quality education.

The number of parents opting to pay for their child's education had, by 2008 been increasing year by year. Some reasons why more than 500,000 parents each year were now prepared to pay for their child's education were the promise of smaller classes, and the availability of well-qualified teachers of languages, maths and physics (Garner, 2007e). The largest increase in pupils going to private education was in students aged 14 and above, since this appeared to be an age when the deficiencies of state secondary schools become, in pedagogic terms, more apparent.

Gilbert (2007a) produced for the New Labour government a "vision for schooling" in which the teacher produced an individualized plan for each pupil based on an individual profile, goal-setting and tutoring, rather than employing a group-instruction, "one size fits all" model. What Gilbert did not add was that such an ideal model required very much smaller class sizes, and much more highly trained teachers. Certainly, for some children who have "normal" intelligence but who are failing to read or handle numerical concepts adequately, individualized instruction may be necessary, following appropriate diagnostic work.

This an expensive model, and so far it is only available to parents who can afford to pay the fees required (Freedman, 2006). Ironically, it is parents who are served by the poorest quality schools in 'working class' areas who need such private education (in which fees often exceed more than £3,300 a term for a day pupil) the most. Instead, parents living in the most depressed economic areas have been presented with the poorest quality schools for their children. But if these children are to be upwardly mobile in social and economic terms, the opposite should be the case – they need the highest quality of schooling.

An alternative, advocated by Trevor Phillips (2007) was to employ the American model of "bussing" of students from disadvantaged areas into high quality state schools. Phillips, Chair of the British Commission for Social Equality and Human Rights cited an American study showing the success of this model. Ironically, this policy of bussing pupils between schools, at least on the grounds of "race" has now been made illegal in the United States (Bagley, 2008b).

Another possibility which has been tried experimentally with the support of a private foundation, is to subsidize access to 'private' schools by promising students from economically poor families (Sutton Trust, 2001). This initiative is unlikely to reach the majority of alienated and disruptive students from smaller secondary schools, serving marginal areas of cities.

Another trend is for local consortia of parents to "home school" their children in groups of up to half a dozen in size, for a variety of reasons – parents may object to a lack of religious ethos in the available schools, or to the fact that their children would be bullied, or would acquire attitudes to violence, drugs and sexuality which would be undesirable. The estimated number of pupils in home education are about 50,000 at any one time, although much larger numbers may have experienced part of their schooling in this way (Curtis, 2008c). Websites exist through which parents can access curriculum guides, textbooks and details of examination entry, and there is no evidence (from visits by Office for Standards in Education Inspectors) that home education is harmful scholastically. Often these home educated students will enter sixth form colleges for more advanced work. There is some evidence that parents who choose to educate their children at home are largely middle class, and are choosing such education (sometimes with local authority subsidies of about £1,700 a year for each child) in order to save their child attending persistently failing secondary schools (Bartholomew, 2009).

In Britain Muslim parents increasingly see these small groupings of pupils in a parental home, or in a larger setting as providing the initial basis for larger schools offering a curriculum informed by the moral and spiritual teachings of Islam. According to research (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2008) these schools can, despite the prejudiced attitudes of some critics, lay the foundation for excellent citizenship.

In an age of austerity, some private schools in an effort to hold down fee levels or to increase recruitment of pupils are merging with nearby schools or increasing class sizes (Lipsett, 2009). Nevertheless, pupil-teacher ratios in private schools rarely exceed two thirds of those in the state system.

#### *Twenty Six: Inequality and Tertiary Education*

There is a strong social class bias in England in state secondary school students who continue on to university studies, ranging in extreme cases from 8 per cent of the age group following this path in the poorest group of urban areas, to 62 per cent in the most prosperous areas (HEFCE, 2005). In Britain as a whole, young people living in the more advantaged areas were more than four times as likely to go on to university than are young

people in areas where average family incomes are in the lowest quintile (Blanden & Machin, 2004b).

By the end of 2005 the proportion of children with parents in the highest wealth quintile had increased their chances of university entry by up to six times the numbers gaining university entry, compared with those whose parents were in the lowest income quintile (Cassidy, 2005). Research cited by Cassidy indicated that an important mediating factor was the poorer quality of the secondary schools attended by many of the students from economically poor homes. Even when they did enter university, children of the poorest parents tended to have poorer degree outcomes, largely because they had to work part-time because their parents (unlike well-off parents) were unable to provide for their child's living allowance (Van Dyke & Little, 2005).

A marked increase in fees for students attending university in England and Wales in 2006 was reflected in a decline of 13,500 students entering university whose parents were in the lowest income quintile, despite the fact that overall the number of applicants to university continued to increase (Blair, 2006). University education in Scotland remained free for Scottish residents, again underlining the paucity of educational provision in England which could impair upward mobility through higher education. The New Labour government had announced a programme of limited bursaries for students from the poorest families entering university. However, research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (Fitzimons & Chowdry, 2007) estimated that this £400 million programme would be of little use for those from poverty backgrounds, since their depressed circumstances mean that they rarely achieved the standards for university entry. This money would be better spent, the IFS researchers argued, on school programmes for youth aged 16 to 18 who would otherwise drop out of education, and having no chance of college or university entry.

In her annual report, the Chief Inspector of Schools (Gilbert, 2007b) stated that schools in areas with a high proportion receiving free school meals (an indicator of overall poverty) was particularly likely to produce pupils with few 'good' passes in the General Certificate of Secondary Education, so that relatively few in turn took Advanced level GCSEs (the usual requirement for university entry). Disadvantage began at the infant-school level, according to Gilbert's (2007b) analysis, and fed through to a much poorer chance of going to university.

Children of the economically poor tended to be concentrated in disadvantaged areas, and were much less likely to achieve university entrance. The underachievement on the Standard Achievement Tests in pupils from poverty-background schools (compared with those pupils who attended 'better off' schools) was well-established at age seven, and

increased at all phases of formal testing (at ages 11, 14 and 16). Children in these poverty-area schools from which very few went on to university, were often absent or had been excluded in 12 percent of cases, compared with two percent of students attending all other types of state school.

Paton (2008a) cites research showing that white males from working class backgrounds are significantly under-represented in university populations: even when they are qualified, they disproportionately failed to apply, despite the availability of special access funds (up to £1000 a year for each student) administered by the universities themselves. When they do attend university, students from poverty backgrounds were significantly more likely to attend former polytechnics, rather than OxBridge and the high status Russell Group universities. Thus a variety of social and psychological factors blocked the upward social mobility of working class youth in Britain (Goldthorpe & Jackson, 2007; Blanden et al., 2007).

*Twenty Seven: World Perspectives on Britain's Failure to Serve the Needs of Children and Adolescents*

A major UNICEF report published in February 2007 placed Britain's failure in serving the needs of disadvantaged children and adolescents in a clear, comparative perspective. This report compared WHO and OECD data for the world's 21 richest countries. In terms of absolute wealth, and on GNP per head Britain ranked very highly – but in terms of the well-being of young people, Britain ranked last, and compared unfavourably with less wealthy nations such as Ireland, Greece, Poland and the Czech Republic. The country with the best record in the treatment of children and adolescents was The Netherlands, followed by Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Spain, Switzerland, Norway and Italy.

Data were assembled in six sections:

Firstly, *Material Well-Being* - defined as the percent of children living in poverty - homes with an income less than 50 percent of the median income for the nation; percent of children in which all of the adults were unemployed; percent of children living in homes with few educational resources; and percent of children in which there were fewer than 10 books. Of the 21 wealthy countries Britain ranked 18 on these aggregate indicators, with a high proportion (16%) in relative poverty, who were also living in homes with few educational resources.

Secondly, *Health and Safety* - defined by rates of infant mortality, children born with birth weight of less than 2,500 grams, percent of infants being immunized, and percent of deaths in children from 'accidents'. Britain's rate of infant deaths at 5.3 per 1,000 was nearly twice

that of Finland's; and percent with birth weight of less than 2,500 grams was again nearly twice that in several Nordic countries.

Thirdly, *Educational Well-Being* - defined by level of school achievements at age 15+; percent staying on at school aged 16+; numbers aged 16-19 in training and vocational courses; percent expecting only unskilled employment. Overall, Britain ranked 17 out of the 21 nations, with a particularly high proportion (25%) of those aged 16+ dropping out of education, failing to receive vocational training, or having low occupational aspirations: 36 percent in Britain expected only unskilled employment, compared with 17 percent in the USA.

Fourthly, *Relationships* - defined by percent in one-parent families, percent in step-families; frequency of eating a meal with the whole family; percentage reporting positive interactions with parent(s); and percent at ages 11, 13 and 15 reporting their peers to be "kind and helpful". British children ranked last amongst the 21 nations studied on these various indicators, only 42 percent seeing their peers as kind or helpful, compared with 73 percent of Dutch and 81 percent of Swiss children and adolescents. British children were most likely to be in a family with only one parent, or with a non-biological parent, and had very low rates of direct or positive interactions with other family members. Britain and the US stood out among the 21 nations as having high proportions of one-parent and disrupted families.

Fifthly *Behaviours and Health Risks* - defined by percent eating breakfast; percent eating fresh fruit daily; percent physically active; percent overweight; percent who smoked in past week; percent drunk twice or more in past year; percent using cannabis in lifetime; percent having had intercourse by age 15; percent using condoms during sex; percent becoming pregnant between ages 15 and 19; percent aged 11, 13, and 15 in a fight in past year; and percent bullied in past two months. On these aggregated indicators British adolescents fared worst among the 21 nations by a considerable margin, Sweden, Poland and The Netherlands reporting the least problems of poor health and risk-related behaviours. Judging by these data, life for teenagers in Britain is often difficult and unpleasant, with frequent retreats into the self-indulgence of alcohol, drugs and sex.

Sixthly, *Subjective Well-Being* – defined by percent rating health as no more than 'fair' or 'poor'; percent who 'like school a lot'; and percent with a low score on a measure of life satisfaction. More than a quarter of British girls ranked their health as only 'fair' or 'poor', and overall British youth scored poorly on the measures of life satisfaction. The Netherlands ranked best on these combined indicators, Britain the worst.

The UNICEF report concludes: "Children who grow up in poverty are more vulnerable: specifically, they are more likely to be in poor health, to have learning and behavioural

difficulties, to underachieve in school, to become pregnant at too early an age, to have lower skills and aspirations, to be low paid, unemployed and welfare-dependent.” In other words, the six areas of deprivation studied by UNICEF are systematically related. Children often begin their vulnerable careers *in utero*, and in economically poor and disorganised families often do not receive social and psychological supports which would prepare them for successful and healthy adult careers. They will likely form the parents of the next deprived generation.

The Children’s Commissioner for England (Aynsley-Green, 2007) commenting on the findings of the UNICEF report, argued that there has been systematic under-funding in services and financial supports for children and families since 1979, a year coincident with the rise of neo-conservative policies of extreme individualism, which a New Labour government since 1997 had, he said, done little to modify. The British government in 2007 claimed that the UNICEF figures were out-of-date. This disingenuous defence was refuted by Aynsley-Green (2007) who pointed to the fact that the UNICEF Report Cards 1 (2000) and 6 (2006) showed similar differences between countries, indicating the chronic nature of the profound disadvantages for children and families in Britain, relative to other countries.

Even though the situation in Britain had improved somewhat, the welfare of children had also improved in most other OECD nations. With regard to relative poverty, the situation in Britain appeared to be getting worse (Seager, 2007).

The UNICEF data have been subjected to additional analysis in ecological comparisons by Pickett and Wilkinson (2007), who added two further countries (Australia and Canada) to the original 21 OECD countries, and then after statistical modelling, replicated the analyses with data for 50 American States. Key variables were an aggregate measure of child well-being (rate of births to teen mothers; rate of children killed through murder; infant mortality; low birth weight rates; levels of educational performance; drop-out from high school; proportion overweight; and proportion with mental health problems). These indicators, making up the aggregate measure, were significantly and positively linked with one another.

The two independent predictor variables explored were average income per head, and the Gini measure of income inequality. Average income levels did not predict levels of child well-being. However, the measure of income inequality (the proportion of people in relative poverty) correlated at a highly significant 0.67 with child well-being, indicating a fairly linear relationship between inequality and level of child problems.

The country with the highest level of inequality, and the poorest level of child well-being on the aggregate measures, was Britain. The countries which had least income equality and

the highest levels of child well-being were Sweden, Netherlands Finland, Norway and Denmark. Replication across American States found largely similar results in terms of income inequality and low levels child well-being. The authors of the study conclude that the most likely effect is that high levels of relative poverty undermine the quality of family life, with numerous negative consequences for children's welfare.

The dismal findings from the UNICEF study with regard to children's welfare in Britain were corroborated in the 41-country study of survey data for 2005-6 by Currie et al. (2008), which analysed findings on some 200,000 children aged 11, 13 and 15, in developed nations in North America and Europe. In this study, teenagers in Britain came well below the median (i.e. scored more poorly) in the national league tables with regard to proportion drinking alcohol regularly, and experimenting with cannabis. British children were also likely to be particularly anxious about school work, possibly a reflection of a regime of frequent school testing and examinations.

The British children were particularly likely, amongst the national groups studied, not to turn to parents for help and advice. Rather, they sought advice and support from peer groups, which provided support for (or initiation in) many of the health-risk behaviours. Children from The Netherlands, Finland and Denmark emerged as those with the lowest level of risky health behaviours, and with close relations with their parents.

Another example of Britain's worsening international position came from a study which compared the links between child mortality (in those aged 0 to 4), and income inequality (ratio of incomes of the poorest quintile to those of the richest quintile of population, as measured by the Gini coefficient). This study by Collison et al. (2007) of the 24 wealthiest OECD nations showed a strong correlation between income inequality and child mortality, using data for 2003 to 2006. Britain shared with the USA (another country with much income inequality) the highest rates of child mortality. In Britain increasing levels of income inequality over time were reflected in higher rates of child mortality.

Those countries with the lowest child mortality rates – Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Japan, Finland - were those maintaining the least income differentials between the richest and poorest quintiles: in Britain by 2006, rates of child and infant mortality were twice those in Sweden.

In their submission to UNICEF for 2007, a consortium of 380 English advocacy groups campaigning for the full implementation of the UN Charter on Children's Rights, concluded that the British government had "wilfully neglected" the rights, safety and equality of many children, contrary to the UN Charter of which Britain is a signatory. Each year according to CRAE (2007) more than 12,000 younger children were processed in police custody, and at

least 300 who were still minors were detained in adult jails. Diagnosable rates of poor mental health in adolescents were increasing (Skuse, 2006), and a substantial number (some 400,000) lived in crowded households, or in “unsafe” neighbourhoods; at least 3.4 million children continued to live in households with incomes below the official poverty line (CRAE, 2007).

Figures from OECD showed that Britain stood 24<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of Gini coefficients for the 30 wealthiest OECD nations. Only USA, Italy, Romania and Poland ranked more poorly than Britain. According to recent data, the richest 10 percent in Britain owned nine times more wealth than the poorest 10 percent. The wealth gap in Britain had grown steadily since the 1970s, and the gap between rich and poor in 2005 was 20 percent greater than this gap in 1985 (OECD, 2008).

A study conducted by the World Health Organization (Friedli, 2009) using data from the world’s developed nations showed, once again how strongly was income inequality linked to poor health in children and adolescents. Scandinavian countries and The Netherlands were amongst the most equal and the healthiest of nations; Britain fell near the bottom in these league tables with a high degree of inequality, and above average measures of poor health, psychopathology, and poor social adjustments. Lakhani (2009) drawing on the work of Friedli and others points to the remarkable rise in deliberate self-harm among young Britons aged 16 to 24, which indicated an 80 percent increase since 2000, with a rise of one third in the previous 5 years. In addition 4,337 children aged 14 or less were admitted to hospital emergency departments for self-harm between 2003 and 2007. Possible reasons for Britain’s high rate of youthful self-harm were high rates of unemployment and poverty in some urban areas in contrast with others, low educational attainments and a hopeless view of achievements later in life, a fear of crime and neighbourhood violence, premature sexual behaviours (and physical and sexual abuse), drug and alcohol abuse, and high rates of criminality and suicidal behaviour in an individual’s extended family or neighbourhood. “Dropping out of school” and “dropping out of life” may have some conceptual similarities. Britain may have one of the highest rates of deliberate self-harm in youth due to specific socio-cultural factors, but the phenomenon does exist, according to an international survey, in many other developed nations (Madge et al., 2008).

An expanded replication of the UNICEF study undertaken by the University of York for the Child Poverty Action Group (Westhead, 2009) found after analysing 43 indicators of child and adolescent well-being grouped under seven headings (health; subjective well-being; relationship quality; access to material resources; behaviour and risk-taking; educational quality; housing and the environment) that Britain still ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of the 29 developed nations that were studied. The passing of two years since the original UNICEF Report was



issued in 2007, suggested that Britain had done nothing to diminish the relative poverty which diminished the lives of so many British children. The Netherlands, once again, came top of this child well-being league, followed by the Nordic countries. The researchers found that households in Britain which were in chronic poverty were particularly likely to have children with highly adverse aggregated scores on the seven measures of deprivation and disorganised behaviour. The Child Poverty Action Group therefore advocated government measures to diminish child and family poverty, income inequality, and adults without jobs whose children will otherwise enter the cycle of poverty. Whether this advocacy would have any better impact than the well-researched advocacy document edited by Fimister (2001) for the Child Poverty Action Group a report that was ignored by New Labour- remained to be seen.

Layard & Dunn (2009) on behalf of The Children's Society had taken forward the UNESCO (2007) study in a major review drawing on evidence from 30,000 children, adults and professionals. They identified family problems, family instability, and socialisation problems for most of the learning and behavioural problems identified, problems which now afflicted more than ten percent of British 5 to 16 year olds - including anxiety, depression, self-harm, anorexia, hyperactivity, and conduct disorder. Children with single or step-parents or who were separated from both their biological parents, were 50 percent more likely to suffer low academic achievement, poor self-esteem, unpopularity and being victims of bullying, and depression. Underlying these family problems were income inequality and relative poverty, which put a great strain on family life .

After the United States, Britain was the most unequal of the developed countries. In Britain 22 percent of children lived in economically poor families (incomes less than 60 percent of the median wage), compared with eight percent in Sweden, and ten percent in Denmark. Thirty years previously 'only' 13 percent of British children fell into this very poor sector. Research from Layard & Dunn (2009) review, showed that gross inequality tended to breed despair, envy, family breakdown and inadequate parenting, acquisitive consumerism in pursuit of short-term goals, self-indulgent and unsocialised sexual behaviours, hatred between class groups, and from these in the social classes above them, and often media-inspired contempt for the poor. On education, the research found that 28 percent of children from the poorest quarter of the population achieved five good GCSEs (C+ including Maths and English), compared with 67 percent in the most wealthy quarter of the population. This meant that patterns of inequality, without state intervention, tended to be transmitted from generation to generation. "The key to educational progress is recruiting enough good teachers to our deprived areas ... giving higher pay for teachers in schools with a high percent receiving free school meals."

On interventions for children with conduct disorder and early patterns of delinquency, Layard & Dunn (2009) reflect on earlier research in showing how cost effective early interventions could be: "A child with conduct disorder costs the taxpayer £70,000 in crime, social care and remedial costs by the time they are 28, compared with £7000 for the effective treatment of the average child with problems of conduct disorder." Reviewing this report, Stephenson (2009) argued that it had important implications for action in a time of financial austerity – preventing expensive problems through early interventions was particularly important when money for servicing deviant and disorganized behaviour becomes increasingly scarce.

### ***Twenty Eight: The Spatial Dimensions of Disadvantage and Disorganized Behaviour***

In his view of "geographies of young people", Stuart Aitken (2001) maps "the morally contested spaces of identity" in cities, using a Marxian analysis. Cities are stratified, zones 'contain' populations stratified by class and race, youth are socialized and controlled, turned in on themselves, encouraged to join gangs and kill one another, rather than joining political parties and bringing down the power structures that oppress them. Aitken's view is an American one, but he reveres the work of Paul Willis in Britain for his "acclaimed *Learning to Labour*, "which couches the lives of working-class youths in terms of covert resistance to schools ... and the larger structure of capitalism ... By translating an abstract framework of Marxism into the everyday cultural terms of his working class subjects, Willis is concerned with a tension between their knowledge and their rebellion against it." (p. 56) Aitken borrows metaphors from the English anarchist Colin Ward's depiction of *The Child in the City* (1978) in his account of how the child "learns through the body" to live in the city. This experience can be pleasing, or violent, according to class position.

An examination of the maps of Manchester included in Engels' account of "the condition of the working class in England" shows that several of the areas of extreme stress and poverty identified in 1845 remained as areas of poverty, stress and the alienation of youth in 2008 – although there were now new "overspill" estates in Wythenshawe and Handforth in which problems of poverty and delinquency had been transported, and inherited through slum-clearance and rehousing from Greater Manchester.

The classic Chicago studies of spatially organised normative behaviour (Abbott, 1999) have inspired British scholars, such as the criminologist Terence Morris (1957) in his seminal work on *The Criminal Area*. Since then generations of students of the spatial correlates of crime, disadvantage, and oppression have studied British cities in some detail – research summarized by Bagley (1984).

For some years researchers have used ecological models in mapping rates of social deviance and disadvantage in urban settings in Britain (Bagley 1972 to 1992), India (Bagley, 1989) and Canada (Bagley, 1992). This research has shown that indices of social and behavioural disadvantage (poverty measured by various indicators) unemployment, population-adjusted rates of adult crime and juvenile delinquency, mental illness in adults and children, emergency admissions for psychiatric disorder, suicide and deliberate self-harm, numbers of children taken into care following neglect or abuse, family disruption, alcoholism and drug abuse, rates of unsolved crimes, high population density, household crowding, lack of environmental amenities, childhood injuries from 'accidents' of various kinds including deaths and serious injuries as pedestrians and cyclists - all of these tend to co-occur within the same neighbourhoods to a degree which greatly exceeds chance expectation.

Moreover, while these are 'ecological correlations' (which puts limits on the kinds of statistical analyses that can be employed), further analysis of data for individuals showed that these indicators co-occur not merely in the same neighbourhood, but also in the same street, in the same multi-occupied dwelling, in the same family, and sometimes in the same individual. Adults who manifest one or more of these behaviours which the social order deems problematic, frequently have manifested or experienced 'negative' behaviours and conditions as children and adolescents (perhaps, in Willis' term "learning not to labour).

These 'zones of disadvantage' tended to be self-perpetuating and enduring from one generation to another unless there are major rehousing or community support policies. Even then, as in Exeter (Bagley, 1972) inhabitants from older slums were often rehoused into poor quality public housing projects. Local authority housing departments often exacerbate this process by further rehousing 'problem families' into particular streets on housing estates which other families refuse to accept. The result, over time, is the evolution not merely of the 'sink estate', but also of the stigmatized street, and the 'mentally ill' tenement block. Schools serving these areas often struggle to deliver services to pupils who are ill-motivated to learn, including pupils whose behavioural maladaptation reflects their disadvantaged and often disorganized home background.

An unanswered question is what causes the emergence of non-adaptive behaviours within neighbourhoods. Certainly, poor environment can elicit conduct and other behaviour disorders in neurologically vulnerable children who in better circumstances would not manifest negative disorders (Bagley, 1972; Bagley & Mallick, 2000).

Other factors which may cause rebellious behaviours (particularly crime) in zones of disadvantage, are structural: stress which results from living within crowded houses and

neighbourhoods ill-served by local amenities – this was a major finding from the work in Brighton (Bagley et al. 1976). Another possible factor was the interaction of negative environmental factors, and the child's individual psychology. This possibility was demonstrated in a study of deaths and injuries which child pedestrians and cyclists experienced in Brighton, in replication of a Canadian study (Bagley 1992, 1993a). Children in these "sub-zones" often have to cross busy roads to get to school and play spaces, and the overactive child becomes easy prey for the fast moving vehicle, whose speedy transit through the city must take precedence over child safety.

Identifying deprived neighbourhoods is an obvious basis for multiple-level interventions for community development, addressing both structural and individual problems. This was the basis for a programme initiated by the British government called National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Glass, 1999; ODPM, 2005; Eisenstadt, 20), which aimed over 20 years to regenerate all of Britain's highly deprived local neighbourhoods (which constitute about ten per cent of all neighbourhoods identified at the enumeration district level). *Sure Start* programmes too were initiated on an area basis (Belsky & Melhuish, 2007; Eisenstadt, 2011) using census data to identify areas with populations potentially at risk. The neighbourhood regeneration programmes died with New Labour. *Sure Start* has taken a little longer to be discarded by central government (Sammons et al., 2015).

#### ***Twenty Nine: Sure Start: Shaky Beginnings***

To their credit, the New Labour government of Britain had paid some attention to the abundant medical and social evidence on the corrupting, demoralizing and demeaning effects of chronic poverty on family life, and on children's health and welfare. The government thus initiated the *Sure Start* programme in 1998, as part of its goal of halving the incidence of child poverty by 2010.

The declared goals of *Sure Start* were: "To work with parents-to-be, parents and children, to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children - particularly those who are disadvantaged - so that they can flourish at home when they get to school, and thereby break the cycle of disadvantage for the current generation of young children." (*Sure Start*, 2001). This three-billion pound programme, modelled to some extent on the American *Head Start* programmes, aimed to provide improved parenting skills in areas of high deprivation, focussing on the first five years of a child's life (Barnes et al., 2005). Unfortunately, the systematic integration of *Sure Start* with various medical interventions was dropped following the initial pilot work, largely on grounds of cost, although such integration did remain (and was shown to be highly effective) in some centres.

The initial workings of *Sure Start* (in the integrated model, using medical, social work and educational resources) were described in an evaluative study in the North West region of Britain (Pearson, 2005). Within the selected areas, participant families were identified and referred by community midwives, and the programme offered support to parents (particularly mothers) to improve their health and emotional and social development, and their parenting abilities. In addition to group sessions for effective parenting before and after the child's birth, parents were usually offered a maximum of four individual counselling sessions, although further sessions might be offered for families considered at high risk of neglect or abuse of children. Involvement in the programme was voluntary, and in the settings studied by Pearson (2005) some 70 per cent of parents approached initially agreed to participate. However, of those parents considered most at risk for 'problem parenting', 50 per cent chose not to attend any of the individual counselling sessions, and less than a quarter completed all four sessions. Among the reasons given for not attending were "illness of self or family member".

Fathers were particularly difficult to engage, and because evening sessions were not usually offered, parents working full-time often had difficulty in attending. The initial evaluation of this programme was qualitative rather than quantitative, and there were few indicators of outcome, apart from the fact that most parents who had participated said that the experience had been enjoyable and positive. But this kind of 'halo effect' is common in evaluation work, and merely tells us that those who participated fully in a voluntary programme were probably those least likely to have required such a service.

Attached to the national *Sure Start* programme was a major evaluation programme based at Birkbeck College, University of London. This team first of all, examined service delivery to 15,000 families and their focus child in 150 *Sure Start* nursery centres in order to provide a description of services actually delivered. Secondly the team attempted to assess whether children, families and communities had actually benefited according to various indicators. Twenty six centres were randomly selected from the 150 centres for intensive study, children and families in these centres being compared over six years with initially similar families in fifty "Sure-Start-to-be" comparison areas.

Belsky et al. (2006) published details of the first statistical evaluation of *Sure Start*, based on interviews and tests involving 3,927 mothers and their children who were enrolled in the programme, at the age nine months and three years. The target group were compared with 1,509 mothers and children from similarly deprived neighbourhoods, who were not yet enrolled in *Sure Start*. The main dependent variables were mother's perception and use of community services; her family functioning; her reports on her child's health and development; and a measure of the child's verbal skills at age three.

The results of this initial evaluation were disappointing: differences between target and comparison groups were small, and when statistically significant pointed to adverse outcomes for the most deprived mothers and children enrolled in *Sure Start*<sup>56</sup>. Children of teenaged, single mothers, and unemployed single parents who participated in *Sure Start* had children with poorer verbal ability in the third year of life. *Sure Start* had the most beneficial effects for the least deprived, intact families living in areas with lower levels of deprivation. Apparently these mothers were able to elicit additional helping and support networks unavailable to the most deprived mothers. Overall, outcomes were slightly better in *Sure Start* programmes which were delivered within a health services framework. A follow-up of a pre-2003 *Sure Start* cohort into the early years of schooling showed that the focus children had better social skills, but were no better at scholastic attainments than were control children (Schneider & Ramsay, 2006).

The Minister for Children and Families defended the *Sure Start* programme, arguing that positive outcomes should be seen in the long-term, rather than in the first few years of the programme (Hughes, 2005; Readfearn, 2005). The authors and evaluators of *Sure Start* may be looking to the evaluations of the US *Head Start* programme, which also showed few short-term benefits, but nevertheless showed significant gains for the child participants when they were in their teens - in terms of school achievements, adaptive behaviours, and educational and occupational aspirations and achievements - compared with controls. (Oden et al. 2000; Barnett & Hustedt, 2005).

The need for a fully effective programme which could fulfil the idealist goals of *Sure Start* was underlined by the longitudinal research by Joshi (2007). This study used data from the Millennium Cohort of 15,500 British children born in the years 2000 to 2002. Results indicated that children from the most advantaged social groups were on average, a year ahead of children from the least advantaged group on the School Readiness Test, which assessed a child's recognition of words, numbers, shapes and colours. This study was unable to show that *Sure Start* programmes had been effective in enhancing 'school readiness' in children from the most disadvantaged families. A further report from the Millennium Cohort in 2008 showed that before they entered schools, children of young, poorly educated mothers were nearly a year behind in their vocabulary scores, a

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<sup>56</sup> A somewhat similar finding was made in the later evaluation of *Sure Start* (Sammons et al., 2015). The obvious conclusion was not that intervention had made the functioning of these very disrupted and marginal families worse; rather, the interventions had not been sufficient to make any difference, and the families moved in to a down-hill spiral because of the multiple pathologies which beset them. The obvious solution was a much more intensive, clinically focussed approach, linked to comprehensive social work services. *Sure Start* was not set up to provide this, but the problem has been that *Sure Start* being available to all families within particular areas, regardless of particular needs, was spreading available resources "too thinly".

difference that increased for each year that they remained in schools (Joshi, 2008). Boys with conduct behaviour disorders, with depressed and often punitive mothers, were the most disadvantaged in terms of reading readiness, and it was clear that these were mothers and children whom *Sure Start* should focus on in particular.

It may be countered that *Sure Start* focused not on cognitive goals, but on parenting capacity and the development of behavioural and emotional competence in children. Ideally of course, cognitive and emotional goals should be simultaneously addressed in a comprehensive programme for the most disadvantaged families.

One problem which emerged in evaluative studies of *Sure Start* is that of integrating the work of health care, social work, child care and clinical psychology specialists involved (Edgley & Avis, 2006 & 2007). Apparently programming in some areas was working better than in others, and this could have been due to varying degrees of integration of the professionals involved, or of the differing nature of the communities in which intervention was attempted (Barnes et al., 2005; Melhuish et al., 2007). In addition, some severely disadvantaged clients may have felt stigmatized by the proposed interventions, accounting for their low take up of services (Avis et al., 2007). Failure of *Sure Start* programmes to recognize, or intervene with severe maternal depression (especially likely for single, abused or deserted mothers) was another problem which could be associated with reduced impact (Raymond, 2009). Another identified problem was that some *Sure Start* centres were failing to link effectively with black and other ethnic minorities (Craig, 2007).

The planned expansion of *Sure Start* centres after 2004, from some 1,400 to 3,500 over ten years, faced the problem that not enough qualified staff were readily able to staff such expansions; and the current budgetary allocation for *Sure Start* appeared to be inadequate for training such new staff (NAO, 2007b).

A useful policy analysis by Gray & Francis (2007) goes some way to explain both positive and negative aspects of *Sure Start's* initial roll-out phase. They draw specific lessons from a comparison of *Sure Start* with the American *Head Start* programmes. Their analysis implies the following conclusions:

1. Early interventions, as the American experience shows, can significantly improve the life chances of many children throughout their lifespan; but failure to provide adequately expanded funding can impair both the quality and impact of early intervention programmes of this type.
2. There is a temptation for evaluators to focus on narrow, measurable objectives; but this runs the risk of ignoring broader aspects of success, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation techniques may be needed.

3. Programmes must be flexible in meeting local conditions, and the needs of individual families, while remaining faithful to the original programme goals.
4. Be aware that multiple programme objectives may conflict with one another, and political demands to divert early intervention programmes to meet new or multiple goals should be avoided.
5. Evaluation may show that the programme works better with some client groups, and in some areas. The failure to be effective with all client groups should not be seen as a general failure of the programme in its initial years.
6. The English and Welsh *Sure Start* programme was probably rolled out too fast, in order to fulfil political goals. Funding, although initially generous, failed to recognize problems of recruiting and training staff for a programme which was, at that stage, unproven.
7. Now that *Sure Start* was entering its second phase and building on experience, it was crucial that funding matched the needs of what was still a developing programme. Failure to fully fund the programmes because of for example, a recession and cutbacks in public funding, could be disastrous for the long-term success of *Sure Start*.

#### *Thirty: Sure Start's 'Second Wind'*

Notwithstanding the earlier problems of programme organization and service delivery (Belsky & Melhuish, 2007), *Sure Start* seemed to have 'bedded down' gained a 'second wind', as evidenced by later evaluation studies.

Overall evaluation of the *Sure Start* programme when the children were aged five-plus (Sure Start Research Team, 2008) provided rather more optimistic findings than the 2005 evaluations. There were now more than 9,000 families involved in SSLPs (Sure Start Local Programmes) in 150 areas. Comparison between SSLP participants, and matched non-SSLP families and children enabled a wide range of family and area background factors to be controlled. The main findings were:

1. Parents of 3-year-old children in the programmes showed less negative parenting, while providing their children with a better home learning environment.
2. Children in SSLP areas had better social development, with higher levels of positive social behaviour and independence/self-regulation.



3. The SSLP effects for positive social behaviour appeared to be a consequence of enhanced parenting behaviours.
4. SSLP children had higher immunization rates and fewer accidental injuries.
5. SSLP families used more child and family-related services.
6. Positive effects associated with SSLPs applied to all of the participants, rather than to different subgroups identified in 2005.
7. The more consistent benefits associated with SSLPs in 2008 compared with 2005 might well reflect the greater exposure of children and families to the programme, and to the evolution of a more focussed and sophisticated type of programme delivery.

*Sure Start*, like the American *Head Start* programme (Currie and Thomas, 1993) might have global advantages which spread out from earlier gains which would be reflected in better achievement in later years.. The American programme found that by their mid- to late-teens the children enrolled as infants made better school progress, dropped out of school less, were more likely to go on to college, were less delinquent, and less often became pregnant (Oden et al., 2000). These gains made the early investment in *Head Start* highly cost effective (Bennett & Hustedt, 2005).

Further evidence that *Sure Start* Local Programmes (SSLP) were learning valuable experience with time, came from the evaluation (Melhuish et al., 2008) of a quasi-experimental study which compared 5,883 3-year-olds and their mothers who were enrolled in *Sure Start* nurseries, with a comparison group of 1,879 3-year-olds of similar backgrounds, not enrolled in *Sure Start*. The *Sure Start* children had statistically significant advantages in the following areas, after all relevant background factors (e.g. family size, presence of father, dependence on benefits) were controlled for: better social behaviours; more self-confident independence; less negative parenting; better home learning environment; use of relevant family support populations. These advantages held across different regions, ethnic groups, and social class backgrounds.

However, the SSLP children had no significant advantages in several other desired outcomes: mothers smoked as much as before; children's language skills were similar; mean BMI indicators (predictors of obesity) for child and mother were similar across the two groups; father's involvement was no greater; personal life satisfaction was no greater; and mothers of both SSLP and controls often rated their housing and urban environment negatively. Children from both groups still had incipient behaviour problems. It remained to be seen whether prolonged exposure to SSLPs, and added programme experience and feedback based on evaluations such as these could yield better results in the longer term.

The medical focus of *Sure Start* had been emphasized in a successful intervention with parents in deprived areas whose children were at risk of developing conduct disorder (Hutchings et al., 2007). In this controlled study 153 parents were offered behavioural support and focussed counselling to help them cope with their child's incipient problem behaviour. Results showed clear and significantly different positive outcomes for children in the focus families, compared with those in the wait-list families, in terms of reduction of problem behaviours.

This important new direction for *Sure Start* was emphasized by further work of the team led by Hutchings et al. (2007), and came from a follow-up of this experimental programme, based in Wales and North West England which identified children at particular risk of developing conduct disorder (and later delinquency) because of their identified symptoms of Attention Deficiency and Conduct Disorder (ADHD) at age three (Jones et al., 2008). This team identified 50 children with serious levels of ADHD and instructed and monitored their parent(s) in giving appropriate feedback to the child in ways which reduced the chronicity of symptoms. The approach is similar to that described by Bagley & Mallick (2000) of providing "goodness of fit" between child behaviour and parental feedback in ways which lead to the "spiralling down" of difficult behaviour to normal levels. Jones et al. (2008) achieved an improvement of 57 percent in the focus group (criterion, falling below the clinical level as indicated by scores on the Connors Rating Scale) compared with 21 percent in the untreated, waiting list controls. These gains were maintained, in comparison with controls, at follow-ups 12 and 18 months later.

Scott (2007) commented that although these interventions were relatively expensive (about £1,800 per family), in the long run these interventions could be very cost effective, given the known costs of children who enter cycles of juvenile delinquency and rebellion in school and community. *Sure Start* could be most effective not principally as a service agency, but also as a screening agency which refers for intensive help families with children most at risk.

The programme described in the following section was funded by the Home Office as a one-off piece of research, and was not part of this programme of community regeneration – but it did identify schools in at-risk neighbourhoods using ecological data.

*Thirty One: The Two Schools Experiment in Educational and Social Work Intervention to Prevent School Exclusions and the 'Cycle of Poverty'*

There is substantial evidence that schools which serve neighbourhoods with a high proportion of indicators of deprivation and social problems (poverty and unemployment; overcrowded and impermanent housing; child welfare interventions; high delinquency and

crime rates; and rates of high rates of mental illness) have, on average significantly poorer achievement in their school students, and much higher rates of school exclusions than in schools in stable or prosperous neighbourhoods. Farrington's (1995) important British research concluded: "The whole process is self-perpetuating, in that poverty ... and early school failure lead to truancy and lack of educational qualifications, which in turn lead to low status jobs and periods of unemployment ... all of which make it harder to achieve goals legitimately."

The experiment described below was funded through the Home Office 'Safer Cities' programme, and aimed through focussing on schools, to reduce pupils' disruptive behaviour and expulsions, and to increase their motivation to achieve legitimate goals. In this the researchers attempted to replicate the experimental English work of Rose & Marshall (1975) which showed that social work interventions at the school level could have a strong role in reducing delinquency.

The experimental study (Bagley & Pritchard 1998 a & b; Pritchard, 2001) selected two schools (linked primary and secondary serving some 1,300 children) in a city in southern England and matched them with two similar schools in another area of the city. In both experimental and control school settings there were similar levels of deprivation, with poverty rates of 60 per cent (judged by proportion of pupils receiving free school lunches). The neighbourhoods serving these two school areas had well above average proportions of social service interventions, and criminal convictions.

Inputs over three years in the experimental schools were an additional teacher in the primary school, a half-time additional teacher in the secondary school, and a project social worker who operated with families and children attending both primary and secondary schools. The additional teachers worked in both the areas of instruction and counselling, and also worked closely with the project social worker in co-ordinated strategies. The additional primary teacher worked intensively with children in the infant reception classes and with their families, trying to ensure that incipient problems of learning and behaviour could be addressed. In the secondary school the additional teacher focussed on both bullying and behavioural problems, seeking a variety of solutions to avoid the need for exclusion of disruptive students.

The social worker ensured that all families received maximum benefit from income and social services, with the focus on preventing family disruption. Families of pupils whose under-performance in scholastic areas reflected their frequent absenteeism were engaged. Again, the focus was on helping the parents to emphasize the need for achieving educational goals by full attendance. Health education in the secondary school focussed

on risky sexual behaviours, and drug use with a stress on long-term achievements rather than on short-term gratifications.

Evaluation consisted of self-report questionnaires and tests completed by pupils at the beginning and end of the three-year project. Similar measures were completed by pupils in the experimental and control primary and secondary schools (Bagley & Pritchard, 1998a). There was a highly significant fall in self-reported delinquency, fighting, experience of bullying, truanting and drug-use in the project schools, but the incidence of these events actually increased in the control schools. Positive attitudes to school increased significantly in the project schools, but there was no parallel increase in the control schools. In the project schools, for children's families there was a significant decline in problem behaviours, including movement of children into care, adult criminality, and unwanted pregnancies. Significantly fewer children from the project schools were excluded for any reasons.

A follow-up of children from the secondary schools to age 19 indicated that the positive effects of the school social work experiments were retained, with significantly fewer young people becoming pregnant, delinquent, leaving school early, or being unemployed. Careful estimates of the costs to the public purse of processing delinquents, supporting unmarried mothers, costs of keeping children in care, and maintaining older children in youth detention indicated that although initially expensive, the intensive social work and educational inputs had, over a five-year period saved the public purse £156,310 using the most conservative estimates of cost saving.

Generalising these figures to the country as a whole the researchers estimated that "at least a billion dollars" of public expenditure could be saved in the long-term, through early interventions and the reordering of chaotic and wasted lives which were the lot of many of the pupils who graduated from the control secondary school (Bagley & Pritchard, 1998b).

Somewhat similar figures were presented by the Scottish Executive (1997) who pointed to the relatively low costs of "preventing reoffending" (including cognitive behavioural projects; social skills training; aggression reduction programmes; treatment of mental health and drug use conditions; and pre- and post-natal support and counselling).

These results have been substantially verified in a three-year study of seven British secondary schools by Webb & Vuillamy (2004). In this experiment a full-time, trained support worker was allocated to each school with the role of preventing exclusions of "difficult" children. As well as preventing many temporary exclusions, the experimental interventions were able to prevent 26 pupils from permanent exclusion, a 25 percent reduction across the seven schools.

Several studies of the costs and benefits of preventing school exclusions and associated disruptive behaviour provide substantive support for the cost-benefit analyses of Bagley & Pritchard (1998b). Scott & Knapp (2001) followed up 124 10-year children into adulthood, comparing children excluded from school for “antisocial disorder”, and “normal controls”. By young adulthood, each of those with conduct disorder had (in the absence of any special interventions) in 1998 prices cost the public purse £70,019 on average, in educational, psychiatric, social service costs.

In America Pelham, Foster & Robb (2007) provide an overview of 13 studies of children with attention deficit hyperactivity with varying levels of seriousness. From childhood to young adulthood the average cost to the public purse for the average child in the study was \$14,576 – implying a \$42.5 billion cost for the country as a whole. These figures had an obvious implication – intervention services, even if successful with only some of the disruptive youth, could be hugely cost effective. Further American research also suggested that various programmes of youth mentoring could be highly cost-effective (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

Brookes, Goodall & Heady (2007) in Britain provided estimates of the costs of both school exclusions and of truancy, since these two statuses often overlap – truancy often precedes forced exclusion from school, and also often stems from or continues after expulsions – being excluded from school simply adds to the alienation of the young person. The short-term cost of the persistently truanting and often excluded youth amounted, on average, to £63,851 per individual when costs of crime, social service interventions, and additional health needs as well as lost productivity due to examination and skill development failures were taken into account. ‘Scaling up’ these figures to the national level, these costs amounted to about £800 millions per annum. Brookes et al. (2007) estimate that there was a 124 percent return in the medium term, on initially expensive interventions such as providing specialised workers in schools along the lines established by Bagley & Pritchard (1998a) and Webb et al. (2004).

RESET (2007), a consortium of employers funded by the EU Social Fund provided detailed figures on the annual costs of a young offender aged 15 to 17: £46,460 for the cost of the crimes, and their detection, they committed in one year; and £31,580 for the further costs of housing and processing each young offender – a total of £78,040. The annual costs of short custody with maximised resettlement programmes RESET put at £65,707. Even if these interventions by RESET in mid to late adolescence were successful with only half of the youth involved, the cost savings over the lifetime of these youth would amount to many million pounds. And if interventions were applied much earlier in the life cycle the costs savings could be much larger.

Waller (2009) a Canadian criminologist writing about Britain confirmed these figures, arguing that even only partially successful crime prevention strategies would save several billion pounds within a decade. Based on these figures, he advocated that five percent of the prison budget should be diverted into prevention and rehabilitation work.

### ***Thirty Two: Comparison of the Experimental Schools Programme and Sure Start Interventions***

It is pertinent to ask why the experimental work in schools had, apparently been so successful (Bagley & Pritchard, 1998a; Pritchard, 2001) and so cost-effective, and why *Sure Start*, aimed at preschoolers from deprived families, has in its initial stages at least, been relatively ineffective (Belsky and Melhuish, 2007). First of all, *Sure Start* may be underfunded, and could offer only limited support and counselling for families experiencing problems. Secondly, the *Sure Start* programme was not linked systematically to social work action, or the treatment of the family as a systemic reality, treating older as well as younger siblings who might have problems linked to their school, peer group and the wider community.

Thirdly there was only partial take-up of the parent support and education programmes offered by *Sure Start*. In contrast, the school-based project was able to access all pupils attending the focus primary and secondary schools, and operated within the legal framework of Acts governing the care of children, their regular attendance at school, and the consequences of their delinquent acts. In other words our programme was both comprehensive, and to a certain degree authoritarian as well as supportive.

That *Sure Start* might be spreading scarce economic resources too thinly comes from the various evaluation programmes, summarized above. Significant numbers of parents of children with a high risk of developing conduct disorder might be missed, or required long-term, intensive follow-up. Thus Jones et al. (2008) in describing counselling and behavioural interventions for children with ADHD and developing conduct disorder, found that these interventions could only be partially successful - with 40 percent of the treated group continuing to be highly challenging for their families, environments and schooling. Coe et al. (2008) emphasized this too in their study of parents living in *Sure Start* areas who avoided enrolling their children, despite the service being free and non-threatening. Extremely disorganized families presumably need a more intensive type of contact and intervention.

### ***Thirty Three: New Labour Government Initiatives***

Responding to the various demonstration projects described in the sections above, in December 2005 the New Labour government announced the *Early Help* programme (Brown, 2005). This, with additional funding would create social work support for children and families in difficulty, using a school-based worker who would co-ordinate a range of services for referred families. Acknowledging that the current government had failed to meet its targets for the reduction in the amount of child and family poverty (Branigan, 2006), the British Prime Minister (Blair, 2006) stated that: "... We intervene too late. We spend without asking how effective is the spending. These are the children who are the clients of many agencies, but the charges of no-one, prey to drugs, into crime and anti-social behaviour, lacking in self-belief, lacking a basic stake in the society into which they are born ... It isn't right, and we can't afford it."

In March, 2006 the Prime Minister elect (Brown, 2006) presented a budget programme in which increased spending on education was a major part. Gordon Brown acknowledged the favourable effects of small classes and announced a five-year programme in which spending on education would be increased by £2.4 billions in order to reduce class sizes to those which pertained in private, fee-paying schools. By September, 2008 only £200,000 of this promised funding had been made, to ten areas with particularly poor outcomes in terms of achievements and staying in school to 16 and beyond (TeacherNet, 2008).

In 2006 the British government announced a £40 millions programme in London for individualised support for parents of primary and secondary school children who were persistently truanting from school, but announced in parallel that parents who failed to co-operate in programmes for helping children stay in school would be fined (Frean, 2006). For the school year 2006-7, rates of truanting had risen by four percent to a record level (Garner, 2008b).

The success of the London schools programme was, apparently, indicated by enhanced GCSE results in the targeted schools, and in 2007 a similar £50 millions programme was announced for Manchester (Ottewell, 2007). The need for such programmes in Manchester was underscored by figures which showed that the city's pupils, on average, lost 3.3 percent of class time because of truancy and exclusions, compared with a national average of 1.4 percent. In Manchester 3,300 children were "persistent truants" while another 21,500 were frequent or occasional truants (Qureshi, 2007). Manchester did employ some educational welfare officers, but it seemed that the way in which their activities were organized had done little to diminish truancy rates, particularly in areas marked by poor housing or urban decay.

These new expenditures were a fraction of other educational programmes abandoned by the government (Browne, 2007). A £55 billion programme of school building refurbishment which promised the production of 3,500 'good as new' schools by 2020 had almost certainly been abandoned, because of broad cutbacks in educational expenditures.

In the face of a marked growth in violent crime and social malaise involving young people, and the failure of its punitive justice system, the British government in July, 2008 announced a two-year programme of initiatives which would focus on at-risk youth (Sparrow, 2008). In doing so the national government appeared to have accepted the estimates of various researchers, that a young person who drops out of (or is excluded from) school in early adolescence will over his or her lifetime cost the state in many cases at least £100,000 in current costs because of illiteracy and innumeracy, lost employment, welfare dependency, lawless behaviour, court processing, poorer health, time spent in imprisonment, and the costs of servicing children of this group in the long-term.

The new programme which was designed following various experimental initiatives and cost-benefit analyses, aimed to "Develop a comprehensive and coordinated national package of short and long term policy options to tackle youth crime and disorder and its causes, in order to provide maximum protection to the public whilst providing appropriate support and assistance." The initiative would provide £250,000 for each local authority in England and Wales. Four social workers within each local authority would, across England identify about 30,000 very high risk young people. Diverting a 1,000 of this group into normal career pathways would, according to government, make the programmes highly cost-effective. The criteria for identification of these children in the early years of primary school were a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), inconsistent or abusive parenting within a dysfunctional family, and scholastic failure in both primary and secondary school, with frequent absenteeism from school, and disruption when in school.

Our reservations in 2008 were that this programme did not specify funds for keeping families together, and preventing the often disastrous option of children coming into care; nor did it specify any funding for individualized tuition to overcome problems of literacy and numeracy which may be associated with the subtle neurological pictures which underlie ADHD. Presumably this new programme was to run in parallel to *Sure Start*. The need for this multi-level intervention comes from work by the *Sure Start* team on a parallel cohort of 2,857 children followed up to age 11 (Melhuish et al., 2008). This showed that the combination of child's placement in high quality preschool together with parental support for learning was associated with significantly higher achievement in tests of mathematics ability at ages 10 to 11. But children born with low birth weight, developmental delay in the



first three years of life, and with mothers with minimal educational achievement were unlikely to make such gains.

The British Prime Minister had further promised a programme of “individual tuition” to the 300,000 or more pupils who were struggling with literacy and numeracy – but by the end of the school year in 2008, only 3,438 pupils had received such help with mathematics, and 3,514 with English (Paton, 2008b). There was no prospect for any increase in these numbers, and the government programme for enrolling some 300,000 struggling pupils seemed, like so many other governmental proposals, destined to fail because of lack of funding.

A recurring theme in the literature reviewed has been the negative impact of an income inequality in Britain which is much greater than in most other developed nations. This inequality is both enduring, and difficult to change through existing policy interventions and fiscal interventions. Recognising this, the Cabinet Office (2008) had launched a programme called *Getting Ahead*, which aimed to capitalize on trends which showed that inequalities in Britain might finally be narrowing. Important case studies of schools which were relatively successful in boosting academic performance in white, working class youth were analysed by Mongon & Chapman (2008). There was, concluded these authors “no silver bullet” for success, although an inspirational and determined head teacher who links with agencies for neighbourhood improvement could be of key importance.

In January, 2009 the New Labour government announced a range of measures aimed at enabling teenagers (including teenaged mothers) to enter the world of work, with view to breaking intergenerational cycles of disadvantage (Bennett & Bahra, 2009). These included the promise of £57 millions to extend the amount of free childcare for disadvantaged 2-year olds; a dedicated nurse for each pregnant women deemed to be at risk; 35,000 new apprenticeships for youth who might otherwise drop out of education and training; special university access courses for disadvantaged youth; £10,000 “golden handcuffs” to keep (or recruit) successful teachers into “difficult” schools in marginal areas; and a new *Narrowing the Gaps* programme, in which £400 millions was promised for allocation to increasing the achievements of white, working class boys, those most likely to fail at the GCSE stage, with prior or subsequent school drop-out (Curtis, 2008e; Morgan, 2009).

Whether these measures would actually be initiated in a climate of fiscal confusion, and would go any way to reducing the profound lack of social mobility and the persistence of social class disadvantage remained to be seen. In considering the evaluation these programmes we should take note of the government warning that “schools must plan for an austere future” (Paton, 2009a). At a time of tight budgets, government funding for new

social and educational supports might be operating in a “zero sum” climate, in which money for new programmes had to be obtained at the expense of reducing government spending elsewhere. In the April 2009 budget statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced many programme cuts, but promised to retain education and training programmes for those less than age 25 who had been unemployed for at least a year. However, the New Labour government did not survive the subsequent general election, and few if any of these plans were effected.

***Thirty Four: Conclusions: Educational Failure, Poverty, Child Welfare and School Exclusions in Britain***

This review of trends up to the fiscal year 2008-9, has documented the chronic crisis in British education from the highest to the lowest levels. Universities faced a crisis of underfunding, secondary schools failed to prepare disadvantaged pupils for occupational achievement, and infant and primary school classes were too large for fully effective teaching, as were classes in many state secondary schools. Teacher morale was low, and classes were getting larger. In such contexts alienated pupils and those with special needs (including children from the care system) were ignored, bullied, suspended or expelled. This lack of positive educational policies was a feature of an extremely wealthy country, but in one in which incomes and resources were unequally distributed, with degrees of inequality which were much greater than in many countries with similar or lesser sources of national wealth. Income inequalities, rather than national income as such strongly predict child morbidity and mortality in international comparisons (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

The ecological dimension of unequal schooling meant that poor quality schools, both primary and secondary often served deprived areas marked by very high levels of poverty, infant mortality and morbidity, poor housing, unemployment, delinquency and adult criminality, and mental health problems. Schools in these areas struggled not only with a high proportion of disaffected and underachieving pupils, but also experienced a poverty of resources and a high turnover of teachers who found working in such schools particularly difficult. This in turn led to chronically larger classes than the 30 pupils per class, required by current policy.

British research indicated that even relatively small reductions in school classes could be reflected in a significant enhancement in reading abilities. American research clearly showed that halving class sizes in primary schools in the early years (to between 15 to 18 pupils per class) resulted in significant and enduring scholastic gains, better behaviour and motivation, better self-concept, less school drop-out, and greater college attendance. The reasons for these improvements seem to be that teachers of small classes in the early

years are able to focus more readily on the individual learning, behavioural and social needs of their pupils. Although halving class sizes in the age group 5 to 8 years is expensive, these expenditures are highly cost-effective in the medium-term.

It is not surprising that pupils in Britain's overcrowded classrooms perform on average, rather poorly on internationally standardized tests of ability, and clearly below the level expected of a nation with Britain's national wealth. Inequalities of income make these problems worse, and children from the poorest families attending the poorest schools are also likely to experience significantly higher rates of illness and premature death (from infections, accidents, and incidents of abuse), child neglect, delinquency, underachievement, and school exclusions. Economic and social disadvantage in Britain was often transmitted between generations, and upward mobility rates were low compared with several other countries. In other words, being born into a disadvantaged social class tended to be a deterministic status.

A review of experimental programmes to prevent school exclusions and to improve the welfare of families and children from poverty neighbourhoods showed that despite their initial expense, these programmes could be highly cost effective in preventing children moving into a cycle of family poverty in which their own children were neglected, demotivated, marked down for careers of petty crime, unemployment, and drug-taking. Thus, vigorous interventions which are school-based and family-oriented could be successful in breaking the deterministic patterns of being born into a disadvantaged family in an underprivileged neighbourhood.

This was the dilemma of social policy of Britain. A rich nation could afford to vastly improve the quality of education and the welfare of families and children. Far from being expensive this would actually be cost-productive in the medium to long-term, saving the public purse many millions of pounds. But governments seemed reluctant to make major social investments whose return might not yield measurable returns within the normal life of a parliamentary five year term.

Projects such as *Sure Start*, and the urban regeneration programme might well succeed as long-term programmes, but they were nevertheless inadequately funded. There were some grounds for optimism with regard to new initiatives which would target disadvantaged children at the school level, and new developments which promise to reduce class sizes in all schools. Nevertheless, the fiscal year 2008-9, the endpoint of this policy review was the beginning of a period of fiscal crisis in the world economy, and as we now know, the ending of New Labour's attempts to intervene on behalf of the most disadvantaged groups. Writing in 2016, we can only conclude that the situation of children and youth from economically

deprived families will have become worse, rather than better. Capital rules, and the poor (and their children) stay poor.

Nevertheless, Britain could still learn lessons on social policy initiatives on behalf of children from countries such as Sweden, The Netherlands, Finland, Norway and Denmark which are marked by lack of income inequality, higher rates of upward social mobility, far fewer pockets of extreme poverty, and school systems which are well-funded and not constrained by the burden of continuous examinations. Unfortunately, as Wilkinson & Pickett (2009) argue, unequal societies such as Britain reflect a set of values which are not socially cohesive, and which do not support ideas of movement towards better health and social care for the poorest groups of society. Their data suggests that class divisions are deeply rooted in British social structure, and will be difficult to change in the direction of a more equal society, with diminished degrees of child and family poverty.

Finally, we have argued that in an age of financial austerity, preventive programs whose efficacy has proven, cost-benefit efficiency in both the long and the short-term, and which increase the life chances of the poorest children and adolescents should not be sacrificed in an era of increasing unemployment and cutbacks.

#### ***A Marxian Postscript***

An examination of the maps of Manchester included in Engel's account of "the condition of the working class in England" shows that a number of the areas of extreme stress and poverty identified in 1845 remain areas of poverty, stress and the alienation of youth – although there are now new "overspill" estates in Wythenshawe and Handforth in which problems of poverty and delinquency have been transported, and inherited.

We have argued in this review that Britain remains a society deeply divided by social class privilege on the one hand, and continued poverty on the other. The deprivations of the poorest fifth of the nation are associated with high rates of morbidity, mortality, inferior education, reduced life chances, delinquency, and alienation from school, learning and employment. Engels (1845 & 1978) argued that the continued deprivation of working people resulted in primitive rebellions of crime, and self-destructive actions such as alcoholism and violence within the ghettoized areas to which the working classes were assigned. What has changed? Today poverty is relative rather than absolute; yet outcomes are often similar to those described by Engels.

Our task, we submit, is to raise the consciousness of working class youth, and to stimulate their energies in ways which both foster their educational commitment and their upward mobility in order to finally "unmask" the alienation which besets their lives. The goal is not the Marxist one of overthrowing the class system; rather we should seek to raise all citizens

to the status of the highest classes, maximizing the citizen's freedom as well as their fulfillment. In this we follow T.H. Green's model of an ideal society (Greengarten, 1981) in which every citizen, free of want, is raised to through the process which Archer (2007) calls "social mobility" to the status of equality with the bourgeoisie: this is the critical realist, Marxian solution to inequality, rather than the Marxist one of "dictatorship of the proletariat".

Finally, it is clear from this review that the majority of "the permanent underclass" of Britain are "white", traditional proletariat of English, Scots, Welsh and Irish origin. This is much easier group for the ruling classes to control on a permanent basis, as the useful 'reserve army of labour'.

Ethnic minorities are, for the ruling classes, potentially dangerous for they can organize themselves on cultural lines, as radical intellectuals who pose a danger to the forces of establishment. A case in point are African Caribbean settlers in Britain, who with their white partners (fellow scholars, fellow professionals, marital partners) expose the outrages of racist educational and social policies, such as the false-labelling of Black children as "Educationally Subnormal", and the invention of deviance which results in Black adolescents being disproportionately excluded from school (Pearson, 2009). Once this kind of crude institutional racism is identified, exposed, and debated it slips away. Tomorrow all Black people in Britain will be artisans, craftspeople, entrepreneurs, artists, professionals, politicians. They are upwardly mobile because that is the path that most immigrants and their children have created for themselves.

Many of "the poor whites" and their children, and their children, and their children, are likely to remain poor whites because that is how British society is structured. Fenetke (2009) writes angrily about the new racism of Islamophobia: but the irrationalities of such prejudice and the biased actions which result are easy to expose. In the span of one generation ten percent of the British population will be Muslim: they too may be upwardly mobile, and their employees will be the poor whites lucky enough to be employed. The best option for Britain's ruling economic class seems to be to co-opt ethnic minorities into their ranks, so that the functional practice of maintaining the poor in poverty can proceed, unhindered.

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## Appendix B

### **Multicultural Integration in British and Dutch Societies: Review of Policies for Education and Citizenship**

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Revised version of a paper given to the SOAS-Nohoudh Muslim Integration Conference, University of London *Engaging with the Integration Discourse*, November, 2015.

**Abstract** Current calls in Britain and The Netherlands for minority religious and ethnic groups to “integrate” are often ill-disguised expressions of prejudice, in which the suppression of a particular culture or religion is advocated, in favour of a nebulous and ill-defined set of British or Dutch values. A policy review of the past 50 years of political developments identifies a strong undercurrent of racism, and xenophobia regarding ethnic and religious minorities. The Dutch plural society which tended to protect minority groups, has withered away since 1990. Despite this, aspects of multicultural education in The Netherlands has achieved some modicum of success, despite a “moral panic” about Muslim integration in the past decade. In Britain today, despite the manifest success of Citizenship Education curriculum models showing that young Muslims are the most magnanimous and broadminded of the groups described in our research, Muslims have become increasingly targets of cultural aggression and intolerance. Seeking to defend multiculturalism, we comment on the complexities and opportunities in facing this task, including citizenship education for youth.

**Key Words** Islamophobia Education Multiculturalism Citizenship Britain Netherlands Alienation

## **Introduction**

In seeking ways forward for minority groups in British society in general, and for Muslim minorities in particular, issues of how citizens have melded together in a complex and changing multicultural society in the recent past are important. An understanding of these issues may enable us to get a clearer picture of the challenges with which minority groups are faced, including the rise of right-wing political parties, anti-immigrant hysteria, and the increasingly Islamophobic themes expressed in British media, including demands for “integration”, actually meaning “assimilation” of minorities.

The terms “integration”, “assimilation”, and “multicultural pluralism” are widely used, and widely misunderstood, in debates concerning ethnic and religious minorities in Europe. In Britain at the present time, “integration” has become a debased political concept, a thinly cloaked piece of anti-Muslim ideology which seeks to suppress, rather than to liberate the full, creative citizenship of ethnic and religious minorities (Kundari, 2007; Fekete, 2009).

## **Recent British and Dutch History of Ethnicity, Prejudice, Islamophobia and ‘Race Relations’**

A historical perspective is valuable here. The twentieth century demand that newly immigrant groups (Irish Catholics, European Jews, African-Caribbeans, Indians and Pakistanis, and various Muslim minority groups in Britain) should “integrate” is in fact often a demand that they should accept a subordinate role in society, and give up their ‘alien

lifestyles', manifest for example in dress, and religious observance. At its base, the call for minorities to "integrate" is fundamentally racist, since the corollary is that those who fail to "integrate" should be subjected to control, discipline, and exclusion (Bagley, 2008a; Fekete, 2008 & 2009; Lowles & Painter, 2011; Farrar, 2012). This "moral panic", particularly concerning Muslim citizens, is also evident in The Netherlands (Vasta, 2007; Fekete, 2009).

This strong and persistent element of racism in British culture led to the development of a major research programme in the 1960s and 1970s based at The Institute of Race Relations in London, which examined how "race" and "religion" were popularly perceived and acted upon not only by those in political power, but also by those relatively powerless, indigenous citizens who nevertheless exercised some power at the populist, democratic or street level. This research programme led to the publication of a major report by Rose et al. (1969), and to various other surveys and comparative studies, including the conceptualisation and measurement of racism in the British population (Bagley, 1970), and international studies such as the comparison of levels of racism, and associated social policies in Britain and The Netherlands (Bagley, 1973).

### ***The Plural Society Concept***

The idea of *pluralism* is important, and in current British society has been expressed as multicultural pluralism (Modood, 2013), a concept which often engenders fear, hostility and wilful misunderstanding amongst sectors of the British population and their political leaders (Joppke, 2004 & 2009), since the concept implies that minority groups have rights to retain cultural and religious values, while subscribing to a social contract which involves the toleration of the rights of other groups within the plural society. We define a plural society as:

A nation or society which in its legal, social or constitutional arrangements supports the existence of distinct blocs of society (defined by such factors as ethnicity, values, religious observance) whose rights and freedoms are legally guaranteed in ways which mutually respect the rights of other blocs within the plural society. Inherent in these arrangements is a *social contract* between members of any bloc with the state, and with members of other blocs, to foster tolerance, and equality of rights and aspirations, with legal protections from all forms of discrimination.

Ramadan (2010) for example, draws on both theological and political concepts in his proposals for a liberal social contract which accepts the integrity and moral aspirations of Muslim minorities in Western society. This thesis is ably presented by Maulawi (2012) in his monograph *The Muslim as a European Citizen*.

The sociological concept of pluralism emerged from British anthropological studies which described political societies or countries which contained highly contrasted cultural groups (in terms of ethnicity and religion) who had reached modes of accommodation in which each group tolerated the existence of the other group(s) from self-interest, as a way of protecting the individual aspirations of their group in way which did not clash with those of the other groups. Overarching co-operation in these cultures usually took the form of economic exchange, and political arrangements in which governing parties acted in the interest of all cultural groups. The prime example of such a plural society in Europe in the past century has been that of The Netherlands (Bagley, 1973).

The purpose of studying Dutch society at that time was to try and understand, by means of a Weberian cross-cultural analysis, why The Netherlands, superficially similar to Britain, had successfully absorbed a refugee population (from former colonies in the Indonesian archipelago) in a span of less than five years, that amounted to more than 10 percent of its total population, into a society that tolerated a variety of minority groups. This was in marked contrast to Britain, in which some mainstream politicians promised “rivers of blood” if “non-white” immigration continued (Rose et al., 1969). The answer seemed to lie in the Dutch plural society model of social structure in which well-developed “blocs or pillars” (*verzuling*) absorbed immigrants according to ethnicity and religion, and traditional political arrangements ensured degrees of balance and harmony between the blocs. Britain, without such constitutional arrangements, tended to reject commonwealth immigrants and refugees who were perceived as being unable to “fit in” to British society and its values (values which were then, as now, only vaguely defined).

We have also argued that pluralism in society is, under conditions of mutual tolerance and cultural exchange, likely to change its character over time, and this has proved to be the case in The Netherlands, which has become an increasingly secular country. An indicator of blocs of a plural society “withering away” is the amount of marriage between (compared to within) members of such blocs, in the form of inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriages (Bagley et al. 1997). Another, ironic, indicator is the degree to which “minority” youth are absorbed into mainstream categories of deviant behaviours (Bagley, 1983; Baksh, 2007).

As The Netherlands’ social structure has become less defined by plural blocs (e.g. Protestant, Catholic, Secular), so Britain had moved to a greater degree of plural multiculturalism, in which newly arrived groups (e.g. Asian refugees from Uganda in the 1970s) were accommodated by the UK government in a purposive manner which allowed them to retain a protected ethnic and religious identity within British society (Marett, 1993). At this highpoint in British multiculturalism (circa 1980), the Rose (1969) principle of

multicultural integration (taken from a speech by Roy Jenkins, a Labour Home Secretary) appeared to be achievable (Farrar, 2012). That principle had declared:

Integration should be defined not as a flattening process of assimilation but of equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.

This idea had also been reflected in the European Union's "basic principles" (cited by Fekete, 2008):

Integration is a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by all, both immigrants and residents, of Member States.

But, as Fekete (2008 & 2009) and others have argued, current policies in all members of the EU vary from this principle to a greater or lesser degree, and this is well-illustrated by the often very different approaches employed by European countries to "multicultural education" (Keast, 2007). The Netherlands is no longer a paragon of tolerance, and there is great pressure on for example, Muslim minorities, to "assimilate" or at least to remain a quietist religion, with no public manifestations of dress, worship or public behaviour (Fekete, 2009; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). In Britain, as well as in Europe, Muslims have become "the new Jews", convenient scapegoats whose suppression may divert energies from criticizing the true state of inequalities in society (Greenslade, 2005; MacGregor, 2007).

### **Dimensions of British Racism and Islamophobia**

A key sociological concept in understanding the impact that "racism disguised as demands for integration" has on minority communities is that of *alienation* - defined as the gap between the goals (e.g. for education, employment, and religious participation) which the minority group person has absorbed from the wider society, and the structural means to their achievement. Conformity (in terms of dress, diet, public and private language discourse, and religious values and practice) is demanded of the immigrant in ways which imply the abandonment, in public at least, of traditional values; but even those that do conform are nevertheless discriminated against because of their manifest ethnicity. This is most true of the "highly visible" minorities from Africa, the West Indies, and parts of Asia who, however much they conform to the demands of the indigenous, white community are still subjected to significant discrimination. This form of alienation has been particularly true of African-Caribbeans who despite being mostly Christian and desiring to assimilate (including frequent intermarriage), nevertheless still encounter significant amounts of self-reported racial discrimination (Astell-Burt et al., 2012).



For those who have internalized the message of the demand for conformity to majority values, but who are still blocked in their goal achievement, a profound degree of *alienation* may result for some in self-blame. Alienation manifests itself in a variety of ways, including drug-using subcultures, gang membership, and even in mental illness (Bagley, 1983; Baksh, 2007; Bagley & Al-Refai, 2008).

This sociological model is derived from the work of Robert Merton (1968) who described a scenario consisting of the goals of social structure into which all citizens are socialized (conformity with existing values) in the achievement of socially prescribed goals (e.g. educational and occupational achievement), but in which the aspirations of some individuals are blocked through racist barriers and stereotyping, often creating “deviant” outcomes which justify the original racist values. The subjects of racist or religious stereotyping may ritualize their individual alienation (sometimes termed *anomie*) in different ways: ritual conformity, accepting work in the lowest status occupations, often engaging in self-blame for lack of achievement; or they may rebel within the existing political frameworks as activists; or they may even join counter-cultural groups, as become rebels both inside and outside of existing social structures.

Bhui and others (Bhui, 2015; McGilloway et al., 2015) have described this phenomenon in marginalized and depressed youth of “Muslim origin”, who are usually not practising Muslims, who express support for Daesh or similar extremist groups. In Bhui’s follow-up work with a cohort of Muslim adolescents from Asian communities in London (Bhui et al., 2012; Bhui, 2015), only about two percent had any such sympathies, and this sector of youth tended to be lonely, depressed and isolated. Such value expressions, however marginal, elicit alarmist and unreasoning reactions from the established social order who desperately search for meaningful “British values” which can be imposed on apparently deviant groups, labelled and stereotyped in various ways, by educational systems.

#### **Europe Today: British and Dutch Comparisons**

Government support for liberal multiculturalism in Britain has, since the 1980s been eroded by an increasing xenophobia, and a desire to control “immigration”. Nevertheless, Britain has developed a comprehensive set of laws (evolving since 1975 into the 2010 Equality Act) which outlaw discrimination and hate propaganda in the areas of “gender, disability, race and religion”. And despite the emergence of a far-right party in The Netherlands which advocates both political and cultural violence against Muslim minorities, in the Randstad region of key Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and The Hague) there is (apparently) a stronger ethos of tolerance than in Britain (Zick et al, 2008; Sevelkoul et al, 2010). This is not of course to assert that there is no overt ‘cultural racism’ amongst the

Dutch populace: rather there is an element of “smug ignorance” as Essed & Hoving (2014) put it. Certainly in the early 1970s when we made systematic cross-cultural comparisons, using appropriately translated instruments significantly more overt prejudice in England was apparent than in The Netherlands (Bagley, 1973).

Without systematic cross-cultural comparisons using the methodologies of cross-cultural psychology, one can only infer differences indirectly, or base them on qualitative observations. Certainly, on comparative indicators of the well-being, health and academic achievement of youth, Dutch adolescents come near the top of the indicators, while British adolescents (along with American adolescents) come close to last (UNESCO, 2007; Currie et al., 2008; OECD, 2008; Friedli, 2009). Correlational studies indicate that the measures of youth well-being are strongly correlated with the Gini coefficient (UN, 2004), a measure of the unequal distribution of income, and over time, an indication of lack of upward social mobility. The generally benign relationships of Dutch adolescents with their classmates derives not only from school, but also from sets of relationship in the wider society and neighbourhood (Bakker et al., 2007).

The noted international scholar Tariq Ramadan (2011), reflecting on his experience of The Netherlands, and commenting on a European-wide survey which showed that the Dutch expressed lower levels of direct prejudice and racism than adults in many other European countries (Zick et al., 2008), observed that: “I would say the Netherlands should really start reassessing their own attitudes towards their own values – not even just towards Islam. It’s about their own values: how do we deal with pluralism, how do we deal with mutual respect and mutual dignity ...” (Ramadan, 2011). This perspective argues that the Dutch, despite much interactional tolerance, have not adjusted their “plural society” system to accommodate the aspirations for Muslim minorities to become equal partners in a Dutch plural state (Bader, 2005; Fenetke, 2009). Yet despite the emergence of a popular right-wing party with an explicit anti-Muslim agenda, surveys of several thousand indigenous Dutch respondents showed that in the urban areas most settled by Muslim populations, direct contact with Muslims resulted in much higher degrees of acceptance of this religious minority, despite lack of official policies fostering political or value accommodation (Gonzalez et al., 2008; Sevelkoul et al, 2010).

Tariq Ramadan’s observations (applying both to Britain and The Netherlands) on Muslim “integration” are highly relevant here: Ramadan (2007 to 2012), the leading scholar on the adaptation of Muslims in Europe stresses that Muslims have choices in this matter: “It is up to Muslim individuals to be and become committed citizens, aware of their responsibilities

and rights. Beyond the minority reflex or the temptation to see themselves as victims, they have the means to accept a new age of their history. For those who were born in the West or who are citizens, it is no longer a question of 'settlement' or 'integration' but rather of 'participation' and 'contribution'." (Ramadan, 2012). What Ramadan offers, with much brilliance, is a "post integration" role for Western Muslims who have " ... multiple, moving identities, and there is no reason – religious, legal or cultural – a woman or man cannot be both American, or Muslim ... Millions of individuals prove this daily. Far from the media and political tensions, a constructive, in-depth movement is under way, and Islam has become a Western religion ... Of course there is only one single Islam as far as fundamental religious principles are concerned, but it includes a variety of interpretations and a plurality of cultures. Its universality indeed stems from this capacity to integrate diversity into its fundamental oneness." (Ramadan, 2010).

#### *Tariq Ramadan: A Dutch Case Study*

In 2009, after he was dismissed from his Chair at Erasmus University of Rotterdam for allegedly being "too political", Ramadan was then immediately offered the Chair of Contemporary Islamic Studies at Oxford University in the United Kingdom, a country in which despite degrees of street-level Islamophobia, in the academic sphere freedom of the exchange of ideas seems to largely unassailed.

Tariq Ramadan's Dutch ordeal has become an important case study for scholars advocating Muslims' "integration", rather than their silent subordination in The Netherlands (March 2010 a & b). After two years as "integration advisor" for the city of Rotterdam (home of a large number of The Netherlands' one million Muslims) both university and city decided that Ramadan should not be allowed to mix academic and political roles, and he was summarily dismissed from the university named, ironically, after the philosopher Erasmus. Van Sandwijk (2014) describes these events as a form of "moral panic", in which Ramadan was seen to be an intellectual spokesman for radical Islam, and the idea that Muslims should be a permanent, powerful and integral part of Dutch society.

Ourghi (2010) describes the situation in which "Tariq Ramadan, from being a quiet spokesman for mere co-existence, became an 'authentic contributor' to Dutch society, and a spokesman for European Muslims." Her analysis shows how Ramadan's firm stand on Muslims as permanent and authentic citizens of Europe was based on Qur'anic principles, and the Sunna (the Prophet's life and teaching) in showing how a European Islam had claims to be a powerful pillar within all of the European nations. "Ramadan was attractive to European Muslims agitating for a firm identity in their society." Ourghi argued that: "*Ramadan appeals to European Muslims for agitating for a firm stand in their society. I*

*argue that this cannot be simply judged as 'Islamic engagement', but as an emphasis on religious morality, which should play a major role in society ... and is also placed within the sphere of representatives of other religions, and the right to lead public debates or to demonstrate one's faith is an inherent trait of secularism as long as all religious groups are treated equally."* (p. 308)

Bracke (2013) considers the 'Ramdan affair' within the context of the "historical coincidence of depillarisation and the institutionalism of Islam in The Netherlands." It had been claimed that Muslim attempts to form a distinct pillar in the Dutch plural society were "too late", since the process of depillarisation (dissolution of the identity of Dutch society's separate blocs) had already begun. Bracke shows that historically, this was untrue, and Muslims' attempt to gain bloc status began (and was rejected) well before depillarisation began. She argues, nevertheless, that Muslims have an important role to play in nation-building in the newly secular Dutch state, in which all religious groups are treated equally.

That such equal treatment has not yet been achieved is demonstrated by Andriessen et al's (2013) experiment in which the resumes of 280 new graduates (from Dutch universities) were submitted to 1,340 institutions advertising job vacancies in The Netherlands. Each submission involved a pair of applicants who were broadly similar in achievement and qualification, differing only by a traditional Dutch surname, or a surname suggesting a Muslim affiliation in someone born in the country. The study found "significant" rejection of the supposedly Muslim applicant named 'Muhammad', who was offered an interview at some two-thirds of the rate offered to the applicant named 'Mark'. Nevertheless, in the Randstad (urban, central region of Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague, Rotterdam) of The Netherlands, employers were quite likely to be non-discriminating. This study deserves replication in other European centres, including Britain.

#### *Dutch Multiculturalism within the Context of Changing Political Prejudices and Attitudes*

The Dutch social psychologist Maykal Verkuyten and his colleagues at Utrecht University have offered a valuable series of studies on inter-ethnic attitudes in The Netherlands, and how those attitudes develop and vary according to models of multicultural education (Verkuyten, 2005; Thijs & Verkuyten, 2013; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). Verkuyten effectively uses Tajfel's (1982/2010) social identity theory, in showing that group identification, and interaction between groups (especially in the classroom) provide the foundations of tolerant intercultural understanding. This is demonstrated through a series of teacher-led classroom strategies, in which the teacher actively led pupils (Dutch-European, and Dutch-Turkish, for example) in enhancing both degrees of shared cultural knowledge, and equal-status interactions. The research team were able to show these effects in a large sample of middle

schools, because of an active Dutch policy of supporting multicultural education and understanding.

However, the law was changed in 2007, when programmes of “civic education” (which seem similar to the British concept of “citizenship education”, discussed below) replaced the multicultural curriculum. Teachers were now able to offer a broader social studies curriculum which emphasised the citizen’s rights and duties (including obligations for inter-ethnic tolerance). These changes reflected what Vasta (2007) termed the move “... from ethnic minority to ethnic majority policy” and the Dutch shift away from ‘multiculturalism’ to ‘assimilation’ of all groups. The effects of this change in policy were illustrated in the Ramadan debacle, reflecting what Vasta described as a form of “moral panic”, a backlash in public discourse with the implicit agenda of “forced assimilation”, a policy which Vasta saw as fostering conflict and dissidence in the minority groups concerned, rather than their passive acceptance of being required to assimilate.<sup>57</sup>

Verkuyten and Thijs’ (2013) historical review of Dutch attitudes towards minorities from the 1970s to around 2004 show rather positive results. Using the same measures used by Bagley (1970) and Bagley (1973) in comparative English-Dutch surveys, they showed that Dutch adolescents and adults remained positive in their attitudes towards minorities into the 1990s. The data they collected from several thousand school pupils in their experimental work on multicultural strategies showed too that Dutch adolescents, given positive information and interactions concerning minorities, remained positive in their attitudes into the first decade of the present century. How things may change in this and in other European countries (which still includes England) is a matter for further research. It is clear that systematic cross-cultural surveys using validated measures and comparable methodologies are necessary before we can adequately evaluate multicultural education policies, particularly those concerning Muslim minorities.

#### *A ‘hidden face’ of Dutch racism?*

Some Dutch sociologists (e.g. Essed & Hoving, 2014) have argued that despite an official claim of “tolerance”, there is an undertow of racism in Dutch culture. This we had observed in 1970 when in fieldwork in The Hague, we described “race riots” in which Moroccan migrant workers were attacked and their homes burned, by mobs of the white, working class (Bagley, 1973). Our argument then was that this kind of ‘discipline’ imposed on a

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<sup>57</sup> A personal example: the daughter of the first author of this paper (CB) is a lecturer at a Dutch university, and experiences strong pressures not to wear a *hijab*. His sister, an English university administrator, experiences no such problems. CB’s daughter, who is black, has engaged in a vigorous campaign against the notorious “Black Pete”, the ubiquitous and much-loved slave-like character who aids St. Nicolaas in the distribution of gifts in December (Mesman et al., 2016).

strange minority, outside of the blocs of the plural society was part of the strict social control by which the bloc pillarization was maintained. Now, the blocs have crumbled, and Islamic minorities have to face more focussed forms of Dutch racism in seeking a stable identity within a rapidly changing society (Bader, 2005).

#### *The Thread of British Racism and Xenophobia*

There is, despite a façade of liberal legislation, a persistent thread of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia in British society. Earlier studies of attitude cohorts showed that about a quarter of Britons were firmly racist in their attitudes to various groups (Bagley & Verma, 1979). More recently a major survey of public opinion (Lowles & Painter, 2011) has shown that around a quarter still hold very negative attitudes towards ethnic and religious minorities, including Muslims. This sector of the population tends to be older, less qualified, and more often blue collar or lower white collar in status. On the positive side, more than two-thirds of those questioned in the most recent survey believed that religion was a private matter, and should be tolerated; and minority groups should be protected in this regard. These views were mainly held by younger and better educated respondents.

But even prior to 9/11 in 2001 a strong current of anti-Islam ideology pervaded Christian countries of Europe and North America (Strabiac & Listhaug, 2006). In Britain a long-standing prejudice against foreigners in general, and Arabs in particular evolved into a more coherent Islamophobia, even before 9/11, after which it increased markedly (Poynting & Mason, 2007). The purveyors of extreme prejudice in most Western countries are typically the “white” third of the population who are nominally adherents of Christian “values”, and have lower social status in society (Fetzer & Cooper, 2003).

Some critics of “integration” argue that minority groups live in ghettos. Analysis of British Census data in which religious affiliation is recorded, showed that the group most often living in tight residential clusters were Sikhs, followed by Jews and Hindus. Muslims were less likely to live in such “ethnic clusters” (Peach, 2006). Thus the evidence from social geography indicates that in Britain “ghettos” rarely exist, and upwardly mobile immigrant groups tend to spread out rather than cluster together.

Britain, for all its confusion about what consists “British values” and how citizens should acknowledge and live these values, does have a comprehensive set of laws which can prevent discrimination of various kinds, as well as legislation regarding the protection of minority and multicultural rights. This is relevant regarding the recent spate of cartoons, scurrilous and obscene in nature, which sought to depict the Prophet Mohammad in an insulting and obscene manner. It is likely that few people in Britain (unlike the general population in the rest of Europe) will have seen these cartoons. This is because of 2007

legislation in Britain, *The Incitement to Racial and Religious Hatred Act*. An editor or publisher in Britain (or any media distributor importing print or broadcast materials) who displays such cartoons is liable to an unlimited fine, and indeed imprisonment, for distributing such media.

The key British value which is salient and seems worth preserving is that of "critical multiculturalism" as Farrar (2012) terms it, the value premise that we are all - men and women, Muslim and non-Muslim, and of whatever "racial" origin - equal, and our principle value is that of pursuing our own interests through a social contract with other groups in society within a framework of mutual tolerance, respect and support (Crick, 2001a). In this "post integration" model, Islam is a basic religion of Britain, and one which fosters inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance, and good citizenship (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2008).

#### **Ideological and Religious Pluralism: The Case of Islam**

Writing about Europe, Mustafa Ceric (2008) casts the mutuality of rights and duties which make up the plural society, in spiritual terms, drawing on Qur'anic sources. The scholarship of this pluralistic position is soundly based in both Qur'anic and Hadith analyses (Eaton, 2008). Historically, Islam has been more tolerant of other monotheistic religions, than Christianity has been of Islam and Judaism (Lewis, 1984; Esposito, 1998). This history is important, since there is not a little irony in how some sectors of the "Christian" community in Europe today view Muslims with.

Islam has indeed the distinction of being the world's oldest value tradition in which a coherent set of ideas and practices have laid the foundations of ideological pluralism, and the mutual tolerance of different Abrahamic religious traditions within the same state. This was established early in Islamic history through Almighty God's revelation in The Qur'an. Abrahamic religions of Judaism and Christianity have traditionally been tolerated as minority groups within Muslim-majority societies (Armstrong, 2002; Lewis, 1984). All that was required of such minority groups was that they should reciprocate this tolerance, follow their own religions faithfully, and pay a basic tax. Their rewards were protection and tolerance (including support from Islamic welfare systems) but without the obligation of military service. Jewish groups fleeing from religious oppression in Spain were offered sanctuary and protection in Muslim countries (including Palestine) for many centuries (Lapidus, 2002).

#### *Muslims in Europe as a Minority Group: The Plural Society Debate*

Besides accommodating Jewish and Christian groups in countries where it was a majority, Islam has a long history as a minority group, beginning with the movement from Mecca to

Medina where, as refugees Muslims were a minority and worked out ethics and procedures for conduct in relation to the majority population. Thus was born the Fiqh of Minorities, or law of minorities (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2013). Since then in nations where Muslims have been minorities, they have tried to apply these principles, emphasising that in return for tolerance they will work hard to be self-sufficient and law-abiding. Muslims expect that the outcome of such mutual tolerance is that they will be allowed to worship and engage in the multiple religious practices of Islam, be allowed to dress modestly as their religion requires, and have their children educated either in Muslim-run schools, or in schools which respect their religious aspirations. These include principles of modesty, so that pupils will not be required to undress or change clothes other than in private, and that girls may wear religious dress, and sit separately from males if they so choose.

These straightforward requirements of Muslim minorities in Britain are rarely considered by those who demand the “integration” of Muslims in British society – such critics often fail to define what they mean by integration. Sociologically speaking, “accepted integration” means that the minority group are tolerated in their customs of religion, dress, diet, clothing and personal language – and are legally protected from discrimination in access to services and employment, and from religious and racial hatred; reciprocally, the minority group will live peaceably with neighbours, according them the tolerance which they themselves enjoy. And the minority group will maximise their talents through education and training, working hard to support their families and making (as all citizens should) minimal demands on state aid.

Classic studies of “race relations” in Britain pointed to Jews as an “ideal” minority group in this regard (Rose et al., 1969). In more recent decades, Muslims now seek this ideal form of integration, seeking upward mobility on the basis of stable adaptation, retaining traditional languages for use in home and mosque, wearing traditional religious dress, and seeking protection from discrimination through legal means. Most Muslims are hard working and law abiding, and draw on a set of values which are expressed as being ideal citizens, helping everyone, regardless of their religion, who occupy their local community. That is an ideal, but xenophobic forces in British society often make it difficult to achieve. Much public dislike and even hatred seems to be expressed against Muslims (“the new Jews”) simply because they are different, often newcomers, and ideal scapegoats in times of economic stress (Greenslade, 2005).

The British sociologist Tariq Modood (2013) has carefully analysed the paradoxes and dilemmas embodied in British multicultural and social control policies, and it is clear from



his analysis that these policies are still evolving, and multiculturalism is “far from dead”: this multicultural ideal differs from “interculturalism” which involves mutual interest in values and religion of seeming disparate groups (Meer & Modood, 2011). Rather, multiculturalism involves “collectivities of complex identities” which interact, on equal terms within a political state which tolerates and protects such diversity. However Joppke (2009) also shows that despite an official policy of multiculturalism, which should in theory ameliorate feelings of alienation in religious and ethnic minorities, the current fugue of Islamophobia in Britain has resulted in a significant degree of alienation of the Muslim population, especially as right wing elements, including the press, denigrate multiculturalism as an accommodation with an “alien” religion. In his analysis of Dutch (and European) multiculturalism Bader (2007) offers a useful political analysis of the concepts and problems involved, in ways which show how democratic states may indeed accommodate the aspirations of religious and cultural minorities. This is clearly an ongoing political debate, and several different models may be explored as we seek to fulfil Tariq Ramadan’s ideal of Islam as a new, confident and respected minority in western societies.

Today some notable Muslim theologians in different continents elaborate with eloquence doctrines of religious tolerance and pluralism. Foremost among these is the Algerian Mohamed Talbi (1998) who goes to the roots of Islam, to its earliest practices in Makkah and Medina, and out of that puritan piety brings great wisdom, great tolerance, and much spiritual joy. Tariq Ramadan, another advocate of religious pluralism also goes to the roots of Islam in his biography of *The Prophet*, and advocates the role of an Islam that is faithful to its roots (the authority of The Qur’an and The Hadith), and the five pillars: but designs a new and powerful role for the positive dignity of migrant Muslims in Europe and America (Ramadan, 2009 to 2012).

### **Citizenship Education in Britain: Preparing young people for life in a multicultural, plural society**

The nature of citizenship in the democratic political communities of the future suggests a world where citizens (including migrant communities) enjoy multiple identities, and communities accept some of the general values of the state while preserving their own identity. Each person in any state may have to learn to become a ‘cosmopolitan citizen’ who is capable of mediating between rootedness, national traditions and alternative forms of identity (Held & McGrew, 1999). For Muslim youth who have settled in Europe, the challenges to their traditional religious identity are strong. They seek empowerment, but at the same time wish to retain a traditional set of Muslim values (Malik, 2006), and education

is seen as a key factor in both retaining traditional identity, adapting successfully, and being upwardly mobile in British society (Waller & Yilmaz, 2011; Valli, 2012).

There are a number of important factors central to the presence of Muslims in Britain, within the context of Muslim social and political mobilization, and subsequent state responses (Anwar & Bakhsh, 2003). Over the past decade, there has been an increasing debate on a number of issues concerning Muslims in Britain and the national schooling system. Today, Muslims, after Anglicans and Catholics, are the third largest practising religious group in Britain. Many Muslims who grow up in Britain have to face the prospect of defining their identity in peaceable, productive and law-abiding ways in a society that is increasingly Islamophobic (Sheridan, 2006). This question of identity particularly affects second - and third - generation immigrant Muslims, who have to balance their religious upbringing and traditions with the demands of the culture surrounding them.

On the one hand, the fact that the rate of religious observance has been relatively low among young British Muslims means that for many, “integration” into their “host” communities has actually meant an uncomfortable kind of assimilation. On the other hand, renewed commitment for religious observance among Muslims in Britain has, with the aid of some parents and community leaders, led to the creation of a number of independent Islamic schools.

Educational and social institutions have a role in developing communities in terms of both cultural belonging and citizenship. There is a growing energy and commitment among Muslim schools and other Muslim associations to ensure that a cosmopolitan view is taught to pupils, which is seen as a necessary stage in the acquisition of legitimate rights, and in the formation of duties and obligations within a cooperative social contract with the wider society (Waller & Yilmaz, 2011).

There is a population of more than 500,000 Muslim pupils in Britain of school age (currently 5–16), and that figure is likely to increase substantially each decade (Office for National Statistics, 2012; Peach, 2006). The large majority of these children of Muslim parents are enrolled in state schools, including many nominally designed as ‘Church of England’. These schools have been challenged to find a form of religious and citizenship education that meets the needs of all pupils in an increasingly complex, multicultural society that Britain has become (Wilson, 2015).

In the early 1990s it was estimated that there were about 60 state and Anglican schools with a Muslim intake of 90 to 100 per cent, and over 200 with over 75 per cent (Parker-Jenkins, 1995). There are now also a significant number of Muslim independent schools, founded by individuals and groups, which aim to incorporate Islamic ideals into the

education system to fulfil the religious and cultural requirements of their children (Parker-Jenkins, Hartas & Irving, 2005).

#### *Development of the national curriculum and Citizenship Education (CE)*

The government's Advisory Group on Citizenship that reported in 1998 (Osler & Starkey, 2001) proposed a national programme of CE for English schools in its final report – 'The Crick Report' (Qualification and Curriculum Authority [QCA], 1998; see also Crick, 2000a, 2000b) that offered a programme of study and preliminary guidance (QCA, 2000). This curriculum has three main strands: *social and moral responsibility* whereby children learn from the very beginning self-confidence, and socially and morally responsible behaviour inside and outside the school, both towards those in authority and towards each other (this is seen to be an essential precondition for citizenship); *community involvement* through which pupils learn about and become helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their communities, including learning through community involvement and service to the community; and *political literacy* through which pupils learn how to make themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values (QCA, 2000).

In 2002, the QCA launched guidelines for teachers to demonstrate how schools might value diversity and challenge racism within the framework of the National Curriculum (Osler & Vincent, 2002). CE as a new subject was introduced for the reasons outlined in the Crick Report, and as a declared attempt to deal with what was perceived as institutional racism, which became a serious concern of government and public sector workers after publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report and other research on the survival of racist attitudes in Britain (Lawton, Cairns & Gardner, 2000). CE is seen as a means of strengthening democracy and challenging racism as an antidemocratic force. Successive governments have seen CE as a key means through which equality initiatives might be developed through the curriculum. The available curriculum materials on CE do address, to some extent, issues of ethnic inequality (Adjegbo, Kiwani & Sharma, 2007). Citizenship implies a sense of belonging, and that sense of belonging requires a sense of security and genuine inclusion. This sense of belonging cannot be taught to newcomers, nor can it be realized through a ceremony of belonging; it needs to be experienced (Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy & Lopes, 2010; Osler & Vincent, 2002). As Parker-Jenkins et al. (2005) observe, the CE framework offers faith-based schools the opportunity to explore wider social issues and encourages pupils to perceive themselves not merely as members of their own religious community but also as citizens of the world, aware of the wider issues and challenges of global interdependence and responsibility.

#### *The scope of Citizenship Education (CE)*

In 2006, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) published a major review of the teaching of CE in secondary schools. This report was based on inspection of a large number of schools and observed that despite 'significant progress', there was not yet a strong consensus about the aims of CE, or about how to incorporate it into the curriculum. 'In a quarter of schools surveyed, provision is still inadequate reflecting weak leadership and lack of specialised teaching' (OFSTED, 2006). However, in another quarter of schools, it was judged that satisfactory progress in the understanding, organization and delivery of CE had been made. Probably, the report infers, these 'failing' schools were those experiencing stress for a variety of reasons (OFSTED, 2006).

The OFSTED report found that often schools had responded to the goals of CE in very different ways. 'Some, a minority, have embraced it with enthusiasm and have worked hard to establish it as part of their curriculum. Others, also a minority, have done very little' (OFSTED, 2006, p. 139). The inspection report found contrasting methods of delivering CE, though most offered it as part of Personal Health and Social Education (PSHE) classes. Many teachers were unclear about the standards by which CE should be assessed, and written work in CE was poorer than that produced by the same pupils in other subjects. Standards were best when CE was included in GCSE subject teaching. The OFSTED report found that many teachers had not been adequately prepared for instructing their students in CE, and recommended that teachers should be seconded to the growing number of short courses in CE instruction. OFSTED also suggested that schools should use the recommended reference manual on CE by Huddleston and Kerr (2006).

The key aim of our own research (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2008 & 2013) has been to investigate differences between Muslim and state schools, contrasting ways of delivering CE in Muslim schools and in state schools, and to examine the role of Muslim schools in preparing pupils for a role in British society by focusing on both Islamic education and education in being a good citizen.

This study also explored ways of delivering CE in Muslim schools in terms of the National Curriculum guidelines, the differences in teaching citizenship between Muslim and state schools, the attitude of pupils in Muslim schools towards the teaching of citizenship, the attitude of educational professionals, parents and community leaders towards the teaching of citizenship; examining the role of Muslim schools in preparing pupils for a role in British society; investigating the relationship between Islam and citizenship; and demonstrating the possible contribution of Islamic Studies to the teaching of citizenship.

The ten schools studied were located in cities in the North West of England that have been major centres of Muslim settlement. Interviews and questionnaires were completed with

375 respondents (336 pupils and 29 teachers and community leaders) in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and teacher training. The professional informants in this research included teachers of Citizenship and other subjects; head teachers in Muslim and state schools; Islamic Studies teachers in Muslim schools; and Muslim community leaders and opinion formers.

This research is not merely a sample of pupils, but is also a case study of Muslim schools, which were studied because of their willingness to participate, and their geographical location in northern England. The final selection of Muslim schools for study is biased in that it reflects our perception of what is 'best practice', where CE was delivered in contrasted and enthusiastic ways. In policy terms, we are seeking to describe what appear to be models of best practice, in which religious principles inform CE, and vice versa.

#### *Research findings: The Citizenship Curriculum*

In the views of both Muslim and non-Muslim pupils, a tolerant citizen is one who treats everyone in society equally and is against discrimination and racism. An interviewed pupil stated that a good citizen should 'accept all races, treat each other as equal, fight against racism, help others who are in trouble, and try his best to protect the environment'. Pupils have cited racism and discrimination as the most unacceptable behaviour within society. Another said, 'a good citizen helps to raise money for charity and respects people and their ethnic origin'.

Pupils were also able to identify a bad citizen in terms of his lack of tolerance. Many pupils said that a bad citizen is one who is a racist and discriminates between people. He is one who does not respect other citizens especially those from different religions and cultures, and might even go out of his way to make their life difficult for no apparent reason. Findings indicated that 78 per cent of pupils in Muslim schools observed that studying Islam was similar to studying citizenship, while about half of the pupils in state schools had the same view on the relation between RE and CE. (This important distinction between 'Islamic Studies' and 'Islamic Education' is highlighted in another study on six Muslim secondary schools in Britain - Al-Refai & Bagley, 2013).

#### *Conclusions from the Ten Schools Study*

The findings of this study of ten 'best practice' secondary schools (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2013) is that pupils (both Muslim and non-Muslim) from both types of schools, Muslim and Non-Muslim, are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the society they live in. Many desire to improve society when they become adults, through various means. The

responses of the young people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, are for the most part, refreshing in their enthusiasm.

The majority of Muslim pupils considered CE as interesting and important, as it helped them understand society and the role they play in it. Many pupils thought that CE helped them to relate harmoniously with the wider community, taught them good values, and how to discern between right and wrong. It had persuaded them to respect not only their fellow classmates, but others in society as well. CE was seen by many pupils as an aid for self-development – for Muslim pupils in particular it was a way of acquiring a meaningful social identity in a complex and sometimes hostile culture.

Muslim pupils also said that their citizenship classes helped them understand their rights and responsibilities in society, and enhanced their understanding of the moral teachings of Islam. In other words, citizenship lessons helped students to 'see the big picture'. In this 'big picture', many of the young Muslims in this study considered themselves as good Muslims striving also to be good citizens.

Most Muslim and non-Muslim interviewees shared similar views about what constitutes a 'good' and 'bad' citizen. A good citizen is seen as someone who is kind, helpful and altruistic, not only in the school or local community, but in the larger society as well. He is someone who obeys and respects the law; is tolerant; is a productive member of the community; and someone who cares for the environment. One may ask: are these the responses of idealistic youth that would have emerged even without CE; or has CE given pupils a frame of reference with which to elaborate on this idealistic view of 'a good citizen'?

Muslim pupils do appear to have a preference for instruction on citizenship to be conducted by a teacher who holds to Islamic values. In Muslim schools, pupils are subject to religious influence in terms of prosocial behaviours and positive attitudes towards others, whatever their ethnicity or faith. These schools appear to be rather successful in building their pupils' value systems. Islamic Studies and lessons in the Qur'an are often used to support the teaching of citizenship, and this too appears to be quite successful (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2013). Muslim schools do appear to have the potential for the development and evolution of a new form of Muslim-influenced national identity within Britain through CE, given the difficulties encountered in the delivery of CE in schools of all types as described in the OFSTED (2006) review.

While full-time Muslim secondary schools are valiantly trying to incorporate CE within their curricula in various ways, they still face a number of problems. First the large amount of work required to look after not only the National Curriculum (NC) subjects, but also RE, and the integration of citizens into wider society of pupils, is a major challenge. Second, financial

problems reduce the ability of these schools to implement their plans, and can restrict the use of new and effective resources. The reason for this is that most of these schools are dependent on pupil fees and contributed donations from the community. Currently, very few Muslim secondary schools in Britain are given state financial support, compared with several thousand Anglican, Catholic and other religious schools in Britain. The findings of the present study should be read in conjunction with this OFSTED report and the government-sponsored longitudinal study (Keating et al., 2010) to gain a more complete picture of the challenges that face the further development of CE in Muslim schools.

Citizenship Education now faces several challenges. (Cameron, 2010) proposed an expansion of CE for 16-year-olds as part of his "integration in British values programme" for all students, with an increased emphasis on local participation, including voluntary work in local, civic organizations and agencies. This is an initiative that minorities (including Muslims) may endorse.

In discussing these findings, a number of studies, parallel to our work, are worthy of mention. Firstly, there are the important social policy analyses of Tinker (2009) and Oldfield et al. (2013) that have shown that the development of schools by the Muslim (and other faith) communities involve activities that promote good neighbourliness and social cohesion. These policy research reviews provide an important counter to the often ill-informed critics of the setting up of schools for Muslim pupils. Secondly, government reviews of CE have resulted in a key review of CE provision in ethnically diverse schools (Adjegbo et al., 2007). This work showed that CE materials need further development in order to address ethnic diversity in British schools. The authors of this report indicate that by 2018, 15 per cent of the British workforce will be Muslim, and because of their age profiles, will have children who will be attending British schools. This implies an imperative need both to develop the CE curriculum in order to accommodate the needs and aspirations of ethnic and religious minorities, as well as to expand support for the Muslim community's efforts to obtain funding for Voluntary Aided schools (Parker-Jenkins, 2002).

We have undertaken further research (which included two of the Muslim schools from the earlier ten-schools study) in six Muslim schools in England, studying the nature and content of their Religious Studies curriculum, since these curricula have not been studied in detail before. These schools were of three contrasting types: two voluntary-aided Muslim secondary schools, two independent Muslim schools and two Muslim boarding schools. While each type of school had some unique approaches to the delivery of Islamic Education in the context of teaching religious studies, there was general agreement across the three types of school that RE did foster good citizenship, and RE and CE were mutually

reinforcing aspects of the curriculum (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2013). This 'mutual reinforcement' was based on the combined interactions of teachers, parents and peers that tended to mould Muslim youth into responsible young adults.

#### *Critical realism and the understanding of citizenship education for Muslim youth in Britain*

Our research, "merely" showing that young Muslims react positively to curriculum messages about citizenship and its obligations, is open to the criticism that we have crafted not only a co-operative role for young Muslims, but a subordinate role as well. Thus, in undertaking the original research (Al-Refai & Bagley, 2008), we had not adequately absorbed Ramadan's (2011) important message, that Muslims in Europe seek not merely tolerance for their quietist and adaptive roles within society, but have something more to offer: the positive ideal of Islamic culture which shares equally with other European cultures, models of history, morality and religion which are part of Europe's moral evolution.

Matthew Wilkinson's *A Fresh Look at Islam in a Multi-Faith World* (2015) leads us to a significant step on this new path, using the methodological philosophy of critical realism (Archer et al., 2004). This approach addresses social change as being grounded not only in "reality", but ontologically, in a form of metaphysical transcendence. Wilkinson applies this approach to analysing the progress in citizenship of the pupils he taught and studied in a Muslim secondary schools. This leads him to conclude that: "... the presence of young people in the citizenship classroom presents the opportunity for an informed and more deeply critical examination of civic and political phenomena that many of us take for granted. Muslims and Islam, with their own traditions of governance and civic organisation, can provide the necessary critical perspective to allow all of us to ask the difficult civic questions: what is the nature of governance and justice?" (p. 252)

Wilkinson's final conclusion is timely and important in taking forward the consideration of multiculturalism in general, and educational policy in particular: "Taking a fresh look at Muslims in a multi-faith world is ... one of the most important educational tasks of our time; but it can only be accomplished effectively if educational policy-makers, thinkers, school-managers, parents, guardians and teachers remember, and are constantly reminded, that it is in the balanced development of the whole human being, in all his or her related, articulated dimensions, that the true meaning of education lies." (p. 253)

#### **English Policy developments in Multicultural and Islamic Education**

Government policy in secondary education (in England, at least – policies in Wales and Scotland differ) has up to 2015 been to foster the development of state-aided "free" schools or academies (using the legal framework of the 2002 Education Act), focussing on particular



types of curricula (e.g. science, engineering, design and technology, arts and music, sport). Subject to government approval, these schools may work outside of National Curriculum guidelines, in all but the core subjects, so not all of these schools have adopted the traditional Citizenship Education (CE) model. In theory this academy model should provide the opportunity for Muslim communities to provide, with state funding, schools serving the particular needs of parents and children from these communities. Yet there appears to be government bias in granting such status: thus in 2015 there were about 5,000 schools with academy status in England, but very few were run by Muslim foundations. Oldfield et al. (2013) in their review of faith schooling in Britain found that there were only 12 state-funded schools administered by Muslims, compared with 41 state-funded Jewish schools – even though the Muslim community in Britain is at least eight times more populous than the Jewish community, and also has a lower age profile, with many more young families with children.

There is a socioeconomic dimension to this issue. The Jewish community in Britain is deservedly prosperous, based on several centuries of settlement in Britain. The Muslim community is in comparative terms, economically disadvantaged, and many first generation immigrants from Africa and the Asian sub-continent cannot afford the fees for privately funded schools. In the absence of state support which is offered to other religious groups, many Muslim parents have little alternative but to allow their children to attend 'second rate' secondary schools, serving areas of economic deprivation (Sawyer & Bagley 2016).

## **Conclusions**

This review of policy, practice and popular opinion regarding minority groups in general, and Muslims in particular, has pointed to similarities and divergences in Britain and The Netherlands. The Netherlands was described as a plural society in 1973, accommodating the aspirations of a variety of religious, political, and ethnic groups. At this time Britain was still evolving policies concerning "race" and the accommodation of minority groups. British policy emerged in the 1980s as one of plural multiculturalism, but this policy ethos has diminished in the past 15 years, with the development of a growing hysteria of Islamophobia, expressed at both the public and political levels. The same trend has occurred in The Netherlands (in which, as in Britain, only about five percent of the population are Muslim). Dutch tolerance grounded in its plural society model has withered, although research indicates that in areas (and in schools serving these areas) where Muslims live and work, tolerance increases: knowledge and experience of Islamic cultures generates tolerance, an important sociological message.

Mainstream Muslims in Britain have retained a quiet dignity, applying as best they can the social tolerance and good citizenship that is required by the Blessed Prophet's Qur'an-based teaching. This is well-illustrated by our study of the teaching of citizenship as a national curriculum subject in secondary schools run by Muslims, or in which a high proportion of pupils are Muslim. Pupils from Muslim homes expressed a wide range of positive responses concerning what being a good citizen entails. Pupils from Muslim homes were actually significantly *more* likely to aspire to the "good citizen" model than were pupils from non-Muslim households.

Ironically, the anti-Muslim hysteria which now seems to inform much government policy, also prevents Muslim parents and community leaders from setting up publicly-funded schools under the new "academy" or "free school" model.

In contrast to the situation of Muslim pupils in Britain, African-Caribbean immigrants and their children and grandchildren have followed the path of assimilation, based on successful "integration" programmes in secondary schools, and the likelihood of religious and other values shared with the indigenous, white population. National survey data indicate that at least a third of African-Caribbeans in Britain are in stable partnership with a white British or European partner, and their "mixed-race" children, numbering more than three millions, are now the fastest-growing ethnic group in Britain (Platt, 2009). The same trend seems to be occurring in The Netherlands (Bagley, Van Huizen & Young, 1997).<sup>58</sup>

We stress that both balanced, tolerated integrated accommodation of ethnic and religious groups (the plural society option); and the tolerant absorption of an ethnic group through intermarriage (the assimilation option) are acceptable outcomes in the dilemmas on implementing multicultural policy, whatever the race or religion of those involved. What is crucial is that *each individual* in Western, democratic societies should have the *right to choose* which religion or religious bloc he or she wishes to belong to, including the right to be a non-religious humanist independent of any group, and marrying across ethnic and religious boundaries if they so choose. For Muslims, for example, attending to principles of canon law (Shari-ah – Deen, 2013) should also be a matter of free choice, and every citizen should have the right to follow either religious or civil codes. The final adjudication in contested cases should lie with the secular, civil authority.

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<sup>58</sup> Islam, of course, contains individuals of many different ethnic backgrounds, and "racially mixed" marriages within Islam seem common, according to our observational experience of Mosques in Northern England. This is an interesting area for future research. On Mosques, CB compares the dozens of well-signed, always-open Mosques in his home city of Manchester, with his experience of Amsterdam and The Hague where there seem to be far fewer Mosques, which are hard to find, and are not usually signed as places of worship.

Tomlinson (2008) in her review of thirty years of British policies for multicultural education points to the unevenness and often confused nature of policy-making, changing with both governments, and ministers of education. The result, in her opinion, has resulted in a significant weakness in British multiculturalism. It has been the cultural minorities themselves who have been the policy innovators in this regard (e.g. Richardson et al. 2007). Tomlinson (2013) in a cross-national analysis of policies for underachieving youth argues that this is not specifically a problem for ethnic minorities, but is rather mainly a problem for underachieving white youth, whom globalising economic policies have assigned to a permanent underclass, termed “the precariat” (Standing, 2014).

The way forward we advocate for upwardly mobile Muslims in Britain is a political one, not only continuing to live a life of “quiet dignity”, living to the fullest the Islamic principles of helping others and being good neighbours; but also that of actively explaining to the wider community, Islam’s moral message, based on The Holy Qur’an, and The Sunna of the Blessed Prophet. Focus on children’s Islamic education is crucial, since there is evidence that in a hostile society, young people who are not well-grounded in Islamic values may become alienated and disaffected in British society.

Islamic values are fundamentally expressed in everyday acts of goodness and kindness seeking, as Quakers say, the soul given to us by Almighty God, in *everyone* (Bagley, 2015). The ethical principles of Islam, expressed in brilliant clarity by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (2012) should for multicultural educators, become more widely known.

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## **Appendix C**

### The Day Nursery Practitioners' Narratives on Implementing the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000)

**Alice Sawyerr**

#### **Introduction**

The individual semi-structured interview findings on how the nursery practitioners implemented the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000) to 3 to 5-year-old children was the original, overt focus of this chapter. The narrative which follows is based on how I reported these research "results" soon afterwards, a document I had to put aside for several years, for a variety of reasons. Now, more than a decade later I see that I must have been intimidating and indeed overpowering for many of the respondents, who might have felt that they were enduring some sort of "oral examination", especially in the light of the fact that the nursery in which I had first observed them was, soon after my observational sessions were completed, suddenly closed for reasons which at that time were entirely unclear – notwithstanding the fact that more than 20 children in the nursery were placed there for therapeutic reasons, and had been assessed clinically as "at risk". In retrospect we were all – the researcher from the minority group, the front-line workers from various ethnic minorities, the middle level, white managers, the children from such a variety of backgrounds, in the most deprived area of the London conurbation – victims of a process, a class system of exploitation and control, a bureaucratic system of power and money. We were unaware of these cross-cutting factors which controlled and exploited the lives of all of us in the nursery favela, as Alderson (2016) might term it.

*Back to the past ...* A key component of the interview was (I felt) the preparation process. These included the steps taken by the researcher in preparing the semi-structured interview questions, which were piloted in a community day nursery in the same multi-ethnic community (located a street away from the local authority day nursery which I researched). Part of the preparation process also included consultation with an independent, experienced qualified nursery officer whose role was limited to checking the wording of the questions to ensure that the interview questions and phrases used, were at the appropriate level for the 11 nursery practitioners who are the subject of the study (as the researcher was not NNEB trained).

#### **A break from the nursery to work on the semi structured questions**

The end of the initial participant observation phase was scheduled to be followed by the researcher taking a break from the nursery for eight weeks, during which time the participant

observation video tapes and hand written notes would be looked at, transcribed and analysed in detail. The purpose was to contextualise the semi structured questions using information from the participant observations. This would in theory enable the researcher to modify the semi structured questions that had been previously drafted, using information from the participant observation data, and the notes and from the videotapes to make the semi structured questions more pertinent and relevant to the nursery practitioners' actual practice. It might also enable the researcher to use language and descriptions that practitioners had themselves used and which they would be familiar with, and therefore find easy to understand in the individual Semi-structured interviews.

In this process, of course, the researcher was becoming socialized in the values of the actors in her research setting, so that in effect she became not only a researcher, not merely a participant observer, but was being absorbed into the mind-set of the workers themselves. Through a self-reflexive process of dialectical critical reasoning the "research worker" may become a member of the 'favela', the nursery collective in which the members come to realise, and to counter, the nature of their exploitation (Alderson, 2013 p 4). Thus positioned, the researcher might become part of the process she was describing, part of the social system, of nature itself, and she would be able to act as an advocate of social change in understanding and unweaving the net of alienation in which the nursery-favela was bound (cf Bhaskar, 2000, 26).

### **Background**

Following the eight-week break from the local authority day nursery in which I had video-recorded the worker-child interactions, I sought consultation from an independent senior practitioner to advise on the relevance of interview questions for practitioners and managers. With feedback from this independent senior practitioner, I was able to make the relevant changes to the questions, and the sequencing of the questions. On completion of the semi-structured questions with the nursery staff, I interviewed the manager of the community day nursery, as well as two of the three practitioners, both on-site at the community day nursery.

### **Unplanned changes**

Although I had made the above plans, the schedule had to be abandoned for six months, for the following unplanned reasons:

1. The nursery manager and the deputy manager at the local authority day nursery resigned from the nursery within a month of each other.
2. There was a period of uncertainty and instability within the nursery during which a deputy manager from another nursery had to manage the nursery while the manager's job was being advertised internally.

3. Following the appointment of a new manager from within that nursery staff group, further instability was experienced in the nursery. Another candidate from within the same nursery staff team who had been unsuccessful in the job interview reportedly became a disruptive and destabilising influence within the nursery staff team. The acting team manager (who was a deputy team manager from another nursery) had to stay at the nursery for a further four months following the appointment of the new nursery manager to provide stability for the nursery staff team.
4. During the transitional period, the acting team manager (a deputy team manager from another nursery) made her opposition to the research being continued, known to this researcher. She said: *'This status quo with no research being carried out here will have to remain until the practitioners have successfully resolved their internal relationship difficulties'*.
5. She had also during the participant observation period during her visits to the nursery to familiarise herself with the routines, practitioners and parents/carers before the deputy manager left, said to me: *'I am opposed to research being carried out in day nurseries, so you need to know now that I will not be part of the research study while I am acting up as manager at this day nursery'*.
6. On the acting team manager's departure from the nursery, the new team manager (Practitioner 5 from the green room, a Black-African) agreed to the research being continued at the nursery and made the necessary arrangements for all the NNEB trained, and the trainee practitioners including herself to be interviewed in one day only.
7. The new manager resigned from the nursery following her planned wedding, a week after the interviews. The nursery had to be managed by different acting managers from different nurseries. I was informed by the acting managers that the interviews with the remaining staff could not take place until a permanent manager was appointed. In the event the manager's job was not advertised for a further eight months.
8. However, after some months the nursery was closed with a week's notice to the practitioners and parents/carers. The researcher was not informed of the closure of the nursery. I had returned to a full time clinician position at the NHS Mental Health Trust, and only discovered the closure when attempting to visit the nursery for an update on the staffing situation.
9. The front of the nursery building had a notice board announcing it was being refurbished for a 'Sure Start' programme for the area. Inside the building were workmen who did not know about the closure of the previous nursery.
10. On visiting the nearest local authority day nursery that day, the manager there informed the researcher that the staff and children from the nursery had been placed in the

remaining five nurseries within the borough. The researcher was able to say 'hello' to a few of the children and staff who reported they had chosen to be moved to that nursery as it was the closest to their homes.

### **Semi-structured interviews with the nursery practitioners**

#### **Individual interviews at the day nursery**

This involved meetings with individual practitioners in locations that were convenient for them. For example seven of the practitioners including the five NNEB trained practitioners, the unqualified practitioner in training and the acting manager chose to be interviewed at the nursery during their working hours. Provision was made for cover of the group rooms while they were being interviewed by me in the staff room.

During the individual interviews, I read out the instructions for answering the questions to each practitioner and explained that there were no right and wrong answers. I also reminded each practitioner to ask me to repeat any questions that they did not hear clearly so that I could repeat the questions. I began by asking each practitioner biographic questions such as when they started work at the nursery, training that they had attended, which training they had found interesting and useful and training sessions that they wanted to attend in the future. I also asked questions about the background training which allowed the practitioners to relax, think back, reminisce and talk about changes that have taken place in the careers over the years.

I gradually moved on to questions about the foundation stage curriculum and the specific early learning goals. Some practitioners asked for the questions to be repeated especially in relation to questions that required a description of the practice when implementing the early learning goals of the foundation stage curriculum. Some practitioners had difficulties remembering the early learning goals and a couple of the practitioners commented that they had not anticipated that I would ask such questions given that I was not NNEB trained.

#### **Individual Interviews held at other locations**

The managers chose to be interviewed at different locations away from the day nursery. For those who had moved on to other jobs, they asked to be interviewed at their places of work. The operations manager asked to be interviewed at her home in the evening. The Cook and the Administrator asked to be interviewed at the other nursery sites that they had been transferred to, within this same local authority day nurseries.

### Reading of documents

The reading of planning and assessment documentation, both those produced by the Government, those produced by the local authority as well as those provided by the private company in charge of the running of the nursery and used by the nursery practitioners was useful. These provided information on how information was recorded, disseminated, who attended meetings and who were absent. I was also able to gather information about individual children from the files written by the key practitioners. I also referred to clinic files in the NHS Mental Health Trust files on the children who had been referred for assessment, to gather relevant information, which will be commented on in more detail later.

The major investigative question guiding this study was (overtly): ‘How do the nursery practitioners in a local authority multi-ethnic day nursery perceive, plan and implement the six Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum (preschool curriculum) that supposedly influence children’s learning and ethnic identity development?’ This was meant to be an open-ended, exploratory and non-pejorative question, although I became aware that a number of workers did feel that they were being submitted to a form of “oral examination”. This was less than ideal, given that the whole nursery system in the borough was in a state of flux and change, with workers moving, nurseries closing for puzzling reasons, and high levels of anxiety in the workers in some of the nursery settings.

Table 1 provides the number of practitioners that were interviewed and their designations at the day nursery. This is followed by a more detailed description of each of the 11 practitioners in Table 2.

**Table 1 The 11 Practitioners interviewed and their designated professional roles at the day nursery**

<b>Number of practitioners</b>	<b>Designation in the day nursery</b>
6	The key practitioners in the 3 group rooms
1	The off-site operations manager
1	The on-site manager
1	The deputy manager
1	The cook & meals supervisor
1	The administrator

The semi structured questions were aimed at eliciting responses to the three investigative research questions:

- (1) How do practitioners from multi ethnic backgrounds working in a multi-ethnic local authority day nursery perceive the Foundation Stage Curriculum for 3 – 5 year old children?

- (2) How do the practitioners' perceptions influence the way in which they interpret, plan and implement the Foundation Stage curriculum which affects children's learning?
- (3) What are the possible implications for children's learning and development including their self-esteem, self-concept and ethnic identity development in a multi-ethnic local authority day nursery.

**Table 2 The Eleven Practitioners interviewed**

Practitioners	Role at the nursery	Years at the nursery	Ethnicity
Practitioner 1	Sole Key practitioner for 3.5 – 5 year old preschool group room children	5 years	Black, African-Caribbean
Practitioner 2	1 of 3 Key practitioners for 2.5 – 3.5 year old blue group room children	5 years	White European
Practitioner 3	1 of 3 Key practitioners for 2.5 – 3.5 year old blue group room children	4 years	Black, African-Caribbean
Practitioner 4	1 of 3 Key practitioners for 2.5 – 3.5 year old blue group room children	1.5 years	Black Indian
Practitioner 5	1 of 2 key practitioners for 1.5 – 2.5 year old green group room children	6 years	Black African
Practitioner 6	1 of 2 key practitioners for 1.5 – 2.5 year old green group room children	5 years	Black African-Caribbean
Practitioner 7	Deputy manager	6 years	White European
Practitioner 8	Manager	22 years	White European
Practitioner 9	Operations manager	24 years	White European
Practitioner 10	Nursery cook and meals supervisor	4 years	Black African
Practitioner 11	Nursery administrator	7 years	White European

### The Interview Findings

#### Theme 1. Practitioners' perceptions on day nursery provisions

In order to develop an understanding of the practitioners' perceptions on day nursery provision it was important to ask them in the individual semi-structured interview: *What they saw as the key role of day nurseries.*

Most of the practitioners paused to think or sigh before sharing their perceptions. Some practitioners focused more on the needs of the children, some emphasised the needs of the parents and others provided a broader perspective. Examples of practitioners' verbatim responses are presented below, indicating their designation in brackets beside their responses.

*A day nursery is there to provide care and education for the children. (P1)*

*It means working as a team, we all work as a team and working together with the parents and the other professionals. Recording information, having meetings like the reviews every 6 months, to keep in contact with parents, just to sort of exchange information on the children progress and needs.(P2)*

*To work with the parents as well as the children (3, P10, P11)*

*To make relationships with the parents, to come closer to the children and according to their needs and abilities we have to provide them with activities. (P4, P7)*

*To provide a safe environment for the children and their parents, and at the same time a stimulating and a friendly environment for the parents and their children. Also respite for the parents.(P5)*

*Basically to provide a warm stimulating environment which is more educational. (P6)*

*When I worked at ...it was slightly different because obviously there's a lot more emphasis when you're working with parents, the importance of supporting them sometimes in very basic things like parenting skills and interaction with their children, parents who you know suffer from postnatal depression, or there are issues with setting boundaries with children. And that happens here as well. (P8)*

*Um, key role? I think there's lots of different roles depending on the sort of nursery you work in. Obviously the key role is working with the children and supporting parents in whatever field that is. You know obviously now it's working with parents who work, so it's supporting them in having good childcare for them cos they need to work, providing good childcare for the children, ensuring that they have their play experiences and interaction with each other. Through all the foundation years we're preparing them to move on for life in school.(P9)*

*I think the key role is obviously in providing good quality childcare for children, ensuring that their experiences are positive, that their interactions with members of staff is good,*



*that there's care and it's a stimulating environment, that they, feel cared for. ... Um, working in partnership with parents and carers so it is a partnership really. (P9, P7)*

*That we would work to ensure that the children reach their full potential, that their needs are met in whichever way is appropriate for individual children. (P9)*

## **Theme 2. Practitioners' perceptions of the Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The practitioners' overall view of the foundation stage curriculum was that it was a form of guidance for practitioners to refer to, rather than a curriculum to rigidly follow. The majority of the practitioners said they believed that children at this age should not have restrictions regarding what they learn and how they are taught, especially in local authority day nurseries where children have been assessed and registered for free places at the nursery, based on being labelled as 'children in need'. All the practitioners emphasised play, unstructured activities and the need for children to explore the environment as more important than learning to read, write their names or to do mathematics.

They said they paid most attention to the following Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum:

1. Social and emotional development,
2. Physical development,
3. Aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world and
4. Creative development.

Two of the key practitioners from the group rooms (P1 and P 3) were unable to recall or list the six early learning goals of the foundation stage curriculum. None of the key practitioners described the foundation stage curriculum in any depth, except to list the relevant early learning goals as:

1. *Personal, Social and emotional development*
2. *Language and Literacy*
3. *Mathematics*
4. *Creative development*
5. *Physical development*
6. *Knowledge and understanding of the world*

## **Theme 3. Practitioners' perceptions of curriculum planning.**

Although the practitioners demonstrated their familiarity with the timescales for planning the foundation stage curriculum and could list these, they did not however place much importance or emphasis on curriculum planning for the under-fives. Managers observed that '*...children*

*at this age learn through free play and exploration ... adhering strictly to planned curriculum is very restrictive for the children and excludes spontaneity.'*

Secondly, extensive planning was perceived as time consuming for the practitioners as it took away valuable time from direct interactions with the children. It was also perceived and experienced as not being beneficial to the children, especially since most had been labelled as 'Children in Need'. Several practitioners said they viewed curriculum planning and implementation as the work for trained teachers, not nursery practitioners. They provided descriptions of when curriculum planning needed to be completed for display e.g. when it was required for OFSTED inspections, Social Services Inspections, the internal nursery agency inspections and for individual children's documented review plans. Here are examples of their responses to the question:

*There is long term planning, medium term planning and short-term planning (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6).*

*There are weekly and daily plans (P7, P8, P9).*

*All plans are based on the 6 areas of the foundation stage curriculum (P9)*

*Implementing the plans, and looking at the ability of the children, special needs, behaviour needs or speech delays is difficult, and complex (P5, P6, P7, P8, P9)*

*Plans are modified by the needs of the children from direct observations (P5, P6, P7, P8, P9)*

*There is the need to adapt the plan on a daily basis to incorporate everything (P1).*

*There is the added need to work with key children focusing on two activities for the reviews (P5, P6).*

*The activities are required to be evaluated (P9).*

*Only trained staff can do planning (P1, P3) ... But unqualified staff do the setting up of the rooms (P3).*

*Practitioners have to follow guidelines when conducting the planned activities ... which is often extremely demanding, or impossible (P1,P4).*

The perceptions of the managers especially the operations manager, were often similar to those of the frontline practitioners. However she emphasised the provision she had made for frontline practitioners to attend curriculum planning training sessions.

*I incorporate and adhere to regulations and requirement by ensuring that the staff have time to do the planning. By making sure that they all were trained in planning. By making sure that they do observations. And again we had a sort of basic training. I used to send them on training on various areas. You know they used to do training courses on different areas of the foundation stage curriculum and early learning goals, you know like there might be a day when there was like language and literacy. So I used to always try and make sure that they went on those language courses. So that they understood the whole concept of it and how the children learnt through play. (P9)*

*Because the other thing that was very important to me was that it was through play. It wasn't through sitting the children down and saying 'You've got to write your name' or whatever. And also talking to them about the areas where they could incorporate all of that stuff without the children even realising. (P9)*

*So that at lunch times making sure the children did have opportunities to be asked for example how many children for lunch today? Count the children, count the plates aloud, encouraged the children to join in the counting. You know say to them put the red sets together and the blue sets together. You know so that they are learning to count but they are also learning to understand you know, that it isn't just counting by rote it is learning what the meaning of it really is. Just sort of incorporating it all within the day to day planning really. (P9)*

*And also obviously going round and checking that the planning is done. Just literally saying 'Well why isn't your planning up on the wall?'. Just kind of ensuring the everyday management of tasks are really done. (P9)*

**The key practitioners were asked: Who would assist them with the planning of their work if they got stuck or needed some guidance.**

Their narratives and experiences were very different from those presented above by the operations manager. Some practitioners said they would turn to other colleagues, the managers, refer to books, guidance notes or make telephone calls to other practitioners. They did not comment positively on having access to curriculum planning training since the private agency took over the running of the nursery. The following are some of their responses:

*I use books e.g. foundation stage curriculum guidance notes.*

*We used to have a teacher at the start but she left and was never replaced.*

*Since the private agency took over, the one teacher assigned to all six nurseries came and left within a month.*

*Things were better when social services ran the nursery.*

*We used to have resources and access to training and planning in the days of social services*

*There has been no support since the private company took over.*

**In order to understand how the practitioners implemented the foundation stage curriculum, they were asked to describe how they would implement the foundation stage curriculum when they have to stand in or cover for an absent practitioner with a group of children they do not routinely work with - for example in the preschool group room or in another group room.**

Most of the practitioners on hearing the question immediately asked me to turn off the audiotape to give them time to think before responding to the question. A couple of the practitioners exclaimed in surprise 'Oh my God you were really watching everything when you were here before weren't you?' They then provided the following kinds of responses.

*I would refer to the curriculum plan on the board for the day.*

*Within the plan, I will set up the areas.*

*Each area tells you which part of the areas of the curriculum it is, I would use the home corner which covers many areas.*

*I would set up according to the curriculum plan posted on the board with the appropriate activities.*

*I may set up in the garden that is outside activities which would cover many areas.*

*I do not mind covering for different group rooms as I will get experience from this.*

*I have worked in each of the group rooms so I am familiar with all the age groups rooms so I would know what to do.*

These responses were however very different from my observations of their actual practice - this will be explored in more detail later.

#### **Theme 4. Practitioners perceptions on developing the children's self-esteem and self-concept.**

Most of the practitioners appeared to struggle the most with defining self-esteem. Two of the key practitioners said they did not know what self-esteem meant.

Other practitioners defined self-esteem as:

*It is like self-concept, children feeling reluctant about who they are.*

*Individual children not believing in themselves.*

They were however able to describe ways in which they would personally promote positive self-concept in their interactions with the children and described what they might do to achieve this:

*Giving children lots of praise (P1,P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9);*

*Encouraging children in everything they do (P5, P6, P7, P8, P9);*

*Encouraging children to believe in themselves. (P3, P5, P6).*

Most respondents in describing 'self-concept' said that it involved self-image, and said their action plan would include the following:

*To involve the children in the 'myself' identity programme to enable them to realise that they have certain features that are different from others. (P5, P6, P7,P8,P9)*

*I will encourage them to look in the mirror to see themselves and their features (P5).*

*I will invite the children to bring in and to look at pictures of them as babies and as they have grown (P5, P6.).*

#### **Theme 5. Practitioners perceptions on children's experiences of cultural, racial and ethnic stereotypes.**

Three of the key practitioners (P1, P 2, and P4) said they did not believe or perceive children under the age of five were capable of encountering or understanding cultural, racial and ethnic stereotypes. A fourth practitioner (P3) said she could not answer the question because she did not have charge of the children or any meaningful input into curriculum planning for the children in the pre-school group room or in the blue group room.

*Children do not encounter racism because they are too small. (P1)*

*Children don't experience racism, cultural or ethnic stereotypes at this age. (P2)*

*It does not happen in nursery because the children are too small to understand.  
(P4)*

*It happens with older children in junior school and it is what they hear at home.  
(P4)*

*I can't answer because of my limited exposure to the preschool group room children and the fact that I am never in charge of curriculum planning or the children on my own.(P3)*

With regards to perceptions on how the foundation stage curriculum might be implemented to counter experiences of cultural, racial and ethnic stereotypes the practitioners identified and listed the following early learning goals:

*It is the personal social and emotional development that deals with children's identity issues.*

*It is under the knowledge and understanding of the world where they learn about the different cultures, clothes, festivals and foods.*

*They do the identity project on 'myself' here, and it is through the readings and activities that they learn to develop their knowledge on who they are and their identity.*

**The practitioners were presented with five different scenarios and asked to describe how they would in their practice, implement the early learning goals of the foundation stage curriculum in the preschool group room to the children starting with:**

*(a) You overhear a White child say to a Black child and an Asian child in the home corner: You can't be the doctor in my play because you are not White.*

They provided the following responses, and suggested these interactions and interventions for the children and their families.

*I will join in their play and will tell the White child that it was not a fair comment. (P1)*

*I will tell the White child that everyone can be a doctor, whether Black or any race, anyone can be a doctor. (P2)*

*I will speak to the parents to reinforce this same view point at home.(P2)*

*I will tell the child everybody is equal, if you go to the hospital you will see that everyone can get sick. And everyone can be a Doctor. (P4)*

*We can describe the children appearances, but don't classify them as Black or White as we are all human beings. (P4)*

*I will use myself as a teacher and say I am not White, you are a child 3 years old and I am in authority over you but am not White. (P4)*

*I will approach the children and speak to them according to their age level. If a preschool child say this I will find out why they said it, depending on the answer, ethnicity of child, depending on their colour, I would ask the child if for example a Non*

*I will join in the play and will role play different jobs, mum, cleaner, baby, different home situations with different children just to introduce them to the idea that different ethnic people can become doctors. Through role plays we can get the children to see the benefits. (P6)*

*I believe that the children get their stereotypes from home. I will invite and role play and if the child still says no, I will try to be positive to see if the child has a good understanding of the meaning of the remark. I will go in the home corner, role play the doctor and let everyone play together.(P6)*

*I will be truthful and let them know there are Black, Asian and White doctors not just White and find out why they said what they did and try to encourage them to reflect on what they are thinking. (P5, P6, P7, P8, P9)*

*We haven't had that but have actually had that 'you can't be the doctor because you are not a boy' (P8).*

*It will be important to find out from the child where they got the idea from but to do it without blaming them. Parental involvement and collaborative work with the key worker at nursery is crucial here. (P7, P8, P9)*

**(b) In the Christmas play a White child says to an Asian Moslem child: You can't be baby Jesus because baby Jesus is White.**

The individual practitioners presented a variety of responses, activities and interactions.

*I will tell the children that everyone is equal in the world, give the other child a chance. (P1)*

*I will explain that everybody has their own beliefs.(P2)*

*Anybody can be successful, anybody can be what a White person can be. (3)*

*I will tell them there is Black and White Jesus, every child can play Jesus. (P4)*

*I will take the child to the home corner, using different colour dolls to show that babies are not one colour they are different. (P5, P6,P7,P8,P9)*

*I will tell the child no one knows what colour Jesus is – anybody can play Jesus.(P5, P6)*

*I will get the White child who passed the remark to play a stereotypical Black role. I will get an Asian child to play a stereotypical White role.*

*I will use the example of a restaurant – I will give a view that an Asian child can be a business person who comes to the restaurant to eat.*

*The White person will be a worker in the restaurant e.g the chef or waiter (4).*

**(c) You hear a Black child and an Asian child say to a White child during a music and dance activity: You can't dance, because only people like us can dance.**

*I will say everybody can dance. (P1)*

*I will tell them that everybody can dance will do role play another time..(P2)*

*I will tell them we all can work together. (P2)*

*I am unsure if it is a stereotype comment. (P3)*

*I will tell them to give everybody a chance. (P4)*

*Regardless of one's background everyone can dance ...*

*I will not encourage any distinction between Black and White ... I will insist they play together as a team. (P1,P2,P4).*

*Everybody can dance as there are different ways of dancing, its all dancing (P7, P8,).*

*Will intervene in the activity. Make it a dancing session to learn the moves ...*

*Will put on a show, each child will do their own dancing. Each child will learn each other's dance, Asian, Black and White ...*

*Each child will pick up different moves from White, Asian and Black children, and learn to value each other's dance. (P5, P6, P7,P8, P9)*



**(d) You hear a White child and a Black child in the playground turn away an Asian child from their play team by saying to the Asian child 'You can't run fast, only Black people and White people can really run fast like people who play football.**

The practitioners interventions varied from discussions to physical activities. These are listed below.

*I will tell them it is not the right thing to do, will use circle time to talk about it.*

*Will enforce equal opportunity.*

*Will say everybody can run.*

*Will say we are all equal regardless of background, we can all play football.*

*Will talk to them personally, if beyond my limit will call parents and take their advice.*

*Would inform the managers and take their advice*

*I can't go beyond my limit and what I can do.*

*It will be activity led, I will get the children to do an obstacle in the garden .*

*I will ensure full participation from all children, will want Black and White child to see the Asian child accomplish an obstacle.*

*I would ask them to do the same as the Asian child to prove that Black, White and Asian can do this task*

*I will get them to value each other as peers not the colour of their skin.*

*I will tell them it is not true, no matter what race, some can be fast, some slow, all can run.*

**(e) You hear a White child and an Asian Child say to a Black child in the toilet as they dry their hair from coming in from the rain ' Your hair is all fizzy and funny, you don't have nice hair like us'. How would you deal with that?**

*I will use equality books, use dollies from different cultures.*

*Get the parents to bring things from home, to reflect different cultures.*

*Use circle time, different colours to illustrate difference.*

*Explain that everyone has hair, some straight, some curly.*

*All is equal, not good to laugh at other people's hair.*

*Talk to the two of them, encourage friendly behaviour.*

*Activity, use different dolls with different texture hair. The aim is to demonstrate how different texture hair will change when wet.*

*I will discuss different process when hair is wet and will look at Asian and White hair and explain the processes.*

*I will do the 'Myself Activity'.*

*I will make faces with different types of wool to create how different hair is.*

*I will tell them hair is hair, but texture maybe different because of background and ethnicity.*

*Will tell them everyone has different texture hair, short, long, straight, different colour, all the same.*

### **Theme 6. Perceptions on diversity**

#### ***The practitioners were asked whether it was necessary to attend to issues of diversity in nurseries, and why.***

Most of the practitioners said it was important to attend to issues of diversity in nurseries. One practitioner said it was only necessary when problems and issues arose, and another practitioner said it was not necessary.

*There are lots of cultural difference in nursery it would help to prevent conflict in the nursery.*

*The first five years are the most important years. It is therefore important to prepare them for school as it gives the children important opportunity and input to understand diversity issues.*

*The community is quite diverse ethnically, so it is important and prepares them for the world. (P9)*

*Only if there is a problem, only if issues come up and needs to be dealt with. (P2)*

*No it is not needed, as children are already coming from different cultures, backgrounds and speak different languages.(P4)*

#### ***The practitioners were asked about their perceptions on how the foundation stage curriculum could make it possible for children to value diversity***

The practitioners' responses included suggestions for activities as well as the children learning from practitioners and parents (adults) behaviours:

*By introducing many provisions for them to work with.*

*Parents taking more active role and coming into nursery.*

*Celebrating all festivals, respecting other beliefs.*

*Providing and introducing different activities, celebrating different cultures.*

*By carrying out the Identity project on 'myself', with families like before, and reading books on ethnic minority achievements.*

*Learning from staff behaviour at nursery.*

*Learning from parents behaviour at home.*

*Celebration of different cultures, awareness of differences around them, framing differences positively rather than concentrating on negative stereotypes.*

**Practitioners were invited to describe ways in which in their practice they personally enable and make it possible for the children to value diversity.**

The practitioners' descriptions were not limited to activities and involvement of parents, but also included looking at making use of the knowledge and diversity in cultures within the staff group at the nursery:

*Becoming more creative with the activities in personal and social development areas of the foundation stage curriculum.*

*Introducing more cultural activities, Chinese new year, Ramadan for Muslims, having books on different religions in recognition of the changes in the local community.*

*Showing appreciation and respect for others beliefs, festivals, including differences.*

*Giving everyone equal opportunities.*

*Put out all the activities ensuring no one is left out. Not overlooking quiet children*

*Making children to feel comfortable and proud of their features and heritage*

*If necessary talk to the parents and make them understand they are working with the nursery staff as a team.*

*Talking and sharing with each other where we are from, accepting each other's differences.*

*Encouraging the children and each other to try different things, awareness of different foods, values, taboos and customs and trying different foods.*

**Practitioners were asked to describe how another practitioner, on short notice in their absence, would know how to take over and continue with work, such as the ones they have suggested above, that they have been implementing with the children.**

The practitioners perspectives were quite mixed, with expectations that common sense was all that was needed, worksheets and planning sheets would be readily available, reliance on

co-worker in the group room and managers for information and support as well as concerns for the emotional impact on the children as a result of the lack of continuity. The suggestions included:

*Work sheet will be available.*

*Explanations will be given by Nursery Manager.*

*They should know from their training and from common sense.*

*Although I am not experienced or qualified yet any one coming in should be experienced, qualified and able to take over.*

*Although work sheet will be available, the concerns will be the children as they will be uncomfortable with a new worker.*

*Planning sheets will be there, there will be the other member of staff in the room to cover also.*

*Planning stuff and written information will be available.*

### **Conclusions**

This Appendix has presented and analysed data on the practitioners' responses from the semi structured interviews with the eleven practitioners, who are all female ranging in age from 26 to 58 years. The findings have been organised into the six most salient themes which pertain specifically to the three investigative questions:

4. How did practitioners of various backgrounds working in a multi-ethnic local authority day nursery perceive the foundation stage curriculum for 3 to 5-year-olds children?
5. How were the practitioners' perceptions reflected in the ways in which they appear to plan and implement the Foundation Stage Curriculum which purportedly affects children's learning?
6. What were the potential implications for children's development, including their self-esteem, self-concept and ethnic identity development in this multi-ethnic local authority day nursery?

Five of the six key practitioners and all three managers are experienced and qualified NNEB trained Nursery nurses, except for the assistant practitioner who was still in training at NVQ level II in childcare. The three managers had each also completed management courses at the certificate level. They were therefore well qualified for their designated roles and responsibilities at the nursery and to meet the curriculum and standards ordered by government.

The involvement of the six key practitioners from the three group rooms who have direct responsibility for implementing the foundation stage curriculum to the twenty-seven children

in the three group rooms; the two on site practitioners (the cook and meals supervisor and the nursery administrator) whose roles are pivotal to the smooth running of the day nursery; and the three managers responsible for policy implementation, supervision, support and training have been particularly beneficial to this study. Their contributions have been particularly useful in offering multiple perspectives on what they observed, and the reports they experienced, on a variety of identity issues which were elicited by my focussed questions.

Their observations reflected their wide age range, life experiences and length of stay at the nursery. It was a stable team of practitioners from multi ethnic backgrounds with an average stay of five years at this local authority day nursery. I learned (as a psychologist) a great deal about the interactional worlds of the kinds of clients I was connected with in clinical practice. This was not only a cognitive learning process for me, but an affective one as well. I learned from, and was humbled by, the 'common sense humanism', the naturally grounded ontology of the workers, and how they reacted to what in perspective, were my rather pompous and intrusive questions. They reacted with common sense, humour and tolerant understanding of my "ivory tower" questions about identity and self-esteem. Workers and I engaged in a dialectic, and for all of us this interchange seemed to yield a fresh understanding of some of the crucial issues in the lives of these precious, vulnerable children of this London Borough, whilst their close-by "peers" threshed out a future which would involve the closure of their nursery's safe haven, scattering them into new realms of pedagogic experiment, uncertainty and bureaucratic control (see the Documents reproduced in Appendix E).

In formal terms "the sociology of knowledge" that emerged was consistent with the findings of a later research study in Early Years Education in the UK that specifically investigated the implementation of the Foundation Stage Curriculum by nursery practitioners by Richardson (2009).

Looking back, with some awe and nostalgia, at the findings of "the experiment" which involved myself as the interacting stranger, the provoker of perspective, the recording angel (sic), I recall that some of the practitioners I interviewed, when asked directly about their beliefs and perceptions on the purpose of the day nurseries as well as the foundation stage curriculum (2000) provided answers (to which I had arrogantly assumed was an appropriate question) in ways which did confront my curiosity with common sense:

7. From these practitioners' perspectives there needed to be an acceptance that most children, especially those who had been assessed as 'children in need' in local authority day nurseries required *more* caring and *less* teaching between the ages of three to five years, in order to prepare them for school.

8. These practitioners believed that the change from a child developmental curriculum to an outcome curriculum (through the requirement for all registered day nurseries to implement the mandatory foundation stage curriculum with its 'early learning goals'), had meant that they had to plan, assess and teach children skills, which they judged were inappropriate for many children.
9. Despite practitioners' attendance at curriculum planning training sessions, they continued to adhere to "common-sense and humanity", and were reluctant in accepting the new manipulations of nursery provision. They continued to believe that they were not trained to teach reading and writing skills, or to teach anything other than basic numeracy. Moreover, they did not think that teaching those subjects to such young children was necessary.
10. The operations manager (the off-site manager for the Buffer Bears commercial chain which profited from keeping costs as low as possible, including the failure to ensure stable staff coverage during staff sickness), the manager, and the deputy manager accepted as particularly challenging the questions on implementation of the foundation stage curriculum. Their objections were grounded to a greater degree in their professional training, than were the "common-sense" objections of the front-line workers. Nevertheless, the group room practitioners were very clear that the training sessions they had attended were unfocused and unhelpful in the areas of curriculum planning, or in helping them to understand and implement the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum in areas that they had never had training in, and which involved teaching, planning and assessment.
11. Despite the existence of established research findings in the UK and USA to the contrary, both Ethnic Minority and White practitioners, including the preschool group practitioner who is Black and works on her own in the preschool group room, said that they did not believe or perceive children under the age of five to be cognitively capable of understanding or experiencing (and indeed, expressing) racist, cultural or ethnic stereotypes at this age – this was certainly what their "common sense" view of childhood told them, and it had certainly not been contradicted in any of their training modules.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> This was despite a body of American and British research which apparently showed the opposite to be true (Clark, 1966; Holmes, 1995; Young and Bagley, 1982; Milner, 1983; van Ausdale and Feagin, 2002). Looking back however, writing in 2016, it is remarkable that these studies with young children have not been replicated in Britain or America since 2002, and the focus in literature now is one the positive self-concepts which black and ethnic minority children develop, for a variety of reasons.

12. These practitioners also believed that discrimination and racist attitudes evolved either at home, or when children attended primary school.

## Appendix D

City Council documents concerning nursery school planning, 2003-5

### City of (Redacted)

Decision Maker	Date	Title of report
Education DCMB	29 April 2004	Approval of Service Levels for the Contract for the Provision of Day Nursery Services
Social Services DCB	4 May 2004	
Cabinet Member for Social Services	May 2004	
Cabinet Member for Schools	May 2004	
		<b>Report of</b>
		Director of Education and Director of Social and Community Services
<b>Wards Involved</b>	All	
<b>Policy Context</b>	To protect those at risk of significant harm	
<b>Financial Summary</b>	The Social and Community Services 2004/05 Business Plan includes a saving target of £375,000 from the re-let of the contract.	

#### 1. Summary of this Report

- 1.1 The re-letting of this contract creates a significant opportunity to review our strategy in the context of changing needs and new ways of delivering universal services to young children in need and their families. The new Children Bill and "Every Child Matters" requires that services for vulnerable children should be more integrated with universal services and this report sets out the City Council's strategy to meet these requirements through the re-letting of this contract.
- 1.2 The City Council day nursery service has evolved over the years from a highly targeted service for children in need in which nurseries almost exclusively provided places for children in need to one in which there was a mix of fee paying and children in need places.
- 1.3 The re-letting of this contract now provides an opportunity to take a further step in the direction of a more inclusive approach. It builds on the development of services for parents such as family centre services, Sure Start, children's centres and other services



aimed at tackling the difficulties that parents experience in caring for their children. The new service will support a more family focused approach so that parents will receive support in addition to the day care provision for their children.

- 1.4 This report seeks approval for the service levels set out in the specification and contract documentation for the Day Nurseries Service contract, which ends on 31 March 2005.
- 1.5 The current contract provides for a day care service for up to 88 full time equivalent (f.t.e.) children "in need" (CiN) from 1 April 2004 within [Redacted] and for up to an additional 196 f.t.e. fee paying children. The service is currently provided from five day nurseries, located throughout the City. This is no longer the most appropriate model for meeting the needs identified.
- 1.6 There is good evidence that many children in need who previously received day nursery places are more appropriately placed in universal nursery school provision. All children benefit from the educational input and this has informed the government's policy to provide nursery school provision for all 4 year olds and the government plans to extend this to all 3 year olds.
- 1.7 The contract for the provision of a Day Nursery Service was first let in April 1994 for four years and this was subsequently extended for a further two years. From 1 April 2000 it was re-let on a five year contract to [DCP] Limited. The service has been substantially re-shaped to take account of changes in demand brought about by Government initiatives over the past few years which include Neighbourhood Nurseries, Sure start, Family Tax credits and the expansion of school based nurseries to 3 year olds.
- 1.8 It is proposed to focus the future service for children in need on three day nursery locations in the new contract – Bessborough, Katherine Bruce and Warwick Day Nursery. It is further proposed to cease commissioning CiN places from Carlton Hill Day Nursery. Of the 40 (full time equivalent) nursery places for CiN to be commissioned through this contract, 20 will be for under 2's and 20 for over 2's. Over the period of the contract the number of CiN places at Carlton Hill has reduced to 3, which means it is virtually a private nursery and the expansion of universal nursery school provision has also lead to a reduction in demand for CiN places.
- 1.9 The City Council funds a further 121 (fte) day nursery places in a number of different settings and approximately 32 (fte) sponsored child-minding places. The City Council believes that this is an appropriate number of places for children in need.
- 1.10 It is proposed that the new contract for 12 places at Bessborough Street Day Nursery be negotiated directly with (Redacted) Children's Society for a period of five years with a break clause at three years and an option to extend for a further two years. This will ensure continuity with a high quality local provider who is already providing 88 children in need places and is a key partner in developing Sure Start and Children's centre services in the south of the borough.

1.11 It is proposed that tenders for a five year contract, with an option to extend for a further two years, at the two remaining day nurseries, Katherine Bruce and Warwick, be invited at the end of July 2004.

1.12 The new contracts will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005.

## **2. Recommendations**

### **For the Cabinet Member for Schools**

2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Schools recommends to the Cabinet Member for Social Services approval of the proposed levels of service for the Contract for the Provision of Day Nursery Services as detailed in Appendix A of this report.

### **For the Cabinet Member for Social Services**

2.2 That the Cabinet Member for Social Services approves the proposed levels of service for the contract for the Provision of Day Nursery Services as detailed in Appendix A of this report.

2.3 That the proposal to cease commissioning day nursery places for children "in need" at the Carlton Hill Day Nursery be approved.

2.4 That approval be given to enter into negotiations with [Redacted] Children's Society for the Provision of Day Nursery Services at Bessborough Day Nursery with a view to a five year contract starting on 1 April 2005.

2.5 That the contract for the Provision of Day Nursery Services at Warwick and Katherine Bruce Day Nurseries be subject to a competitive tendering exercise with a view to a five year contract starting on 1 April 2005.

## **3. Board Recommendations**

- 3.1 The Education Departmental Contracts Board (DCMB) and the Social and Community Services Departmental Contracts Board (DCB) received this report at their meetings on 29 April 2004 and 4 May 2004 (respectively).
- 3.2 DCMB agreed the report and asked that emphasis be placed on the important role that Bessborough, Katherine Bruce and Warwick Day have in taking forward the Early Years Strategy and Sure Start agenda and the development of Children Centre networks. DCMB also asked that the Financial Implications include the impact on the Education Service budget of the proposed decision to cease commissioning children "in need" places at Carlton Hill Day Nursery. DCB supported the proposals and asked that the financial implications include a reference to the expectation of potential further cost reductions as a result of the re-letting strategy over and above the planned 2005/06 savings of £375,000. The re-tendering of the service with a reduction from 4 to 3 nurseries will lead to an overall reduction in the management costs which will be identified once the contract is awarded.

#### **4. Background to this Report**

- 4.1 The services provided through the contract for Day Nursery Services are affected by two significant pieces of legislation, the Children Act 1989 and the School Standards and Framework Act. The former underpins all services for children under eight and determines local authority responsibilities for children in need.
- 4.2 Since the contract was first let there have been significant developments in Early Years and Child Care. Childcare is an integral component of the package of government policies tackling poverty and social exclusion, both directly and indirectly. It is essential to the policies designed to get parents back into paid employment and supporting them once they are in work. The provision of quality childcare has a clear impact on the desired outcomes of the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' and the subsequent Children Bill i.e. being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; economic well being.
- 4.3 For 'children in need' it is intended to commission nursery places as part of a package of services which include family support, parenting skills training and employment pathways in order to achieve the best long-term improvements in both family functioning and consequently children's progress. Whilst in some cases it is important to provide a day nursery for those children who may be at risk of significant harm or have clearly identified developmental needs, for most children in need the traditional day nursery place did not significantly impact on the care issues which led to a child being identified as a child in need in the first place.
- 4.4 There is now considerable evidence to show that effective integrated early years services have a more positive and long term impact on the lives of children and families than 'stand alone' day nursery provision. This leads to necessary and significant changes in the day nursery service that will be provided under a new contract. The service which was previously managed by (Redacted) Day Nurseries Direct Service Organisation (DSO) has been managed by [DCP] Limited since April 2000 when it won

the contract following a competitive tendering exercise. The contract was awarded for a five year period.

- 4.5 At the time of the re-let in April 2000 the contract provided a total of 310 full time equivalent (f.t.e.) places to children throughout [Redacted] of which 181 f.t.e. were for CiN with the remaining 129 f.t.e. places available for fee paying placements. At present the number of CiN places commissioned by the Social and Community Services Department is 88 f.t.e. leaving 222 f.t.e. places available to [a commercial company, DCP] for fee paying placements.
- 4.6 The service, which is available between the core hours of 8.30am and 5.30pm, five days per week, 50 weeks a year, is currently provided from the following five day nurseries located throughout the City:
- Bessborough (Vincent Square Ward)
  - Warwick (Westbourne Ward)
  - Katherine Bruce (Queens Park Ward)
  - St. Stephen's (Maida Vale Ward)
  - Carlton Hill (Abbey Road Ward)
- 4.6 A sixth setting, St. John's, was removed from the contract and re-shaped as the Queens Park Sure Start Centre on 1 March 2004. From 1 April 2005 St. Stephen's will become an independent day nursery managed by [commercial provider DCP], offering a mixed economy of affordable childcare, ranging from spot purchased CiN places if required, a number grant (government) subsidised places and fee paying places.
- 4.8 Table 1 below indicates the current capacity and specified places at each of the five day nurseries currently included in the contract.

Table 1

Day Nursery	Children In Need Places	Private Places	Total Places
Bessborough	21	34	55
Carlton Hill	6	47	53
Katherine Bruce	35	24	59
St. Stephen's	16	55	71
Warwick	12	36	48
Total	90	196	286

4.9 The contract with [DCP] forms part of the overall Social and Community Services day nursery provision for children “in need”. Table 2 below shows that a total of 209 f.t.e. places are commissioned from five different providers.

Table 2 Children "in need" Commissioning Profile April 2004

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Places f.t.e.</b>
DCP (WCC main contract for the provision of day nursery service)	Five nurseries across the City owned by the City Council	88
[Redacted] Children's Society (contract for the provision of day nursery places)	Nine nurseries across the City on a long lease or owned by WCS	76
Dorothy Gardner Centre (WCC)	Shirland Road	20
Portman Early Childhood Centre (WCC)	Salisbury Street	15
[Redacted] Society for People with Learning Difficulties	Rainbow Nursery	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>209</b>

4.10 Table 3 below shows that, since April 2001 93 f.t.e. 'children in need' places have been decommissioned in line with service demand from the contract with DCP (commercial provider).

Table 3 Decommissioning of children "in need" places since April 2001

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of f.t.e. places commissioned</b>	<b>Reduction in f.t.e. places</b>
2000/01	181	
2001/02	160	21
2002/03	144	16
2003/04	128	16
2003/04 (1.7.03)	108	20
2004/05	88	20

4.11 There have been no difficulties with the existing contract arrangements with the exception of the arrangements for the decommissioning of places within the contract. The mechanism for

calculating the reduction in the contract sum has not proved advantageous to the City Council and therefore new arrangements will need to be put in place (see paragraph 6.17).

## **5. Consultation with Potential Providers and Service Users**

5.1 The City Council has been able to ascertain the views of service users through previous consultation on its proposals for integrated nursery settings and the audit of childcare provision undertaken annually by Early Childhood Services on behalf of the Early Years Childcare and Development Partnership. The consultation identified the following factors for consideration in setting service levels for the Day Nurseries Contract:

- care and education are seen as inseparable;
- high quality nursery education is every child's entitlement;
- equality of opportunity to access services is essential;
- the importance of providing age-appropriate services for children under 3 years;
- the importance of having a key worker system;
- the opportunity to continue to purchase private day care;
- the availability of affordable childcare places;
- advice and support for families to access tax credits;
- the availability of employer partner childcare places for City Council employees.

5.2 Meetings have been held with a number of providers, including [DCP], in order to seek their views on a number of issues including:

- scope to bid for a contract for individual nurseries or to let provision at all nurseries as a single contract;
- payment structure – block contract or spot purchase;
- average unit price or unit price differentiated according to age in the event that the City Council wanted to decommission places or purchase additional places;
- the balance of public and private places across the contract as a whole and in individual nurseries and their ideas on providing a range of affordable places;
- arrangements for the inclusion of children with disabilities;
- arrangements to increase the educational achievement of children and maintain continuity of care;
- the Index to be used for the annual price review;
- length of contract;
- property arrangements;
- preferred arrangements for payment;
- re-tendering timetable;
- incentives for contractors.

## **6. Scope of Services**

6.1 A summary of the proposed service levels is provided at Appendix A. The main proposed changes to the existing specification and contract conditions are summarised in the following paragraphs.

**Number of CIN Places**

6.2 A needs analysis has been undertaken to identify the overall number of children who will be provided with a fully funded day nursery place in future. Most children will be provided with a part-time place as part of a wider package of family support services. It is estimated that in future the Social and Community Services Department will need to commission in total approximately 150 f.t.e. CIN nursery places a year. This will mean a significant reduction in the number of places in the Day Nursery Service contract.

6.3 It is therefore proposed that there will be a block contract of 40 f.t.e. CIN places with up to 122 f.t.e. places available to the provider(s) for fee paying children to be placed. Any 'children in need' places that may be needed in addition to the core block contract will be spot purchased as and when required at a pre-determined rate.

Number of Day Nursery Settings

6.4 Future commissioning plans have also looked at the spread of provision across the City and the advantages of re-shaping the property portfolio to make sure that the nurseries are integrated into the areas designated for Children's Centre initiatives and that all families have fair and equal access to services. This requires some redistribution of resources and some changes in the geographical profile of day care resources. Some day care is currently situated in areas, which are not easily accessible to local families.

6.5 It is therefore proposed that 40 f.t.e. CIN places will be spread over three settings, Bessborough, Katherine Bruce and Warwick. Places will no longer be commissioned at the Carlton Hill nursery site as the building is not situated in an area of deprivation and high need (see section 7). The three day nurseries will continue to play a role in taking forward the Sure Start agenda and supporting local Sure Start Delivery Plans and the development of Children Centre Networks in line with the Local Preventative Strategy and earlier support for families to prevent family breakdown. Table 4 below sets out the number of places to be provided at each of the three day nurseries.

Table 4

<b>Day Nursery</b>	<b>Children In Need Places f.t.e.</b>	<b>Private Places f.t.e.</b>	<b>Total Places f.t.e.</b>
Bessborough	12	41	55
Katherine Bruce	14	34	28
Warwick	14	45	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>162</b>



#### Age Range and Pricing

- 6.6 It is proposed that the number of CIN places across the three day nurseries will be divided evenly between 0 –2 year olds and over two year olds to reflect current commissioning needs and practice. The block contract price will be based on this set number of places for under twos and over two's with a Notional Rate (unit price) in the event that the specified Placement Ratio (50% over two's and 50% under two's) is exceeded. Any future spot purchase of additional places and decommissioning of places would be based on a tendered unit price for under twos and over twos.

#### Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

- 6.7 The new specification will ask the Contractor to specifically address the inclusion agenda with regard to children with disabilities. The Contractor will be encouraged to develop joint working practices between the day nurseries and the Rainbow specialist nursery in Queens Park in order to develop a co-ordinated service.
- 6.8 The new specification will also encourage the Contractor to aim for full inclusion within the block contract price. However, it will also recognise that in certain cases an additional price might need to be negotiated and agreed by the Special Needs Panel depending on the level of disability and support to be provided by the day nursery.

#### Sustainability of Childcare provision.

- 6.9 As indicated in table 4 the registered capacity of the three day nurseries, is 162 places. As the Social and Community Services Department intends to block purchase 40 places this will leave a total of 122 places which can be independently marketed by providers. The City Council is committed to sustaining high quality affordable and inclusive services.

6.10 Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative (NNI) funding in 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06 has already been agreed to enable a total of 20 places divided between Katherine Bruce and Warwick nurseries to be made available at affordable rates. Tenderers will be invited to put forward proposals on how they would work in partnership with the City Council to maintain nurseries that are responsive to the needs of the community.

#### Employer Partnership

- 6.11 The new specification will require the Contractor(s) to make nursery places available for children of City Council employees as part of an Employer Partner scheme.

#### Contract Packaging

- 6.12 It is proposed to separate the Bessborough Day Nursery (currently 21 f.t.e. children “in need” places and 34 fee paying places) from the core contract and to hold negotiations with [Redacted] Children’s Society (WCS) for a five year contract with a break clause at three years and an option to extend for a further two years.
- 6.13 As can be seen from table 1 on page 4 WCS has an existing contract with the City Council for the provision of 76 f.t.e. 'children in need' places from nine nurseries in premises, which are on a long lease or owned by the Society. WCS are an established and well-regarded nursery provider in [Redacted] and a valuable member of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Negotiating a stand alone contract for Bessborough Day Nursery with WCS would enable the Children’s Centre Network in the south of [Redacted] to put in place an integrated management structure for both sites and more easily meet the government target of having a qualified early years teacher in both settings employed by one employer. A separate negotiated contract could also provide the opportunity for reduced management costs at Bessborough in the longer term.
- 6.14 It is proposed that a five year contract, with an option to extend for a further two years, for the management of the Katherine Bruce and Warwick day nurseries should be re-let by competitive tender.

#### Charges for Fee Paying Places

- 6.15 Contractors will have the freedom to set and review annually the charges for fee paying places without the need to seek the City Council’s approval. Contractors will be required to provide five places at each of the three day nurseries at affordable rates to be subsidised from the fees set for other fee paying places.

#### Decommissioning of CIN Places

- 6.16 The new contract will ask Tenderers to provide an average unit price based on their block contract price. This will be used as the basis for the reduction in the fee as a result of any decommissioning and the cost of purchasing any additional places. It is, however, recognised that there is a risk to the Contractor of not being able to immediately fill the vacancies from decommissioning with private places. It is therefore proposed that, in addition to a requirement for the City Council to give four months notice (currently six), the level of decommissioning will be restricted to 10% in any one contract year.

#### Annual Price Review

- 6.17 It is proposed that the annual price review for the new contract will be based on 80% Annual Earnings Index and 20% Retail Price Index.

#### Quality Assurance

- 6.18 The new specification will require the Contractor(s) to work to the “Celebrating Quality” – [Redacted] Quality Assurance Scheme which is a newly developed quality assurance programme designed for all settings providing services for children aged 0-14 years or a comparable Approved Investors in Children scheme.

### **7. Carlton Hill Day Nursery**

- 7.1 As indicated in paragraph 6.5 it is the intention to cease commissioning places for CIN at Carlton Hill day nursery from 1 April 2005. The location of Carlton Hill means that it is inaccessible to most children who are assessed as needing a Social and Community Services funded day care place. There are currently only 3 ‘children in need’ places occupied from the 6 CIN places in the nursery. The nursery functions successfully as a day care service for children who are fee paying and numbers have increased from 23.5 in January 2003 to 35.3 in January 2004. There are currently 182 children on the waiting list and 71% of these are local residents. The nursery has a total capacity of 53 f.t.e. places.
- 7.2 Although the City Council has earmarked the Carlton Hill site for disposal the Director of Education is considering options for the future of the building in order to take forward the early years agenda for [Redacted] e.g. early years services linked to extended schools initiatives.

### **8. Consultation with all Users**

- 8.1 The City Council in partnership with [DCP] will ensure that the needs of individual services users are met as far as possible, through a clear information strategy and consultation about their individual needs.
- 8.2 Some children will be leaving to go on to school, others will require alternative provision and the City Council will as far as possible, try to ensure that this is provided by assisting in re-locating a child or identifying other provision. Each child will have a planned transition to another appropriate resource.

### **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The total estimated cost of the Day Nursery Services contract in 2004/05 is £1,569,309. The cost is recharged to the Social and Community Services Department who commission the places for CIN. The Social and Community Services Business Plan for 2004/05 includes a savings target of £375,000 in 2005/06 from the re-let which will be achieved from the decommissioning of places, the reshaping of St John's Day Nursery that took place in March 2004 and the removal from the new contract of St Stephen's and Carlton Hill Day Nurseries.
- 9.2 Subject to any decision on the future of the Carlton Hill Nursery, it may be necessary under the contract to pay DCP compensation for loss of income. The company was therefore asked to submit an estimate of the likely cost/deficit they would incur in 2004/05, i.e. a reduction in income from not being able to sell fee paying places offset by reductions in direct child related costs for example, food and nappies arising as a result of a reduced number of children.
- 9.3 [DCP] submitted costs based on 3 scenarios and various assumptions. Their estimate of costs ranged from £38,000 to £66,000. There is also a savings target of £50,000 in the Business Plan for 2004/05 against which savings of approximately £125,000 have been identified, made up of the decommissioning already agreed with [DCP] and the saving arising from withdrawing St. John's from the contract. However, any compensation paid to DCP in respect of the closure of Carlton Hill will reduce this surplus saving.
- 9.4 Carlton Hill Day Nursery is in the Education Service property portfolio. As a result the proposal to cease commissioning children "in need" places at the nursery will impact on the Education Department which will need to identify funds to cover the clientside property costs currently recharged to the Social and Community Services Department. These costs are set out in table 9 below:

Table 9	
	2005/06 Costs £
Asset Rent	35,200
Insurance	1,200
Maintenance	13,600
Total	50,000

- 9.5 This will represent a growth bid going forward to the next Star Chamber which in effect will offset the saving that Social and Community Services are seeking to achieve. It is considered that the planned savings of £375,000 in 2005/06 are assured notwithstanding the need for a new growth item of £50,000 for Education Service clientside property costs. In addition there is a possibility of potential further cost reductions as a result of the planned re-letting strategy which will be declared as part of the next Star Chamber. The need for re-investment in the Early Years Service will be considered at the same time.

9.6 The Deputy Prime Minister's Circular 03/03 (commonly referred to as the two tier workforce code) introduced as statutory guidance a Code of Practice relating to workforce matters which is intended to guide authorities to ensure that Contractors engage new joiners to a service on terms which are no less favourable than staff who were originally employed by the Local Authority. Equally it is intended that staff transferring from a local authority and new joiners should have a broadly comparable pension scheme. The inclusion of the Code and its full effect in the tender documentation would have an impact on tender bids although additional costs would not be known until actual tender bids were received.

10. Staffing Implications

10.1 There are no staffing implications for the City Council arising from this report.

**11. Implications for Information Technology, Property and the Customer Services Initiative**

11.1 There are no information technology implications arising from this report.

11.2 The Carlton Hill Day Nursery building is dealt with in section 7 of this report.

11.3 There are no elements of the contract that can be incorporated into the CSI.

**12. Performance Plan Implications**

12.1 The re-let of the Day Nurseries contract supports the aim of identifying and protecting those at risk of significant harm.

13. Ward Member Comments

13.1 Members from the Abbey Road Ward in which the Carlton Hill Day Nursery is located have been sent a copy of this report. Any responses will be reported to the Cabinet Members.

**14. Reason for the Decision**

- 14.1 The service levels proposed in this report will contribute to the City Council's priorities in the Children and Young People's Strategic Plan whilst ensuring that the City Council continues to meet its responsibilities to children in need.

**Background Papers**

Confidential Report (30.3.04) to Contracts Review Board "Re-letting Strategy for the Contract for the Provision of Day Nursery Services"

## APPENDIX

### PROPOSED GENERAL SERVICE LEVELS FOR THE CONTRACT FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF THE DAY NURSERY SERVICE

- To provide good quality, affordable, and accessible child care and education appropriate and inclusive to the needs of the diverse multi-ethnic community and children of all abilities at three day nurseries, Bessborough, Warwick, and Katherine Bruce.
- Within an overall total of 162 full time equivalent places to provide 40 f.t.e. places for children "in need" as set out below:

Bessborough	12 f.t.e
Katherine Bruce	14 f.t.e
Warwick	14 f.t.e.

- To provide 50% of children "in need" places for under 2's, 50% for over 2's. Age ranges will be specific to each setting in accordance with the Children Act 1989 registration requirements as amended by the National Care Standards.
- Nurseries to be open from 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., Mondays to Fridays, for 50 weeks a year. Any extension of hours beyond this will be at the Contractor's discretion.
- To operate policies and good practice that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of children of all abilities, and from a diversity of ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. There will be no fluctuation in the highest standards of any aspect of care and educational service delivery which will be accorded to all children attending.
- Providers will have the freedom to set and review annually the charges for fee paying places without seeking the City Council's approval.
- To provide five places at each of the three day nurseries at affordable rates to be subsidised from the fees set for other fee paying places.
- To provide advice and support for families to access Tax Credits.
- To provide places for children of City Council employees as part of an established Employer partner scheme.
- To develop joint working practices with the Rainbow Nursery in order to develop a co-ordinated service for children with disabilities.
- To contribute to the work of the local Children's Centre Networks to increase access to integrated services for children and families.

- To work to the “Celebrating Quality” – [Redacted] Quality Assurance Scheme or a comparable Approved Investors in Children scheme.
- To appoint a keyworker for each child responsible for ensuring continuity of care and identifying and recording individual needs and strengths in care and education plans.
- To provide a developmental Care and Education Plan for each child and organise six monthly review meetings.
- To provide staff ratios based on the recommendations of the Children Act 1989 with managers or officers in charge supernumerary and cooks, cleaners and administrative staff additional. Staffing requirements of each unit to take account of opening hours.
- To ensure that all children are provided with a nutritional, varied, and balanced diet that is age appropriate and culturally sensitive. Individual children’s special dietary needs, including those of vegetarians and non-vegetarians must be met. Children attending on a full day basis to be provided with a two course meal. Healthy snacks to be provided for all children each mid morning and mid afternoon.
- To keep the premises and grounds clean and tidy in accordance with all relevant legislation to ensure a healthy and safe environment for the children.
- Full records, policies and procedures will be maintained throughout the nurseries in accordance with Children Act 1989, [Redacted] City Council contractual requirements and good practice.
- To produce an annual Quality Development Plan.



For completion by Cabinet Member for Schools

**Declaration of Interest**

- I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed ..... Date .....

NAME:

- I have to declare an interest

State nature of interest .....

.....

Signed ..... Date .....

NAME:

(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter.)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Approval of Service Levels for the Contract for the Provision of Day Nursery Services** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

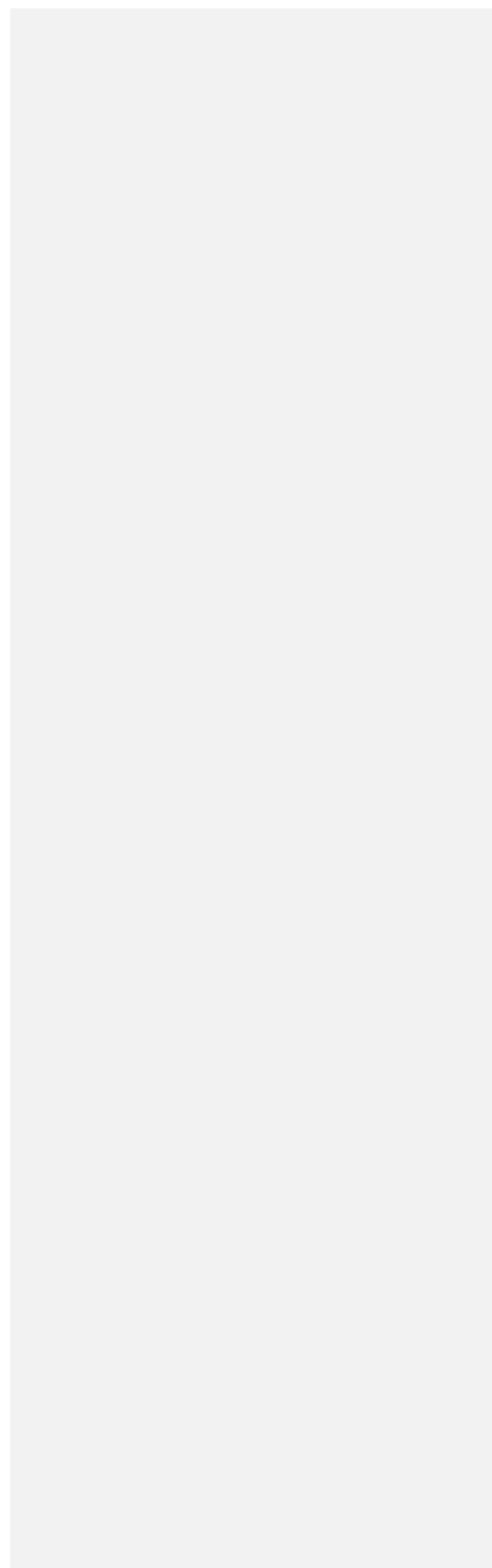
Signed .....

Cabinet Member for Schools

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment: .....  
.....



For completion by Cabinet Member for Social Services

**Declaration of Interest**

- I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed ..... Date .....

NAME:

- I have to declare an interest

State nature of interest .....

.....

Signed ..... Date .....

NAME:

(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter.)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Approval of Service Levels for the Contract for the Provision of Day Nursery Services** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....

Cabinet Member for Social Services

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment: .....  
.....

NOTE: If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Legal and Administrative Services, the Chief Financial Officer and, if there are staffing implications, the Head of Personnel (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

**Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.**

City of [Redacted]

Decision-maker	Date	Title of Report
Cabinet Member for Social Services & Housing Cabinet Member for Schools	23 March 2004	<b>Re-shaping of St John's Day Nursery and the Re-Location of the Marylands Family Centre.</b>
Confidential to Departments Involved		<b>Report of</b> Director of Social & Community Services Director of Education
<b>Wards Involved</b>	Queens Park and Harrow Road	
<b>Policy Context</b>	To protect those at risk of significant harm	
<b>Financial Summary</b>	This proposal to reshape the St John's Day Nursery and relocate the Children in Need day nursery places to other nurseries from 1 March 2004 will achieve estimated savings of around £6,900 in 2003/04 and estimated full year savings of £83,000 in 2004/05. Additional estimated savings of around £200,000 are anticipated in 2005/06 with the re-letting of the day nursery contract.	

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet Member approval to re-locate the day nursery places currently provided on the St John's nursery site under the contract with [DCP] Ltd from March 2004 and to re-shape the site as the Queens Park Sure Start Centre.
- 1.2 The re-location of the day nursery places will not reduce the number of places that are currently block contracted for Children In Need (CIN) in the [DCP] nurseries as the 18 children currently placed in the St John's nursery will be offered a choice of alternative local provision at the Katherine Bruce, St Stephen's, Warwick, or Dorothy Gardner nurseries. This proposal supports the Social and Community Services (SCS) contract re-letting strategy and decommissioning targets.

- 1.3 The location of the Queen's Park Sure Start management team in the St John's nursery building will provide Sure Start managers with office space and a base from which to offer a full range of services. The establishment of a centrally located Sure Start building will provide the essential framework in the Queens Park area for achieving the overall Sure Start objective, namely, that every family with a child under the age of four living in the 10% most deprived areas in the country should have access to a range of high quality integrated services that will deliver better outcomes for children and their parents. Services should meet and respond to varying needs and where possible should be available through one point of access.
- 1.4 This development creates the potential to draw in capital funding from both Sure Start and Children's Centre funding streams and so bring forward the modernisation of the site and its services. This development is congruent with the S&CS family support commissioning strategy and is consistent with the evolving Early Years Strategy.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That approval be given for the St John's Day Nursery to be removed from the contract with [DCP] Ltd for the provision of day nursery places at the earliest opportunity, subject to appropriate notice.
- 2.2 That approval be given to the proposal that the St John's Day Nursery site becomes the Queens Park Sure Start Centre and that the modernising of service delivery from the new Sure Start Centre shall include Sure Start staff and services; such as crèche and drop in facilities, parental training and support groups, new child care places and be the hub of a local childminding network.
- 2.3 That the Directors of Education, Social and Community Services and Legal and Administrative Services be authorised to do everything necessary to give effect to the above recommendations including the service and completion of all necessary documentation.

## **3. Board Recommendations**

- 3.1 The Social and Community Services Departmental Contracts Board (DCB) and Education Departmental Contracts Board (DCMB) considered the removal of the St. John's site from the Day Nurseries contract on 22 December 2003 and 22nd January 2004 (respectively).
- 3.2 DCB endorsed the recommendations of the report at its meeting on 22 December 2003 with a project plan and communication strategy to re-shape St John's nursery as part of a developing strategy for Early Years. Proposals in this report fit with the early years strategy being developed for integrated services for children and families 0-4yrs.

#### 4. Background Information

##### 4.1 The Day Nursery Contract with [Redacted]

4.1.1 The day nursery contract was awarded for a period of five years by the Education Committee on 8 February 2000 and Contracts Committee and Social Services Urgency Sub-Committee on 11 February 2000 to [DCP] Ltd., following a competitive tendering process. The contract began on 1 April 2000 and will end on 31 March 2005.

4.1.2 The contract provides an under fives day care service for a total of 331 full time equivalent (fte) places across six day nurseries:

- Katherine Bruce
- Bessborough
- St. Stephen's
- Warwick
- Carlton Hill
- St. John's

4.1.3 The Social and Community Services Department (SCS) currently commissions 108 fte places for Children in Need (CIN) with the remaining 223 fte places available for privately funded day care. A further 20 fte CIN places will be decommissioned from April 2004.

4.1.4 A needs analysis has been undertaken to identify the numbers of children who will be provided with a fully funded day nursery place in future. The number takes into account all those children who are assessed as experiencing significant harm and those who are at risk of harm.

4.1.5 SCS currently provides in total 252 full time day nursery places across 5 providers for children aged 2 to 4 years. Children under the age of 2 are provided with spot purchased child-minding services. Decommissioning is taking place in line with service demand and it is estimated that in future Social Services will need to fund approximately 150 nursery places for children aged 2 to 4.

4.1.6 This will mean a reduction in the number of places block contracted from [commercial provider DCP or a future provider.

4.2 Reshaping of St John's day nursery

**4.2.1 The reshaping of St. John's will involve the decanting of day nursery places from St John's and the re-provision of these places at local nurseries; (Katherine Bruce, St Stephen's and Dorothy Gardner). Officers have undertaken negotiations with other nursery providers in the locality to offer parents of children at St John's as wide a choice as possible of alternative nursery**

**provision. Minimising the impact of the changes will be the primary consideration for the existing children and their families.**

4.2.2 [DCP] are keen to implement the proposal to re-locate the day nursery provision in St John's nursery as soon as possible. A formal consultation process with parents, children and staff took place in January 2004. [DCP] managers report that the current staff group at St John's nursery view the plans for the future service in a positive manner, and are keen to work with them to implement the changes.

4.2.3 There are currently 18 children in St John's who have been placed by Social and Community Services. Most of these children have a part-time nursery place. There is one child with a private place. The numbers in the nursery are low due to the fact that over the last year there have been low numbers of children who are assessed as needing a specialist Social Services nursery place. In addition children, where appropriate, have been offered alternative nursery places in preparation for the re-focusing of St John's.

4.2.4 All the children have now had alternative places of their choice confirmed in adjacent [DCP] Nurseries and Dorothy Gardner Nursery Centre. Introductory visits took place in February in order to help the children settle into a new environment.

#### 4.3 Queens Park Sure Start

4.3.1 Sure Start is a central government initiative designed to improve the life opportunities of children growing up in poverty, thereby contributing to the government's aim to eradicate child poverty within a generation. It is an area-based initiative, working from defined catchment areas selected from districts with significant levels of deprivation. By the end of 2003 there were 524 local Sure Start programmes reaching one third of under 4s living in poverty.

4.3.2 The City now has 3 Sure Start Programmes – Church Street, Queens Park and South [Redacted] - these aim to reach approximately 2,480 children aged 0 – 3 years; that is approximately 44% of all children of this age group living in [Redacted].

4.3.3 The Sure Start team in Queen's Park will offer a new model for service delivery; it is both local and community based, multi-agency and focused on outcomes for children and families. The programme provides a universal service for all families i.e. all families are offered two Sure Start visits, and a range of other activities, with more specialist components if needed. The aim is towards early intervention and prevention. The team find joint solutions to identified need and there is an ease of referral between professionals, which does not involve complex re-referral procedures.

4.3.4 The Queen's Park Sure Start programme requires a Sure Start centre where multi-agency professionals can work together to deliver integrated services. The Sure Start capital projects group has been meeting to look at the options for developing a suitable



site or combination of sites. City Council officers have held preliminary meetings with Sure Start Managers to discuss whether the St John's building would be suitable for use as the Queens Park Sure Start Centre. St John's would provide an ideal site as it is centrally located in the area and is within easy reach of complementary services such as the Dorothy Gardner Centre of Excellence and the Mary Patterson Nursery School.

## 5. Financial Implications

5.1 Estimated savings of £375,000 have been identified in 2005/06 from the re-letting of the day nursery contract. The proposals set out in this report will generate some savings from the day nursery service in advance of the re-let of the contract, which is due to end in March 2005. By removing the St John's building from the [commercial provider DCP] contract, savings from the management fee can be realised without reducing the number of day care places. The current day nursery places and staff at St John's will be re-located to alternative sites.

5.2 Removing the St John's building from the day nursery contract with effect from March 2004 would realise estimated part year savings in 2003/04 of around £6,900 and estimated full year savings in 2004/05 of around £83,100. These relate mainly to the costs of running the building, e.g. rates and utilities. Other costs, for example the majority of expenditure on staffing, will remain the same, as they will transfer with the children.

5.3 Sure Start is not legally constituted to take the leases of properties. It is proposed that Sure Start occupy the St John's site on the basis of a licence agreement at a peppercorn rent.

5.4 Any future costs that may arise from these proposals will be met from within Sure Start's budget.

## 6. Legal Implications

6.1 The implications of the proposals in this report and their effect on the contracts and leases/property issues are set out elsewhere in this report.

## 7. Staffing Implications

7.1 There are no direct staffing implications for the City Council.

## 8. Performance Plan Implications

10.1 8.1 The reduction in the [DCP] contract will not impinge on the Performance Plan as there will be sufficient day nursery provision to provide a suitable place for all children in need.

8.2 The [DCP]contract will continue to support the following aims of the Social and Community Services Performance Plan 2003-2004:

- To assess and meet needs and develop a range of easily accessible integrated services that promote choice and positive outcomes.
- To identify and protect those at risk of significant harm.
- To support the development of strong, safe and diverse communities by promoting independence, strengthening family life and investing in local environments.
- To work in partnership with residents, customers, service users, carers, contractors and other key agencies to continue to improve services.

## 9. Consultation

9.1 [DCP] began a consultation process with staff at St. Johns nursery in December 2003. The outcome of this was that staff feel positive about the move and are anxious to complete the process as soon as possible.

9.2 Officers from within the Social and Community Services and Education Departments with [DCP] managers met with staff and parents of children attending the St. John's nursery on 15 January 2004. At this meeting parents were reassured that their child's allocated nursery place would continue at an alternative nursery of their choice. They were also offered the opportunity to talk with a [DCP] Senior Manager about their own circumstances on an individual basis.

9.3 Officers have negotiated with other nursery providers in the locality to offer parents as wide a choice as possible of alternative nursery provision. All the parents at St John's are now satisfied with the arrangements that are in place for their children.

9.4 A presentation of the SCS day care commissioning strategy was given to the Executive of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership on 11 December 2003. More detailed consultation about the re-shaping of the St John's nursery has taken place with individual members of the Executive.

11.3 9.5 The Sure Start Partnership Board has been consulted and is keen to implement the proposals contained in this report.

## 12.1 10. Ward Member Comments

10.1 Ward Members have been consulted on the proposals in this report.

11. Crime and Disorder Act

11.1 There are no Crime and Disorder Act implications arising from this report.

12. Health and Safety Issues

12.1 None.

**13. Human Rights Act 1998**

13.1 There are no particular Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

**14. Reasons for the Decision**

14.1 The day nursery services must change and develop in order to provide better services for children and their families. The Sure Start and Children's Centre developments require that integrated Health, Education, family support and child care services are offered as part of a menu of services which are available to communities at a local level. St John's, as the Queens Park Sure Start Centre will become part of the local Children's Centre network and will be well placed to contribute to the outcomes identified in the City Council's Children's Centre Strategy which has been recommended to the Minister for Children.

Background Papers

The documents used or referred to in compiling the report were: -

1. Report (December 2003) "Proposal to reshape St. Stephen's Day Nursery as an independent Neighbourhood Nursery" to the Cabinet Member for Schools and the Cabinet Member for Social Services and Housing
2. Children's Centre Strategic Plan (October 2003)

For completion by Cabinet Member for Social Services & Housing

Declaration of Interest

- I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed ..... Date .....

NAME:

- I have to declare an interest

State nature of interest .....

.....

Signed ..... Date .....

NAME:

(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter.)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Reshaping of St John's Day Nursery and the Re-Location of the Marylands Family Centre on the St John's Site** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....

Cabinet Member for Social Services & Housing

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment: .....

.....

.....

For completion by Cabinet Member for Schools

Declaration of Interest

- I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed ..... Date .....

NAME:

- I have to declare an interest

State nature of interest .....

.....

Signed ..... Date .....

NAME:

(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter.)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Reshaping of St John's Day Nursery and the Re-Location of the Marylands Family Centre on the St John's Site** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....

Cabinet Member for Schools

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment: .....

.....

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NOTE: If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Legal and Administrative Services, the Chief Financial Officer and, if there are staffing implications, the Head of Personnel (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

**Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.**

## Appendix E

### England's Sure Start Child Care Centres: Achievement, Progress and Political Change<sup>60</sup>

Alice Sawyerr and Christopher Bagley

#### Introduction

Identifying deprived neighbourhoods is an obvious basis for multiple-level interventions for community development, addressing both structural and individual problems. This was the basis for a programme initiated by the British government called National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Glass, 1999; ODPM, 2005; Eisenstadt, 2011), which aimed over 20 years to regenerate all of Britain's highly deprived local neighbourhoods (which constitute about ten per cent of all neighbourhoods identified at the enumeration district level). *Sure Start* programmes too were initiated on an area basis (Belsky & Melhuish, 2007; Eisenstadt, 2011) using census data to identify areas with populations potentially at risk. The neighbourhood regeneration programmes died with New Labour. *Sure Start* has taken a little longer to be discarded by central government (Sammons et al., 2015).

#### Shaky Beginnings

The New Labour government of Britain had paid some attention to the abundant medical and social evidence on the corrupting, demoralizing and demeaning effects of chronic poverty on family life, and on children's health and welfare. The government thus initiated the *Sure Start* programme in 1998, as part of its goal of halving the incidence of child poverty by 2010.

The declared goals of *Sure Start* were: "To work with parents-to-be, parents and children, to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children - particularly those who are disadvantaged - so that they can flourish at home when they get to school, and thereby break the cycle of disadvantage for the current generation of young children." (*Sure Start*, 2001). This three-billion pound programme, modelled to some extent on the American *Head Start* programmes, aimed to provide improved parenting skills in areas of high deprivation, focussing on the first five years of a child's life (Barnes et al.,

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<sup>60</sup> The first parts of this overview on *Sure Start* studies up to 2008, are also included in Appendix A. An updated version of this paper will appear in *Open Journal of Political Science* in 2017, in a Special Issue on Public Policy.

2005). Unfortunately, the systematic integration of *Sure Start* with various medical interventions was dropped following the initial pilot work, largely on grounds of cost, although such integration did remain (and was shown to be highly effective) in some centres (Sammons et al., 2015).

The initial workings of *Sure Start* (in the integrated model, using medical, social work and educational resources) were described in an evaluative study in the North West region of Britain (Pearson, 2005). Within the selected areas, participant families were identified and referred by community midwives, and the programme offered support to parents (particularly mothers) to improve their health and emotional and social development, and their parenting abilities. In addition to group sessions for effective parenting before and after the child's birth, parents were usually offered a maximum of four individual counselling sessions, although further sessions might be offered for families considered at high risk of neglect or abuse of children. Involvement in the programme was voluntary, and in the settings studied by Pearson (2005) some 70 per cent of parents approached initially agreed to participate. However, of those parents considered most at risk for 'problem parenting', 50 per cent chose not to attend any of the individual counselling sessions, and less than a quarter completed all four sessions. Among the reasons given for not attending were "illness of self or family member".

Fathers were particularly difficult to engage, and because evening sessions were not usually offered, parents working full-time often had difficulty in attending. The initial evaluation of this programme was qualitative rather than quantitative, and there were few indicators of outcome, apart from the fact that most parents who had participated said that the experience had been enjoyable and positive. But this kind of 'halo effect' is common in evaluation work, and merely tells us that those who participated fully in a voluntary programme were probably those least likely to have required such a service.

Attached to the national *Sure Start* programme was a major evaluation programme based at Birkbeck College, University of London. This team first of all, examined service delivery to 15,000 families and their focus child in 150 *Sure Start* nursery centres in order to provide a description of services actually delivered. Secondly the team attempted to assess whether children, families and communities had actually benefited according to various indicators. Twenty six centres were randomly selected from the 150 centres for intensive study, children and families in these centres being compared over six years with initially similar families in fifty "Sure-Start-to-be" comparison areas.

Belsky et al. (2006) published details of the first statistical evaluation of *Sure Start*, based on interviews and tests involving 3,927 mothers and their children who were enrolled



in the programme, at the age nine months and three years. The target group were compared with 1,509 mothers and children from similarly deprived neighbourhoods, who were not yet enrolled in *Sure Start*. The main dependent variables were mother's perception and use of community services; her family functioning; her reports on her child's health and development; and a measure of the child's verbal skills at age three.

The results of this initial evaluation were disappointing: differences between target and comparison groups were small, and when statistically significant pointed to adverse outcomes for the most deprived mothers and children enrolled in *Sure Start*<sup>61</sup>. Children of teenaged, single mothers, and unemployed single parents who participated in *Sure Start* had children with poorer verbal ability in the third year of life. *Sure Start* had the most beneficial effects for the least deprived, intact families living in areas with lower levels of deprivation. Apparently these mothers were able to elicit additional helping and support networks unavailable to the most deprived mothers. Overall, outcomes were slightly better in *Sure Start* programmes which were delivered within a health services framework. A follow-up of a pre-2003 *Sure Start* cohort into the early years of schooling showed that the focus children had better social skills, but were no better at scholastic attainments than were control children (Schneider & Ramsay, 2006).

The Minister for Children and Families defended the *Sure Start* programme, arguing that positive outcomes should be seen in the long-term, rather than in the first few years of the programme (Hughes, 2005; Readfearn, 2005). The authors and evaluators of *Sure Start* may be looking to the evaluations of the US *Head Start* programme, which also showed few short-term benefits, but nevertheless showed significant gains for the child participants when they were in their teens - in terms of school achievements, adaptive behaviours, and educational and occupational aspirations and achievements - compared with controls. (Oden et al. 2000; Barnett & Hustedt, 2005).

The need for a fully effective programme which could fulfil the idealist goals of *Sure Start* was underlined by the longitudinal research by Joshi (2007). This study used data from the Millennium Cohort of 15,500 British children born in the years 2000 to 2002. Results indicated that children from the most advantaged social groups were on average,

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<sup>61</sup> A somewhat similar finding was made in the later evaluation of *Sure Start* (Sammons et al., 2015). The obvious conclusion was not that intervention had made the functioning of these very disrupted and marginal families worse; rather, the interventions had not been sufficient to make any difference, as the families moved in to a down-hill spiral because of the multiple, interacting pathologies and stressors which beset them. The obvious solution would be a much more intensive, clinically focussed approach, linked to comprehensive social work services. *Sure Start* was not set up to provide this, but the problem has been that *Sure Start* being available to all families within particular areas, regardless of particular needs, was spreading available resources "too thinly".

a year ahead of children from the least advantaged group on the School Readiness Test, which assessed a child's recognition of words, numbers, shapes and colours. This study was unable to show that *Sure Start* programmes had been effective in enhancing 'school readiness' in children from the most disadvantaged families. A further report from the Millennium Cohort in 2008 showed that before they entered schools, children of young, poorly educated mothers were nearly a year behind in their vocabulary scores, a difference that increased for each year that they remained in schools (Joshi, 2008). Boys with conduct behaviour disorders, with depressed and often punitive mothers, were the most disadvantaged in terms of reading readiness, and it was clear that these were mothers and children whom *Sure Start* should focus on in particular.

It may be countered that *Sure Start* focused not on cognitive goals, but on parenting capacity and the development of behavioural and emotional competence in children. Ideally of course, cognitive and emotional goals should be simultaneously addressed in a comprehensive programme for the most disadvantaged families.

One problem which emerged in evaluative studies of *Sure Start* is that of integrating the work of health care, social work, child care and clinical psychology specialists involved (Edgley & Avis, 2006 & 2007). Apparently programming in some areas was working better than in others, and this could have been due to varying degrees of integration of the professionals involved, or of the differing nature of the communities in which intervention was attempted (Barnes et al., 2005; Melhuish et al., 2007). In addition, some severely disadvantaged clients may have felt stigmatized by the proposed interventions, accounting for their low take up of services (Avis et al., 2007). Failure of *Sure Start* programmes to recognize, or intervene with severe maternal depression (especially likely for single, abused or deserted mothers) was another problem which could be associated with reduced impact (Raymond, 2009). Another identified problem was that some *Sure Start* centres were failing to link effectively with black and other ethnic minorities (Craig, 2007).

The planned expansion of *Sure Start* centres after 2004, from some 1,400 to 3,500 over ten years, faced the problem that not enough qualified staff were readily able to staff such expansions; and the current budgetary allocation for *Sure Start* appeared to be inadequate for training such new staff (NAO, 2007b).

A useful policy analysis by Gray & Francis (2007) goes some way to explain both positive and negative aspects of *Sure Start's* initial roll-out phase. They draw specific lessons from a comparison of *Sure Start* with the American *Head Start* programmes. Their analysis implies the following conclusions:

8. Early interventions, as the American experience shows, can significantly improve the life chances of many children throughout their lifespan; but failure to provide adequately expanded funding can impair both the quality and impact of early intervention programmes of this type.

9. There is a temptation for evaluators to focus on narrow, measurable objectives; but this runs the risk of ignoring broader aspects of success, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation techniques may be needed.

10. Programmes must be flexible in meeting local conditions, and the needs of individual families, while remaining faithful to the original programme goals.

11. Be aware that multiple programme objectives may conflict with one another, and political demands to divert early intervention programmes to meet new or multiple goals should be avoided.

12. Evaluation may show that the programme works better with some client groups, and in some areas. The failure to be effective with all client groups should not be seen as a general failure of the programme in its initial years.

13. The English and Welsh *Sure Start* programme was probably rolled out too fast, in order to fulfil political goals. Funding, although initially generous, failed to recognize problems of recruiting and training staff for a programme which was, at that stage, unproven.

14. Now that *Sure Start* was entering its second phase and building on experience, it was crucial that funding matched the needs of what was still a developing programme. Failure to fully fund the programmes because of for example, a recession and cutbacks in public funding, could be disastrous for the long-term success of *Sure Start*.

#### **Sure Start's 'Second Wind'**

Notwithstanding the earlier problems of programme organization and service delivery (Belsky & Melhuish, 2007), *Sure Start* seemed to have 'bedded down' gained a 'second wind', as evidenced by later evaluation studies. Overall evaluation of the *Sure Start* programme when the children were aged five-plus (Sure Start Research Team, 2008) provided rather more optimistic findings than the 2005 evaluations. There were now more than 9,000 families involved in SSLPs (Sure Start Local Programmes) in 150 areas. Comparison between SSLP participants, and matched non-SSLP families and children enabled a wide range of family and area background factors to be controlled. The main findings were:

8. Parents of 3-year-old children in the programmes showed less negative parenting, while providing their children with a better home learning environment.
9. Children in SSLP areas had better social development, with higher levels of positive social behaviour and independence/self-regulation.
10. The SSLP effects for positive social behaviour appeared to be a consequence of enhanced parenting behaviours.
11. SSLP children had higher immunization rates and fewer accidental injuries.
12. SSLP families used more child and family-related services.
13. Positive effects associated with SSLPs applied to all of the participants, rather than to different subgroups identified in 2005.
14. The more consistent benefits associated with SSLPs in 2008 compared with 2005 might well reflect the greater exposure of children and families to the programme, and to the evolution of a more focussed and sophisticated type of programme delivery.

*Sure Start*, like the American *Head Start* programme (Currie & Thomas, 1993; Cameiro & Ginja, 2014) might have global advantages which spread out from earlier gains, reflected in better achievement in later years.. The American programme found that by their mid- to late-teens the children enrolled as infants made better school progress, dropped out of school less, were more likely to go on to college, were less delinquent, and less often became pregnant (Oden et al., 2000). These gains made the early investment in *Head Start* highly cost effective (Bennett & Hustedt, 2005; Cameiro & Ginja, 2014).

Further evidence that *Sure Start* Local Programmes (SSLP) were learning valuable experience with time, came from the evaluation (Melhuish et al., 2008) of a quasi-experimental study which compared 5,883 3-year-olds and their mothers who were enrolled in *Sure Start* nurseries, with a comparison group of 1,879 3-year-olds of similar backgrounds, not enrolled in *Sure Start*. The *Sure Start* children had statistically significant advantages in the following areas, after all relevant background factors (e.g. family size, presence of father, dependence on benefits) were controlled for: better social behaviours; more self-confident independence; less negative parenting; better home learning environment; use of relevant family support populations. These advantages held across different regions, ethnic groups, and social class backgrounds.

However, the SSLP children had no significant advantages in several other desired outcomes: mothers smoked as much as before; children's language skills were similar; mean BMI indicators (predictors of obesity) for child and mother were similar across the two groups; father's involvement was no greater; personal life satisfaction was no greater;

and mothers of both SSLP and controls often rated their housing and urban environment negatively. Children from both groups still had incipient behaviour problems. It remained to be seen whether prolonged exposure to SSLPs, and added programme experience and feedback based on evaluations such as these could yield better results in the longer term.

The medical focus of *Sure Start* had been emphasized in a successful intervention with parents in deprived areas whose children were at risk of developing conduct disorder (Hutchings et al., 2007). In this controlled study 153 parents were offered behavioural support and focussed counselling to help them cope with their child's incipient problem behaviour. Results showed clear and significantly different positive outcomes for children in the focus families, compared with those in the wait-list families, in terms of reduction of problem behaviours.

This important new direction for *Sure Start* was emphasized by further work of the team led by Hutchings et al. (2007), and came from a follow-up of this experimental programme, based in Wales and North West England which identified children at particular risk of developing conduct disorder (and later delinquency) because of their identified symptoms of Attention Deficiency and Conduct Disorder (ADHD) at age three (Jones et al., 2008). This team identified 50 children with serious levels of ADHD and instructed and monitored their parent(s) in giving appropriate feedback to the child in ways which reduced the chronicity of symptoms. The approach is similar to that described by Bagley & Mallick (2000) of providing "goodness of fit" between child behaviour and parental feedback in ways which lead to the "spiralling down" of difficult behaviour to normal levels. Jones et al. (2008) achieved an improvement of 57 percent in the focus group (criterion, falling below the clinical level as indicated by scores on the Connors Rating Scale) compared with 21 percent in the untreated, waiting list controls. These gains were maintained, in comparison with controls, at follow-ups 12 and 18 months later.

Scott (2007) commented that although these interventions were relatively expensive (about £1,800 per family), in the long run these interventions could be very cost effective, given the known costs of children who enter cycles of juvenile delinquency and rebellion in school and community. *Sure Start* could be most effective not principally as a service agency, but also as a screening agency which refers for intensive help families with children most at risk.

#### **The Second Stage of Evaluation: The Oxford team**

Eisenstadt (2011), the civil servant responsible for overseeing the setting up of *Sure Start* in the early years of New Labour, gives an insight into the fierce competition in bids to evaluate the early years of *Sure Start* – the awarding of the research contract was certainly

valuable for the university or research group which took on the task, and many influential publications were likely to follow. Indeed, there was 'dismay' at the contract being awarded to Birkbeck College, University of London, perhaps because these scholars promised a quantitative form of evaluation, rather than a more global, qualitative perspective (although the two perspectives are of course complement rather than compete with one another). Michael Rutter was asked by government to conduct an independent audit of the research emerging from the Birkbeck group, and he observed: "Given the constraints imposed by government, this was a rigorous and careful an evaluation as could be undertaken .... The research team are to be congratulated on their high quality research. As a consequence, there is every reason to trust the research findings." (Rutter, 2007, pp 197-209).

The second major contract for the valuation of Sure Start (now relabelled for political reasons as Children's Centres – Lewis, 2011) was awarded to a group at the University of Oxford. In the event, this group carried out a methodologically careful quantitative approach, reflecting the rigours of research in educational and clinical psychology. The team was joined by Melhuish, who had been a key member of the Birkbeck group. And Eisenstadt, having retired from her civil service post, joined the Oxford group, writing an extremely interesting account of the political sociology of Sure Start in her (2011) book: *Providing a Sure Start: How Government Discovered Early Childhood*.

The major series of reports on the second wave of evaluation were issued in 2015<sup>62</sup> under the authorship of the four key researchers, with acknowledgments to a number of specialist or consultant researchers (Sammons et al., 2015). The new evaluation did not use the term "Sure Start Centres", but instead termed the centres as "ECCE" meaning "Evaluation of Children's Centres in England". The research was divided into five "Strands" for the period of evaluation, 2009 to 2017, and a number of evaluations were to be published in coming years.

The Strands were:

Strand 1: Delivery and use of ECCE in 509 'most disadvantaged' areas, 2011 to 2013.

Strand 2: Interviews with a sample of 2,608 staff in 128 ECCE centres in 2013.

Strand 3: Reports of visits to a sample of 121 of the 128 'focus' ECCE centres (Goff et al., 2013).

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<sup>62</sup> The Reports were released by the Department for Education on "the night before Christmas" in December 2015, allegedly so that they would attract little press attention (*Guardian*, January 14, 2016). In the event, the press did ignore the Reports. But then, who would be interested in research showing that cutbacks to services for young children was causing significant harms?

Strand 4: The impact of ECCE programmes on child and family functioning in 1,305 boys and 1,305 girls attending 117 of the 128 focus centres, studied at three points in time, between 9 months and 38 months of age.<sup>63</sup>

Strand 5: Cost-benefit analyses (Briggs et al, 2012); and a yet unpublished, later report.

The Strands 1 and 2 evaluations focussed on a broad range of non-child outcomes examining the underlying goals of Children's Centres " ... to support all children and families living in particularly disadvantaged areas, by providing a wide range of services tailored to local conditions and needs." (Sammons et al., 2015)

Results from the Strand 1 evaluation reported: " ... high levels of parent satisfaction, and clear evidence of improved 'personal, social and emotional development', with 92 percent of mothers interviewed being 'very happy' with the programmes offered." (Evangelou et al., 2014). The delivery of services on a neighbourhood basis was offered to a broad range of families, including those not currently experiencing material or social stress. The aim was to avoid stigmatising low-functioning families through services which were inclusive of the whole community. (Sylva et al. 2015). Nevertheless, within this broad range of services, those "most in need" were identified, so that for such families a more focussed approach could be offered, in terms of mothers' material and mental health problems, problematic parent-child relationships, and material difficulties (Lord et al, 2011).

The major evaluation, Strand 4, was based on longitudinal data collected at three points in time, using a number of validated measures of children's behaviour and cognition, parent-child interactions, and maternal and family functioning. Among the measures was one intriguingly termed the CHAOS scale which measured family "parental distress and dysfunctional parent-child interaction", based on a validated measure using in American Head Start projects (Matheny et al., 1995), estimating (through mother's self-report) "confusion, hubbub and (dis)order" in family life." Overall, 13 child, mother and family outcomes were measured. The longitudinal design allowed the researchers to identify what services were available and were used, and their possible outcome over a 30-month period.

The broad research question was: "What aspects of children's centres (management, working practices, services offered, services used) promoted better family, parent and child outcomes?" (Sammons et al., 2015)

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<sup>63</sup> Fathers were not interviewed, since they are difficult to interview when they are working full time; or when they are completely absent from the family.

The researchers used advanced statistical modelling (based on multiple regression analyses) which allowed them to partial out the influence of any predictor variable on any outcome variable, all other factors controlled for. The demographic and health factors controlled for included the family's socioeconomic status, ethnicity, family size and birth order, maternal age and education, child's perinatal health status, degree of neighbourhood deprivation, mother's initial mental and physical health status.

Significant predictors of CHAOS (Matheny, 1995) and parental distress scores when the child was aged three were (all other factors controlled for): Mother's poor mental and physical health when first interviewed; family's lack of material resources or chronic unemployment at the outset; larger families; and mother's low educational achievement. This model applied to both genders, but was more marked in the case of boys.

The ECCEs also had an influence on problematic family functioning in the focus child's fourth year of life. The more that the families used the child care centres, the less likely were they to have negative outcomes in terms of CHAOS scores, and problematic parent-child interactions. When a health visitor was based in the ECCE centre, outcomes were also better. The better the worker-child staff ratio in a centre, the better the outcome, but only when the centre was operated on an "Educational Leadership" model, with kindergarten classes run by qualified teachers.

The period over which the research was undertaken was one in which Sure Start funding was offered on a changing legal and fiscal basis, and this resulted in both a contraction of services offered in CC centres, and the closure of a number of centres: Sammons et al. (2015) observed: *"Since 2010 [Sure Start] child care centres have experienced considerable turbulence and volatility as a result of changing organisational models, funding constraints linked to budget cuts, and addressing new children's centres 'core purpose'. Local authorities were given responsibility for making decisions on which services were most required per locality. The ring-fence for Sure Start funding was removed and the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) was introduced in 2011, so it is not possible to put a figure on central government funding for Sure Start from 2011-12 onwards ... and many children's centres reduced their services."* (Sammons et al., 2015, p. 2)

In England as a whole, the research reported, by March, 2015 142 children's centres had closed, leaving 2,816 centres remaining in the country. Between 2010 and 2013 government funding for the Sure Start initiative had fallen by 28 percent; it was not possible to calculate the extent of further funding cuts in England, because the changes in the 'block grants' to local authorities did not allow this fiscal breakdown, although spending



in the health service budget on child and adolescent mental health also reduced by around five percent over a 4-year period.

The evaluation research by the Oxford University team found that when CC services were reduced during the 3-year evaluation, outcomes in terms of parental distress, and poor parental functioning were significantly reduced compared with centres which maintained the full range of staffing and services. The best outcomes for parents and children were delivered by centres which offered not only a stable and fully staffed service, but which also linked to health care supports, and were led by educationally-trained professional.

Not surprisingly, parental distress and high-CHAOS families tended to have children with poorer cognitive and emotional outcomes – effects which were stronger for boys than for girls. However, cognitive gains or deficits resulting from family and children’s centre variables were marginal. The strongest effects were those concerning externalising (e.g. conduct) behavioural disorders, and internalising (e.g. anxiety) problems. The “neediest families” in contact with Centres clearly got the most help. For most (but not all) families this paid dividends in terms of positive outcomes, particularly for boys at the threshold of serious conduct disorders.

Health visitors were particularly effective in helping mothers who had problems with alcohol or drug abuse. Being in financial distress was systemic in causing various family dysfunctions, and when intervention was able to stabilise a family’s finances, maternal mental health and mother-child relationships also improved, as did child behavioural outcomes. The greater the level of family disadvantage, the more likely was the family to use the services offered by the child care centres. It is implied that if the Centres were more generously funded, and could offer a wider range of specialist services, then outcomes would have been more favourable. Centres which employed a multiagency model, linking with health, social service and educational services had the best outcomes.

There was one negative finding however. Mothers whose social and mental health and material conditions, and lack of partner support were profoundly negative at their first contact with the Centre, actually deteriorated over time (to the disadvantage of their children) despite their high level of dependency on anything the Centre had to offer. This did not mean that the Centres were making things worse for some families. Rather, it implied that a small fraction (perhaps five percent) of mothers needed more intensive and more highly skilled help than could be offered by even the best-staffed Centre: “... Children’s Centres typically did not have highly qualified specialist staff to support complex mental health or social problems” (Sammons, 2015, p. 23). Furthermore: “Cuts to mental

health services further hit child care centres' ability to treat and refer those with complex social or mental health problems." The five percent of mothers whom Sure Start did not help had very poor physical and mental health at the outset, had rarely succeeded in school, were not usually supported by a stable partner, and endured chronic material poverty. Their mental health and their parent-child relationships steadily deteriorated over a two-year period, this decline being particularly marked when the children's centre services were reduced or withdrawn.

The research found that 14 of the 117 centres studied had experienced cuts in their budget, or loss of staff. However, because of local authority support 32 of the centres were actually expanding services, and child and parent outcomes were most favourable in these expanding centres, and least favourable in the contracting or underfunded centres. Moreover, the negative effects of reduction or withdrawal of services for highly-stressed families was significantly greater than the overall positive effects of continued services. It appeared that programme reduction or withdrawal acted as an additional stressor in the lives of already highly-stressed families (Hall et al., 2016). This has been emphasized in a qualitative study of Sure Start child care centres in Liverpool (Campbell et al., 2016) which showed that as child poverty was increasing in areas of deprivation, available services including Sure Start centres, were experiencing (as were other social and health services for children and families) a reduction funding.

The main evaluation study (Sammons et al., 2015) acknowledged that although moderately disadvantaged families who made maximal use of the facilities offered, did seem to be "on track" for improved life chances, in general the Sure Start programme had not altered the overall impacts of inequality on child and family health in England. Very disrupted and disturbed families were not helped by the children's centres, and in an era of reductions in social work and mental health programming, a likely outcome was that many of these children would eventually be removed into care, since resources which could support these families were not available. Families who had additional resources of "social capital" seemed to have gained most from Sure Start (Bagley, 2011).

Twenty percent of families served by Sure Start were enduring chronic poverty, and the greater the amount of poverty, the greater the amount of family chaos and disruption, the extent of problematic parent-child interaction, and poor behavioural outcomes for children. Sammons et al. (2015) concede too that in their longitudinal study, greatest sample loss was in the very poor families who because of housing problems, had moved to other urban areas. However, despite the partial effect of the child care centres, their success in arresting the emergence of conduct disorders in some young children certainly

made the Sure Start financial investment potentially cost effective (Scott, 2007; Briggs et al., 2012).

Sure Start child care centres were established in areas serving 'mixed' communities, both in terms of economic and ethnic status. The Oxford team's evaluation sample reported that 71.1 percent of families served were traditional "white British", and these included most of the "very deprived" families. Some 12 percent of the children served came from black or "mixed-race" backgrounds. Mothers and children from these backgrounds were not identified as having particularly poor or good outcomes in terms of social adjustment, cognition and behaviour. This underlines the fact that the neighbourhood-delivery model of Sure Start would inevitably offer services to some families who were climbing out of poverty, or indeed did not require child care other than for enabling mothers to pursue career options. Although Sammons et al. (2015) did not specify ethnic profiles of the economically poor and disrupted low-functioning families, we infer that these are largely inter-generationally disadvantaged families of "poor whites", in whom problems of children will influence the development of those children when they are adolescents and young adults, and have children of their own.

Sammons et al. (2015) compare their evaluations with those of the earlier Sure Start (NESS) evaluations, and concluded: "The ECCE results support and extend those of the earlier NESS study. They demonstrate that children's centres do have the potential to promote better outcomes for families and to a lesser extent, for children who are engaged in specific programmes (such as high quality childcare). At present the focus is on family and parenting services, and perhaps unsurprisingly, such outcomes show more evidence of impact in this evaluation." But funding and service changes since 2010 were clearly making evaluation using straightforward statistical models extremely difficult. It could be however that in the very long-term, follow up of Sure Start and Children's Centre "graduates" will as young adults, show the positive gains in educational achievement, employment, and stable family formation demonstrated in the American Head Start research (Cameiro & Ginja, 2014).

### **Conclusions**

Offering a comprehensive programme of child and family support (including income and housing support) in neighbourhood family centres, with links to local schools, and offering individualised support for each child is an ideal and the Oxford team point, enviously, to the 'universal care' model in Finland and Norway (Kekkonen, 2013). Such programmes are generously funded, and comprehensive in nature and are linked to Finland's overall

programmes of income equality, and the high scholastic achievement levels of children and adolescents later on.

The English Sure Start, in comparison with this Finnish model, is poorly funded and subject to the political forces which prevail in a country in which neo-liberal economic and policy models dominate social care options. The emerging conservative-liberal alliance, and the subsequent conservative governments rebranded Sure Start as Child Care Centre programmes, and withdrew the evaluation contract from the University of London

Sure Start child care centres began, idealistically, as neighbourhood programmes but also offered services to families and children who did not actually need those services. The evaluation programme focussed on families using the services, rather than on families who were in greatest need, but who may have not accessed the services offered. The kind of ecologically-based research identifying sub-areas, and particular families in whom problems are intergenerational in nature, which we advocate (e.g. Williams & Pritchard, 2006) could have resulted in comprehensive services being focussed on those most in need.

Not surprisingly, Sure Start Children's Centres have made no contribution to patterns of social mobility in England, or in Britain (Eisenstadt, 2011, p. 160). Constructed within the context of neoliberal economic policies, it did not have any such intention (Johnston, 2007). Its implicit purpose was to quieten the precariat, the most deprived of the social class groupings, suppressing their incipient antisocial behaviours, and giving them through integrated programming, useful comparison groups whose behaviour (and social and cultural capital resources) they might envy and emulate (Standing, 2014).

The early phase of Sure Start/Children's Centres programme was, paradoxically too ambitious and idealistic, and spread its limited funding over too large a client group. An alternative model, developed by Bagley & Pritchard (1998a) would be to use the primary school and the neighbourhood it serves as the centre of social work intervention, identifying pupils with problems of learning and behaviour in school, and then engaging with their families. This model has been shown to be highly cost effective (Bagley & Pritchard, 1998b; Williams & Pritchard, (2006).

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