UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

TOWARDS A BETTER DEAL FOR LONE PARENTS

A Feminist Analysis of Social Policy

(Volume 1 of 2)

Jo Wright
Thesis for the degree of PhD
Faculty of Law
February 2003

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF LAW

LAW

Doctor of Philosophy

TOWARDS A BETTER DEAL FOR LONE PARENTS:
A Feminist Analysis of Social Policy

Jo Wright

Since the election of a New Labour Government in 1997, tackling poverty and social exclusion has been high on the political agenda and that has necessarily meant targeting the high risk group of lone parent families. Essentially, the Government has focused on paid work as 'the best route out of poverty'; pledging to provide 'work for those who can and security for those who can't'; 'to make work pay' and to make it easier for families to achieve a 'work-life balance'. Its strategy includes the New Deal for Lone Parents which is a voluntary programme aimed at helping lone parents move into paid work or to increase their weekly working hours to 16 or more.

First, this thesis locates the strategy of the Blair Government within its historical context. Secondly, using data collected from a small scale study of lone parents and findings from larger national studies, it explores the scope and limitations of present policy. Focusing on paid work distorts the meaning of social exclusion and diminishes the policy debate; it ignores inequalities in pay, in the workplace and in the allocation of caring responsibilities and it undermines the value of unpaid work. Delivering social inclusion demands a more holistic approach which encourages participation, accepts diversity and secures an adequate family income, thereby ensuring the full status of citizenship for all. In some cases, paid work may be key to achieving that status but to extol it either as the best or only route out of poverty serves only to exclude yet further those who, for whatever reasons, do not feel that paid work would be right for them or their families in their present circumstances.

Most parents, carers and volunteers readily fulfil their responsibilities as citizens. Accordingly, neither their marital nor their working status should prevent their families from enjoying the same rights as their fellow citizens; rights which enable them to participate fully in everyday activities of their own choice within their own communities. The data presented here show the value of self-help support and suggest that widening the policy agenda to include greater funding for such initiatives could help to reverse the trend of current policy which tends to preserve full citizenship rights for paid workers and their families.

Contents

		Page
Abstract		2
Illustrations		6
Acknowledgements		7
Introduction	**An Academic Journey**	8
Chapter 1	**Method, Methodology and Epistemology: A Feminist Perspective**	
	Introduction	10
	Including the Excluded	11
	Methodologies: The Warring Paradigms	13
	Feminist Epistemologies and the Theory of Discourse	15
	The Theory and Practice of Feminist Ethnography	21
Chapter 2	**Citizenship, Poverty and Social Exclusion: Competing Discourses and Policy Responses**	
	Introduction	31
	Citizenship: From Want to Rights and Responsibilities	33
	Poverty: From Absolute to Relative Poverty and Social Exclusion	39
	Policy: From RED to MUD and SID	43
	RED: No Money	44
	MUD: No Morals	54
	SID: No Work	60

		Page
Chapter 3	**Family Practices:**	
	Discourses of Lone Parenthood and Policy Responses	
	Introduction	68
	Family Practices	69
	Women's Hidden Poverty	76
	Lone Parents as a Social Problem	84
	Lone Parents as a Social Threat	91
	Lone Parents as Paid Workers	99
Chapter 4	**New Labour's New Discourse:**	
	Lone Parents' Perspectives	
	Introduction	111
	Private Discourses of Lone Parenthood	114
	Attitudes to and Experiences of Lone Parenthood	119
	Attitudes to and Experiences of Poverty	129
	Attitudes to and Experiences of Paid Work	134
	Attitudes to and Experiences of Childcare	140
Chapter 5	**NDLP and Self-Help for Lone Parents:**	
	A Way Forward	
	Introduction	150
	NDLP, the Impact of ONE and Jobcentre Plus	151
	Attitudes to and Experiences of NDLP	157
	Attitudes to and Experiences of Self-Help Support	168
Conclusion	**A Better Deal for Lone Parents**	182

		Page
Appendix A	Prompt Cards	198
Appendix B	Data Codes	206
Appendix C	NDLP Time Line	209
Appendix D	Evaluations of NDLP	213
Appendix E	Evaluations of NDLP Innovative Schemes	216
Appendix F	Evaluations of ONE	217
Appendix G	Research Relevant to NDLP and Commissioned by DWP	220
Abbreviations		227
Bibliography		228

Illustrations

			Page
Figure 1.	The Warring Paradigms		13
Figure 2.	Discourses on Lone and Cohabiting Mothers		83
Figure 3.	NDLP Time Line	(Appendix C)	209

Acknowledgements

In the introduction which follows, my thesis is described as an academic journey and, as anybody who has ever embarked upon such a journey surely knows, it is one which can not be made alone. In my case, there are three distinct groups of people without whom I would never have reached journey's end.

The first of these are the lone parents who welcomed me into their support group and, in the case of the 20 I interviewed, into their homes. They gave freely of their time; openly discussed their experiences and shared their personal views and aspirations. I hope they feel that my thesis does them justice. I am also grateful for the help and support of the project workers at the support group and for the friendly co-operation of the New Deal for Lone Parent Advisers I met during the course of my journey.

Secondly, I am grateful for the academic support I received along the way, most notably from my supervisor, Professor Nick Wikeley, without whom I would never have ventured beyond first base. His constant encouragement, his enlightened and constructive criticism and his eternal patience have provided an enduring source of inspiration, particularly at times when the road ahead seemed almost impassable. The award of a studentship from the Law Faculty at the University of Southampton helped to fund my journey, whilst the dedication of its staff helped me to see it through. I also received considerable help from staff in the Faculty of Social Sciences and in the Hartley Library at the University of Southampton and, more recently, from library staff at the University of East Anglia.

Finally, and more personally, I am indebted to loyal friends and family members who helped to carry my baggage throughout! I could not have managed without domestic and childcare support from Pat and Sue, or without the lasting friendship of my sister, Jackie, and two fellow PhD students, Susan and Emma, whose abundant wit and wisdom are always greatly appreciated. Lastly I would like to thank my children, Nikki and Ken, for providing many welcome, and some not so welcome, distractions and, most of all, my husband, Dave, for being there beside me every step of the way.

Introduction

An Academic Journey

My thesis derives from a long standing interest in social security law and a growing disquiet at its failure to make adequate provision for the needs of lone parent families. Essentially, it is a record of an academic journey predicated on the announcement of a New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) which closely followed the election of a New Labour Government in 1997. The issue of real interest to me is the programme's impact on the everyday lives of lone parent families and I aim to discover whether NDLP, and New Labour's wider anti-poverty strategy, will genuinely tackle poverty among lone parent families. In other words, I seek to ascertain whether the social exclusion which, despite profound economic and social change, became a way of life for many lone parent families in the twentieth century is set to continue in the twenty-first century. The inherent challenge was to devise a research method enabling me to acquire some understanding of what it means to live in a lone parent family, to consider how government can genuinely offer a programme of support and, essentially, to give lone parents an opportunity to express their own views and aspirations. Such were the objectives of a research proposal submitted early in 1998; a proposal formally marking the start of an academic journey really begun some years earlier and likely to continue beyond the thesis now formally marking its end.

Although already apparent that my stance would represent a clear departure from a traditional and doctrinal legal approach, my research proposal noticeably lacked any coherent framework for the empirical work I planned. Hence the first stage of my journey entailed locating my theoretical perspectives and deciding upon an appropriate method for the fieldwork to follow. I had some idea of *what* I *wanted* to know but little or no idea of *how* it was that I *could* know. The naivety of expecting to produce 'good' research by diligently following a clear set of universal guidelines soon became obvious. All research includes choices about how best to collect and present data and how to appraise the work of others; choices which inevitably give rise to questions about the reasons for making them and about their implications. In other words they are both integral and essential to any research and, far from negating their effect, failing to make these choices explicit

risks focusing solely on the outcomes of research and undermining the impact of the process itself. Chapter 1 therefore endeavours to explain my reasons for deciding upon a feminist ethnography and considers the implications of that decision for my research.

Once confident of my choice of method (how could I know?), I was satisfied that the first leg of my journey was over and so began the second leg in earnest. The focus remained theoretical, but now returned to the fundamental purpose of my research (what did I want to know?). Although clear from the outset that my concerns were rooted in the extent of poverty and social exclusion and the ensuing lesser citizenship status within lone parent families, the meanings of the concepts of citizenship, poverty and social exclusion were by no means as clear-cut. Hence Chapter 2 explores those concepts at some length, locating them within their historical context and establishing their link with social policy. In doing so, it considers the causes of poverty and social exclusion and looks at possible solutions, including present policy which heralds paid work as 'the best route out of poverty' irrespective of family circumstances. Chapter 3 moves on to discuss how the widespread change in family practices since the Second World War has greatly extended the numbers of lone parent (predominantly lone mother) families and shows how a failure to adapt both the welfare state and the labour market has culminated in disproportionate levels of poverty and social exclusion within those families.

This brings me to the third and final leg of my journey marking another shift of emphasis, from the theory to the practice of research. Chapters 4 and 5 explain the Government strategy for eliminating child poverty and evaluate that strategy from the perspectives of lone parents, using data collected from my own small scale study and from larger national studies. Chapter 4 illustrates the traumas sometimes associated with lone parenthood; demonstrates that economic considerations do not necessarily prevail when lone parents make decisions about moving into paid work and exposes a clear discrepancy between the private discourses of lone parents and the public discourses of Government. Chapter 5 presents lone parents' views of NDLP, contrasts them with the study participants' views of their self-help support group and reveals the value of the contribution lone parents can make both to the policy debate and to policy delivery. The chapter concludes that greater funding of family focused self-help support, on a national scale, would usefully complement the present work focus of the Government's strategy and enhance its chances

of alleviating poverty and social exclusion in the high risk group of lone parent families. Thus, for the time being at least, my journey draws to an end.

Chapter 1

Method, Methodology and Epistemology
A Feminist Perspective

Introduction

Contingent upon time, funding and institutional restrictions, research design is a matter of personal choice; it is the researcher who decides upon the issues to be addressed and it is the researcher's own theoretical perspectives which determine the method, or combination of methods, most appropriate to resolve those particular issues. Whether explicit or implicit, these choices impact not only on the process of research, but also on its outcome. Hence, though the primary focus of my research is the relationship between poverty, social exclusion, lone parent families and social policy, my thesis would be incomplete without some explanation of the two perspectives which combine to form the theoretical framework on which it rests: namely feminism and discourse theory. Whilst each of these perspectives is of itself sufficiently complex and contentious to make it more than worthy of an entire thesis, the purpose of this chapter is not to engage in a critique of the extensive literature,[1] about which I certainly make no claims of expertise, but rather to locate my own position and to consider its implications both for my choice of method and for my findings.

[1] For an introduction, see in particular Tong, *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1989); McNay, *Foucault and Feminism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) and Usher, "Feminist approaches to research" in Scott and Usher (eds), *Understanding Educational Research* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Including the Excluded

In her introduction to a volume of letters written by mothers living in poverty at the end of the twentieth century,[2] Ann Oakley compares the experiences of contributors to this volume with those of contributors to a similar volume of letters written in the early part of the century. The earlier volume claimed that for the first time the real problems of maternity were being presented as 'seen through the women's own account of their lives'[3] and Oakley regards the later volume as having a similar purpose - 'to enable women's voices to be heard, at a time when social and economic change and policies towards mothers and children are raising newly urgent questions'.[4] For her though, 'the main question, of course is why it is still necessary, over eighty years later, to collect together and publicize women's accounts in this way. Surely the situation of mothers is vastly different now?'[5] The letters which follow her introduction suggest not. Acknowledging that 'there is also much that's different', Oakley notes:

> Some key themes reveal themselves in both sets of letters: the effect on women, children and families of poverty; women's unremitting responsibility for housework and children, for making ends meet, for keeping families together; the problem of men, who are both essential and marginal to the whole enterprise of having and bringing up children; the lack of practical support for mothers' work; the trials and tribulations of medical care; and the impact of motherhood on women's physical and emotional health. These themes ring out across the gulf of the generations; here the voices of women are in unison, accusing the social and political fabric of failing to meet their needs.[6]

So why have the voices of mothers living in poverty persistently gone unheard and why, despite a century of profound social, economic and political change, has the 'social and political fabric' failed to meet their needs? Advocating a more participatory approach, Beresford et al suggest that conventional research methods are partially

---

[2] Gowridge et al (eds), *Mother Courage: Letters from Mothers in Poverty at the End of the Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1997).
[3] *Ibid.* p.xvii.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*

responsible. They argue that people with experience of poverty have largely been excluded from poverty discussion and policy development and on those rare occasions when their views have been included, it has usually been as a means of fleshing out the arguments of academics, the poverty lobby, politicians and the media:

> We believe that people with experience of poverty have a particular contribution to make to poverty discussions and anti-poverty action and that they should have an equal chance to make it. They don't have the only insight into poverty, but they have particular knowledge and understanding of and concern about their oppression, just as women, black people, lesbians and gay men, disabled people and others do of theirs. So far, poor people have had few chances to contribute to discussions about poverty or to come together to develop their own. [7]

Thus we begin to have some insight that alleviating poverty and social exclusion among lone parent families may be at least partially dependent on listening, and responding, to the (thus far neglected) views of lone parents themselves. Of course, the crucial question is how? Essentially, this is a question which directs us to the three closely linked aspects of research, often collectively referred to as 'method', but which Sandra Harding has helpfully distinguished as: *method* (a technique for gathering data); *methodology* (the theoretical framework that derives from a research tradition[8]) and *epistemology* (a theory of knowledge which raises questions about what we can 'know', who can be a 'knower', the nature of 'objectivity' and the relationship between researchers and participants).[9] Resolving it means plummeting into an epistemological debate which has troubled the social sciences for much of the twentieth century and which has been dubbed 'the paradigm wars'.[10]

---

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Beresford et al, *Poverty First Hand: Poor People Speak for Themselves* (London: CPAG, 1999), Chapter 1.

[8] See Usher, "Challenging the power of rationality" in McKenzie et al (eds), *Understanding Social Research: Perspectives on Methodology and Practice* (London: The Falmer Press, 1997), p.42.

[9] Harding, "Is there a feminist method?" Introduction in Harding (ed), *Feminism and Methodology* (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1987), p.2.

[10] See Oakley, *Experiments in Knowing: Gender and Method in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p.23.

Figure 1: *The warring paradigms

	'(logical) positivist', 'scientific', 'quantitative', 'positivism'	*'naturalist', 'interpretivist' 'qualitative'*
Aims	Testing hypotheses/ generalizing	Generating hypotheses/ describing
Purpose	Verification	Discovery
Approach	Top-down	Bottom-up
Preferred Technique	Quantitative	Qualitative
Research Strategy	Structured	Unstructured
Stance	Reductionist/inferential/ hypothetico-deductive/ outcome-oriented/ exclusively rational/ oriented to prediction and control	Expansionist/exploratory/ inductive/process-oriented/ rational and intuitive/ oriented to understanding
Method	Counting/obtrusive and controlled measurement (surveys, experiments, case-control studies, statistical records, structured observations, content analysis)	Observing (participant observation, in-depth interviewing, action research, case-studies, life-history methods, focus groups)
Implementation of method	Decided a priori	Decided in field setting
Values	Value-free	Value-bound
Instrument	Physical device/pencil and paper	The researcher
Researcher's stance	Outsider	Insider
Relationship of researcher and 'subject'	Distant/independent	Close/interactive and inseparable
Setting	'Laboratory'	'Nature'
Data	Hard, reliable, replicable	Rich, deep, valid
Data type	Reports of attitudes and actions	Feeling, behaviour, thoughts, actions as experienced or witnessed
Data analysis	Specified in advance	Worked out during the study
Analytic units	Predefined variables	Patterns and natural events
Quality criterion	Rigour/proof/evidence statistical significance	Relevance/plausibility/ illustrativeness/ responsiveness to subjects' experiences
Source of theory	A priori	Grounded
Relationship between theory and research	Confirmation	Emergent
Causal links	Real causes exist	Causes and effects cannot be distinguished
Nature of truth statements	Time- and context- free generalizations are possible	Only time-and context-bound working hypotheses are possible
Image of reality	Singular/tangible/ fragmentable/static/ external	Multiple/holistic/dynamic/ socially constructed
Research product	Stresses validity of research findings for scholarly community	Stresses meaningfulness of research findings to both scholarly and user communities

Sources: Bryman 1988:84; Guba and Lincoln 1981:57, 65; Lincoln and Guba 1985:37; Reichardt and Cook 1979:10; Reinharz 1984:11-15; W.A. Silverman 1985:138; Tones 1996:6

***Reproduced from *Experiments in Knowing: Gender and Method in the Social Sciences* by Ann Oakley (Cambridge: Polity Press 2000), p26.**

Methodologies: The Warring Paradigms

Ann Oakley has provided a helpful summary of the debate, including a table which brings together a number of attempts to describe the characteristics of two 'methodological paradigms'[11] (reproduced on page 13 above). On one side of the debate are the 'positivists', who regard the 'objectivity' of the natural sciences as equally applicable to the social sciences. Typified by Durkheim's view that social facts should be treated as things,[12] they believe in a 'real world' and advocate 'quantitative' or 'scientific' methods which, if properly applied, will establish the 'truth'. On the other side of the debate, and emanating from the work of Max Weber, is the 'interpretivist' position which acknowledges similarities between the sciences, but argues that the goal of the social sciences (understanding) is different to that of the natural sciences (explanation).[13] Interpretivists challenge ideas of social facts or a single 'reality' which can be known, and tend to employ 'qualitative' methods which seek 'insight rather than statistical analysis'.[14]

Despite the continuing efforts of interpretivists to acquire equal status for their methods, the warring paradigms remain unequal.[15] The enormous significance of the sciences in facilitating our understanding of the natural order has no doubt contributed to the greater weight often attached to 'quantitative' or 'scientific' methods[16] and it is these methods which continue to represent the 'gold standard' by which other approaches are judged.[17] Nevertheless, Oakley observes that 'quantitative' research often measures quality, and numbers are a frequent occurrence in 'qualitative' research.[18] Hence, while some researchers continue to see the two positions as clearly distinct and thus regard themselves as belonging to one or other tradition, others see the distinction as less clear-cut and successfully combine both methods.[19] My own view, informed by feminist and discourse theories discussed further below, is that neither quantitative nor qualitative

[11] *Ibid.* p.24.
[12] See Cotterrell, *The Sociology of Law: An Introduction* (second edition) (London: Butterworths, 1992), p.11.
[13] Hekman, *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a Postmodern Feminism* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), p.2.
[14] Bell, *Doing Your Research Project* (second edition) (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), p.6.
[15] Oakley (2000) see note 10, p.29.
[16] Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research* (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1988), p.13.
[17] Usher (1997) see note 8, p.46.
[18] Oakley (2000) see note 10, p.303.
[19] Brannen, *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research* (Aldershot: Avebury Press, 1992), p.1.

methods will reveal an absolute 'truth', but both can make a valuable contribution to knowledge. The search for a supreme method is thereby reduced to little more than fodder for a sterile academic debate.

Feminist Epistemologies and the Theory of Discourse

Although feminist thinkers are united in their goal, feminism is certainly not a single unitary movement. Its primary aim is political: to change those power relations between women and men which currently structure all areas of life including the family, education and welfare, the worlds of work and politics and of culture and leisure.[20] The personal, political and cultural backgrounds of feminists vary considerably; methodological and epistemological issues are continually contested and there is no consensus as to what constitutes an appropriate research method.[21] Nevertheless, Sandra Harding has identified three co-existing, feminist epistemologies,[22] although as Stanley and Wise,[23] and to a lesser extent Harding herself, have acknowledged,[24] attempting to define different feminist epistemologies is helpful only if it is accepted that these are intended as *models* representing just some of the possibilities which exist. They are not distinct categories and the work of most feminists will include elements of all of them.

The two dominant feminist epistemologies bring a gender sensitivity to the positivist and interpretive positions outlined above. The first, 'feminist empiricism', has been criticised as an 'add women and stir' approach[25] because it does not question the prejudiced assumptions underpinning conventional scientific inquiry. Feminist empiricists accept the positivist view that there is a 'truth', a social reality which exists 'out there' and which can be objectively observed and described.[26] They believe that 'sexist and androcentric

---

[20] Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (Oxford Cambridge Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), p.1.
[21] Maynard, "Methods, practice and epistemology" in Maynard and Purvis, *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1994), p.10.
[22] Harding (1987) see note 9, p.1. Harding, *Whose Science, Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991), p.111 & p.119.
[23] Stanley and Wise, *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology* (second edition) (London: Routledge, 1993), p.190.
[24] Harding (1991) see note 22, p.137.
[25] Usher (1996) see note 1, p.129.
[26] Stanley and Wise (1993) see note 23, p.189.

biases can be eliminated by stricter adherence to existing methodological norms of scientific inquiry; only 'bad science' or 'bad sociology' is responsible for their retention in the results of research.'[27]

The second of the dominant feminist epistemologies, the 'feminist standpoint' epistemology, rejects conventional notions of value-neutral objectivity and focuses on the importance of women's experiences of oppression. The lives of men and women differ significantly, and studying women's lives from the perspective of their own experiences produces 'empirically more accurate descriptions and theoretically richer explanations than does conventional research'.[28] Standpoint theorists reject what Harding calls the 'weak objectivity' of positivism, in favour of a 'strong objectivity' which acknowledges 'that all human beliefs - including our best scientific beliefs - are socially situated' but which also 'requires a critical evaluation to determine which social situations tend to generate the most objective knowledge claims.'[29] Although they would not claim the results of their research to be 'true', they believe that 'starting research in women's lives leads to socially constructed claims that are less false - less partial and distorted - than are the (also socially constructed) claims that result if one starts from the lives of men in the dominant groups.'[30]

It is the third of the feminist epistemologies, postmodern feminism, which holds the most allure for me. Postmodern thinkers argue that all knowledge is historical and contextual, rejecting the idea of an absolute truth in favour of a plurality of meanings, or a number of truths. Of particular relevance is the work of Michel Foucault and his theory of discourse.[31] Simply stated, a discourse is a set of principles which determine how knowledge about society is organised, how the nature of its structures is known and its institutions constructed. Foucault has shown how all knowledge is constructed through the rules of particular discourses and how (through language) discourses create subjects and objects, and so create and maintain power.[32]

[27] Harding (1991) see note 22, p.111.
[28] *Ibid.* p.119.
[29] *Ibid.* p.142.
[30] *Ibid.* p.185.
[31] See Hekman (1990) see note 13, p.17. For a helpful interpretation of Foucault's work, see McNay (1992) see note 1 p.175.
[32] Hekman (1990) see note 13, p.18-22 & p.175.

The relationship between postmodernism and feminism is at best problematic: many thinkers reject a 'feminist' or 'postmodern' label[33] and the diversity of feminist thought is easily matched by that of postmodern thought. Hence it is not easy to locate thinkers within either movement and, since attitudes between the two movements range from, in some cases, supportive, to more often sceptical, and sometimes openly hostile, it is hardly surprising that there is a reluctance to accept the existence of a relationship between the two, much less accept the ensuing label of 'postmodern feminist'. However, Susan Hekman has drawn attention to many similarities between the movements and has shown how they 'compliment each other in important ways'[34] arguing that the 'profound impact' which both movements have had, and continue to have, on the course of intellectual inquiry renders a relationship between them 'almost compelling'.[35]

Recognising the potential contribution of both movements to social policy, Hillyard and Watson go one step further:

> Perhaps one of the most important arenas of postmodern influence has been within feminism which, in turn, has implications for rethinking social policy. Indeed looking back at the eighties it is hard sometimes to distinguish what informed what. That is - did ideas within feminist theory generate many of the ideas now associated with postmodernism, such as notions of difference, fragmentation, subjectivity, the construction of meaning or did these ideas challenge feminist orthodoxies which then shifted the ground and focus? To a certain extent both these things are true. Arguably feminism has even created postmodernism - or in Foucault's terms, feminism has created the conditions of possibility for postmodernism to emerge as the force it has.[36]

Feminists have added another dimension to postmodernism by focusing on the significance of gender and by showing how patriarchal discourses construct definitions of

[33] For example, Foucault explicitly denies that his work is postmodern even though many other thinkers consider his position to be the 'very essence of postmodernism'. See Hekman (1990) see note 13 p.17.
[34] Hekman (1990) *Ibid* p.7-8.
[35] *Ibid* p.9.

masculine and feminine behaviour and thus operate to maintain the established power imbalance between women and men.[37] In other words women's nature is a construct of discourse: women are made, not born.[38]

Hekman shows how Western thought is underpinned by a number of dualisms which, because one element of the dualism is always privileged over the other, gives rise to a hierarchical view of knowledge. For positivists, the 'masculine' element of the dualism is privileged over the 'feminine' element (rational over irrational; subject over object; culture over nature). Those working within the interpretive paradigm, however, have attempted to reverse the dualisms (and therefore to privilege irrationality over rationality; object over subject and nature over culture). Postmodern thinkers step beyond the boundaries of both positions by insisting that dualisms should not merely be accepted or reversed but rather that they should be dissolved. Consequently the two elements of the dualisms (traditionally considered to be in opposition) are now regarded as continuities and any attempt to privilege one element over the other is rejected.[39] Thus it challenges not only positivist and interpretivist paradigms but also their corresponding feminist positions (feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint theory) because it reveals the futility of any attempt to define an essentially female nature or to replace a masculinist epistemology with a feminist epistemology.[40]

One criticism frequently directed at postmodernism is the charge of relativism or nihillism. For positivists there is a clear distinction between these two concepts: whilst the relativist accepts some standards of truth and falsity, albeit not absolute ones, the nihilist rejects any standards at all.[41] Both are unacceptable to positivists because in their view to reject any attempt to find an absolute grounding for knowledge is to give up on notions of truth and falsity and thus to undermine the possibility of knowledge.[42] For postmodernists, however, knowledge has no need for absolute foundations and

---

[36] Hillyard and Watson, "Postmodern social policy: a contradiction in terms?" *Journal of Social Policy* (1996) vol.25 no.3, p.331.
[37] Rowland and Klein, "Radical feminism: critique and construct" in Gunew (ed) *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.278.
[38] Hekman (1990) see note 13, p.189.
[39] Usher (1997) see note 8, p.50.
[40] Hekman (1990) see note 13, p.42.
[41] *Ibid* p.152.
[42] Weedon (1997) see note 20, p.177.

consequently both the charge of relativism and nihilism is irrelevant.[43] By rejecting the dualism of absolute or relative knowledge, postmodernism renders both categories obsolete.[44] In other words, all knowledge claims are perspectives:

> Each methodology is the product of a specific combination of historical, socio-political influences - whether it is positivism or postmodernism - all of them are making claims about the truth but none should be regarded as telling *the* truth ... This does not mean that each perspective is equally valid but each of them has a point of view and should be interrogated from a stance that accepts that no perspective is producing disinterested knowledge and each of them represents particular positions within power relations.[45]

Some feminists also criticise postmodernism as a predominantly theoretical (rather than a political) movement: a product of male theorists which rejects any notion of a privileged standpoint, either masculine or feminine.[46] Their argument, in the words of Audre Lorde, is that 'the master's tools can never dismantle the master's house'.[47] However, drawing on Foucault's theory of discourse, Hekman convincingly argues that it is through discourse that the feminine has been constituted as inferior; that discourses are not closed systems - the silences and ambiguities within them provide the possibility of refashioning them, of discovering other conceptualizations and of revising accepted truths; and that these refashionings provide the possibility of forming new discourses which constitute the feminine, the masculine and sexuality in a different way:[48]

> In the postmodern era feminists cannot oppose the discourses of male domination by appealing to a metanarrative of universal justice. They can be opposed, however, by formulating a feminist discourse that displaces and explodes the repressive discourses of patriarchal society. Foucault's position and that of postmodernism more generally, supplies a means of formulating such a discourse and articulating a feminist political practice. It provides a strategy that

[43] Hekman (1990) see note 13, p.153.
[44] *Ibid* p.153.
[45] Usher (1997) see note 8, p.51-52.
[46] Hekman (1990) see note 13, p.154.
[47] Audre Lorde quoted by Hekman (1990) see note 13, p.154.

> deconstructs masculinist discourse/power without attempting to resurrect the Enlightenment project of metanarratives and liberation. It is a strategy that feminists can and should employ in both theory and practice.[49]

Such a strategy has important implications for the research process and the dualism which has traditionally existed between quantitative and qualitative methods. Building on the work of social psychologist Carol Gilligan,[50] feminists have demonstrated how traditionally, the whole approach to the study of the social world, including the (predominantly quantitative) methods employed, has reflected a bias which privileged what might be regarded as stereotypically 'masculine' traits (for example, reason over emotion, objectivity over subjectivity, neutrality over partiality).[51] Appropriate subjects for study were thought to be public rather than private and thus the personal sphere of women's everyday lives was excluded.[52] Moreover, since it was, and largely remains, the task of researchers to define, interpret and present research,[53] they are bestowed with the power not only 'to create the world from their own point of view' but to present that world as the 'truth' to be described.[54] In other words, before feminists intervened, research findings reflected a world created and described almost exclusively by white, middle-class, able-bodied and heterosexual men.[55]

United in their rejection of the purported neutrality of conventional research methods, many feminists argued, in the words of Stanley and Wise, that the presence of the researcher's self is central in all research:

---

[48] Hekman *Ibid.* p.163.
[49] *Ibid* p.188.
[50] Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982); Gilligan, "Getting civilized" in Oakley and Mitchell (eds), *Who's Afraid of Feminism?* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1997), p.13 and Glendinning and Millar, "Poverty: the forgotten Englishwoman" in Maclean and Groves (eds), *Women's Issues in Social Policy* (London: Routledge, 1991).
[51] Usher (1996) see note 1, p.126.
[52] Stanley and Wise (1993) see note 23, p.63.
[53] Save for rare examples of participatory and action research. See Wolf, "Situating feminist dilemmas in fieldwork"in Wolf (ed), *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p.26. Beresford et al (1999) see note 7.
[54] Maynard (1994) see note 21, p.18.
[55] *Ibid.*

> One's self can't be left behind, it can only be omitted from discussions and written accounts of the research process. But it *is* an omission, a failure to discuss something which has been present within the research itself. The researcher may be unwilling to admit this, or unable to see its importance, but it nevertheless remains so. If nothing else we would insist on the absolute reality of this: that being alive involves us in having emotions and involvements; and in doing research we cannot leave behind what it is to be a person alive in the world.[56]

Feminist researchers rebuffed the heirarchical and potentially exploitative relationships which conventional methods created between the researcher as Subject (Self) and the participant as Object (Other). They preferred qualitative methods, believing them to be more conducive to the creation of the honest, empathic, and reciprocal relationship which they regarded as essential to acquire a richer understanding of the lives of participants. Hence many feminists sought to privilege qualitative methods as the only methods which could generate useful knowledge.[57] What had been an early preference thus developed into a widespread tendency to equate feminist work with qualitative methods, despite the valuable work of some feminists who continued to use quantitative methods or a combination of both.[58]

The Theory and Practice of Feminist Ethnography

Ethnography (a multi-method approach which usually includes participant observation and face-to-face interviews[59]) appeared to many as ideally suited to the aims of feminist research,[60] although the feminist practice of interviewing women contrasted sharply with the traditional approach. In her classic piece *Interviewing Women: a Contradiction in Terms?* Ann Oakley dismissed a 'proper' interview as a 'masculine fiction':

---

[56] Stanley and Wise (1993) see note 23, p.161.
[57] Maynard (1994) see note 21, p.12.
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] See Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) p.46.
[60] Stacey, "Can there be a feminist ethnography?" in Gluck and Patai (eds), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (London: Routledge, 1991),p.112. Oakley (2000) see note 10, p.66.

> the mythology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production [should] be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias - it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives.[61]

Subsequent experiences of fieldwork, however, have raised serious concerns about feminist methods; in particular about the inherent power imbalance between researcher and participants and its potential for both an exploitative practice and an ambiguous product. A well-known paper by Judith Stacey entitled *Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?*[62] expressed her surprise to find that the ethnographic method is potentially more exploitative than conventional methods, and the greater the intimacy or the 'apparent mutuality of the researcher/researched relationship' the greater the risk of manipulation and betrayal by the ethnographer. Oakley herself has acknowledged that the 'laudable goal of feminist research, to do away with the 'objectification' of research participants, may itself be a contradiction in terms' and that 'in-depth interviewing and ethnographic observations may only bring us nearer to the truths that flourish inside researchers' heads'.[63]

In other words, however desirable it may be, a collaborative, egalitarian research process which generates an authentic account of women's (or men's) experiences may be simply unattainable. Distinctions giving rise to power imbalances between researcher and researched (such as those of race, class, life chances, educational and cultural backgrounds) can never be completely eliminated and, save perhaps for some very rare examples of fully participatory or action research,[64] control over the agenda, process and presentation of research remains almost exclusively with the researcher.[65] Moreover, participants' accounts of their experiences are subject to multiple interpretations and multiple meanings not just in terms of the discourses which locate and position the

[61] Oakley, "Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms?" in Roberts (ed) *Doing Feminist Research* (London: Routledge, 1981), p.58.
[62] Stacey (1991) see note 60, p.114.
[63] Oakley (2000) see note 10, p.72.
[64] See note 53.
[65] Wolf (1996) see note 53, p.3. Oakley (2000) see note 10 p.72.

researcher as author of the text, but also those which participants use to interpret their own experiences and therefore to locate and position themselves.[66]

> The fact is that our subjects are often not just responding to our agendas and to our questions, but they are also always engaged in actively shaping their presentations to suit their own agendas of how they wish to be represented.[67]

Katherine Borland has provided an example of how a researcher's interpretation of her data can lead (albeit unwittingly) to misrepresentation and misunderstandings between researchers and participants (in this case, her grandmother Beatrice).[68] Borland acknowledges that her framing of Beatrice's oral narrative was informed by contemporary feminist conceptions of patriarchal structures which her grandmother did not share.[69] Consequently, Beatrice strongly disagreed with Borland's initial conclusions, prompting Borland to suggest that:

> we might open up the exchange of ideas so that we do not simply gather data on others to fit into our own paradigms once we are safely ensconced in our university libraries ready to do interpretation. By extending the conversation we initiate while collecting oral narratives to the later stage of interpretation, we might more sensitively negotiate issues of interpretive authority in our research.[70]

In other words feminist research calls for a continually reflexive approach: an approach which, at each stage of the research, considers the impact of the researcher's own 'intellectual autobiography', by which I mean the process or discourse through which researchers reach their 'understandings' and 'conclusions'.[71] However, Judith Stacey

---

[66] Stacey (1991) see note 60; Fine, "Dis-stance and other stances: negotiations of power inside feminist research" in Gitlin (ed), *Power and Method: Political Activism and Educational Research* (London:Routledge, 1994); Wolf (1996) see note 53; Lal (1996) "Situating locations" in Wolf see note 4 and Ribbens, "Interviewing - an 'unnatural situation'?", *Women's Studies Int. Forum* (1989) vol. 12 no.6, pp. 579-592.

[67] Lal (1996), see note 66 p.205.

[68] Borland, " 'That's not what I said': interpretive conflict in oral narrative research" in Gluck and Patai (eds) (1991) see note 60.

[69] *Ibid.* p.69.

[70] *Ibid.* p.73.

[71] Maynard (1994) see note 21, p.16.

provides a good example of how conflicts of interest can not always be satisfactorily resolved:

> It is possible (and most feminists might claim it is crucial) to discuss and negotiate one's final presentation of narrative with informants, but this does not eliminate the problem of authority, and it can raise a host of new contradictions for the feminist ethnographer. For example, after several years involving scores of hours of mutual reflections on the meaning of [a] lesbian relationship ... this 'research collaborator' asked me to leave this part of her history out of my ethnographic account. What feminist principles could I invoke to guide me here? Principles of respect for research subjects and for a collaborative, egalitarian research relationship demand compliance, but this forced me to collude with the homophobic silencing of lesbian experience, as well as consciously to distort what I considered to be a crucial component of the ethnographic 'truth' in my study. Whatever we decided, my ethnography was forced to betray a feminist principle.[72]

What these two examples reveal is that the product of ethnographic research can never be more than an account of the partial perspectives of both researcher and participants. As such it seems an unsatisfactory, and therefore unlikely, choice of method for a feminist researcher hoping to inform the policy debate by representing the views of lone parents. Why, then, did I choose this particular method for my own research?

Perhaps the first thing to note is that choosing a research method is not as straightforward as it first appears. For novice researchers (myself included) the choice may be made with little or no practical experience and no clear understanding of the theoretical perspectives that will subsequently frame our research. Inevitably there will be mistakes and omissions which may only become apparent as we gain experience and develop our theory. However, providing we remain alert to this eventuality, and are prepared to be explicit and reflexive about its occurrence, it may serve to inform rather than undermine our work. The process and product of research are inseparable: practice (good and bad) informs theory just as surely as theory informs practice. In other words research is useful

[72] Stacey (1991) see note 60, p.114.

not only in terms of the contribution it makes to knowledge, but also for what it reveals about how to conduct meaningful and worthwhile research.

Unwittingly, I embarked on my fieldwork before I had given any serious thought to my methodological and epistemological positions and my choice of method was not therefore the meticulously planned textbook exercise I had anticipated. During the 1980s and early 1990s, I had taken a growing interest in developing media and policy debates concerning lone parenthood and, in particular, the tendency to focus not on the extent of poverty among lone parent familes but rather on the high costs of supporting them from public expenditure and the 'poor outcomes' expected of their children.[73] When, shortly after its election in 1997, the Labour Government launched the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP), it seemed timely for the doctoral research I was planning. I was keen to know whether this programme would genuinely offer support and tackle poverty among lone parent families as the Government was claiming,[74] or whether it would just offer them more of the same.

At this early stage, I was reluctant to acknowledge such a highly political position, much less the extent to which my own experiences might also have provided motivation for my research. Although my personal circumstances are now very different to those of lone mothers living on low incomes, in the mid 1970s I was one of five teenage daughters supported by my lone mother who was in low paid work. Moreover, working for the DSS in the early 1980s had provided me with direct experience of the Income Support claims process and its negative connotations.[75] Though my theoretical perspectives have clearly changed, at that time I would have considered it detrimental to acknowledge a political, or worse still a personal, motivation for my planned project because it seemed to me that denying any claim to impartiality ruled out the possibility of producing 'valid' research.

---

[73] See p.91 below.

[74] See speech by Harriet Harman then Secretary of State for Social Security at launch of NDLP on 21.7.99 (DSS Press Release 97/125).

[75] See DSS Research Report No. 63 (1997): Elam and Ritchie, *Exploring Customer Satisfaction: Customer Satisfaction with Benefits Agency Local Offices* and DSS Research Report No.68 (1997): Ritchie and Chetwynd, *Claimant's Perceptions of the Claim Process.*

Having secured a university place to start in September 1998, I made contact with a community project for lone parents[76] whose work is carried out principally by lone parent volunteers and focuses on informal self-help support groups. I worked as a volunteer for a few months in the spring of 1998, during which time, I attended several group meetings and offered individual support and advice to some lone parents, particularly with regard to housing and welfare benefit issues. The extent of my personal involvement and the level of support I offered varied. In some cases, we shared no more than a brief casual meeting at the office, at group meetings or informal gatherings, whilst in others, I visited lone parents at home and shared intimate details of their personal lives. I may have done no more than suggest a course of action, or I may have corresponded with other agencies, occasionally accompanying lone parents to meetings with professionals from those agencies (including, in one case, the NDLP Adviser[77]). At first, I was treated with some suspicion (perhaps because of a perceived connection with the DSS) but gradually I built up a friendly and open relationship with many lone parents and with the three paid project workers.

Throughout this time, I was explicit about my motives for working with the project and did my best to ensure that all concerned (lone parents, project workers and those working for other agencies) were fully aware of the reasons for my involvement. We often discussed a wide range of issues, including the NDLP and I was happy to share my own views. At the time, I saw this experience as no more than a valuable way of offering support to lone parent families; of gaining some understanding of their everyday lives and of getting to know some lone parents who may agree to be interviewed at a later stage of my research. It was only when I had begun my training that I realised how these experiences might also be problematic. How could I now return as a 'neutral' researcher to interview lone parents I had earlier befriended? Might the views offered by some be coloured by those which others (including myself) had expressed in previous discussions? Could I be sure that they would not merely tell me what they thought I wanted to hear?

[76] See p.171 below.
[77] See **P1**, Wright, *Towards a Better Deal for Lone Parents: A Feminist Analysis of Social Policy*, vol.2 (Data Volume), p.7.

There were also wider concerns. Having offered many lone parents advice and help to resolve some difficult housing and welfare benefit issues, it would be problematic (both practically and ethically) to subsequently avoid becoming involved on the grounds that my intervention would inevitably impact on the outcome of my research. My early intention had been to interview some lone parents involved with the project and then make contact with a control group consisting of lone parents who did not enjoy the support offered either by this project or by a similar support group. It slowly became clear, however, that time constraints would preclude this as an option and hence my sample would be far from representative. How could such a small-scale study enable me to say anything worthwhile about the views of lone parents?

By the time I began interviewing lone parents in October 1999, most of these concerns had been dispelled and I was comfortable with my method, which I had come to recognise as a feminist ethnography. Time allocated to research training had necessarily meant that I had become less involved with the project and had been unable to offer individual support and advice on the same scale as I had when working as a volunteer, although I continued to suggest a course of action when asked to do so. I therefore accepted that my data would emanate predominantly from the in-depth interviews I was about to conduct, but recognised that the relationships I had previously formed with lone parents, project workers and NDLP Advisers, and the experiences we had already shared, would inevitably inform my work. Neither those relationships and experiences, nor those we continued to share for some time afterwards, could or should be excluded as an alternative (and valuable) source of data: they were just some of a myriad of experiences which would impact on my findings. In other words, I had abandoned any pretence of neutrality and accepted that my thesis would be no more than an account of my own, and the participants', partial perspectives. I had also accepted that lone parent families (like all families) are individual and cannot be represented as a homogeneous group no matter how large or representative the sample. My study may not fairly represent the views of the wider population of lone parents but it does offer an account of the views of those who took part and thereby adds to the wealth of (past and ongoing) research about lone parent families,[78] none of which is truly impartial.

---

[78] For a useful overview see Ford and Millar, (ed), *Private Lives and Public Responses: Lone Parenthood & Future Policy in the UK* (London: Policy Studies Institute,1998).

I have earlier acknowledged that a genuinely collaborative, egalitarian research process may well be an unattainable goal. Nevertheless, I was concerned that my method should be as egalitarian as possible and informality was thus an inherent feature. I conducted a total of 20 interviews between October 1999 and April 2000, three of which were with lone fathers. I met all of the participants through the project and had worked with four of them during my time as a volunteer. Most of those I approached expressed a keen interest in my work and seemed happy to take part, although two (one lone mother and one lone father) declined to do so and one lone mother, who was not at home when I called for our pre-arranged interview, subsequently proved impossible to contact.

All of the interviews took place in participants' homes at pre-arranged times and in the absence of children whenever this could be arranged. In order that participants should have an opportunity to raise issues of concern to them (and not just to comment on those issues which concerned me) the interviews were not structured, but took the form of an informal conversation. I used a number of prompt cards (illustrated at Appendix A[79]) which I consulted only when required to promote fluency or to ensure that I had explored similar issues with each of the participants. All consented to the recording of their interviews and, in most cases, were sent a full transcript, inviting comments and suggestions, although only one chose to do so. I presented my preliminary findings at the project's Annual General Meeting in November 2000 and, at the suggestion of one participant, I shall furnish the project with a copy both of the thesis and its supplementary data volume, which may well be of more relevance to the participants than the thesis itself.

I chose to compile a separate data volume because I found that analysing and presenting the data confronted me with yet another methodological quandary. Each of the 20 interviews was transcribed into a table; the text was very generally coded according to its content (see Appendix B[80]) and those codes were used to sort the data. However, I was greatly troubled by the extent of my own input in this process. Having strived for an egalitarian and participatory method of data collection, it now seemed inappropriate to

[79] P.198 below.
[80] P.206 below.

undermine the contributions and identities of the individuals who took part by presenting a collective account of their views and by using only selective quotes to support my thesis. To have proceeded in that way would have been to maintain the status quo and essentially continue to exclude the views of lone parents or, at best, use them only to flesh out my own arguments. Giving lone parents a voice required a far greater respect for their own words, but to have included a complete transcript of each interview would have rendered the data profuse and inaccessible. Instead, I strove to keep selection and analysis to a minimum by using a series of quotes to present the data (see Chapters 4 and 5 below) and by referring to the accompanying data volume which contains a detailed profile, and hence the individual voice, of each participant.

Of course these small measures can not entirely eliminate either my own partiality or the inherent power imbalance that existed between the participants and myself. Neither can they dispel the inconsistencies in some accounts which suggest that the circumstances of some participants might be rather different to those they chose to describe (examples included childcare arrangements and relationships with (ex)partners). That is not to say, however, that meaningful conclusions may not be drawn from the data or that the study can not make a worthwhile contribution to the policy debate. As Diane Wolf has commented:

> recognising and accepting the imperfections within feminist fieldwork and research constitutes a necessary step if we are to refocus our gaze beyond ourselves.[81]

There is nothing exact about the design, practice or presentation of research; all depend on the choices and theoretical perspectives of particular researchers and, although we should not allow it to impede our work, we should accept that all have inherent difficulties and flaws. That is not to suggest that we should be complacent or that inconsistencies and potential errors should be ignored. On the contrary: they should be fully explored as part of a continuous effort to improve our methods as we build our knowledge. Debates about the supremacy of particular methods have their place but, if

[81] Wolf (1996) see note 53, p.4.

prolonged, they serve only to forward academic careers,[82] risk inaction and undermine the value of research outcomes. A more positive way forward is to choose an appropriate method, remain alert to its shortcomings and move on to deal with the issues raised by the research project in question.

[82] Oakley (2000) see note 10, p.306.

Chapter 2

Citizenship, Poverty and Social Exclusion
Competing Discourses and Policy Responses

Introduction

This chapter shifts the focus from the theoretical perspectives which underpinned my choice of method to those which both define the concepts of citizenship, poverty and social exclusion and determine their link with social policy. Superficially the link is clear: social policy (or more specifically, social security policy) represents the Government's response to poverty and social exclusion; a response which, by decreeing the extent to which citizens are able to participate in the day to day lives of their own communities, provides a passport to the full status of citizenship. Disguised by this simplistic view, however, are the complexities of the issues confronting policy-makers: it presupposes common definitions of citizenship, poverty and social exclusion; assumes that there are clearly identifiable causes and solutions which can, and should, be readily implemented, and completely ignores the issue of gender. It therefore fails to acknowledge the evolutionary nature of both political discourse and social policy.

In the words of Pete Alcock:

> social security policy, like all other policy development, is produced not by visions but by the weight of historical circumstances and economic pressures and by the conflicts and compromises of political power.[1]

It is precisely these pressures, conflicts and compromises which produced the convoluted social security system that developed during the twentieth century; a system unlikely to be replicated by any government afforded the inconceivable luxury of a clean slate for the

[1]Alcock, "Development of social security" in Ditch (ed), *Introduction to Social Security* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.48. See also Sainsbury, "The aims of social security" in Ditch (ed), *Ibid.* p.34.

new century.[2] The slow and complex process of policy development arising from the necessity for governments to work with inherited policies, structures and institutions under varying economic constraints, renders it difficult to pinpoint clear changes of political direction. Nevertheless, a retrospective analysis of twentieth century social security policy reveals three, albeit far from distinct, turning points which are most usefully regarded as helpful signposts rather than obvious landmarks.

First, the publication and subsequent implementation of the Beveridge Report[3] marked the start of a period of consensus, if not of political thought, then of political action.[4] Secondly, the dissipation of that consensus when Mrs. Thatcher became Conservative Prime Minister in 1979 and pledged to 'roll back the frontiers of the state' and end the 'dependency culture'.[5] The third turning point was the election of a New Labour Government which came to office in 1997 with a legacy of mounting poverty and social exclusion[6] and the promise of a 'third way in welfare'.[7] Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, has declared that his Government will have failed if it does not raise the living standards of the poorest people in Britain.[8] Furthermore, in his Beveridge Lecture in 1999, he made the now celebrated pledge to eliminate child poverty within twenty years.[9] However, his Government is confronted with the same issues as its predecessors: negotiating the balance of citizens' rights and responsibilities; defining and measuring poverty and social exclusion, identifying their causes and determining an appropriate, yet affordable, policy response.

---

[2] Alcock, "Poverty and social security" in Page and Silburn (eds), *British Social Welfare in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p.199.

[3] Beveridge, *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (London: HMSO, 1942), Cmnd. 6404.

[4] Timmins, *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State* (London: HarperCollins, 2001), p.170.

[5] Timmins (2001) *Ibid.* p.358 and Walker, "The strategy of inequality" in Walker and Walker (eds), *Britain Divided: the Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s* (London: CPAG, 1997), p.4.

[6] See Walker and Walker (eds) (1997), *Ibid.*

[7] Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for the New Century* (London: The Fabian Society, 1998).

[8] See Oppenheim, "The growth of poverty and inequality" in Walker and Walker (eds) (1997), see note 5. Also Lister, "From equality to social inclusion: New Labour and the Welfare State" (1998) *Critical Social Policy* vol.18 no.2, p.215.

[9] Blair *Beveridge Revisited: A Welfare State for the 21st century* (The Beveridge Lecture given at Toynbee Hall, London, on 18 March 1999 as part of the celebrations for the 750th Anniversary of University College, Oxford). Reproduced in Walker (ed), *Ending Child Poverty: Popular Welfare for the 21st Century?* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 1999), p.7. A subsequent shift of focus prompted Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to make a similar pledge to end pensioner poverty; Brown, *The Economy,* Labour Party conference speech, Brighton 25th September 2000.

Citizenship: From Want to Rights and Responsibilities

Adopting the American term 'welfare',[10] the New Labour Government claimed to be the 'party of welfare reform'[11] and promised radical reform of the social security system:

> The third way in welfare is clear: not to dismantle it, or protect it unchanged, but to reform it radically - taking its core values and applying them to the modern world.[12]

It is not the first government to have made such ambitious claims. In the Green Paper which preceded the 1986 Social Security Act, the Conservative Government promised 'the most fundamental review of social security since the Second World War' and 'a system capable of meeting the demands of the next century'.[13] However, as Carey Oppenheim and Ruth Lister described a decade later, far from carrying the social security system into the next century, the 1986 reforms marked only the start of a continuous period of reform.[14] The Prime Minister has accepted that New Labour's own long awaited and widely anticipated Green Paper, published in 1998, represented the 'beginning of a debate, not its conclusion' and recognised that the process of welfare reform 'will take time'.[15] Hence the Beveridge Plan, published in 1942, remained the only comprehensive review and reform programme for social security produced during the twentieth century.[16]

Although his Plan was principally an attack upon 'Want',[17] Beveridge acknowledged that in itself social security was a 'wholly inadequate aim': 'Want' was only one of 'five giant evils', to be tackled alongside 'Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness' as part of a 'comprehensive policy of social progress';[18] one general programme incorporating

---

[10] Lister (1998) see note 8.
[11] The Labour Party, *New Labour: Because Britain Deserves Better,* 1997 manifesto, p.4.
[12] Blair (1999) see note 9. See also DSS, *New Ambitions for our Country: A New Contract for Welfare,* 1998, Cmnd. 3085, paras. 10-16.
[13] *Reform of Social Security*, DHSS 1985, Cmnd. 9517, preface.
[14] Oppenheim and Lister, "Ten Years after the 1986 Social Security Act" (1996) *Social Policy Review* 8, pp. 85-105. See also Cox, "The consequences of welfare reform: how conceptions of social rights are changing" (1998) *Journal of Social Policy*, vol. 27 no.1, pp.1-16.
[15] DSS (1998) see note 12, Foreword.
[16] Alcock (1999) see note 2 p.204.
[17] Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.23.
[18] Beveridge (1942) see note 3. See further Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.23.

policies for social security, health, education, housing and full employment, which was to become the foundation of the post-war welfare state. Beveridge himself commented:

> This is the greatest advance in our history. There can be no turning back. From now on Beveridge is not the name of a man; it is the name of a way of life, and not only for Britain, but for the whole civilized world.[19]

The Report was an immediate bestseller.[20] Its proposals had universal appeal and were greeted with widespread acclaim, as José Harris explains:

> In fact, the war was an indispensable backcloth to the underlying principles of the Beveridge Plan and to its wholly unexpected mass popularity. The Plan assumed a very high degree of social solidarity, a sense of 'everyone being in the same boat', that fitted the social reality of 1942 more than any earlier or later moment in British history. Many aspects of the Plan implicitly reflected the high degree of collective organisation and control over private resources that had become part of the familiar, taken-for-granted, climate of wartime.[21]

It was to take four Acts of Parliament to implement Beveridge's proposals,[22] albeit with important differences between what have been termed the 'Beveridge Report', the 'Beveridge Welfare State' (i.e. the implemented version) and the 'Beveridge philosophy'.[23] Its basic shape is well known: building in the three assumptions of family allowances, a national health service and full employment and allowing for a safety net of means-tested allowances, Beveridge essentially renounced both *universal benefits* (paid to all citizens in any particular group) and *means-tested benefits* (paid only to those who can prove that they have no other adequate income or resources). His preference was for *insurance benefits* (paid during periods of interruption in employment and funded by the

---

[19] Beveridge to Harold Wilson shortly after his report came out, recounted *in Wilson, The Making of a Prime Minister, 1986,* p.64 as quoted by Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.43.

[20] Gladstone, *The Twentieth-Century Welfare State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p.38. Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.23.

[21] Harris "Beveridge and the Beveridge report - life, ideas, influence" in Walker (1999) see note 9, p.25.

[22] Family Allowances Act 1945; National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act 1946; National Insurance Act 1946 and National Assistance Act 1948.

[23] Hewitt and Powell, "A different 'Back to Beveridge'? Welfare pluralism and the Beveridge Welfare State" (1998) *Social Policy Review* 10, pp.86-104.

contributions of individuals and employers).[24] In his view, social security is not 'for giving to everybody something for nothing and without trouble':[25]

> The State should offer security for service and contribution. The State in organising security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility; in establishing a national minimum, it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more than the minimum for himself and his family.[26]

Hence his Plan was 'first and foremost a plan of insurance - of giving in return for contributions benefits up to subsistence levels, as of right and without means test, so that individuals may build freely upon it'.[27] Finally, it seemed, the hitherto harsh and punitive system of last resort operating under the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 had been brought to an end.[28] Means-tested publicly funded assistance, paid at mere survival rates and intended only to meet immediate and desperate need, would henceforth be replaced by benefits paid at subsistence rates according to individual contributions to a central social security fund. A discourse of 'want' had succumbed to a discourse of 'rights' (albeit 'rights' in return for contributions) and the meaning of citizenship was about to take on a new dimension.

Referring to it as a 'slippery concept', Ruth Lister suggests that, rather than attempt a definition of citizenship, many fall back on that provided by T.H. Marshall whom she acknowledges as 'the British sociologist who, more than anyone else, shaped post-war thinking about citizenship and not just in Britain'.[29] For Marshall:

---

[24] Alcock (1999) see note 1, pp.51-52.
[25] Beveridge (1942) see note 3. Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.24.
[26] Beveridge (1942) see note 3, p.9; Timmins (2001) see note 4, pp. 23-24 and Social Security Select Committee, Fifth Report, Session 1999-2000, *The Contributory Principle*, HC385 (I-II), para.23.
[27] Beveridge (1942) see note 3, p.10. Timmins (2001) see note 4. Social Security Select Committee (2000), see note 26.
[28] Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare State* (New York: Longman, 1982), p.32.
[29] Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), p.14.

> Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed.[30]

Placing an emphasis on the word *status*, Lister draws attention to the key elements of that definition:

> membership of a community (itself an increasingly contested concept), the rights and obligations that flow from that membership, and equality.
>
> What is involved is not simply a set of legal rules governing the relationship between individuals and the state in which they live but also a set of social relationships between individuals and the state and between individual citizens.[31]

Importantly for Marshall, rights flowing from the status of citizenship are composed of three elements: the civil element (civil rights established mainly during the eighteenth century); the political element (political rights associated largely with the nineteenth century) and the social element (social rights developed in the first half of the twentieth century).[32] It was of course the social element to which Beveridge's contribution was of greatest significance:

> By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the community.[33]

Lister describes two citizenship traditions which she refers to as a *status* and a *practice* view of citizenship, but which Raymond Plant has called a *status* and an *achievement*

[30] Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), pp.28-9. See further Lister (1997) see note 29, p.14.
[31] Lister (1997) *Ibid.*
[32] Marshall, "Citizenship and social class" in *Sociology at the Crossroads and Other Essays* (London: Heinemann, 1963.) See further, A.M. Rees, "The promise of social citizenship" (1995) *Policy and Politics* vol. 23 no.4 p.314.
[33] Marshall (1950) see note 30, pp.10-11. See further Lister (1997) see note 29, p.16.

view.[34] For the first view, the status of citizenship derives from membership of a particular political community and gives rise both to negative rights (civil and political rights necessary to protect individual freedom) and positive (social) rights. Raymond Plant explains:

> On this view, status and membership are the crucial issues in relation to rights, not whether a particular citizen makes a positive contribution to society as a whole. So long as the individual does not interfere with anyone else in exercising his or her right to live life in his or her own way then he should be secure in his/her rights, both negative and positive, to live a life shaped by their own interests and desires together with the welfare goods to enable this to happen. If this way of life is disapproved of by others, so long as it does not interfere with the choice of others, it will not detract from the possession of such basic goods and rights.[35]

The second view of citizenship

> places much less emphasis on rights and focuses instead upon *obligation, virtue* and *contribution*. On this view, citizenship is not a kind of pre-existing status, but rather something that is developed by contributing to the life of society - it is an *achievement* rather than a *status*. The ideas of reciprocity and contribution are at the heart of this concept of citizenship: that individuals do not and cannot have a right to the resources of society unless they contribute to the development of that society through work or other socially valued activities, if they are in a position to do so.[36]

Whilst the first view privileges rights over responsibilities, the second, and prevailing view in post-war Britain, reverses that dualism. Lister chooses to call the latter a *practice* view of citizenship, reflecting the approach not just of 'those who emphasise the obligations of citizens (or at least certain citizens) to undertake paid work and/or engage in voluntary service' but also those 'for whom the true citizen is actively involved in

---

[34] Plant, "Supply Side Citizenship?" (1999) JSSL 6 125.
[35] *Ibid.*, p.125.
[36] *Ibid.*

political and civic affairs.'[37] Although contribution remains essential to this concept of citizenship, the introduction of a further element in the form of *inclusion* arguably strengthens the emphasis of citizens' responsibilities over citizens' rights.

Plant is in no doubt that it is the *achievement* view which best describes Beveridge's approach:

> Far from the status of citizenship creating rights; it was for Beveridge insurance and contribution to the labour market that created rights; the status of citizenship only created a means-tested benefit which would be subject to extensive enquiry into the character of the individual and his or her preparedness to accept obligations. Work and contribution were the passports to citizenship rights.[38]

Consequently it was this view which, with bipartisan support, helped to shape the development of the welfare state. Drawing attention to disputes not just between but within political parties, Nicholas Timmins has argued that those on the political Left (in keeping with values of collective provision, universality and equality)[39] have generally supported Beveridge's universalism; 'his desire to end poverty through all standing together',[40] while those on the political Right (valuing personal freedom and ownership, selectivity and choice) have preferred to stress 'his insistence on leaving room for private initiative; that the state should not provide all, but only a basic income, and then in return for clear-cut duties'.[41] Whilst the resulting policies were not necessarily indicative of political consensus, they did demonstrate, initially at least, a widespread commitment to the welfare state. Lord Fraser of Kilmorack, former chairman of the Conservative Research Department, summed it up as follows:

> In a fundamental sense there must always be a good deal of common ground between the main parties alternating in government in a free society. When in power, after all, they are governing the same country with the same history,

[37] Lister (1997) see note 29, p.15.
[38] Plant (1999) see note 34, p.129.
[39] Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.169.
[40] *Ibid.* p.61.
[41] *Ibid.*

> people, problems and elbow-room, or lack of it, within the same world ... To say, however, that the situation after 1945 amounted to a 'consensus' is a myth of more recent origin. No one thought that at the time. The real position was like that of two trains, starting off from parallel platforms at some great London terminus and running for a time on broadly parallel lines but always heading for very different destinations.[42]

An understanding of the ensuing policy debate demands an understanding of the underlying poverty debate which, as Alcock notes, requires an appreciation of the complex relationship between issues of definition, measurement, cause and solution. [43]

Poverty: From Absolute to Relative Poverty and Social Exclusion

Early definitions of poverty can be traced back to the *absolute* view which underpinned the pioneering work of Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree at the start of the twentieth century. Booth relied on the impressions of school board visitors between 1886 and 1902 to conclude that 30 per cent of the inhabitants of London were living 'in poverty or in want' which he defined as 'having no surplus'.[44] Rowntree, whose study of York in 1888 produced strikingly similar results, adopted a broader, twofold definition of poverty.[45] In what has subsequently come to be recognised as a *budget standard* method, he drew up a poverty line based on a minimum income which allowed for 'no expenditure of any kind ... beyond that which is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of *merely physical efficiency*'.[46] Those living below the poverty line were described as living in 'primary' poverty while those with incomes above the minimum but whom Rowntree's investigators reported to be 'obviously living in a state of poverty, i.e. in obvious want and squalor' were said to be living in 'secondary' poverty.[47]

---

[42] Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune* (Macmillan, 1969), p.452, as quoted by Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.171.
[43] Alcock, *Understanding Poverty* (second edition) (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997), p.67.
[44] Booth, *Labour and Life of the People of London* (London: Macmillan, 1889.) See further Thane (1982), see note 28, p.5.
[45] Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (London: Macmillan, 1902), p.86.
[46] *Ibid.* p. 297.
[47] *Ibid.* p.86.

At that time, the causes of poverty were thought to be *pathological*. Pathological approaches are often criticised as those which seek to blame the 'poor' for their own poverty. They include highly questionable genetic and psychological explanations as well as those which focus on 'character deficiencies' or on the role of family or community.[48] By contrast, a *structural* approach focuses not on the failings of the poor, but on the efficacy of anti-poverty policies and on the agencies and institutions responsible for making and for implementing them (especially the social security system).[49] Under the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, poverty was clearly regarded as the fault of the individual which should be punished. Hence, poor relief was available only to those who could be supported neither by their own labour nor by that of their families, and the principle of 'less eligibility' ensured that rates were set at a standard below the earnings that an industrious labourer 'of the lowest class' could achieve. [50]

Rowntree's work retained a strong pathological element, explaining the 'immediate causes' of 'secondary' poverty as follows:

> Drink, betting and gambling. Ignorant or careless housekeeping, and other improvident expenditure, the latter often induced by irregularity of income.
>
> It is not possible to ascertain the proportion of 'secondary' poverty assignable to each of the above causes; probably all are factors in the poverty of many households, and they act and react powerfully upon each other.[51]

However, his acknowledgement of those causes as 'often the outcome of the adverse conditions under which too many of the working class live'[52] and his recognition of the impact of large families, low pay and worklessness (whether due to incapacity, old age or unemployment),[53] might be seen as initiating a shift towards a structural explanation. Moreover, Rowntree's discovery of the link between poverty and life-cycle changes was highly significant. He identified five periods of alternating want and relative plenty

[48] Alcock (1997) see note 43, pp. 37-38.
[49] *Ibid.*, p.39.
[50] Thane (1982) see note 28, p.12. See also Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.27.
[51] Rowntree (1902) see note 45, p.142.
[52] *Ibid*, p.144.

through which a labourer would pass: childhood, early working adulthood, parenthood, working life after children and old age.[54] It is the predictability of this cycle, and hence the possibility of anticipating and providing for periods of need, which later became crucially important for Beveridge whose view was similarly twofold.

The fact that Beveridge recognised the need to build his plan upon the assumptions of family allowances, a national health service and full employment demonstrates that he believed the causes of poverty to be primarily structural and environmental.[55] Nevertheless, his insistence that the state should provide only a minimum income during interruptions in employment in order to maintain work incentives and to encourage people to save and take responsibility for their own lives was reminiscent of the pathological approach which had underpinned the principle of 'less eligibility'.

Beveridge devised a 'subsistence' income, i.e. 'benefit adequate to all normal needs, in duration and in amount',[56] but he was acutely aware of the essential arbitrariness of this budget standard approach. He drew extensively on the 'social surveys' of his time and frequently referred to his recommended benefit levels as 'scientifically based',[57] but he acknowledged that 'determination of what is required for reasonable human subsistence is to some extent a matter of judgement'.[58] He conceded that 'estimates on this point change with time, and generally, in a progressive community, change upwards'[59] and that 'any single estimate, such as is necessary for the determination of a rate of insurance benefit, fit exactly the differing conditions of differing households'.[60] Hence Beveridge, like Rowntree before him, was aware of the limitations of an absolute view of poverty and to some extent anticipated the broader definitions and measurements[61] which would ultimately lead to the more recent use of the term social exclusion.

---

[53] *Ibid.*, p.86.
[54] Alcock (1997) see note 43, p.111.
[55] See Harris (1999) see note 21, p.23.
[56] Beveridge (1942) see note 3, p.15. See further Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.52.
[57] Beveridge (1942) see note 3, p.7, p.15, p.79.
[58] *Ibid.*, p.14.
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] *Ibid.* p.77.
[61] See p.45 below.

It is often thought that 'social exclusion' is no more than a relabelling of 'poverty'[62] and the two terms are frequently used interchangeably. Increasingly, however, *poverty* is regarded as a comparatively limited concept which focuses on the lack of material resources, especially income, necessary to participate fully in British society. By contrast, Alan Walker suggests that *social exclusion* is:

> a more comprehensive formulation which refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society . Social exclusion may, therefore, be seen as the denial (or non-realisation) of the civil, political and social rights of citizenship.[63]

Tony Atkinson has suggested that the term has become popular partly because it has no precise definition and 'means all things to all people', but he identifies three elements that recur in the discussion:

> The first is that of *relativity*. People are excluded from a particular society: it refers to a particular place and time ...The second element is that of *agency*. Exclusion implies an act, with an agent or agents. People may exclude themselves in that they drop out of the market economy; or they may be excluded by the decisions or actions of others or by the operation of the state (for example, by the use of means-tested benefits that are seen as stigmatizing) ... A third key aspect is that of *dynamics*. People are excluded not just because they are currently without a job or income but because they have little prospects for the future.[64]

Hence, social exclusion adds a further dimension to the concepts of poverty (*what we do or do not have*)[65] and deprivation (*what we do or do not do*),[66] to include what others *do*

[62] Barry, *Social Exclusion, Social Isolation and the Distribution of Income*, CASEpaper 12 (London: CASE, 1998), p.1.
[63] Walker, "Introduction: the strategy of inequality" in Walker and Walker (eds) (1997) see note 5, p.8.
[64] Atkinson, "Social exclusion, poverty and unemployment" in *Exclusion, Employment and Opportunity*, CASEpaper 4 (London: CASE, 1998) pp.13-14.
[65] Alcock (1997) see note 43, p.85.
[66] *Ibid.*, p.86.

to us[67] and, as the notion of citizenship becomes increasingly reciprocal, what we can *do for others.*[68] Unlike poverty and deprivation, which Alcock suggests might be seen as a state of affairs, social exclusion is seen as a process involving us all, with a focus on relations between people rather than the distribution of resources.[69] It thereby reaches beyond individuals to encompass whole communities.

Policy: From RED to MUD and SID

Ruth Levitas has helpfully identified three discourses of social exclusion[70] which correspond to the discourses of citizenship discussed above. They provide a useful starting point for the analysis of social security policy in post-war Britain and serve to illustrate how, in the words of Roy Sainsbury, 'complex, diverse and versatile social security can be as an instrument of policy'.[71] The first, a redistributionist discourse (RED), is consistent with the status view of citizenship, whilst the moral underclass discourse (MUD) is more consistent with the achievement view and the social integrationist discourse (SID), the practice view. They 'differ quite markedly in how they present the relationships between inclusion/exclusion and inequality'.[72] The aims of all three include the redistribution of resources and power, the control of citizens' behaviour, and labour-market discipline (or integration), although the degree varies within and between discourses.

> All of them posit paid work as a major factor in social integration; and all of them have a moral content. But they differ in what the excluded are seen as lacking. To oversimplify, in RED they have no money, in MUD they have no morals and in SID they have no work.[73]

[67] *Ibid.,* p.95.
[68] *Ibid.,* p.96.
[69] *Ibid.,* p.95.
[70] Levitas, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998).
[71] Sainsbury (1999), see note 1, p.46.
[72] Levitas (1998) see note 70, p.7.
[73] *Ibid.,* p.27.

Although they are presented as distinct discourses, Levitas acknowledges them as 'ideal types' and accepts that 'much public discourse slides between them':

> That indeed, is one of the reasons why a concept like social exclusion is so powerful. Not only does the multiplicity of meanings which attach to it give it wide acceptance, but it operates as a shifter between the different discourses. Like the 'underclass', 'social exclusion' can, almost unnoticed, mobilize a redistributive argument behind a cultural or integrationist one - or represent cultural or integrationist arguments as redistributive.[74]

RED: No Money

RED, a redistributionist discourse usually associated with the political Left, or Old Labour, presupposes a structural approach based on a 'strategy of equality'.[75] The route to achieving its primary aim of *preventing* poverty and social exclusion is a radical redistribution of income and resources through taxation and the welfare state. Levitas summarises it as follows:

- It emphasizes poverty as a prime source of social exclusion.
- It implies a reduction of poverty through increases in benefit levels.
- It is potentially able to valorize [*sic*] unpaid work.
- In positing citizenship as the obverse of exclusion, it goes beyond a minimalist model of inclusion.
- In addressing social, political and cultural, as well as economic citizenship, it broadens out into a critique of inequality which includes, but is not limited to material inequality.
- It focuses on the processes which produce that inequality.
- It implies a radical reduction of inequalities, and a redistribution of resources and power.[76]

---

[74] *Ibid.*
[75] See Alcock (1997) note 43, pp.255-258.
[76] Levitas (1998) see note 70, p.14.

Typical of RED is Peter Townsend's work, which marked significant shifts from an *absolute* to a *relative* definition of poverty and from a *pathological* to a *structural* view of the causes of poverty.

Beveridge had envisaged that insurance benefits would compensate for loss of earnings during temporary periods of sickness or unemployment, while family allowances and retirement pensions would alleviate poverty associated with raising children and with old age. A strong conviction that insurance benefits would thus meet *normal* subsistence needs while means-tested National Assistance would provide for *abnormal* subsistence needs[77] led Beveridge to make the bold claim that 'Want' would be abolished.[78] Despite the fact that insurance benefits were introduced at rates only marginally above National Assistance rates and at nearly a third below what he had recommended as necessary for subsistence,[79] it appeared for a time as though his optimism may have been justified[80] and there was a widely held view during the early post-war period of economic prosperity that society was indeed becoming more equal and more integrated.[81] The aura of complacency was heightened by Rowntree's third and final study of poverty in 1951. Like his first two studies (in 1901 and 1941),[82] it was based in York and relied on a subsistence measure of poverty, but on this occasion the findings suggested that primary poverty in the UK had been finally overcome.[83]

By the late 1950s, however, social scientists had begun to question these findings as they challenged the way in which poverty had hitherto been defined. In particular the work of Richard Titmuss, Peter Townsend, Brian Abel-Smith and Tony Lynes (as Titmuss's research assistant) working together at the London School of Economics, proved to be

[77] Beveridge (1942) see note 3, p.141.
[78] *Ibid.* p.7.
[79] See Timmins (2001) note 4, p.136.
[80] *Ibid.* p.177.
[81] Harris "Society and the twentieth century state in twentieth century Britain" in Thompson (ed) *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950,* Vol.3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See further Gladstone (1999) note 20, p.51.
[82] Rowntree, (1902) see note 45. Rowntree, *Poverty and Progress: A Second Social Survey of York* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1941).
[83] Rowntree and Lavers, *Poverty and The Welfare State* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1951).

seminal.[84] It was their redefinition of poverty as a *relative* concept which was to lead to the 'rediscovery of poverty'. In simple terms, the shift from an *absolute* to a *relative* view of poverty has been described as the extension of a concern with what we *have or do not have* to include an appreciation of what we *do or do not do*.[85] A preoccupation with *income* henceforth becomes an interest in *lifestyle*. According to Townsend's view, poverty is 'a dynamic, not a static concept':

> Man is not a Robinson Crusoe living on a desert island. He is a social animal entangled in a web of relationships - at work and in family and community - which exert complex and changing pressures to which he must respond, as much in his consumption of goods and services as in any other aspect of his behaviour. And there is no list of the absolute necessities of life to maintain even physical efficiency or health which applies at any time and in any society, without reference to the structure, organization, physical environment and available resources of that society. [86]

He used the example of tea which has 'little or no nutritional value', to illustrate the point:

> Should any allowance be made for this [tea] in the minimum diet? Drinking tea is a widespread custom in Britain. But to say that it is 'customary' may also mean that it is 'necessary', and in two senses. It may be psychologically necessary, in the same sense that a habit-forming drug is necessary. Individuals have grown up to accept and expect it. Second it serves an important social function. When a neighbour or a relative calls, a housewife will often make a cup of tea. True, in another society she might prepare coffee or open a bottle of wine, but this is generally what she will do in Britain. The reciprocation of small gifts and services, and sharing the enjoyment of them, is one of the most important ways in which an individual recognizes and maintains his social relationships.[87]

[84] Lowe "The rediscovery of poverty and the creation of the Child Poverty Action Group 1962-68" (1995) *Contemporary Record*, vol.9 no.3, pp.602-611.
[85] Alcock (1997) see note 43, pp.85-86.
[86] Townsend, "The meaning of poverty" (1962) *British Journal of Sociology*, vol.13, p.219.
[87] *Ibid.* pp. 217-218.

Redefining poverty in these terms inevitably raised questions about how poverty should be measured. In 1965, Abel-Smith and Townsend used an 'official poverty line' calculated to be 140 per cent of means-tested national assistance rates, allowing a margin of 40 per cent to take account of additional benefit payments made for special needs and of small amounts of income which claimants could receive without their benefits being cut.[88] In their view 'whatever may be said about the adequacy of the National Assistance Board level of living, it has at least the advantage of being in a sense the 'official' operational definition of the minimum level of living at any particular time'.[89] They sought to show that 'society has tended to make a rather sweeping interpretation of such evidence as there is about the reduction of poverty and the increase of equality since the war' and that 'this evidence is a lot weaker than many social scientists have supposed'.[90]

Analysing Ministry of Labour *expenditure* figures for the year 1953-54, Abel-Smith and Townsend estimated that about 15 per cent of households in the UK (representing almost 13 per cent of the population) were living in, or on the margins of, poverty.[91] A further analysis of *income* figures for 1960, showed an increase to an estimated 18 per cent of households living in poverty (accounting for about 14 per cent of the population).[92] Perhaps inevitably these figures included a significant number of the elderly but more surprisingly, 30 per cent of people living in low income families in 1960 were found to be children, while 41 per cent of all those living on low incomes were in households dependent on earnings as their primary source of income.[93] Such figures demanded a policy response and were ultimately to lead Townsend and his colleagues to establish the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG); a group whose research and campaigns have done much to ensure that poverty remains on the political agenda.[94]

The method used by Abel-Smith and Townsend has been criticised on the grounds that means-tested allowances can not represent a 'poverty line' because they are based on

[88] Abel-Smith and Townsend, *The Poor and the Poorest* (London: Bell, 1965), pp.17-18.
[89] *Ibid.* p.17.
[90] *Ibid.* p.12.
[91] *Ibid.* p.28.
[92] *Ibid.* p.39.
[93] *Ibid.* p.41.
[94] See Lowe (1995) note 84. Also Alcock (1997) see note 43, p.203.

'political decisions' rather than 'scientific findings'.[95] Nevertheless, in his later work, Townsend claimed to have reached a more 'objective', and therefore 'scientific', definition of poverty based on the use of *deprivation indicators* (i.e. key indicators of standard of living, the lack of which provided evidence of deprivation).[96] Since this method also established the poverty line to be about 140 per cent of means-tested benefits, he felt able to justify its earlier use as a poverty measure.[97]

Significantly, Townsend's list of deprivation indicators reached beyond the basic dietary, clothing, household and personal requirements necessary to provide for 'reasonable human subsistence' to include environmental and social factors (such as housing conditions, state of health, level of education and social interaction with family and friends).[98] This was of course consistent with his revised definition of relative poverty:

> Individuals, families and groups can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities.[99]

Nevertheless Townsend's later approach met with criticism (notably from David Piachaud) precisely because he claimed it to be 'scientific':

> Social scientists can describe the inequality of resources within and between countries as objectively as possible. *But inequality is not the same as poverty.* The term 'poverty' carries with it an implication and moral imperative that something should be done about it. The definition by an individual, or by a society collectively, of what level represents 'poverty', will always be a value judgment.

[95] See Veit-Wilson "Poverty and the adequacy of social security" in Ditch (ed), see note 1, p.82.
[96] Townsend, *Poverty in the United Kingdom* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), ch.6.
[97] *Ibid.* p.261.
[98] Townsend (1979) see note 96 App.13, p.1173.
[99] *Ibid.* p.31.

Social scientists have no business trying to preempt such judgments with 'scientific' prescriptions'.[100] (Emphasis in original).

Sensitive to such criticism, later studies developed a *consensual*, or as Veit-Wilson prefers to call it a *majoritarian*,[101] approach. In 1985 Joanna Mack and Stuart Lansley argued that there is no such thing as an 'objective' as opposed to a 'socially perceived' measure of poverty: 'items become 'necessities' only when they are *socially* perceived to be so'.[102] They therefore relied on the views of those who took part in their study to determine what constituted a 'necessity' and, while the enforced lack of any particular item was defined as a *deprivation*, deprivations were only termed *poverty* when they affected a person's way of life.[103] Their aim then, was to 'identify a minimum acceptable way of life not by reference to the views of 'experts', nor by reference to observed patterns of expenditure, but by reference to *the views of society as a whole*.'[104] This was presented not as an 'objective' but rather as a 'less subjective' measure of poverty.[105]

It has already been noted that both Rowntree (by drawing a distinction between primary and secondary poverty)[106] and Beveridge (in recognising the arbitrary nature of defining subsistence levels) anticipated the relative definitions and measurements to come. The so-called 'rediscovery of poverty' therefore marked a shift of position rather than a complete change of direction; a shift of position which generally gained acceptance within academic circles and within the (old) Labour Party,[107] but which had few supporters in the Conservative Party. Moreover, it was a shift of position which fiercely disputed the predominantly *pathological* view of poverty which had hitherto prevailed, as Townsend explains:

---

[100] Piachaud, "Poverty in the United Kingdom" in Townsend, *The International Analysis of Poverty* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p.119.
[101] Veit-Wilson, "Consensual approaches to poverty lines and social security" (1987), *Journal of Social Policy* vol.16 no.2. See further Alcock (1997) note 43, p.82.
[102] Mack and Lansley, *Poor Britain* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), p.38.
[103] *Ibid.*, p.41.
[104] *Ibid.*, p.42.
[105] *Ibid.*, p.38.
[106] Rowntree (1902) see note 45, p.86.
[107] See Lowe (1995) note 84.

> One theme in the entire history of the development of theories of poverty could therefore be said to be that of 'character deficiency' or personal fault. Empirical studies of the population in general and of the poor in particular throughout the last hundred years (including the work of Bowley, Pemberton Reeves, Llewellyn Smith, Ford, Harriett Wilson and others as well as Booth and Rowntree) have exposed this as wholly misplaced or, at the most, as a very small factor in the multiple causation of poverty.[108]

Inevitably an opposing view of the causes of poverty elicited a call for a different policy response. For Townsend, the solution is redistribution. Hence, in 1997, just prior to the election of the present UK Government, he wrote:

> 'Redistribution' within a modernised welfare state could allow statutory income rights for citizens, limits on high earnings as well as a minimum wage, reduction of means tests, reduction of wasteful tax allowances, and fair taxation of the rich to finance better public services and create more jobs, especially for the young. Child benefit and disability allowances, can be strengthened and even a 'participation' income introduced for those who take on caring responsibilities for children and the elderly and disabled. All this is easily within the means of an incoming administration. If interpreted imaginatively 'redistribution' can take account of the rearrangement of responsibilities or activities as well as resources over the lifetime of the individual and between generations.[109]

What he is suggesting is a system which allows not just for *horizontal* redistribution (to tackle the life-cycle changes identified by Rowntree), but also for *vertical* redistribution (between higher and lower income groups).[110] This is consistent with the *status* view of citizenship where full citizenship rights (including social rights) are automatically bestowed on all those who are full members of a community. It therefore represents a considerable step beyond the welfare state envisaged by Beveridge, which was intended only to provide for horizontal redistribution: benefits paid 'as of right' in times of need, in

[108] Townsend (1993) see note 100, p.97.
[109] Townsend, "Redistribution: the strategic alternative to privatisation" in Walker and Walker (eds) (1997) see note 5, p. 133.

return for contributions paid in times of relative sufficiency. Thus, in Beveridge's view, by providing protection at times of high risk, social security would operate not just to *relieve* poverty (or 'want'), as had been the aim of the Poor Law, but to *prevent* it.[111]

The implemented version of his Plan was significantly different to that which Beveridge had proposed.[112] In practice, the decision of the Attlee Government to award pensions to all retired people from the outset, delivered a pay-as-you-go scheme in place of the Beveridge insurance scheme.[113] Furthermore, insurance benefits paid at below subsistence rates[114] resulted in far greater reliance on (tax-based) means-tested allowances than intended, and means-testing came to represent a permanent and growing feature of the social security system. In part this was due to the pace of social and economic change, particularly with regard to the growth in the rate of separation and divorce and the increasing flexibility within the labour market.[115] However, inherent flaws in the scheme (including the three 'special problems' which Beveridge identified but left unresolved: rent; women and disability)[116] and the albeit differing policy agendas of successive governments also led to increased means-testing.

Although Labour Governments in the late 1960s and late 1970s attempted to make the means-tested National Assistance more 'rights' based,[117] they drifted towards increased means-testing in the interests of extending protection.[118] By contrast, Conservative Governments in the early 1970s and throughout the 1980s and 1990s deliberately extended means-tested provision in an attempt to reduce spending and target new benefit support at particular ('more deserving') groups not covered by past social security protection (most notably those families living on low wages with children).[119] The growth of means-testing, and a continued aversion to means-tested benefits for reasons of

---

[110] Alcock (1997) see note 43, p.212.
[111] Corden "Claiming entitlements: take-up of benefits" in Ditch (ed) (1999), see note 1, p.136.
[112] Hewitt and Powell (1998) see note 23.
[113] Alcock (1999) see note 2, p.206.
[114] Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.136.
[115] Social Security Select Committee (2000) see note 26, paras. 25-29.
[116] Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.53.
[117] National Assistance was replaced by Supplementary Benefit in 1966, see Ogus, Barendt & Wikeley, *The Law of Social Security* (fourth edition) (London: Butterworths, 1995), p.455-456.
[118] Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.228. Alcock (1999) see note 2, p.211.
[119] Introduction of Family Income Supplement, rent and rate rebates, free school meals and clothing and free health prescriptions and charges. See Alcock (1999) see note 2, p.208-211.

ignorance, stigma and administrative complexity,[120] meant that benefits were increasingly paid only to those who claimed them. Furthermore, benefits were paid only to those who had incomes below designated subsistence rates. Consequently, redistribution under the post-war welfare state has been confined to protection at times of need rather than at times of risk and the emphasis has thus remained the *relief* rather than *prevention* of poverty.

The growth of means-testing is problematic in another respect: means-tested benefits, which are funded by taxation, provide for *vertical* redistribution from taxpayers on higher incomes to other (non) taxpayers on low incomes. Beveridge had been directly opposed to vertical redistribution lest it should undermine work incentives.[121] There is also a danger, as Julian Le Grand has argued, that 'taking income from the rich and giving it to the poor will cause resentment - because it will be regarded as unjust - if it does not acknowledge a difference in the routes by which people become rich or poor.'[122] Essentially this is an argument about *equality of opportunity* as opposed to *equality of outcome.*

Unlike Townsend, whose main concern is with *equality of outcome*, Beveridge's objective had been to ensure *equality of opportunity* within the state scheme. His goal was frustrated partly by the growth of means-testing and, though subsequently withdrawn, by the introduction of earnings related benefit supplements payable in return for earnings related contributions.[123] Both of these measures conflicted with Beverdge's view that flat-rate benefits should be paid to all 'as of right', in return for compulsory flat-rate contributions paid by all, and both served to maintain pre-existing inequalities between rich and poor.

Paradoxically, however, Beveridge was not concerned that some could buy additional protection through private insurance; in fact he encouraged it. In effect, this led to a partnership between the state and the private or occupational sector[124] which, coupled with evidence that suggests the more active and articulate middle classes have benefited

---

[120] Social Security Select Committee (2000) see note 26, para.94.
[121] Lowe (1995) see note 84, p.604.
[122] Le Grand "Conceptions of social justice" in Walker (ed) (1999), see note 9, p.66.
[123] Alcock (1999) see note 2, p.208.
[124] Alcock (1997) see note 43, p.220.

most from improved welfare services,[125] has exacerbated, rather than reduced, inequalities between rich and poor. This has led Le Grand to argue that a strategy of equality, or in Levitas's terms a redistributive discourse, has never been properly developed and consequently the post-war welfare state has delivered neither equality of opportunity nor equality of outcome.[126]

Nevertheless, in the three decades which followed its implementation, the welfare state was, to some extent at least, both horizontally and vertically, redistributive and provided for far greater equality, both of opportunity and of outcome, than the Poor Law which had preceded it. Universal family allowances (albeit at a relatively low rate and only for second or subsequent children) were introduced in 1945,[127] supplemented for those in work and paying taxes by a child related tax rebate.[128] Moreover, a bipartisan commitment to full employment ensured that, with the exception of the bad winter of 1963, unemployment did not rise above three per cent until the 1970s[129] and between 1950 and 1980, expenditure on social security increased in real terms by 323 per cent (an increase of 4.4 per cent in the proportion of Gross Domestic Product).[130] Growing numbers claimed support, despite concerns about non-take up of means-tested benefits; benefit levels increased, particularly in the mid 1970s under Labour when they rose in line with both prices and earnings, and the range of benefits (both means-tested and universal) was extended, particularly, once again, in the 1970s, though this time under the Conservative Government.[131] By 1979, however, the economy was in deep recession, Mrs Thatcher had been elected as Prime Minister and a new discourse had emerged.

---

[125] Le Grand , *The Strategy of Equality* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982). See further, Alcock (1997), see note 43, p.257.
[126] Le Grand (1982) see note 125.
[127] See House of Commons Research Paper 98/79, *Child Benefit*, p.8.
[128] Alcock (1999) see note 2, p.209.
[129] Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.134.
[130] DSS, *The Changing Welfare State: Social Security Spending. A Social Security Paper* (2000). Available at www.dwp.gov.uk.
[131] Alcock (1999) see note 2, p.209.

MUD: No Morals

MUD is a moral underclass discourse usually associated with the political Right and especially with the Thatcher administration of the 1980s. It is a pathological approach, based on a 'strategy of inequality,'[132] which aims to *control* both individual behaviour and state expenditure. It therefore seeks to *relieve* rather than *prevent* poverty and social exclusion. Levitas summarises it as follows:

- It presents the underclass or socially excluded as culturally distinct from the 'mainstream'.
- It focuses on the behaviour of the poor rather than the structure of the whole society.
- It implies that benefits are bad, rather than good, for their recipients, and encourage 'dependency'.
- Inequalities among the rest of society are ignored.
- It is a gendered discourse, about idle, criminal young men and single mothers.
- Unpaid work is not acknowledged.
- Although dependency on the state is regarded as a problem, personal economic dependency - especially of women and children on men - is not. Indeed, it is seen as a civilizing influence on men.[133]

Fundamental to MUD is the 'underclass' debate. Townsend used this term in 1979 to focus on the deprivation of particular groups in poverty who were cut off from the workforce (the elderly, disabled, chronically sick, long-term unemployed and one parent families).[134] His view, representative of the political Left and shared by commentators such as Garry Runciman and Frank Field,[135] sees the 'underclass' in terms of a structural phenomenon, the result of social and economic changes:

[132] See Alcock (1997) note 43, p.259.
[133] Levitas (1998) see note 70, p.21.
[134] Townsend (1979), see note 96, p.920.
[135] Runciman in Smith (ed), *Understanding the Underclass* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1992) and Field, *The Emergence of Britain's Underclass* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989). See further Oppenheim and Harker, *Poverty the Facts* (London: CPAG 1996), p.5.

> The ways in which they [the elderly, disabled, chronically sick, long-term unemployed and one parent families] have been denied access to paid employment, conceded incomes equivalent in value to bare subsistence, attracted specially defined low status as minority groups, and accommodated as a result, within the social structure as a kind of modern 'underclass', need to be traced.[136]

The alternative view, which sees the 'underclass' as a 'cultural' phenomenon, is more often associated with the political Right, particularly with the Thatcher Government of the 1980s and notoriously with Sir Keith Joseph whose, 'cycle of deprivation' speech was widely criticised in 1973.[137] In this view, championed by the American political scientist Charles Murray, 'the 'underclass' does not refer to degree of poverty, but to a type of poverty'.[138] The issue of race which has dominated the debate in the USA, has been less explicit in the UK, where Murray attributes the emergence of a new underclass to rising rates of 'illegitimacy, violent crime and drop-out from the labour force'[139] coupled with 'perverse policy' which has created a social security system 'designed to be exploited':[140]

> I am not talking here about an unemployment problem that can be solved by more jobs, nor about a poverty problem that can be solved by higher benefits. Britain has a growing population of working-aged, healthy people who live in a different world from other Britons, who are raising their children to live in it, and whose values are now contaminating the life of entire neighbourhoods - which is one of the most insidious aspects of the phenomen, for neighbours who don't share those values cannot isolate themselves.[141]
>
> When I use the term 'underclass' I am indeed focusing on a certain type of poor person defined not by his condition - eg, long-term unemployed - but by his

---

[136] Townsend (1979) see note 96, p.920.
[137] See Timmins (2001) note 4, p.288.
[138] Murray, *The Emerging British Underclass* (London: IEA, 1990), p.1. See also Murray *Underclass: The Crisis Deepens* (London: IEA, 1994)
[139] Murray (1990) see note 138, p.4.
[140] *Ibid.,* p.22.
[141] *Ibid.,* p.4.

> deplorable behaviour in response to that condition - eg, unwilling to take the jobs that are available to him.[142]

There is little empirical evidence to support Murray's thesis and much to refute it.[143] In 1989, Bradshaw and Holmes reflected:

> But at a time when British poverty is again being discussed in terms of an underclass, it is of crucial importance to recognise that these families, and probably millions more like them living on social security benefits, are in no sense a detached and isolated group cut off from the rest of society. They are just the same people as the rest of our population, with the same culture and aspirations but with simply too little money to be able to share in the activities and possessions of everyday life with the rest of the population.[144]

Nevertheless, the preferred approach of most government Ministers during the 1980s and 1990s, was simply to deny the very existence of poverty,[145] as evidenced by Peter Lilley's refusal, in 1995, to comply with a requirement of the World Summit on Social Development, to set out a national strategy to tackle poverty.[146] Then Secretary of State for Social Security, he argued that the social conditions in the UK did not warrant such a strategy. In other words, as Alcock explains, the denial of poverty is a way of justifying the lack of a policy response:

> ... intrinsic to the notion of poverty itself is the imperative to respond to it. Different definitions require different responses, but all require some response. All are thus debates about what to do about the problem. Or to put it another way, although poverty is a contested problem, it is still a problem; and the one thing that there is no disagreement over is that *something* must be done about it.[147]

---

[142] *Ibid.,* Rejoinder.
[143] See Alcock (1997) note 43, p.33.
[144] Bradshaw and Holmes, *Living on the Edge: a Study of the Living Standards of Families on Benefit in Tyne and Wear* (Tyneside: CPAG, 1989) as quoted by Alcock (1997), see note 43, p.34.
[145] See Oppenheim and Harker (1996) see note 135, p.12; Oppenheim (1997) see note 8, p.18; Townsend (1997) see note 109, p. 271 and Sainsbury (1999), see note 1, p.37.
[146] Oppenheim (1997) see note 8, p.18 and Townsend (1997) see note 109, p.271.

Earlier in 1989, in a speech entitled *The End of the Line for Poverty*, John Moore had drawn attention to the paradox of using means-tested allowances as a poverty line: the more generous the allowances, the greater the number of people brought within their scope and hence the greater the number who could be said to be living in poverty. This reasoning was partly responsible for the change, introduced in 1988, in the way in which government statistics covering low incomes were collected and presented[148] Pointing out that among the poorest fifth of families, 70 per cent had a colour television, 85 per cent had a washing machine and nearly 50 per cent had a car, he said it was 'utterly absurd to speak as if one in three people in Britain today is in dire need':

> What the new definition of relative poverty amounts to in the end is simple inequality. It means that however rich a society gets it will drag the incubus of relative poverty with it up the income scale. The poverty lobby would, on their definition, find poverty in paradise.[149]

In a passage from her memoirs, Mrs. Thatcher acknowledges her Government's return to the pathological approach of the early twentieth century:

> I had great regard for the Victorians for many reasons ... I never felt uneasy about praising 'Victorian values' or - the phrase I originally used - 'Victorian virtues', not least because they were by no means just Victorian. But the Victorians also had a way of talking which summed up what we were now discovering - they distinguished between the 'deserving ' and the 'undeserving poor'. Both groups should be given help: but it must be help of very different kinds if public spending is not just going to reinforce the dependency culture. The problem with our welfare state was that - perhaps to some degree inevitably - we had failed to remember that distinction and so we provided the same 'help' to those who had genuinely fallen into difficulties and needed some support till they could get out of them, as to those who had simply lost the will or habit of work and self-

[147] Alcock (1997) see note 43 p.4.
[148] *Ibid*, p.102.
[149] As quoted by Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.449.

> improvement. The purpose of help must not be to allow people merely to live a half-life, but to restore their self-discipline and through that their self-esteem.[150]

As this passage suggests, when Mrs. Thatcher was elected as Prime Minister in 1979, her view was that 'the state had been doing too much',[151] and her aim was to reduce state expenditure by reducing state dependency and by encouraging private protection through the market:[152]

> I came to office with one deliberate intent. To change Britain from a dependent to a self-reliant society -from a give-it-to-me to a do-it-yourself nation; to a get-up-and-go instead of a sit-back-and-wait-for-it Britain.[153]

Inequality was a necessary part of the strategy: in time the wealth created by economic growth would 'trickle down' and thus ensure raised standards for all. Clearly, for the Thatcher Government of the 1980s, and for the Major Government which succeeded it in the 1990s,[154] citizenship was an *achievement* rather than a *status*. The key to economic growth was not redistributive welfare spending but free market policies:[155]

> What lessons are to be learnt from the last thirty years? First, the pursuit of equality is a mirage. Far more desirable and more practicable than the pursuit of equality is the pursuit of equality of opportunity. Opportunity means nothing unless it includes the right to be unequal ... Let our children grow tall, and some grow taller than others if they have it in them to do so.[156]

In terms of social security policy, that meant encouraging self-support and 'targeting' relief on those in greatest need.[157] In practice it meant procedural changes to 'crack down' on 'scroungers' and reduce the supposed levels of fraud and abuse. It also meant a

[150] Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), p.627.
[151] *Ibid.,* p.626.
[152] Alcock (1997) see note 43, p.259.
[153] Thatcher, *The Times*, 9 February 1984, as quoted by Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.495.
[154] Lister, "Back to the family: family policies and politics under the Major Government" in Jones and Millar (eds), *The Politics of the Family* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996).
[155] Alcock (1997) see note 43, pp.259-260.
[156] Thatcher, *Let Our Children Grow Tall* (1975) as quoted by Timmins (2001) see note 4, p.354.
[157] Alcock (1999) see note 2, p.211.

number of measures to reduce levels of both national insurance and means-tested benefits, perhaps most notably by breaking the link with earnings in the early 1980s, from which time all cash benefits have, at best, risen in line with inflation rather than in line with national prosperity.[158] The outcomes for those receiving benefits were lower incomes and much greater reliance on means-tested benefits.[159] Meanwhile, reductions in the rates of income tax led to increases for those with incomes at the higher end of the scale and, despite Mrs. Thatcher's insistence in the Commons in 1988 that 'everyone in the nation has benefited from increased prosperity - everyone,'[160] the end result was rising inequality on an unprecedented scale.[161]

The strategy of inequality also failed to 'roll back' the welfare state. Not only was there continued widespread public support for welfare services, but there was also an increased demand for those services. Hence:

> ... in its last year in office, 1996 -1997 (the financial year starting in April 1996), the Conservative Government devoted almost the same share of national income to the main welfare services as its Labour predecessor had twenty years before ... The balance of welfare spending changed between services - towards health and social security at the expense of housing and education - but the overall total remained at or around a quarter of national income.[162]

Not surprisingly, therefore, after its election in 1997, the New Labour Government pointed to increased inequality and social exclusion, despite increased spending on social security, as one of 'three fundamental problems' with the social security system.[163] The other two were said to be that: 'people are trapped on benefit rather than being helped off' and 'fraud is diverting resources from genuine claimants.' In its view:

> The welfare state now faces a choice of futures. A privatised future, with the welfare state becoming a residual safety net for the poorest and most

[158] Hills, *Thatcherism, New Labour and the Welfare State* CASEpaper 13 (LSE: CASE, 1998), p.4.
[159] Alcock (1999) see note 1, p.69. Timmins (2001) see note 4, pp. 372-375.
[160] *Hansard*, 17 May 1988, col. 801.
[161] See Walker and Walker (eds) note 5.
[162] Hills (1998) see note 158, p.2.

> marginalised; the *status quo*, but with more generous benefits; or the Government's third way - promoting opportunity instead of dependence with a welfare state providing for the mass of the people, but in new ways to fit the modern world.[164]

Although this new approach retains strong overtones of MUD, it is largely underpinned by SID, the third of the discourses of social exclusion identified by Levitas.

SID: No Work

If RED is commensurate with 'Old Left's strategy of equality' and MUD with 'New Right's strategy of inequality', then SID, a social integrationist discourse which focuses on paid work as the means to social inclusion, is exemplified by New Labour's 'Third Way'. SID aims to *control* the behaviour of both *individuals* and *communities* and, whilst it seeks to *prevent* poverty and social exclusion for 'working families', it only offers *relief* for 'workless households'.

The 'Third Way' has often been criticised as a meaningless concept and, perhaps for this reason, the term is becoming less prominent in Government rhetoric. Nevertheless, what is clear is that it is a political hybrid. The Prime Minister has described it as 'a *third* way because it moves decisively beyond an Old Left preoccupied by state control, high taxation and producer interests; and a New Right treating public investment, and often the very notions of 'society' and collective endeavour, as evils to be undone'.[165] Similarly, SID is a hybrid between RED and MUD, though Levitas identifies a number of features which distinguish it from both:

- It narrows the definition of social exclusion/inclusion to participation in paid work.

[163] DSS (1998) see note 12, para.5.
[164] *Ibid.*, para.10.
[165] Blair (1998) see note 7, p.1.

- It squeezes out the question of why people who are not employed are consigned to poverty. Consequently, it does not, like RED, imply a reduction of poverty by an increase in benefit levels.
- It obscures the inequalities between paid workers.
- Since women are paid significantly less than men, and are far more likely to be in low-paid jobs, it obscures gender, as well as class, inequalities in the labour market.
- It erases from view the inequality between those owning the bulk of productive property and the working population.
- It is unable to address adequately the question of unpaid work in society.
- Because it ignores unpaid work and its gendered distribution, it implies an increase in women's total workload.
- It undermines the legitimacy of non-participation in paid work.[166]

On the face of it, the approach of the New Labour Government is markedly different to that which preceded it. The debate has been decisively reopened and poverty is back on the political agenda, though now with a broader meaning better understood by the term social exclusion. Furthermore, there is a Minister for Social Exclusion, a 'strong commitment' to tackling this 'barrier to opportunity'[167] and a pledge to produce an annual Poverty Report to monitor progress.[168] The Report uses multiple indicators as measures of poverty and social exclusion, which fall into three broad categories: 'those that focus on incomes; those that focus on wider aspects of welfare such as education, housing, health and the quality of local environments; and those that capture factors that affect people during their lives and increase the risk that they experience deprivation at a later point'.[169] The use of multiple indicators is indicative of the Government's recognition of the need to 'tackle joined up problems with joined up solutions',[170] as is its establishment

[166] Levitas (1998) see note 70, p.26.
[167] DSS, *Opportunity for All, One Year On: Making a Difference.* Second Annual Report 2000 Cm 4865, Foreword.
[168] DSS, *Opportunity for all: Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion*, First Annual Report 1999, Cm 4445, Foreword. See also DSS (2000), note 167; DSS, *Opportunity for All: Making Progress*, Third Annual Report 2001, Cm 5260 and DSS, *Opportunity for All*, Fourth Annual Report 2002, Cm 5598.
[169] DSS (1999) see note 168, Indicators of success: definitions, data and baseline information, p.1.
[170] Alistair Darling, Secretary of State for Social Security, Speech at the launch of the Government's first annual report (see note 168) 21.9.99.

of the cross-cutting Social Exclusion Unit (SEU),[171] Strategy Unit[172] and Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU).[173]

Closer examination of this new approach, however, suggests that it is less at variance with its predecessors than it first appears. Lister points out that by focusing 'on discrete problems and problem groups' the SEU encourages 'the belief that these groups are themselves the problem'[174] (as in MUD above). The Prime Minister's own definition of social exclusion is similarly enlightening:

> A short-hand label for what can happen when *individuals or areas suffer from* a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.[175] (My emphasis).

By contrast, a definition proposed by Julian Le Grand that met with 'something like a consensus' when circulated at a meeting early in 1998 at the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion begins as follows:

> A (British) individual is socially excluded if (a) he/she is geographically resident in the United Kingdom but (b) *for reasons beyond his or her control*, he/she cannot participate in the normal activities of United Kingdom citizens, and (c) he/she would like to so participate.[176] (My emphasis).

Whilst the second definition implies a structural approach, the first is a more pathological approach which builds on discourses hitherto associated predominantly with Conservative administrations. That is not to suggest that there is no recognition of the structural causes of poverty and social exclusion. In a speech in 2000, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment echoed Rowntree's five life-cycle changes as he identified seven key

---

[171] See www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk
[172] The Strategy Unit replaced the Performance and Innovation Unit in 2002, see www.strategy-unit.gov.uk
[173] See www.neighbourhood.gov.uk
[174] Lister, "Citizenship, Exclusion and "The Third Way" in Social Security Reform: reflections on T.H.Marshall" (2000) 7 JSSL 87.
[175] DSS (1999) see note 168, p.23.

life transitions when people are 'often at their most anxious and vulnerable':[177] birth and early years; from early years to primary school; from primary to secondary school; from adolescence into adulthood; moving from job to job; becoming a parent or other carer and moving into retirement. Nevertheless he left citizens in no doubt about their responsibility to become self-supporting:

> The Government is committed to providing protection against poverty and support at vulnerable junctures in an individual's development but the welfare state of the 21st Century can not, and will not, fund indolence. There is no option of a life on benefit.[178]

> Our challenge is to ensure security for those who can't work and real opportunities for those who can. Rights for the most vulnerable in our society and responsibilities for those, who with support, can engage in the world of work. We need a welfare state where benefits help people cope with the transition in and out of work, with training and skills support to enable people to change jobs when they need to.[179]

New Labour's third way in welfare aims to 'combine public and private provision in a new partnership for the new age':[180]

> ... We are creating a welfare system which is 'active' and not 'passive', genuinely providing people with a 'hand-up' not a hand-out' ... We believe that the role of the welfare state is to help people help themselves, to give people the means to be independent. We are creating an active welfare state focused on giving people the opportunities to support themselves, principally through work.[181]

---

[176] Le Grand, "Possible definition of social exclusion", paper circulated at CASE meeting in January 1998, as quoted by Barry (1998) see note 62, p.4

[177] Blunkett, *Enabling Government: The Welfare State in the 21st Century.* Speech on 11.10.00, para.32. Available at www.dfes.gov.uk

[178] Blunkett, *Transforming the Welfare State.* Speech on 7.6.00. Available at www.dfes.gov.uk, para.75.

[179] Blunkett (2000) see note 178, para.81.

[180] DSS (1998) see note 12, para.13.

[181] Blair (1999) see note 9.

Echoes of Beveridge perhaps, but arguably louder echoes of earlier Conservative Party rhetoric. For example, the 1985 Green Paper states:

> Fundamental to this approach is a belief that the system of social security provision should be based on a clear understanding of the relative roles and responsibilities of the individual and the state. In building for the future, we should follow the basic principle that social security is not a function of the state alone. It is a partnership between the individual and the state - a system built on twin pillars.[182]

For New Labour that partnership represents a 'new contract between citizen and state'[183] based upon 'work for those who can work and security for those who can't'.[184] The very notion of a welfare *contract* serves to press home the reciprocal obligations of citizenship; the contract which provides citizens with a *passport to social inclusion* therefore carries with it a responsibility *for social exclusion*. The clear expectation that the socially excluded have a responsibility to do something about their own exclusion extends beyond individuals to bind not just families but also communities as, informed by communitarian principles,[185] the Prime Minister describes 'community' as at the heart of my beliefs'.[186] In his words 'opportunity to all and responsibility from all equals community for all'.[187]

Thus the view of citizenship as a *practice* is affirmed. A discourse of 'rights' has become a discourse of 'responsibilities' as the contract which serves to extend the responsibilities of citizens also seeks to limit their rights. Entitlement to benefits 'as of right and without means-test' has been superseded by rights only to means-tested benefits and to opportunities to acquire the necessary skills to become self-supporting. Insurance benefits, which Beveridge envisaged would offer protection during periods of interruption in employment, have largely been replaced by means-tested benefits consistently shown to be insufficient to prevent poverty despite significant increases under the New Labour

[182] DHSS (1985) see note 13, preface. See also Dwyer, "Conditional Citizens? Welfare Rights and Responsibilities in the late 1990s" (1998) *Critical Social Policy* 18(4) pp. 493-517.
[183] DSS (1998) see note 12, Foreword and Introduction.
[184] DSS (1998) *Ibid.*
[185] See Levitas (1998) note 70, p.89.
[186] Blair, Prime Minister's Speech to the Women's Institutes' Triennial General Meeting, 7.6.00, www.number-10.gov.uk.

Government.[188] The Chancellor of the Exchequer has argued that 'merely' to improve benefit levels would 'do nothing more than compensate people for their poverty, without tackling the causes'[189] whilst, at the turn of the century, the Secretary of State for Social Security made it clear that the growth in means-testing is set to continue:

> Today the important difference in social security is not whether [benefits] are insurance based or means-tested, but whether or not they provide enough help to get people back to work and improve their lives.[190]

Hence, unlike RED, which sees redistribution as a means of reducing the privileges of the rich in favour of the poor through the tax and benefit systems, or MUD which favours redistribution from poor to rich,[191] SID is not about redistributing *income.* Rather, it is about redistributing *opportunity* through education, training and ultimately through paid work.[192] Furthermore, it is concerned not with equality of outcome (as in RED), but with equality of opportunity. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, has argued (with overtones of MUD) that 'equality of outcome ... is neither desirable nor feasible':

> pre-determined results imposed, as they would have to be, by a central authority and decided irrespective of work, effort or contribution to the community, is not a socialist dream but other people's nightmare of socialism. It denies humanity rather than liberates it.[193]

Instead, he favours:

---

[187] *Ibid.*

[188] Veit-Wilson "Poverty and adequacy of social security" in Ditch (ed) (1999), see note 1, p.79; Acheson, *Report of the Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health* (London: Stationery Office, 1999); Parker (ed), *Low Cost But Acceptable: A Minimum Income Standard for the UK, Families with Young Children, January 1998 Prices* (London: Polity Press and Zachaeus 2000 Trust); Piachaud and Sutherland, *How Effective is the British Government's Attempt to Reduce Child Poverty?* CASEp.ap.er 38 (London: LSE, CASE, 2000), p.37; Bradshaw "Child Poverty under Labour" in Fimister (ed) *Tackling Child Poverty in the UK: An End in Sight?* (London: CPAG, 2001) and Brewer et al, *The Government's Child Poverty Target: How Much Progress Has Been Made?* (London: IFS, 2002).

[189] As quoted by Lister (1998) see note 8, p.219.

[190] Social Security Select Committee (2000), see note 26, para.38. The artificial link between National Insurance Contributions (NICs) and entitlement to benefits was clearly exposed by the Government's decision in Budget 2002 to increase NICs to fund improvements in the NHS, which is traditionally funded from taxation.

[191] Levitas (1998) see note 70, p.11.

[192] Lister (1998) see note 8, p.217.

> a rich and expansive view of equality of opportunity - with a duty on government in education, in employment and in the economy as a whole to continuously and relentlessly promote opportunity not just for some of the people some of the time but opportunity for all of the people all of the time.[194]

SID is therefore a discourse in which equality is synonymous with opportunity and opportunity is largely synonymous with paid work. 'Employment opportunity for all' is described as 'the modern definition of full employment'.[195] In terms of policy this has meant introducing a number of New Deal programmes, designed to move people 'from welfare to work',[196] coupled with the introduction of a minimum wage, and changes to the tax and benefit systems which are intended to ensure that families are 'better off' when one member is in paid work.[197] Means-tested 'out-of-work' benefits serve to *relieve* poverty and social exclusion in 'workless households', but more generous 'in-work' benefits (or Tax Credits) are intended to *prevent* it in 'working families'.[198]

Significantly the New Deal programmes include the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) and the New Deal for Partners of the Unemployed (NDPU), both of which are voluntary programmes principally, though not exclusively, designed to help women in 'workless households' move into paid work. Moreover, policies which claim to promote 'family-friendly' work practices aim to make it easier to combine paid work and family life and thus to achieve a 'work-life balance'.[199] This marks an important shift of policy and raises the crucial issue of women's poverty, thus far absent from the debate but discussed at length in Chapter 3 below. Suffice to say at this juncture that, by distinguishing between 'workers' and 'non-workers' (the 'deserving' and 'non-deserving' poor), by targeting 'workless households' and focusing on paid work as the means to social inclusion, SID

---

[193] Levitas (1998) see note 70, p.135.
[194] Brown, *Our Children are Our Future*, Speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the CPAG Conference on 15.5.00. Available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.
[195] H.M.Treasury, *Pre-Budget Report* (2000), para.4.1. H.M.Treasury, *The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System* (No.6) (2000). Both available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.
[196] See www.newdeal.gov.uk.
[197] H.M.Treasury (2000) see note 195, para.2.7.
[198] See H.M. Treasury, *The Child and Working Tax Credits: The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System* (No.10) (2002). Available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.
[199] See www.lowpay.gov.uk/work-lifebalance.

(like MUD) ignores many of the structural causes of poverty, particularly women's poverty. Maximum social inclusion, and the full citizenship rights which flow from it, can only be achieved by a more holistic approach which addresses the needs of all citizens, irrespective of marital or working status. This calls for policies which value the unpaid work predominantly done by women, as parents, carers and volunteers and which address continuing inequalities in pay, in the workplace and in the allocation of caring responsibilities.

Chapter 3

Family Practices

Discourses of Lone Parenthood and Policy Responses

Introduction

> If women themselves are hobbled in the fight for equality by the demands of child-rearing, and no other group will take up the fight, it seems to follow that equality for women is doomed unless women temporarily refrain from child-rearing so that they can devote themselves to changing the situation. What would happen if they did that? I think we could expect extremely intense pressure to get them to reproduce, by force if necessary. I suspect that this development would open women's eyes to the fact that society wants babies, but that it prefers women to think that producing them is both naturally women's lot and that doing so is an individual decision. After all, in those circumstances society owes women no help in bringing up new generations. If women stopped having babies, the resulting pressures would unmask this reality.[1]

The author of 'Babystrike!', from which this extract is taken, admits that her suggestion, 'will probably be laughed off as utopian or simply ridiculous'.[2] However, it should not be quite so readily dismissed, not because it is a viable proposition (which clearly it is not), but because it effectively focuses our minds on the contradictions and complexities of the process of social change and of established gender roles.

First, because it questions the assumption that women's nurturing role is 'natural', the very idea of a 'Babystrike' suggests that 'mothers' are constructed by discourse. Secondly, by recognising the value of women's unpaid work and by acknowledging how difficult it has been for women to make their voices heard, it exposes the extent of

[1] Purdy "Babystrike!" in Nelson (ed) *Feminism and Families* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.73.
[2] *Ibid.* p.74.

inequalities and power imbalances in 'traditional' families. It thereby demonstrates that the personal *is* political; successful economies and families are inevitably interdependent and public and private spheres are inextricably interlinked. Thirdly, proposing such an extreme measure illustrates how the process of social change is perhaps necessarily slow and piecemeal; whole scale change is impractical and, as noted in Chapter 2 above, no Government is ever afforded the luxury of a clean slate.[3] Finally, and fundamentally, 'Babystrike!' raises issues about the role of law in shaping what David Morgan has chosen to call 'family practices':[4] does the law have a role and, if so, should it be coercive or supportive? This chapter begins to unpack some of these ideas by examining the relationship between the family, the labour market and the state in post-war Britain.

Family Practices

Perhaps, as Trost suggests, there is no clear definition of family life at the start of the twenty-first century:

> Evidently no one 'knows' what a family is; our perspectives vary to such a degree that to claim to know what a family is shows a lack of knowledge.[5]

Morgan's use of the term 'family practices' is therefore helpful because, as Carol Smart and Elizabeth Silva explain, it avoids an institutionalised view of 'the family'[6] and 'implies that individuals are *doing* family, instead of passively residing within a pre-given structure'.[7] There can be little doubt about the scale of change in UK family practices during the twentieth century: the availability of contraception, abortion and divorce has become widespread; there is growing acceptance of cohabitation, lone parenthood and

---

[3] See pp.31-32 above.

[4] Morgan, *Family Connections* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996). Morgan "Risk and family practices: accounting for change and fluidity in family life" in Silva and Smart (eds), *The New Family* (London: Sage, 1999).

[5] Trost (1990) "Do we mean the same by the concept of the family?", *Communication Research,* vol. 17, pp.431-43, as quoted by Cheal "The one and the many" in Allan (ed) *The Sociology of the Family*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p.61.

[6] Silva and Smart "The 'new' practices and politics of family life" in Silva and Smart (eds) (1999), see note 4, p.2.

[7] *Ibid.* p.5.

same sex relationships and far greater awareness of ethnic and cultural differences. Although most people still marry, they now do so at a later stage in their lives, they have fewer children and, while fewer people are widowed, greater numbers separate, divorce, remarry, stay single and/or remain childless. Parenting has been transformed by the continued development of assisted reproduction and by a noticeable trend towards ongoing parenting for both parents even after their own relationship has come to an end.[8]

Inevitably our understanding of family life has been revolutionised. Family ties between adults, who may or may not share the same household, variously include kin, friends and both current and former partners and spouses. Parents may be genetic parents, social parents and/or step-parents; they may co-reside or they may be lone or non-resident parents; children may reside with both parents, or with either or neither parent and they may share a household for all, some or none of the time with siblings, half-siblings and/or step-siblings. Furthermore, the very existence of one relationship necessarily impacts on others, giving rise to variations not only *between* families and households but *within* families and households. Consequently, the possibilities for family formation and reformation over the life course are now highly variable and seemingly endless.

Neither is it only family form that has undergone substantial change throughout the twentieth century: there has also been a marked change in the *nature* of family relationships which Giddens describes as a 'transformation of intimacy'. He suggests that the 'for-ever', 'one and only' qualities of the 'romantic love complex' have been surpassed by 'confluent love'; an 'active, contingent love' consonant with the 'pure relationship'.[9] As the quest for a 'special person' has given way to the quest for a 'special relationship', personal relationships have been 'democratised'[10] and so become reflexive 'projects of the self' in which autonomous actors negotiate, and renegotiate, their own terms.

[8] Smart and Neale, *Family Fragments?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999). The Children Act 1989 seeks to encourage this phenomenon, see pp.97-98 below.
[9] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love & Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp.61-62.
[10] *Ibid.* p.184.

> A pure relationship has nothing to do with sexual purity, and is a limiting concept rather than only a descriptive one. It refers to a situation where a social relation is entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfactions for each individual to stay within it.[11]

Building on Giddens's work in their analysis of post-divorce parenting, Carol Smart and Bren Neale criticise it for minimising the impact of children on personal relationships.[12] Drawing also on the work of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim,[13] they suggest that an increased vulnerability in ties between adults has helped to strengthen the relatively more permanent bond between parents and children and has thus contributed to a greater tendency for children themselves to become the focus of a 'special relationship'. This necessarily has implications for relationships between former partners:

> Giddens seems ignorant of the trend (for which there is as much evidence as there is for the trend towards the pure relationship) towards ongoing parenting after divorce. A sexual relationship may end but parenting is harder to abdicate. It is not clear therefore that couples can simply end relationships and move on even if that is what they most want to do for themselves.[14]

The picture which emerges of the 'new family' is one of fluidity and diversity rendering obsolete any idea of the 'natural', 'normal' or 'traditional' family comprised of a husband and wife raising their joint offspring and living together for life. Indeed feminist analyses have dispelled this view of 'the family' as a myth that represents only a 'model of family life which is associated with a particular cultural and economic moment in British history.'[15] Felicity Edholm asserts:

---

[11] *Ibid.* p.58.
[12] Smart and Neale (1999) see note 8, p.12.
[13] Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage, 1992); Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *The Normal Chaos of Love* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).
[14] Smart and Neale (1999), see note 8, p.13.

> The family, particularly the nuclear family, can be seen, through comparative analysis, as just one very specific means of organizing the relations between parents and children, males and females. It is not, as has so often been claimed, some kind of 'natural' instinctive and 'sacred' unit. Even the bond between mothers and their own children, which is seen in almost mystic terms as the fundamental biologically determined relationship, can be seen as far less important than we are generally led to believe. Universal definitions of human relations must be constantly questioned and the whole notion of the 'natural' must, in terms of human relations, be challenged and the 'unnatural' – in these terms the social construction of relationships – must be fully recognised.[16]

The decline of the mythical 'traditional' family is often portrayed as evidence of 'family breakdown' or 'instability'. Lone parenthood is regarded as a particularly problematic consequence of family breakdown because it is seen as imposing unacceptably high costs on society as a whole, both directly (in terms of the social security budget) and indirectly (in terms of children's outcomes).[17] However, such concerns are often overstated. Certainly Government statistics do indicate a significant shift away from the 'traditional' family, but this probably says more about the inherent contradictions and limitations of statistical indicators than it does about family 'stability':[18]

> Family life is now typically measured in terms of something called 'stability'. Stability is good and instability is bad. But the main, supposedly objective, measure of stability (namely divorce) is an exceptionally crude instrument which

---

[15] Silva and Smart (1999) see note 6, p.3. See also Silva (ed), *Good Enough Mothering? Feminist Perspectives on Lone Motherhood* (London: Routledge, 1996), especially Silva, "The transformation of mothering", p.10 and Smart, "Deconstructing motherhood", p.37.

[16] Edholm "The unnatural family" in Loney et al (eds), *The State or the Market: Politics and Welfare in Contemporary Britain*, (London: Sage, 1991), p.152. See also Smart "Securing the family? Rhetoric and policy in the field of social security" in Loney et al (eds) (1991) *Ibid*, p.153.

[17] See Silva (1996), note 15; Millar, "State, family and personal responsibility: the changing balance for lone mothers in the United Kingdom" in Allan (ed) (1999) see note 5, p.247; Ford and Millar (eds) *Private Lives & Public Responses: Lone Parenthood & Future Policy in the UK* (Oxford: Policy Studies Institute, 1998); Burghes, *Lone Parenthood and Family Disruption: The Outcomes for Children*, (London: The Family Policy Studies Centre, 1994); Kiernan, *The Legacy of Parental Divorce: Social Economic and Demographic Experiences in Adulthood* (London: LSE, CASE, 1997); Rodgers and Pryor, *Divorce and Separation: The Outcomes for Children*, (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1998); Gregg et al, *Child Development and Family Income*, (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999).

[18] Levitas and Guy, *Interpreting Official Statistics* (London: Routledge, 1996).

> does not even measure co-residence, let alone the quality of relationships. The existence of violence in households as a measure of 'stability' might yield a completely different picture of how stable married family life is.[19]

Evidence of family breakdown can be equally unreliable. At the end of the twentieth century, 20 per cent of the UK population lived in households composed of a married couple with dependent children[20] (not all of whom were the 'natural' children of both spouses). However, Faith Robertson Elliott notes how this figure:

> fails to take account of family life-cycle processes and thus ignores the fact that most 'married couple, no children households' and 'one person households' are in either the pre-childbearing or the post-childbearing stage of the lifecycle and either will become or have been 'married couple, dependent children households'. Further it conflates households (groups of persons bound to a place) with families (groups of persons bound together by sexual and reproductive ties). Information about the former does not by itself enable us to draw conclusions about the latter.[21]

Similarly, the work of Karen Rowlingson and Stephen McKay[22] illustrates that lone parent families, like all families, are not a homogeneous group: lone parenthood is a process comprised of a number of different stages and the routes in and out are varied. Lone parenting is usually preceded and/or followed by cohabitation and/or marriage[23] and, for most families, it represents only one of a number of varying family practices over the life-course. Thus at the end of the twentieth century, 12 per cent of the UK population were living in lone parent households whilst almost three quarters were living in households composed of heterosexual couples (almost 90 per cent of whom were married, two-thirds had children and just over half had dependent children).[24] Accounts of a

[19] Smart and Neale (1999) see note 8, p.29.
[20] Office for National Statistics, Social Survey Division, *Living in Britain, Results from the 1998 General Household Survey* (London: The Stationery Office, 1998).
[21] Elliot, *Gender, Family and Society* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p.35.
[22] Rowlingson and McKay, *The Growth of Lone Parenthood: Diversity and Dynamics,* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1998). See also Kiernan et al, *Lone Motherhood in Twentieth-Century Britain: From Footnote to Front Page* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
[23] Kiernan et al (1998) *Ibid.,* p.53.
[24] Office for National Statistics, Social Survey Division (1998) see note 20, p.28.

decline in the 'traditional family' therefore exaggerate the extent of changes in family practices and are unnecessarily alarmist:

> We might say that there is both continuity and diversity in family life at the end of the twentieth century. This means that although there is a numerical dominance in the form of two-parent families, this organization no longer defines so exclusively what it is like to live in a family, or what a family *is*.[25]

In Chapter 1 above, it was suggested that women's nature is constructed by discourse: women are made not born.[26] Families are similarly constructed and our socially constructed roles as mothers and fathers not only determine how our children are nurtured, but also how family income is acquired and how that income is distributed among family members. Hence the myth of the 'traditional family' coexists with the myth of the family as a private arena which is independent of the state:

> As a considerable body of feminist research has revealed, state welfare allocates resources and facilities on the basis of assumptions about the role of the nuclear family in the care and economic support of the individual, family law establishes the legal rights and obligations of spouses and cohabitees in relation to each other and of parents in relation to children, and employment law prohibits or limits the employment of children and influences the conditions under which women and men compete in the labour market. Family privacy, these analyses suggest is a myth.[27]

During the course of debates on the Family Law Bill early in 1996, Baroness Young clearly demonstrated how legislators remain convinced of the law's impact on family practices:

[25] Silva and Smart (1999) see note 4, p.24.
[26] See p.18 above.
[27] Elliot "The family: private arena or adjunct of the state?" (1989) *Journal of Law and Society* vol.16 no.4, p.445. See also Okin "Families and feminist theory: some past and present issues" in Nelson (ed) (1997), see note 1, pp.24-25.

> Law influences behaviour and it sends out a very clear message. There would be no point in legislating at all if the law did not influence behaviour.[28]

Continuing change therefore presents obvious tensions for policy-makers. Should they strive for continuity and try to 'put the Genie back in the bottle,'[29] or should they promote change and actively support diversity in family practices? Moreover, should the needs of children and their carers remain the responsibility of individual families or should they be accepted as the collective responsibility of the state? These are dilemmas which have constantly shaped the policy debate.

The relationship between law and behaviour is complex and unpredictable: law and behaviour are shaped by discourses which are themselves shaped by law and behaviour. Nevertheless, research suggests that laws which try to impose professional or political opinion, without taking account of how people reach what they consider to be morally appropriate decisions in their own particular situations, are not only likely to remain inefficient, but also to attract widespread resentment,[30] as exemplified by the experiences of the Children Act 1989,[31] the Child Support Act 1991[32] and the Family Law Act 1996.[33] The private discourses of individuals are at least as essential to effective social policies as are political or popular 'public' discourses which underpin them. Social problems do not simply occur: they are constructed by public discourses which fail to respond to the flux and multiplicity of private discourses. The 'problem' of lone parenthood is no exception.

---

[28] Hansard, H.L. Debs., vol.569, col.1638 (29 February 1996).

[29] Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, pp. 279-285.

[30] Duncan and Edwards, *Lone Mothers, Paid Work and Gendered Moral Rationalities* (London: Macmillan, 1999); Barlow and Duncan "Supporting families? New Labour's communitarianism and the 'rationality mistake': Part I, JSWFL 22(1) 2000: 23-42; Barlow and Duncan "Supporting families? New Labour's communitarianism and the 'rationality mistake': Part II, JSWFL 22(2) 2000: 129-143. See also Finch, *Family Obligations and Social Change,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989); Finch and Mason, *Negotiating Family Responsibilities* (London: Routledge, 1993) and Smart "Wishful thinking and harmful tinkering? sociological reflections on family policy", (1997) *Journal of Social Policy* vol.26 no.3, pp.301-321.

[31] Smart and Neale (1999) see note 8.

[32] Davis et al, *Child Support in Action* (Oxford: Hart, 1998). Millar, "State, family and personal responsibility: the changing balance for lone mothers in the United Kingdom" in Allan (ed)(1999) see note 5, p.247. Maclean "The origins of child support in Britain and the case for a strong child support system" in Ford and Millar (eds) (1998) see note 17, p.226. Clarke et al, "Supporting children? The impact of the Child Support Act on lone mothers and children" *Ibid.*, p.233.

[33] Smart and Neale (1999) see note 8; Smart (1997) see note 30, p.319; Barlow and Duncan (2000), Part I, see note 30, p.39.

Women's Hidden Poverty

By the time poverty was being redefined in the late 1950s, it was clear that Beveridge had not anticipated the pace and scale of change in UK family practices; his aspiration to abolish 'Want' had been overly optimistic and the means-tested National Assistance scheme had far exceeded the residual role originally envisaged for it.[34] Moreover, the Beveridge welfare state was failing to prevent poverty in many of the 'traditional' families for whom it was designed, much less meet the challenge of providing for growing numbers of less traditional families. There is some evidence to suggest that the response of officers of the National Assiststance Board (NAB) was to use their discretion to differentiate between categories of lone parent (i.e. widows, separated/divorced and unmarried) so that, despite popular discourses which continued to regard women as mothers first and workers second, 'less deserving' lone parent recipients of National Assistance were often pressured into taking up paid employment.[35]

Throughout the twentieth century, discourses in the UK firmly endorsed the concept of the family wage which presupposes that all men have dependent families and that all women have men they can rely on for economic support.[36] Thus women's role as carer and men's role as worker are deeply embedded in our culture. For a time, it looked as though the discourse might have been transcended as mothers were actively encouraged to join the labour force to meet the acute labour shortage during the Second World War. By 1943, 40 per cent of married women were in paid employment,[37] but a widely shared expectation that the established pre-war pattern of family life would eventually prevail ensured that, after the war, the rapid expansion of day nurseries, which had facilitated women's participation in the labour market, was quickly reversed.[38]

The contributory principle underpinning Beveridge's welfare state remains pivotal to women's poverty, both because it continues to enjoy widespread support (even if it is not

---

[34] See p.45 above.
[35] Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, pp.246-248.
[36] Land, "The family wage" (1980) in *Feminist Review* No.6, pp.55-77.
[37] Lewis "The problem of lone-mother families in twentieth century Britain", JSWFL 20(3) 1998, p.260.
[38] Beveridge, *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (London: HMSO, 1942), Cmnd. 6404, para 108.

well understood)[39] and because it establishes a link between the labour market and entitlement to social security benefits, however artificial that link has subsequently become.[40] It was intended that the welfare state would provide comprehensive social security for people outside the labour market (i.e. when sick, retired or temporarily unemployed). In Beveridge's words:

> The scheme of social insurance is designed of itself when in full operation to guarantee the income needed for subsistence in all normal cases.[41]

It was thus designed on the basis of a number of assumptions about what was *normal*: a normal family consisted of two parents, male and female respectively, living together with their joint offspring;[42] it was normal for men to have full-time regular working patterns, with only brief spells out of work and it was normal for the majority of women not to take up paid employment:[43]

> during marriage most women will not be gainfully occupied ... The attitude of the housewife to gainful employment outside the home is not and should not be the same as the single woman - she has other duties.[44]

In Beveridge's view, marriage secured for children 'the proper domestic environment and care';[45] husband and wife were regarded as 'a team,' each with equally important, but clearly defined, roles (hers as 'mother' and his as 'worker') and each readily accepting that a married woman should be economically dependent on her husband.[46] The scheme regarded married women as a 'special insurance class of occupied persons' and a man's contributions were treated as 'made on behalf of himself and his wife'.[47] Married women who were working could choose to pay a lower rate of National Insurance Contribution

---

[39] Social Security Select Committee, Fifth Report, Session 1999-2000, *The Contributory Principle,* HC 56 (I-II), paras. 41, 70 and 97.
[40] See p. 65 above.
[41] Beveridge (1942) see note 38, para.23. Social Security Select Committee (2000) see note 39, para.23
[42] Social Security Select Committee (2000) see note 39, para.25.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] Beveridge (1942) see note 38, paras.50-51.
[45] *Ibid.,* para.348 (iii).
[46] *Ibid.* para.107.
[47] *Ibid.*

(NIC) which would entitle them to lower unemployment and disability benefits based on the assumption that their husbands were already providing them with a home. Hence most insurance benefits in respect of wives (or widows) were paid by virtue of their husbands' NICs and Beveridge considered it inconceivable that on separation or divorce, a 'guilty' wife should receive an insurance benefit based on her husband's contributions. The administrative complexities of distinguishing between 'guilty' and 'innocent' wives led him to conclude that the needs of an anticipated small group of women should be met not from insurance benefits, but, like those of unmarried mothers, from the less generous, and publicly funded, National Assistance scheme.[48]

In the years immediately following the implementation of the Beveridge Plan, mothers of young children were advised by health and welfare professionals (themselves informed by Bowlby's 'Attachment Theory')[49] that their children would fare better if they did not take even part-time employment until their children were in school. Against this background, it was extremely difficult for women to establish their right to work outside the home or to receive the same pay and conditions as men.[50] In other words, married women gained access to full citizenship rights (i.e. social rights[51]) only by proxy (i.e. by economic dependence on a partner). A 1971 study of *Sex, Career and Family* concluded that women:

> tend not to be offered the same chances of training for skilled work or promotion as men nor to be motivated by their education or work environment to take them; that they tend to be segregated into 'women's work', devalued by unequal pay, treated as lacking in commitment to their work and as unsuitable to be in authority over men, and trained and encouraged not merely to accept these conditions but to think them right; and that husbands, the community ... and employers have only

---

[48] *Ibid.,* para.347. See further Lewis (1998) note 37, p.264.
Unmarried mothers might qualify for insurance benefits for a specified time if they had paid sufficient contributions and satisfied prescribed conditions. Otherwise, unless these mothers were in paid work or supported by non-resident fathers or by other means, the needs of their families would be met from the National Assistance scheme. (Beveridge (1942) see note 20, paras.110 and 111).

[49] Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (Geneva: WHO, 1951). See further Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.242.

[50] Smart, *The Ties That Bind* (London: Routledge, 1984), p.228.

[51] See p.36 above.

> half-heartedly adapted to the change in the women's labour market due to the increased share taken in it by married women.[52]

Feminist analyses of social policy reveal how, throughout the twentieth century, the support of successive UK Governments for this traditional breadwinner/homemaker model of family life[53] led many women to become reliant either on their partners or the state for a large part of their incomes and how women consequently came to be over-represented among the poor. The point has been succinctly made by Carey Oppenheim and Lisa Harker:

> Women's poverty is compounded over a lifetime. Their rates of pay, work patterns interrupted because of caring for others, the trap of part-time work, and the diminished social security, occupational and private benefits received as a result of their work patterns combine to impoverish women throughout their lives. Women's longer life expectancy and their reduced access to pensions mean that a high proportion are living out their lives on pitiful levels of income.[54]

Caroline Glendenning and Jane Millar have graphically described how this relationship between poverty and gender was largely ignored before feminist researchers intervened to focus attention on the structural causes of women's poverty.[55] Until relatively recently, neither researchers nor policy makers addressed the issue and women's greater risk of poverty remained 'hidden' in two important respects. First, as discussed in Chapter 1 above, poverty research relied on traditional methods which failed to recognise the significance of gender and thus tended to reflect a world created and described almost exclusively by white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual men.[56] Secondly, and more

---

[52] Fogarty and Rapoport, *Sex, Career and Family* (Allen and Unwin, 1971) as quoted in DHSS, *Report of the Committee on One-Parent Families,* The Finer Report (London: HMSO, 1974), para 7.41.

[53] See for example Pascall, *Social Policy: A New Feminist Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1997); Lewis (1998) see note 37; Duncan and Edwards "Single mothers in Britain: unsupported workers or mothers" in Duncan and Edwards (eds), *Single Mothers in an International Context: Mothers or Workers?* (London: UCL Press, 1997); Lewis and Piachaud "Women and poverty in the twentieth century" in Glendinning and Millar (eds), *Women and Poverty in Britain in the 1990s* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p.27.

[54] Oppenheim and Harker, *Poverty the Facts,* (London: CPAG, 1996), p110.

[55] Glendinning and Millar "Poverty: the forgotten Englishwoman" in MacLean and Groves (eds), *Women's Issues in Social Policy* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.20.

[56] See p.20 above.

centrally here, women's poverty, already exacerbated by inequalities in the workplace and in the allocation of caring responsibilities, has been further exacerbated by the unequal distribution of income within households.

As early as 1901, Seebohm Rowntree wrote:

> Extraordinary expenditure, such as the purchase of a piece of furniture, is met by reducing the sum spent on food. As a rule, in such cases it is the wife and sometimes the children who have to forego a portion of their food - the importance of maintaining the strength of the wage-earner is recognised, and he obtains his ordinary share.[57]

One woman's account served to illustrate the point:

> 'If there's anythink extra to buy, such as a pair of boots for one of the children ... me and the children goes without dinner - or mebbe 'as a cup o' tea and a bit o' bread, but Jim (her husband) ollers takes 'is dinner to work, and I give it to 'im as usual; 'e never knows we go without, and I never tells 'im'.[58]

Rowntree's work further demonstrated that women's greater risk of poverty was not limited to economic deprivation alone:

> No one can fail to be struck by the monotony which characterises the life of most married women of the working class. Probably this monotony is least marked in the slum districts, where life is lived more in common, and where the women are constantly in and out of each others' houses, or meet and gossip in the courts and streets. But with advance in the social scale, family life becomes more private, and the women, left in the house all day whilst their husbands are at work, are largely thrown upon their own resources. These as a rule are sadly limited, and in the deadening monotony of their lives these women too often become mere hopeless drudges ... The husband commonly finds his chief interests among his 'mates',

[57] Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (London: Macmillan, 1902), p.55.
[58] *Ibid.,* p.55.

> and seldom rises even to the idea of mental companionship with his wife. He rarely ill-treats her; but restricted education and a narrow circle of activities hinder comradeship, and lack of mental touch tends to pass into unconscious neglect or active selfishness.[59]

Despite these observations and those of later research findings which were similarly suggestive of a direct link between gender and poverty, policy makers failed to address the issue, principally because researchers, and more especially official poverty statistics, consistently relied on *household* income, rather than *individual* income as a measure of poverty.[60] Building on Beveridge's assumption that it was *normal* for married women to rely on their husbands for financial security, it was assumed that men as breadwinners could be 'trusted' to distribute their income (whether benefit or earnings) 'responsibly' (as opposed to 'equitably').[61] It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that feminist writers began to expose the continued unequal distribution of income within households and the sense of disempowerment that flowed from women's lack of control over income and thus over important life decisions.[62] Glendenning and Millar have concisely summarised the consequences:

> ...the use of household based definitions and measures of poverty rests upon an assumption that both the distribution of income and the consumption of resources *within* households are unproblematic and equal. Household based measures therefore ignore the differences in men and women's access to, and control over, household income; they ignore the differences in men and women's consumption of the various goods and services which that income buys; and they ignore women's intensified experience of poverty through their role in managing scarce household resources on behalf of others.[63]

---

[59] *Ibid.,* pp.77-78.
[60] Glendinning and Millar (1991) see note 55, pp.24-26.
[61] McLaughlin "Social security and poverty: women's business" in Ditch (ed), *Introduction to Social Security* (London: Routledge, 1999) p.181.
[62] *Ibid.,*p.182. See Pahl "Patterns of money management within marriage" (1980) *Journal of Social Policy* vol.9 no.3 pp.13-35; Pahl, *Money and Marriage* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989); Vogler and Pahl "Social and economic change and the organisation of money within marriage" (1993) *Work, Employment and Society* vol 7 no.1 pp.71-95; Goode et al, *Purse or Wallet? Gender Inequalities and Income Distribution within Families on Benefit* (London: Policies Studies Institute, 1998); Lister et al, "Income distribution within families and the reform of social security" (1999), JSWFL 21(3), p.203.
[63] Glendinning and Millar (1991) see note 55, p.28.

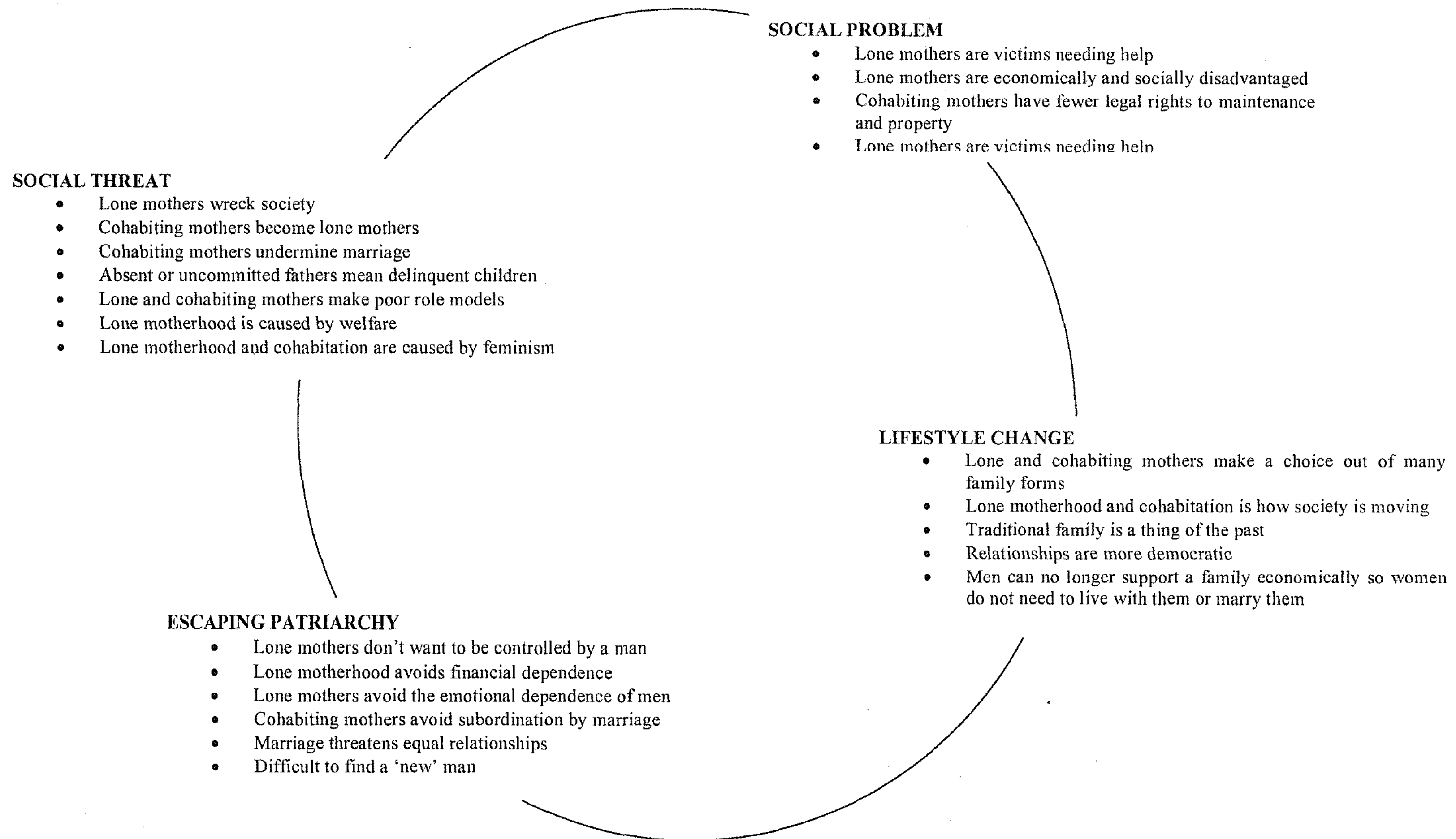
Research funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation suggests that, despite profound economic and social change, the twentieth century ended much as it began for women in poverty:[64]

> Spending patterns and responsibility for different types of expenditure were highly gendered. Men prioritized personal spending money more highly than women, who typically took responsibility for vigilant restraint over both their own and their partners' spending, going without themselves to prioritize their children's needs. In practice, the distinction between 'individual' and 'collective' expenditure was sometimes muddled: men tended to legitimate elements of their individual spending as having been a collective benefit and to define women's 'collective' spending on their children as 'individual'. The latter reflected a belief, shared by men and women, that responsibility for meeting children's everyday needs was the woman's domain.[65]

In other words, twentieth century discourses have embedded women's role as carers and have thus served to increase the likelihood of women's poverty and to ensure that the vast majority of lone parents are women. Simon Duncan and Rosalind Edwards have identified four public discourses of lone motherhood which they respectively describe as a 'social problem', a 'social threat', a 'lifestyle change' and a means of 'escaping patriarchy'.[66] All four, as adapted by Anne Barlow and Simon Duncan to include cohabiting mothers,[67] are usefully summarised in Figure 2 below.

[64] See also p.11 above.
[65] Lister et al (1999) see note 62, pp.205-206.
[66] Duncan and Edwards (1999) see note 30.
[67] Barlow and Duncan (2000), Part II, see note 30.

***Figure 2: Discourses on lone and cohabiting mothers (adapted from Duncan and Edwards, 1999)**



*** Reproduced from Barlow A. and Duncan S., "New Labour's communitarianism, supporting families and the 'rationality mistake': Part II", JSWFL 22(2) 2000: 133**

Although these discourses provide a useful guide to policy developments since the Second World War, it is worth re-iterating at this juncture, that no discourse is distinct. To some extent, discourses of lone motherhood are inevitably linked not just to each other but also to RED, MUD and SID, the discourses of social exclusion described in Chapter 2 above. All are presented only as models with obvious overlaps and possible omissions. Moreover, discourses of lone *motherhood* are, to some extent at least, also applicable to lone *fathers*.[68] Focusing on lone motherhood is more than an acknowledgement that the overwhelming majority of lone parents are women, it helps to expose the fundamental significance of gender in constructing the 'problem' of lone parenthood. However, it also ensures that women's role as carer, or mother, becomes still more deeply embedded and hence, in my view, it is preferable to use ungendered terms such as 'parent', 'carer' and 'paid worker' wherever possible. I do so here on the premise that, irrespective of their gender, all lone parents have, to a greater or lesser extent, taken on the role hitherto more commonly associated only with women as mothers.

Lone Parents as a Social Problem

The 'social problem' discourse posits lone parents as economically and socially disadvantaged victims in need of greater state support. Their social exclusion is attributed not to lone parents themselves but to external social circumstances.[69] This view of lone parenthood overlaps with the 'lifestyle change' discourse where lifestyle changes are seen as inevitably creating specific social problems, particularly as social institutions take some time to adapt.[70] Emphasising equality of living conditions regardless of family form,[71] the 'lifestyle change' discourse is exemplified by legislation such as the Divorce Reform Act 1969, the Equal Pay Act 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. Within this discourse, lone parents are depicted as autonomous agents who have a right to choose lone parenthood as a family practice and a plurality of family forms is 'certainly not to be

[68] There is some evidence to suggest that men may have different experiences of lone parenthood to women. See, for example, DSS In-house Research Report No.42 (1998), Hales et al, *Evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents: A Preliminary Assessment of the Counterfactual*, pp.4-5 and DSS Research Report No. 22 (2000), Lewis et al, *Lone Parents and Personal Advisers: Roles and Relationships. A Follow-up Study of the New Deal for Lone Parents Phase One Prototype*, para.2.5.
[69] Duncan and Edwards (1999) see note 30, p.31
[70] *Ibid.*, p.37

feared' but, at worst, accepted and at best welcomed.[72] Both the 'social problem' and 'lifestyle change' discourses are consonant with Levitas's redistributionist discourse of social exclusion (RED) which, as we have seen,[73] began to hold sway in the 1950s when it transpired that poverty was still more widespread than commonly believed.

Somewhat ironically, the post-war welfare state, which itself afforded lone parents the means to live autonomously in the community, helped to construct the 'problem' of lone parenthood. By offering lone parents the capacity for (albeit poor) autonomous living, the National Assistance scheme boosted their visibility and contributed to their increased number.[74] In turn, their greater visibility triggered public concern about the extent of their poverty, the welfare of their children and the cost of supporting them from the public purse. It is this concern which has become the focus of much public debate and which continues to provide the impetus for reform.

During the 1960s and 1970s, both major political parties professed a commitment to reducing poverty levels[75] and, working within the 'social problem' and 'lifestyle change' discourses of lone parenthood, both legislated to alleviate some of the shortcomings of the National Assistance scheme. The Supplementary Benefits Act, introduced by the Labour Government in 1966, was intended to reduce both the discretion and the stigma attached to the system,[76] while, in 1970, the incoming Conservative Government introduced a supposedly temporary measure to tackle continuing poverty among children in families. Family Income Supplement (FIS), a new means-tested benefit reminiscent of the 'Speenhamland' system, was intended to supplement the incomes of families with children where one parent was in paid work.[77] Its novel feature was the parity it established between one-parent and two-parent families: the amount of benefit depended only on the number of children, not on the number of parents.[78] This matched the parity

---

[71] *Ibid.*, p.38.
[72] *Ibid.*, p.36.
[73] See p.44 above.
[74] Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.5. McLaughlin (1999) see note 61, p.178.
[75] See p.38 above.
[76] Firstly, by conferring a *right* to assistance (henceforth to be known as Supplementary Benefit) in prescribed circumstances and secondly, by amalgamating the administration of contributory and means-tested benefits. Wikeley, Ogus & Barendt, *The Law of Social Security* (fifth edition) (London: Butterworths, 2002), p.274.
[77] *Ibid.*, p.519.
[78] Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.171.

already existing in the tax system which enabled lone parents to claim an additional personal allowance equivalent to the married man's allowance.[79] Nevertheless, the work of organisations such as the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child (later to become the National Council for One Parent Families), Child Poverty Action Group, Mothers in Action and Gingerbread, had helped to raise public awareness of lone parent families as 'a special group having exceptionally low standards of living'.[80]

Consequently, in 1969, a Royal Commission under the chairmanship of a High Court Judge, the Hon Sir Morris Finer, was appointed to consider 'the problems of one-parent families in our society' and 'in what respects and to what extent it would be appropriate to give one-parent families further assistance.'[81] The terms of reference required the Finer Committee to have regard to 'the need to maintain equity as between one-parent families and other families' and to 'practical and economic limitations'.[82] Its report, published in 1974, was clearly underpinned by the 'social problem' discourse of lone parenthood:

> There are, of course, other disadvantaged groups; but in terms of families with children, which must be the relevant standard of comparison here, there can be no other group of this size who are as poor as fatherless families, of whom so many lack any State benefit or family allowances, whose financial position is so uncertain, and whose hope of improvement in their situation is relatively so remote.[83]

Three major factors in relation to the incomes of one parent families were identified: the lack of any worthwhile financial gain by combining part-time work with Supplementary Benefit (formerly National Assistance); the low level of income among one-parent families compared with two parent families; and the inadequacy and uncertainty of

---

[79] *Ibid.*, p.254.
[80] The Finer Report (1974) see note 52, para.2.3. (The National Council for the Unmarried Child became the National Council for One Parent Families in 1973 but, according to its annual report of 1972-1973, the advisability of the change "has permeated our thinking since 1962").
[81] The Finer Report (1974) see note 52, para.1.1.
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] *Ibid.*, para.5.55.

maintenance payments as a source of income.[84] Providing for their needs was considered, at least in part, to be the collective responsibility of the state:

> … not only is the community already contributing in large measure towards the cost of marriage breakdown and the rearing of children born out of wedlock, but we see no method consistent with the basic tenets of a free society of discharging the community from this responsibility.[85]

The Committee therefore proposed the introduction of a Guaranteed Maintenance Allowance[86] (GMA), a 'special' non-contributory social security benefit for one parent families which would bring the income of most above Supplementary Benefit level. Entitlement to GMA would be assessed without regard to maintenance payments, which would be collected and retained up to the level of GMA by the administering authority. In order to maintain equity with other families, the adult portion of GMA would be withdrawn as earnings increased, although the child portion was to be paid regardless of income. The proposal evidenced both 'social problem' and 'lifestyle change' discourses of lone parenthood, as did the Committee's approach to marriage:

> The discipline of marriage has become the consent of the partners and derives no longer from external compulsions … The old tariff of blame which pitied widows but attached varying degrees of moral delinquency to divorced or separated women or to unmarried mothers is becoming irrelevant in the face of the imperative recognition that what chiefly matters in such situations is to assist and protect dependent children, all of whom ought to be treated alike irrespective of their mothers' circumstances.[87]

Recognising the need to raise the pay and status of working women,[88] for a far more flexible attitude to working hours and conditions on the part of employers, and for a

---

[84] *Ibid.,* para.5.49.
[85] *Ibid.,* para.2.22.
[86] *Ibid.,* para.5.104.
[87] *Ibid.,* para.2.6.
[88] *Ibid.,* para.9.20.

considerable expansion in day-care services,[89] the Committee extended the principle of freedom of choice to include decisions about paid work:

> A job outside the home can offer the lone mother much in terms of extra income, social contact and an easier transition to the time when the children have grown up and she has to become self-supporting; but these advantages have to be considered in the light of the double burden of working and caring for the home, and the needs of the children. It is fundamental to our approach that lone parents should have a free and effective choice whether to take up paid employment. The decision is one which lone parents must make for themselves ... Our concern is to see that the choice is a real one and that the selection made is not, as we believe now to be often the case, dictated in either direction by external circumstances: some women, for example, may feel compelled to take full-time work because of the hardship of managing at the existing supplementary benefit level, while others who want to work may feel they cannot do so because they cannot find good day care for the children.[90]

Had the Committee been more fully committed to the 'lifestyle change' discourse, and indeed to the redistributionist discourse of social exclusion (RED), lone parents need not have been singled out as a distinct group. The GMA was 'by definition a one-parent family benefit'[91] and consequently could not 'be awarded to a claimant who was married and living with his or her spouse, or who was living with a man as his wife (or, in the case of a father, living with a woman as her husband)'. Evidently, the presumption was that in those more 'traditional' families, the carer would remain economically dependent on a partner in paid work. Writing at the same time, Peter Townsend illustrated a more committed 'lifestyle change' approach when he suggested that some of the interests of lone parent families 'would be served best by measures designed to help two-parent families as well':

---

[89] *Ibid.*, para.9.23.
[90] *Ibid.*, para.2.45.
[91] *Ibid.*, para.5.162.

> While constructing an argument that shows the benefits to be derived by one-parent families for a new set of measures, that argument will gain in strength if the needs of other families, and of women generally in society, are recognized. To press too hard a policy for the separateness of one-parent families, may be to damage their long-term interests.[92]

The dilemma raised is frequently communicated by the question: should mothers, particularly lone-mothers, be treated as mothers or workers?[93] Lister describes it as the 'contemporary variant of Wollstonecraft's dilemma':

> we are torn between wanting to validate and support, through some form of income maintenance provision, the caring work for which women still take the main responsibility in the private sphere and to liberate them from this responsibility so that they can achieve economic and political autonomy in the public sphere. Without the latter, it is less likely that the various concerns of women as mothers and carers will be articulated in the public world of the *polis* and economy, thereby further weakening their position in the private sphere.[94]

In the event, it was economic rather than discursive constraints which prevented Barbara Castle, then Secretary of State for the Social Services, from implementing Finer's proposals:

> My difficulty is that I am right in the centre of the 'Social Contract' field. Failure to achieve socially just policies will endanger our whole new approach as a government. As it is, Treasury wants a meagre child endowment figure which will actually make some families worse off … I am miserably aware that I shall be able to do little for the one-parent families during the coming five years – certainly not Finer's cash payment as of right.[95]

---

[92] Townsend "Problem of introducing a guaranteed maintenance allowance for one-parent families" (1975) in Poverty, 31: 29-39, as quoted by Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.178.
[93] See note 53 above.
[94] Lister (1997) see note 30, p.182.

Nevertheless, the Finer Committee's findings demanded a response, particularly in respect of the striking numbers of lone parents living on, below or just above Supplementary Benefit levels.[96] Consequently, in 1975, an increased disregard on part-time earnings was intended to encourage lone parents on means-tested benefit to supplement their incomes by working.[97] Moreover, consonant with both RED and with the 'lifestyle change' discourse, the Child Benefit Act 1975 introduced a new benefit for all families with children. Its key features were outlined by Barbara Castle:

> It achieves a long overdue merger between child tax allowances and Family Allowances into a new universal, non means-tested, tax-free cash benefit for all children, including the first, payable to the mother . . . What will the Child Benefit scheme achieve? First and most important, the poorer families who have not been able to take advantage of child tax allowance in full, if at all, because of their low incomes, will in future be able to do so, as the new benefit extends the cash advantage of the allowance to all these families. Those who are dependent on means-tested benefits will receive a larger part of their income from the benefit as of right. Secondly, Child Benefit will be paid for every single child in the family, thus extending the benefit of a payment to the first child to four million families drawing Family Allowance as well as to the three million single child families, thus doubling the number of children receiving benefit. Thirdly, once the scheme is operating, we shall have for the first time a single universal system of family support.[98]

Child Interim Benefit was paid for the first child of a lone parent and was introduced in advance of the main Child Benefit scheme in 1976. Originally this was intended as a transitional measure, but it was retained as an additional benefit for lone parents and was renamed One Parent Benefit in 1981. Further reforms contained in the Social Security Act

---

[95] Castle, *Diaries 1974-1976* (London: Macmillan, 1980) as quoted by Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.178.

[96] The Finer Report (1974) see note 52, paras. 5.15 –5.22.

[97] £6 for lone parents compared with £2 for unemployed claimants and £4 for their partners. See Kiernan et al (1998) note 22, p.179

[98] Castle, Hansard, H.C. Debs., vol.892, col.330 and 334 (13 May 1975). See further, the Social Security Select Committee's Fourth Report 1999, *Child Benefit*, HC114.

1975 and the Social Security Pensions Act 1975 improved the position of women within the national insurance system, reduced the extent to which their claims to benefit depended on their marital status and began to recognise their contribution as carers. Hence by the end of the 1970s, women's economic position was becoming stronger and the presumption that women ought to be financially dependent on their husbands was becoming weaker.[99] However, a noticeable change of discourse and a marked change of direction accompanied Mrs. Thatcher's election as Prime Minister in 1979.

Lone Parents as a Social Threat

The point has earlier been made that the perpetual flux of all discourses renders a quest for distinct political eras necessarily futile.[100] Nevertheless, 1979 is widely recognised as a political turning point and different discourses inevitably began to gain prominence. In Chapter 2 above it was suggested that Levitas's redistributionist discourse of social exclusion (RED) yielded to the moral underclass discourse (MUD).[101] Here it is suggested that the 'social problem' and 'lifestyle change' discourses of lone parenthood yielded to the 'social threat' discourse and, to a lesser extent at least in terms of policy-making, the 'escaping patriarchy' discourse, both of which overlap with MUD. The 'social threat' discourse regards lone parents as members of a growing underclass which rejects both traditional family practices and the work ethic and is encouraged to become 'dependent on welfare' by an over generous benefit system.[102] In this discourse, as in MUD, the problem is not seen as too little, but rather, too much state support. The linked 'escaping patriarchy' discourse focuses on the change in gender relations. Some feminists criticise the 'lifestyle change' view described above because it fails to take account of continuing inequalities between men and women (or of ethnicity and class) thereby simply substituting private patriarchy (control by husbands or fathers) for public patriarchy (subordination to men in paid work and politics).[103] Within the 'escaping patriarchy' discourse, women seek to live their lives without being controlled by men. In

[99] Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.180.
[100] See p.32 above.
[101] See pp.53-54 above.
[102] Duncan and Edwards (1999) see note 30, p.28.
[103] *Ibid.*, p39.

ungendered terms, it might be regarded as 'escaping gendered family practices' whereby both women and men seek autonomy in their everyday lives without the constraints which 'traditional' family practices have hitherto placed on each.

It was the 'social threat' discourse of lone parenthood which clearly underpinned policy-making in the 1980s and 1990s. The incoming Government's message was evident in its manifesto: the Labour Party, 'by enlarging the role of the State and diminishing the role of the individual', had 'crippled the enterprise and effort on which a prosperous country with improving social services depends'.[104] The Conservative Party wanted 'to work with the grain of human nature, helping people to help themselves – and others' and so 'restore that self-reliance and self-confidence which are the basis of personal responsibility and national success.'[105] Its preferred means of supporting families was a system of tax credits 'as and when resources become available' but meanwhile it pledged to 'do all we can to find other ways to simplify the system, restore the incentive to work, reduce the poverty trap and bring more effective help to those in need'.[106] Such were the stated policy objectives of the Social Security Acts of 1980 and 1986,[107] reforms which subsequently led Carol Smart to conclude that it was not the state but the family which was becoming 'the main welfare agency of the 1980s.'[108]

Despite increased spending on social security during the 1980s, there was growing inequality and social exclusion on an unprecedented scale.[109] Lone parents were particularly disadvantaged by the decision to substitute single payments for one-off needs with loans from the Social Fund,[110] but otherwise, by comparison with those of couples, changes made to their benefits during the 1980s were mainly favourable.[111] In recognition of their role as carers, means-tested allowances continued to be available for lone parents without the requirement to register for employment. Hence they were still regarded as

---

[104] Conservative Manifesto, 1979 available at www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/man/con79.htm, p.2.
[105] *Ibid.*, p.3.
[106] *Ibid.*, p.12.
[107] See White Paper *Reform of the Supplementary Benefits Scheme* Cmnd. 7773, 1979 and Green Paper *Reform of Social Security, Vols. i, ii, iii* Cmnd. 9517-19, 1985.
[108] Smart (1991) see note 16.
[109] See pp.58-59 above.
[110] Social Security Act 1986. See Wikeley, Ogus & Barendt (2002) note 76, p.465. See further Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.185.
[111] Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p186.

mothers first and workers second, although now, like couples, lone parents were openly encouraged to take up paid employment. As the value of Supplementary Benefit (SB) (and its replacement, Income Support (IS)) reduced, the real value of FIS, the in-work benefit payable for families on a low income, increased. In 1988, FIS became a permanent part of the benefit system when it was replaced by the more generous and more extensive Family Credit (FC)[112] and modifications in the early 1990s were clearly intended to provide further incentives for lone parents to enter or rejoin the labour market. Nevertheless the Government maintained an official stance of neutrality, articulated by John Major as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1990:

> It is not for the Government to encourage or discourage women with children to go out to work. That is rightly a decision for them to take, and one in which the Government would be wise not to interfere.[113]

Childcare was similarly considered to be a private matter[114] and the consequential lack of any state childcare provision made it especially difficult for lone parents to take up paid work. Jane Millar and Reuben Ford have summarised a whole body of research which has shown this to be only one of many factors making paid work notoriously difficult for lone parents:

> The barriers to work for lone parents are formidable. They include the attitudes of employers; the organisation of work; scarcity of jobs; lack of transport; lack of skills; current hardship and the constraints that it imposes; lack of access to childcare, both formal and informal; lack of confidence and work experience; low pay and insecure jobs; concern about meeting housing costs; and the complexity of the benefit system, particularly in respect of moving from out-of work to in-work benefits.[115]

---

[112] Wikeley, Ogus & Barendt (2002) note 76, p.385.

[113] Lister "Back to the family: family policies and politics under the Major Government" in Jones and Millar (eds) *The Politics of the Family* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996), p.11.

[114] The Under-Secretary at the DHSS told Parliament in 1985 'Day care will continue to be primarily a matter of private arrangements between parents and private and voluntary resources except where there are special needs'. Hansard, H.C. Debs., vol. 73, col. 397 (18 February 1985). See Kiernan et al (1998) note 22, p.267. Also Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), p.629.

Consequently, means-tested benefits remain a primary source of income for lone parent families. Accordingly, they are likely to have lower incomes than two parent families; they tend to be concentrated in the lowest part of the income distribution and, in the 1980s, their position deteriorated relative to other families with children and possibly also in real terms.[116] Their relative deprivation was a direct result of the discursive shift of emphasis from the collective responsibility for family welfare within the 'social problem' discourse to an individual responsibility within the 'social threat' discourse.

Another noticeable shift of emphasis in public discourse occurring during the 1980s and 1990s was a shift of focus from the couple, and the importance of marriage as an institution, to children and their right to receive responsible parenting.[117] That is not to say that both rhetoric and policy no longer upheld the virtues of marriage over other family forms. On the contrary, as Kiernan and Estaugh noted in 1993, 'the position of cohabitants must appear relatively disadvantageous or at best equitable.'[118] Hence:

> the treatment of cohabitants by the social security system is at best inconsistent. Through its application of the cohabitation rule, the system recognises cohabitation where it would restrict entitlement but not where it would grant the unmarried partner rights.[119]

Similarly, in 1988, when the tax system appeared to have inadvertently favoured cohabitation over marriage, Nigel Lawson announced a number of changes in his Budget speech. In his view it was 'clearly wrong that some couples find themselves paying more tax simply because they are married' and he proposed 'to put that right.'[120] Those changes included the retention of the married man's allowance (henceforth to be known as the married couple's allowance) despite the introduction in 1990 of independent taxation.

---

[115] Ford and Millar (eds) (1998), see note 17, p.257.
[116] DSS Research Report No.6. Bradshaw and Millar, *Lone Parent Families in the UK* (London: HMSO, 1991).
[117] Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.97. Smart and Neale (1999) see note 8, p.180.
[118] Kiernan and Estaugh, *Cohabitation: Extra-marital Child-bearing and Social Policy*, Family Policy Studies Centre, Occasional Paper 17, 1993, p. 30.
[119] *Ibid.*, p.32.
[120] As quoted by Kiernan and Estaugh, *Ibid.*

Claims that marriage remains the best environment in which to raise children were buttressed by research suggesting adverse outcomes, both in the short and longer term, for children raised by lone and cohabiting parents relative to those raised by married parents.[121] However, as those outcomes came to be associated not with lone or cohabiting parenthood per se, but with continued conflict between parents living apart[122] and with family poverty,[123] the role of fathers added a new dimension to the debate. Public discourse, informed by the work of academic psychologists, now insisted on children's need to maintain contact with both parents, while policy direction was influenced by the pressure group, Families need Fathers, founded in 1974 to press the cause of fathers in custody cases.[124] The Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 was intended to minimise sustained obligations and ongoing resentment by promoting a 'clean break' (between adults) on divorce.[125] Essentially, it removed the presumption of women's entitlement to maintenance for themselves, although the levels of child support were correspondingly increased to include an element for the carer of the children if she (or he) had to remain outside the labour market to raise the children. Fathers were encouraged to accept their parental obligations by the Children Act 1989 which extended the provisions of the 1987 Family Law Reform Act to enable unmarried fathers, by private agreement, to share parental responsibility for their children, thereby reinforcing the idea that such matters should be private decisions.[126] By the end of the 1980s, however, it was clear that the legislation was not having the desired effect. The unexpected growth in the numbers of lone parents, and consequently the cost of means-tested benefits paid to them[127] was of obvious concern to a Government intent on 'rolling back' the state. Hence, the 'stability of the family' became a political priority and lone parents, particularly young mothers who had never married, became a clear target for politicians and media alike.[128]

---

[121] See Macdermott et al, *Real Choices for Lone Parents and Their Children* (London: CPAG, 1998), p.11; Burghes (1994) see note 17; Cockett and Tripp, *The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and its Impact on Children* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994).

[122] See Walker, *Divorce – Whose Fault? Is the Law Commission Getting it Right?* [1991] Family Law 235; Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.149; Rodgers and Pryor (1998) see note 17.

[123] Kiernan (1997) see note 17; Gregg et al (1999) see note 17.

[124] See Kiernan et al (1998) see note 22, p.94.

[125] Smart and Neale (1999) see note 8, p.31.

[126] See Kiernan et al (1998) note 22, pp. 94-95. See also Adoption and Children Act 2002, s111, which extends parental responsibility to unmarried fathers who jointly register the birth of their child.

[127] See Kiernan et al (1998) note 22, p.189.

[128] Jones and Millar (eds) (1996) see note 113.

In her memoirs Mrs. Thatcher describes how she became increasingly convinced during her last two or three years in office that 'we could only get to the roots of crime and much else besides by concentrating on strengthening the traditional family'.[129] She was 'appalled by the way in which men fathered a child and then absconded, leaving the single mother - and the taxpayer - to foot the bill for their irresponsibility and condemning the child to a lower standard of living'.[130] She also 'thought it scandalous that only one in three children entitled to receive maintenance actually benefited from regular payments.'[131] In her view, 'all the evidence - statistical and anecdotal - pointed to the breakdown of families as the starting point for a range of social ills'.[132] 'The most important - and most difficult - aspect of what needed to be done was to reduce the positive incentives to irresponsible conduct'.[133] However, she felt that:

> all that family policy can do is to create a framework in which families are encouraged to stay together and provide properly for their children. The wider influences of the media, schools and above all the churches are more powerful than anything government can do. But so much hung on what happened to the structure of the nation's families that only the most myopic libertarian would regard it as outside the purview of the state: for my part, I felt that over the years the state had done so much harm that the opportunity to do some remedial work was not to be missed.[134]

That task fell largely to her successor, John Major.[135] A unique insight into policy developments under his premiership is offered by Smart and Neale:

> It might be only a slight exaggeration to say that the Child Support Act [1991] is about coercing fathers to be financially responsible and that the Children Act [1989], in practice, is about coercing mothers to be responsible for father contact.

---

[129] Thatcher (1993) see note 114, p. 628.
[130] *Ibid.*, p.630.
[131] *Ibid.*, p.629.
[132] *Ibid.*
[133] *Ibid.*
[134] *Ibid.*, p.632.
[135] Lister (1996) see note 113, p.14.

> If we add to this the likely impact of the Family Law Act [1996],[136] which aims to impress upon couples the harms of divorce (both economically and in terms of child welfare) we can see the rise of explicit policies to discourage divorce and separation. The Children Act and the Family Law Act both require of parents that they collaborate over parenting after divorce. There can, therefore, be no such thing as an emotional clean break. The Child Support Act additionally abolishes the idea of a financial clean break.[137]

Commenting on those policies in 1996, Lister suggested that the Major Government:

> is more likely to be remembered for the 'moral panic' about the breakdown of the 'family' and the backlash against lone parent families that it helped to unleash, together with the legacy it inherited in the form of the Child Support Act, than for any distinctive policies of its own directed at families and women. It is thus family politics, rather than family policies that have thrived during the first half of the 1990s.[138]

As we have seen, it was primarily the 'social threat' discourse of lone parenthood which underpinned those family politics. However, the 'escaping patriarchy', or 'escaping gendered family practices' discourse, had also become apparent, noticeably in some of the campaigning against the Child Support Act (CSA) 1991.[139] As suggested by Smart and Neale above, the CSA sought to attach a continued breadwinner role to fathers even when a child's parents were living apart;[140] the Children Act 1989 similarly sought to attach an ongoing parenting role and, the Family Law Act 1996, though it will not now be implemented,[141] sought to strengthen the marriage bond by requiring couples to reflect upon the wisdom of the decision to divorce. It might be argued that the cumulative effect amounted to an attempt to impose traditional family obligations on those with non-

---

[136] Part II of The Family Law Act 1996 will not now be implemented. See Press Release from the Lord Chancellor's Department 20/01.

[137] Smart and Neale (1999) see note 8, p.178.

[138] Lister (1996) see note 113, p.28.

[139] Duncan and Edwards (1999) see note 30, p.40.

[140] Millar, "State, family and personal responsibility: the changing balance for lone mothers in the UK" in Ungerson and Kember (eds) *Women and Social Policy: A Reader* (second edition) (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp.146-162.

[141] See note 136 above.

traditional family practices. In other words this was the Government's response to the 'escaping gendered family practices' discourse which was thought to pose a dual threat: from women, who had shown that they could live out their lives without traditional family ties, and from men, who had similarly shown that they could escape the responsibilities hitherto associated with marriage and parenthood.

It has been argued that there is a conspicuous difference between important legislative changes made to family law up to the 1990s and subsequent legislation: formerly, changes were made predominantly 'from the bottom up' and resulted from the demands of a social movement or swings in public opinion, while more recently changes have been 'from the top down' within, as Smart and Neale suggest, 'the context of a very clear agenda about family life' arising from the concerns of professional child welfare specialists and from narrow political concerns to reduce public expenditure.[142] Elected to govern in 1997 and describing itself as 'the political arm of none other than the British people as a whole,'[143] New Labour promised a new approach and a 'new politics'. In the manifesto which preceded his first election as Prime Minister, Tony Blair wrote:

> And I want, above all, to govern in a way that brings our country together, that unites our nation in facing the tough and dangerous challenges of the new economy and changed society in which we must live. I want a Britain which we all feel part of, in whose future we all have a stake, in which what I want for my own children I want for yours.[144]

If lone parents were encouraged by this pledge, they were to be disappointed early in the new administration when, despite fierce opposition from commentators and campaign groups such as CPAG and NCOPF, and from within the Labour Party itself both before and after its election, the Government decided to implement its predecessor's proposals to cut lone parent benefits.[145] Thus the discourse of lone parenthood took a new twist as it

---

[142] Smart and Neale (1999) see note 8, p.175. Smart (1997) see note 30, p.319. Barlow and Duncan (2000) see note 30, p.142.
[143] The Labour Party, *New Labour: Because Britain Deserves Better* (London: The Labour Party, 1997), p.2.
[144] *Ibid.*
[145] Social Security Act 1998, s72.

became clear that the vision Tony Blair has for all children is that their parents should be in paid work.

Lone Parents as Paid Workers

Chapter 2 above describes how New Labour's discourse of social exclusion is typical of Levitas's construct of SID, a social integrationist discourse of social exclusion which is a hybrid between RED (a redistributionist discourse) and MUD (a moral underclass discourse) and which focuses on paid work as the means to social inclusion.[146] New Labour's rhetoric similarly contains elements of all four discourses of lone parenthood discussed thus far. Policy documents imply both 'lifestyle change' and 'escaping gendered family practices' discourses by readily acknowledging the extent of changing family practices and regarding it as 'a fundamental principle of the welfare state' to support all families and children.[147] However, despite its claim that the Government does not try 'to make people marry' or criticise or penalise 'people who choose not to', it shares what it considers to be 'the belief of the majority of people that marriage provides the most reliable framework for raising children'.[148] In its view, 'children thrive in a secure home with loving parents. The family unit provides adults and children alike with emotional and financial support' and 'by pooling income, families ensure a higher quality of life for all their members.'[149] In other words, although to some extent lone parents are regarded as a 'social problem', they clearly remain a 'social threat'.

There is some evidence that lone parent families face greater costs than two parent families,[150] but this remains a matter of debate. It is noteworthy that the lone parent premium payable with Income Support from April 1988 was introduced, not because lone parents have greater financial need, but in recognition of the growing numbers of lone parents, the greater likelihood of their depending on state benefits for long periods and of

[146] See p.60 above.
[147] DSS, *New Ambitions for our Country: A New Contract for Welfare*, 1998, Cm. 3085, para.7.1.
[148] The Home Office, *Supporting Families: A Consultation Document*, 1998, para.4.3
[149] DSS (1998) see note 147, para.7.1.
[150] Dickens et al, *The Costs of Children and the Welfare State* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1995). Berthoud and Ford, *Relative Needs* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1997).

the financial hardship which that entails.[151] It was this premium, together with One Parent Benefit (the additional Child Benefit) which was withdrawn for lone parents making new claims from April 1998. Commenting on the loss of these additional benefits and noting that traditional Labour supporters had been deeply alienated by a measure which would save 'only a trivial amount of money', Duncan and Barlow suggest:

> It was not just, as some commentators have seen it, that the new government had to establish its 'macho' governing credentials, and that this 'demonstration effect' would be particularly effective just because traditional support was flouted. Rather, lone parenthood is seen as morally undesirable where character, as well as behaviour, can be altered by state intervention from above. Although the increase in child benefit and other measures like the WFTC will do much to restore the financial position of lone parents, the right message has been given in terms of less desirable family forms.[152]

In part the Government justified its decision by reaffirming its commitment for the first two years in power, to stay within the spending limits already announced by the previous administration.[153] However, the case for additional benefits for lone parents was more decisively rejected in the Green Paper on Welfare Reform, which reproduced the clear statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his 1998 Budget Speech:

> ... we all know circumstances dictate that some families need more help than others. And that the case for additional support for children in poorer families is strong, but that support should be on the basis of the identifiable needs of children, not on whether there happens to be one parent rather than two. There is, in my view, no case for a one parent benefit and we will not return to that. Additional support should be provided not on the basis of family structure but on the basis of family need.[154]

---

[151] Cmnd . 9517, note 107, Volume (i), p.32. See further, Kiernan et al (1998) note 22, p.184.
[152] Barlow and Duncan (2000), Part I, see note 30, p.30.
[153] The Labour Party (1997) see note 126, p.13. See also Keynote Address to NCOPF Annual Conference on 26 November 1997 delivered by Harriet Harman, then Secretary of State for Social Security and Minister for Women.
[154] H.M.Treasury Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget Statement 17 March 1998, p.13. DSS (1998) see note 147 para.7.2.

In his Budget Speech the following year the Chancellor spelled out the Government's proposals for providing additional support to families with children:

> Our long-term goal is to bring together the different strands of our support for children ... and create an integrated and seamless system of child financial support paid to the mother, building on the foundation of universal child benefit.[155]

That goal was realised by the Tax Credits Act 2002 (TCA),[156] which introduced Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC) to replace earlier transitional measures (Children's Tax Credit[157] and Working Families' Tax Credit (WFTC)).[158] Based on the family's circumstances, assessed against family resources and tapered away for higher earners, CTC guarantees a minimum income for families with children irrespective of the working status of the adults in the household. Unlike WFTC, which was paid to lone parents through the employer (although couples could choose to have it paid to the main carer) the Inland Revenue will, in all cases, pay CTC direct to the main carer (usually the mother).[159] It will thus become a more generous replacement for the child elements of Income Support (IS)[160] and will provide the main carer with a stable income alongside Child Benefit, which remains a universal benefit for all families with children. In the words of the Government:

> The advent of the new tax credits offers the opportunity to introduce a new approach based on the principle of progressive universalism. This means supporting all families with children, but offering the greatest help to those who need it most through a light touch income test.[161]

---

[155] Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget Statement 9 March 1999, p.15.

[156] See H.M. Treasury, *The Child and Working Tax Credits: The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System* (No.10) (2002). Available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

[157] In April 2001, the Children's Tax Credit was belatedly introduced to replace the married couple's allowance and its equivalent payable to lone parents and unmarried parents living together. See Budget statement, 9 March 1999.

[158] WFTC replaced FC in October 1999. See TCA 1999.

[159] S24 TCA2002. Tax Credits (Payments by the Board) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002 No.2173) Reg.3.

[160] H.M. Treasury (2002) see note 156, Appendix B (para.B.12).

[161] *Ibid.* para.2.11.

Much of New Labour's rhetoric, and its stated policy aims, therefore appear to be in keeping with RED, with the 'lifestyle change' and 'escaping gendered family practices' discourses (i.e. discourses earlier associated with Townsend and with (old) Labour[162]). Thus in its view, whilst it is important 'for the economy, and for the welfare of children' to provide help to 'parents to balance work and family life',[163] 'parents should make their own choices'.[164] Closer examination of those 'choices', however, show how New Labour's discourse (SID[165]) departs from the 'lifestyle change' and 'escaping gendered family practices' discourses and returns to the 'social threat' discourse of previous Conservative Governments.

To some extent the TCA builds on Beveridge's assumption of universal family allowances by providing a minimum income for families with children (albeit in the form of means-tested, or in the Government's terms 'income-based', tax credits) but it does not attempt to plug the hole created in his scheme by the unforeseen change in family practices. Rather it builds on his principle that 'the State should offer security for service and contribution',[166] only now citizenship is yet more clearly a *practice*: full social rights are acquired not by financial contributions (NICs) but by work itself. Tellingly, CTC forms 'a stable and secure income bridge as families move off welfare and into work'.[167] Hence, for New Labour, 'there is no option of a life on benefit'[168] and it is not important whether benefits are insurance based or means-tested, providing they offer 'enough help to get people back to work and improve their lives':[169]

> having a parent in work provides children with an active, valuable role model. It helps provide the parent with self-respect and a social network. And most

[162] See pp.51-53 and pp.85-91 above.
[163] DSS (1998) see note 147, para.7.1.
[164] DTI, *Work & Parents: Competitiveness and Choice*, Cm 5005, 2000, para.1.6.
[165] See p.60 above.
[166] See pp.35-38 above.
[167] H.M. Treasury (2002) see note 156, para. 2.3.
[168] Blunkett, *Transforming the Welfare State.* Speech on 7 June 2000. Available at www.dfes.gov.uk, para 75. See p.63 above.
[169] Social Security Select Committee (2000) see note 39, para.23. See also p.65 above.

important of all, a waged family is less likely to be poor and benefit dependent than an unwaged one.[170]

Accordingly, the Government has pledged to 'provide work for those who can and security for those who can't'[171] and has considerably increased the financial incentives of paid work 'for those who can'. Low paid workers, who have benefited from the introduction of a National Minimum Wage, have also gained from adjustments to NICs, a new rate of income tax of 10p in the pound and the raising of income tax thresholds. In October 1999, WFTC replaced FC and significantly improved the incomes of lone parents in paid work for 16 hours or more per week and of couples when either or both of them were in such work. The rates of payment were increased; the withdrawal rate against new income eased and, whereas child support and other maintenance payments exceeding £15 per week were deducted from FC, all such payments were ignored for WFTC purposes.

The average award of WFTC was £30 a week higher than FC,[172] itself more generous than IS, the welfare benefit still charged with providing 'security for those who can't' and payable to eligible lone parents who have no paid work or who work less than 16 hours per week. Despite amendments granting a new disregard on child support and other maintenance payments, a higher disregard on lone parents' part-time earnings and increased allowances for all children, particularly those aged under 11 years, IS remained substantially less generous than WFTC, especially for WFTC recipients working 30 hours or more per week whereupon they received an additional credit.[173] Moreover, subject to a statutory maximum,[174] WFTC could include a childcare tax credit to meet up to 70 per cent of formal childcare costs (such as child minders, nurseries, playgroups, after-school

---

[170] *Ibid.*, para.7.5.
[171] *Ibid.*, Foreword and Introduction.
[172] DWP Research Report No.161, McKay, *Low/Moderate-income Families in Britain: Work, Working Families' Tax Credit and childcare in 2000*, 2002, p. 84.
[173] See further p.118 below.
[174] As at April 2002, the statutory maximum is £135 a week for one child or £200 a week for two or more children. The amount payable is restricted to 70 per cent of the cost so the maximum childcare tax credit which can be paid as part of an award of WFTC is £94.50 per week for one child or £140 per week for two or more children. The rates remain unchanged with the introduction of WTC from April 2003. See H.M. Treasury (2002) note 156 p.32; TCA 2002, s12; Family Credit (General) Regulations 1987 (SI No.1973), Reg. 46 as amended by The Tax Credits Uprating Order 2002 (SI No. 829), Reg.3.

clubs and holiday play schemes). Although take-up has been disappointingly low,[175]this represented a considerable improvement in the provision of childcare costs available hitherto.

Work incentives were further bolstered by the introduction of a number of bonuses to ease the transition for IS recipients either moving into paid work or increasing their working hours to 16 or more per week. Hence lone parents who were receiving IS for 26 weeks before becoming eligible to claim WFTC (now WTC) are entitled to extended payments of IS (lone parent run on) and housing costs (extended payments of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and Mortgage Interest run-on). They may also qualify for a lump sum 'back to work bonus' (if they were working part-time whilst claiming IS) and/or a 'child maintenance bonus' (if they were receiving child support whilst claiming IS).[176]

The introduction of CTC and WTC has served to consolidate these reforms. The income-based WTC is payable, in addition to CTC, to lone parents in paid work for 16 hours or more per week and to couples where one or both are in such work. Like WFTC, WTC includes an additional element for working 30 hours or more per week; it has further eased the rate of withdrawal against new income and, combined with CTC, is more generous than WFTC. It is now WTC which will provide a passport to childcare tax credits, although like CTC, these are to be paid by the Inland Revenue direct to the main carer and not (as in WFTC) through the employer.[177] Eligibility for the childcare tax credit will now include those who use approved childcare in their own home, benefiting families who need home-based care, such as those with disabled children or those who work outside conventional hours.[178]

---

[175] See DWP Research Report No.181, McKay, *Working Families' Tax Credit in 2001*, 2003. Among lone parents, over 90 per cent of WFTC recipients using eligible childcare appear to receive the childcare tax element. The principal reason for the relatively low proportion of WFTC recipients using childcare tax credit therefore seems to be low usage of eligible childcare per se. See further DWP Research Report No. 161 (2002) see note 172 and pp.140-148 below.

[176] For a comprehensive and comprehensible guide to welfare benefits (and associated bonuses) see Child Poverty Action Group, *Welfare Benefits Handbook*, 2002/2003 (London: CPAG, 2002).

[177] TCA 2002, s24 and Tax Credits (Payment by the Board) Regulations 2002 (S.I No. 2173), Reg.3.

[178] See Budget Report 2002, available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk, para.4.25.

The already declining trend to treat [poor] women as mothers first and workers second has gained momentum as New Deal programmes have been introduced to help people move into paid work, including New Deals for Lone Parents (NDLP)[179] and for Partners of the Unemployed (NDPU). New Deal is a major labour market intervention intended to reduce social exclusion and increase sustainable employment levels by helping some people who wish to work to move into, and stay in, employment and to increase their long-term employability. Introduced in prototype form in eight areas from July 1997 (shortly after New Labour took office) and extended nationally in October 1998, NDLP was specifically designed to help and encourage lone parents 'to improve their prospects and living standards by taking up, or increasing their involvement in, paid work' and to improve their job readiness so as to increase their employment opportunities.[180]

In the language of the sound bite, which applies indiscriminately to couples and lone parents alike, paid work is considered to be the 'best route out of poverty',[181] so the Government has pledged 'to make work pay'[182] and to help all families to achieve a 'work life balance'.[183] Continuing inequalities in pay and opportunities for women in the workplace[184] mean that, in this respect, lone parents once again become seen as a 'social problem':

> The twin challenges of raising children alone and holding down a job are considerable. The vast majority of single parents want to work, to gain a decent wage and a foothold on the ladder out of poverty. But the old welfare system did little to help, simply handing out benefits rather than offering active support in

---

[179] See p.151 below.

[180] ES Research Report 51, Hasluck, *The New Deal for Lone Parents: A Review of Evaluation Evidence,* 2000, p.2.

[181] DSS (1998) see note 147, para.2.13.

[182] DSS, *Opportunity for All: Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion,* First Annual Report 1999, Cm 4445; *Opportunity for All, One Year On: Making a Difference,* Second Annual Report 2000, Cm 4865; DSS, *Opportunity for All: Making Progress,* Third Annual Report 2001, Cm 5260; DSS, *Opportunity for All,* Fourth Annual Report 2002, Cm 5598; H.M.Treasury, *The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System, Number Six, Tackling Poverty and Making Work Pay - Tax Credits for the 21st Century,* 2000; H.M. Treasury, *The Child and Working Tax Credits: The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System* (No.10) 2002; DFEE, DSS and H.M.Treasury, *Towards Full Employment in a Modern Society,* Cm 5084, 2001.

[183] See DTI, *Fairness at Work,* Cm 3968, 1998; DTI, *Work-Life Balance: Changing Patterns in a Changing World. A Discussion* Document, 2000(a) (http://www.dfee.gov.uk/work-lifebalance/cpiacw.htm) and DTI, *Work & Parents: Competitiveness and Choice,* Cm 5005, 2000(b).

[184] See Davies et al, *Women's Incomes over the Lifetime* (London: The Stationery Office, 2002).

> finding and securing work, training and childcare. The NDLP will provide a more active service.[185]

NDLP is therefore intended as a first step towards paid employment for those lone parents who wish to work and, because the multiple barriers they face are well recognised,[186] the scheme is supported by other government initiatives designed to make paid work viable for all parents, and especially so for lone parents. In addition to the considerable financial incentives already discussed, the New Labour Government has introduced a National Childcare Strategy which, through increased provision of nursery education and out of school care, 'aims to help childcare providers meet the growing demand for affordable, accessible and good quality care.'[187] It has also launched an ongoing campaign to promote a 'better work-life balance' designed to encourage employers 'to introduce flexible working practices which enable their employees to achieve a better balance between work and the rest of their lives'.[188] This campaign includes a 'Work-Life Balance Challenge Fund' to 'help employers explore how work-life balance policies can help them deliver goods and services more efficiently and flexibly' and 'guides to help individuals and businesses juggle not struggle.'[189]

The Government's use of the term 'work-life balance' reflects a reluctance to risk damaging its relationship with the business community:

> Some people talk of making jobs 'family-friendly'. We do indeed want to help employees who have family responsibilities. But we also want to see benefits for other people in work and for employers. So we are using the term 'work-life

[185] DSS (1998) see note 147, para.3.14.
[186] See p.93 above.
[187] See Budget Report 2002 available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk, para.4.4. Also DSS, *Meeting the Childcare Challenge: A Framework and Consultation Document,* 1998, Cm 3959 and www.daycaretrust.org.uk
[188] See www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance . See also DTI (2000 (a) and (b), note 182. The campaign has yet to make a significant impact on the lives of many working parents. See further pp.145-149 below and ES Research Report 64, Lewis et al, *Employers, Lone Parents and the Work-Life Balance*, 2001 and National Family and Parenting Institute, *Is Britain Family-Friendly? The Parents' View* (London: NFPI, 2002), www.nfpi.org.uk.
[189] 'Work-Life Balance: The Business Case' 'Work-Life Balance: The Essentials Guide', see www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance.

> balance'. Good practice in work-life balance benefits **everyone**. (Emphasis in original).[190]

Statutory measures have been limited to improved entitlements to maternity leave and Maternity Allowance; the introduction of *unpaid* parental leave and entitlement to two weeks' paid paternity leave.[191] From April 2003, in line with recommendations from the Work and Parents Taskforce, parents of children aged under six also have the right to request a reduction or change in working hours and employers will be obliged to give serious consideration to such requests, refusing only where there are genuine business reasons for doing so.[192] The potential benefits to all parents, and particularly lone parents, are necessarily dependent on the co-operation of employers.

The impetus for the policy changes described above is the historic pledge made by the Prime Minister in March 1999 to 'abolish child poverty within a generation'.[193] Early evidence suggests that progress is slower than expected either by Government[194] or by some academics.[195] A report for The Institute for Fiscal Studies suggests that the decline in child poverty is much more modest than predicted because both Treasury and academic analyses were not really full predictions of what would happen but were based on models that held everything constant apart from tax and benefit reforms.[196] Whilst this had always been acknowledged by the academic studies it remained hidden among the small print of government publications until clarified by the Treasury towards the end of 2001.[197] In practice the rate of declining poverty since 1996-1997 has been affected by other changes such as the earnings distribution, employment patterns and average

---

[190] DTI 2000(a) see note 183, para.1.3. Contrast with DTI (1998) see note 183, Chapter 5.

[191] See Employment Relations Act 1999, Employment Act 2002, www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance and www.tiger.gov.uk

[192] *Ibid.* See also www.eoc.org.uk and www.workandparentstaskforce.gov.uk.

[193] See p.32 above.

[194] The 2001 Budget report claimed that 'tax and benefit reforms announced in this Parliament [ie 1997-2001] will lift over 1.2 million children out of relative poverty', defined as '60% of median income, after housing costs'. H.M.Treasury, *Investing for the Long Term: Building Opportunity and Prosperity for All,* HC 279 (London: The Stationery Office, 2001).

[195] Piachaud and Sutherland, 'How Effective is the British Government's attempt to reduce child poverty?', *Economic Journal,* 2001, vol. 111, pp. F85-101. See also Piachaud and Sutherland , *How Effective is the British Government's Attempt to Reduce Child Poverty?*, CASEpaper 38, London: CASE, 2000.

[196] Brewer et al, *The Government's Child Poverty Target: How Much Progress Has Been Made?* (London: IFS, 2002).

[197] *Ibid.* p.18. H.M. Treasury, *Tackling Child Poverty: Giving Every Child the Best Possible Start in Life* (London: HM Treasury, 2001).

incomes (which bear on the poverty line).[198] Timing issues mean that the available data do not fully reflect more recent reforms whilst imperfections in the system prevent the full benefit take-up assumed by the tax and benefit models. Moreover, there are potential measurement errors in estimates of the number of people entitled to benefits and therefore the number of people that benefit reforms should have helped.[199]

Since 42 per cent of children in the bottom quintile of the income distribution at the end of the twentieth century were living in lone parent families,[200] it is hardly surprising that the Government has addressed their needs as part of its programme of welfare reform. Its thinking is clear: changing family relationships have led to increasing numbers of children living in lone parent families[201] and research has consistently shown that the experience of living in a lone parent family is characterised by poverty for the vast majority.[202] Poverty is linked with reliance on welfare benefits (particularly long term reliance on IS) and there is an established relationship between work and income, with children in 'workless' families much more likely to live in low-income households than those with one or more adults in paid work.[203] Hence, since lone parents are disproportionately likely to receive IS on a long term basis and are correspondingly less likely than their married counterparts to be in paid work,[204] helping lone parents move into paid work is seen as one obvious means of reducing child poverty. The Government has therefore set itself the target of getting 70 per cent of lone parents into paid work by 2010.[205]

---

[198] Brewer et al (2002) see note 196, p.18. 'Indeed, in a briefing to journalists in late 2001, the Chancellor admitted that he thought that child poverty would have gone up in the absence of tax and benefit reform, but that his reforms meant that it would be 1.2 million lower in 2001-02 than it would otherwise have been in that year (see Carvel, 'Tories scorn Brown on child poverty', *The Guardian,* 13 December, 2001)'.

[199] Brewer et al (2002) see note 196, p.18.

[200] DSS, *Households Below Average Income: a statistical analysis*, 1994/95 – 1998/9 (The Stationery Office: 2000).

[201] The percentage of children living in lone parent families more than tripled in Britain between 1972 and 2000 to almost one in five. Office of National Statistics, *Social Trends* No. 31 (London: The Stationery Office, 2001).

[202] See, for example, Kiernan et al (1998) note 22; Ford and Millar (1998) note 17; DWP Research Report No. 138, Marsh et al, *Low-income Families in Britain*, 2001.

[203] DWP, *Households Below Average Income Survey2000/01* (Leeds: CDS, 2002).

[204] Office for National Statistics, *Labour Market Trends: Women in the Labour Market. Results From the Spring 2000 LFS* (London: Office for National Statistics, 2001).

[205] See Green Paper (DFEE, DSS and H.M.Treasury, 2001) see note 182, para.3.11.

Jonathan Bradshaw has argued convincingly that the emphasis of the New Labour Government to date has been on 'work for those who can' rather than 'security for those who can't'[206] and consequently support for children has generally meant far greater support for children whose parents are in paid work. Meanwhile, the Government spells out that individuals who can provide for themselves and their families have a responsibility to do so and, in its view, Government has a matching responsibility, not to deliver equality of outcome by further improving welfare benefits payable to lone parents who are not in paid work (as in RED)[207] but 'to provide opportunities for self-advancement'[208] by further increasing work incentives (as in MUD).[209] Its aim is therefore 'to deliver services of such high quality that there would be simply no reason why people should not take them up.'[210] Implicitly, the New Labour Government has a better understanding of citizens' needs and aspirations than do citizens themselves.

However, despite the introduction of compulsory meetings with a Personal Adviser,[211] the rates of participation in NDLP remain relatively low.[212] Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates that, although lone parent employment rates are rising[213] and the number of lone parents receiving IS is falling,[214] there has been a much slower decline in lone parent claimants than other claimants with children, especially those defined as unemployed.[215] The data analysis which follows, in Chapter 4 below, suggests that New Labour policy is flawed because the private discourses of lone parents do not necessarily concur with the public discourses of Government. In other words, it seems that lone

---

[206] Bradshaw "Child poverty under Labour" in Fimister (ed) *Tackling Child Poverty in the UK: An End in Sight?* (London: CPAG, 2001), p.23.
[207] See p.44 above.
[208] DSS (1998) see note 147, para.3.38.
[209] See p.54 above.
[210] DSS (1998) see note 147, para.3.38.
[211] See pp.153-156 below.
[212] At the end of January 2002, 107,640 lone parents (or approximately 12.4% of those receiving IS) were participating in NDLP and leavers from the NDLP caseload reached 211,350, of which 54% left for employment. New Deal for Lone Parents and Personal Adviser Meetings: statistics available to January 2002 available at www.dwp.gov.uk/asd.
[213] Employment rates for lone parents rose from 45.6% in 1997 to 51.5% in 2001. DWP, 2001, see note 7, p.200.
[214] The number of lone parents receiving IS fell from 982,000 in 1997 to 867,000 in 2001. Client group analysis: quarterly bulletin on families with children on key benefits – November 2001, available at www.dwp.gov.uk/asd.
[215] Evans et al., *Growing Together or Growing Apart? Geographic Patterns of Change of Income Support and Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants in England between 1995 and 2000,* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2002).

parents do not universally share the Government's conviction that 'paid work is the best route out of poverty'. Despite his insistence that he is 'listening',[216] it appears that the Prime Minister is *not* listening to lone parents, or if he is, he does not appear to be hearing them.

[216] Blair, Prime Minister's speech, Labour Party conference, Brighton, 2000.

Chapter 4

New Labour's New Discourse

Lone Parents' Perspectives

Introduction

The focus of Chapters 2 and 3 above has been the public discourses which underpin both past and present social policy. In particular, it has been noted how the social integrationist discourse (SID) of New Labour places paid work at the heart of its political agenda and that, consequently, paid work is repeatedly promoted as the 'best route out of poverty' for both couples and lone parents alike. [1] Its strategy is to 'provide work for those who can and security for those who can't' through a number of New Deal programmes including NDLP for lone parents.[2] Drawing on data generated from a small sample, the aim of this Chapter (and of Chapter 5 below) is to contrast the public discourses of policy makers with the private discourses of some lone parents.

The diversity of family life and its implications for lone parenthood have already been explored at some length.[3] Although Millar and Ridge describe a 'typical' lone parent as in her mid 30s with one or (perhaps) two children, separated from a partner and living in rented accommodation, they note the considerable diversity among lone parents and suggest that 'it is perhaps a little misleading to concentrate on 'typical' lone parents at the expense of this diversity'.[4] Nevertheless, it can be said that, whilst their ethnic and educational backgrounds vary, lone parents are much more likely to be female[5] and for the majority, lone parenthood is a stage in the lifecycle rather than a lifelong family

[1] See p.60 and pp.105-110 above.
[2] See further Chapter 5 at p.151 below.
[3] See Chapter 3 above.
[4] DWP Research Report No. 153, Millar and Ridge, *Families, Poverty, Work and Care: A Review of the Literature on Lone Parents and Low-Income Families with Children,* 2001, p.37.
[5] Garnham and Knights, *Putting the Treasury First: The Truth about Child Support* (London: CPAG, 1994); MacDermott et al, *Real Choices for Lone Parents and Their Children* (London: CPAG, 1998); Marsh et al., *Low-Income Families in Britain: Work, Welfare and Social Security in 1999,* 2001.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON LIBRARY

form.[6] It has also been established that lone parents are less likely than their married counterparts to be in paid work and more likely to be in receipt of welfare benefits. Consequently, their families are disproportionately likely to live on low incomes.

Though united by their ethnicity and their membership of one particular self-help support group,[7] the 20 lone parents who took part in my study, were no more or less typical than other lone parents: predominantly women, the sample included three lone fathers; most participants were divorced (12), or separated from marriage (3) or cohabitation (3) whilst only one had always been single and one was widowed. The majority (14) had been lone parents for five years or less and the remaining six had been lone parents for between eight and 12 years. Only one participant was aged under 25; six were aged 25-29; eight were in their thirties and the remaining five were aged 40 plus. Few had recognised qualifications beyond GCSEs and their work experience was highly varied.

Half of the families (10) had two children, three had just one child, six had three children and one had six children, whilst almost half (9) had at least one child aged four or under. Six were receiving child support, 10 were receiving IS and seven were receiving FC or WFTC. Half of the participants (10) were not in paid work but two of those were in education, one full-time. Of the remaining 10, three were working less than 16 hours per week and seven were working more than 16 hours per week. Just less than half of the participants (9) had had direct contact with a NDLP Adviser either in person or by telephone.

Although this brief summary of the data serves to reiterate the diverse characteristics and family circumstances of lone parents, it reveals very little about their lifestyles and offers no insight into their equally diverse views and aspirations. As explained in Chapter 1 above, the aim of this project is to delve deeper; to begin to understand what it means to live in a lone parent family and to consider how government can genuinely offer a programme of support.[8] In my view, notwithstanding the inherent difficulties of selecting

---

[6] Millar and Ridge (2001) see note 4, p.37. See also Marsh et al (2001) note 5.
[7] See further Chapter 5 at p.168 below.
[8] See p.25 above.

a representative sample, that necessarily entails listening to lone parents and valuing their contribution.[9]

My sample was limited to just 20 lone parents, all with experience of self-help support within one organisation. Though it was not overtly faith based, the Church of England contributed to the funding of that organisation[10] and some members joined through their connections with the Church. Others joined through different routes including referral from Social Services and other agencies (such as the Citizen's Advice Bureaux and Volunteer Services) and through contact with existing members. The group's work was carried out principally by lone parent volunteers and focused on informal self-help support groups, several of which I attended in the spring of 1998 whilst working as a volunteer. I talked to members and noted the names and addresses of any who expressed an inclination to take part in my study. Later, when I began interviewing participants in the autumn of 1999, I contacted those members again. At that time, I also attended further group meetings in order to recruit more participants and to ensure that each group was fairly represented in my sample.[11]

Initially, I had expected our interviews to focus on NDLP but it soon became clear that this programme was relatively insignificant in the lives of study participants, all of whom were interviewed in their own homes (in the absence of children whenever possible) and given the opportunity to talk about those aspects of lone parenthood which were important to them and not just those which were important to me. To facilitate sorting and analysis, the data were loosely coded during their transcription,[12] then subsequently condensed into individual profiles. Since my objective was to allow participants, as far as possible, to speak for themselves, the data are presented through a series of quotes, supported by a separate data volume containing the detailed profile, and therefore the individual voice, of each participant.[13] Whilst this representation (or any other) cannot be

---

[9] See Chapter 1 above.
[10] See p.165 below.
[11] See further p.165 below.
[12] See Appendix B at p.206 below.
[13] See Wright, *Towards a Better Deal for Lone Parents,* Vol. 2, 2002. Each of the quotes appearing in the text has been given a prefix representing the participant number used for each profile, immediately followed by the relevant paragraph number in each case.

regarded as wholly impartial,[14] it is hoped that striving to limit my own intervention at least minimised its partiality.

The sheer volume of data generated by this participant led method necessarily limited the number of study participants. Moreover, the ensuing time and resource pressures prevented my interviewing a control group who may well have expressed different views and aspirations. Consequently, my study may not be fairly representative of the wider population of lone parents. Nonetheless, the diverse characteristics of lone parent families has already been noted; like all families, they are individual and cannot be represented as a homogeneous group no matter how large or supposedly representative the sample.[15] There is an extensive body of national research providing a growing insight into the lives of lone parents and their families.[16] My small scale study adopts a rather different approach which helps to build on that research by generating an account of participants' attitudes to, and experiences of, lone parenthood, of poverty, childcare and of reconciling paid work with family life. The conclusions drawn are perhaps necessarily tentative, but their surprising implications for methodological debates and for policy direction are at least worthy of further investigation.

Private Discourses of Lone Parenthood

The work of Duncan and Edwards[17] provides a helpful starting point for the discussion of private discourses of lone parenthood. They argue that social class, race and locality are central to the identity of lone mothers and use the concept of 'gendered moral rationalities' to explain their attitudes to employment and parenting. Despite this specific reference to gender, Jane Millar has noted how Duncan and Edwards fail to address the issue of gender and their samples include only lone mothers.[18] Interestingly, though my own sample included three lone fathers, the data do not reveal significant differences between their attitudes and experiences and those of the lone mothers who took part.

[14] See p.22 and p.29 above.
[15] See p.27 and p.73 above.
[16] See in particular Appendices D to G at pp.213-226 below.
[17] Duncan and Edwards, *Lone Mothers, Paid Work and Gendered Moral Rationalities* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p.120.

Rather, they reveal families' uniquely individual experiences; each with different considerations, different problems and different perspectives that necessarily evoke a whole variety of responses to lone parenthood, irrespective of gender.

I have earlier argued that use of the term 'lone mothers' ensures that women's role as carer, or mother, becomes still more deeply embedded and that, in my view, it is preferable to use ungendered terms such as 'parent', 'carer' and 'paid worker' wherever possible.[19] However, to do so in the context of the models discussed below would serve to distort the work of Duncan and Edwards. I therefore adopt their terminology though I maintain that for the most part those models apply equally to lone fathers.[20]

Duncan and Edwards offer a three part ideal type model of the relationship between motherhood and paid work:

> *Primarily Mother*: In this form of gendered moral rationality, lone mothers give primacy to the moral benefits of physically caring for their children themselves over and above any financial benefits of undertaking paid work. The sorts of statements made by the lone mothers that fall within this ideal type include: 'if you have children you should be with them, not leave them with someone else', 'Bringing up children is a job in itself', and 'If you work you miss out on your children growing up'. A major children's need that mothers ought to meet within this ideal type is for care by their own mothers. Paid work (except perhaps for minimal hours) is not morally right.
>
> *Mother/Worker Integral:* Within this ideal type, lone mothers see financial provision through employment as part of their moral responsibility towards their children. The sorts of views expressed by the lone mothers in this gendered moral rationality include: 'You need to earn money to take care of your children', 'Working means that I can provide for my child and give her a better life', and 'Working sets a good example to my children, so they'll want to get on in life

---

[18] Comments made at my viva on 13 May 2003.
[19] See p.84 above.
[20] *Ibid.*

themselves'. In this gendered moral rationality, the children's needs that mothers ought to meet are for financial provision and employment role models. Long part-time or full-time paid work is morally right.

Primarily Worker: In this form of gendered moral rationality, lone mothers give primacy to paid work for themselves separate to their identities as mothers. In this ideal type, the lone mothers said things like: 'I think of myself as a career person rather than a mother', 'Staying at home and just looking after children feels like a trap', and 'Working gives me status and self-respect'. In this gendered moral rationality then, children may have needs but so too do mothers as separate people. Substantial part-time or full-time paid work is an autonomous moral right.[21]

At this juncture, it is worth reiterating that all discourses are in a continual state of flux and should not be regarded as fixed. Thus far, I have used a number of discourses to structure my thesis (discourses of feminism,[22] of citizenship, poverty and social exclusion[23] and public discourses of lone parenthood[24]) always with the caveat that no discourse is distinct; there are inevitable overlaps and possible omissions. This typology is no exception but, with that proviso, it provides a useful framework for the policy debate.

Duncan and Edwards maintain that, by failing to recognise that moral values about parenthood are a greater determinant in decisions about paid work than are economic considerations, New Labour has made a 'rationality mistake':

> ... policies based on misleading assumptions about how people make decisions about their moral economy can go badly wrong – witness the limited effect to date of the New Deal for lone parents. At worst, for instance if a response to this weak effect was to introduce compulsion, such policies would force large numbers of people to do what they consider morally wrong. This would also risk fragmenting

---

[21] Duncan and Edwards (1999) see note 17, p.120.
[22] See pp.15-21 above.
[23] See Chapter 2 above.

> 'communities' with socially cohesive norms about parenting and paid work. Quite apart from the ethical implications of such policy, it would be very likely to be inefficient.[25]

They go on to explain how the 'rationality mistake' is exacerbated by the 'economic' mistake:

> The 'economic mistake' refers to the presumption that employability will ensure employment and/or employment upgrading, and that this will in turn allow escape from poverty and benefit dependency. Once any necessary individual re-moralisation towards paid work has been undertaken, then education and training becomes the key to reducing unemployment, including for lone mothers ... The trouble with this is not only that jobs may simply not be available, but that the British economy has been producing a lot of low wage, low skill, and short-time jobs. These sorts of jobs can themselves create poverty, quite apart from the fact that they may be of little help to lone mothers who need both a household income from one job and time for parenting.[26]

Both mistakes are further exacerbated by the 'geographical' mistake:

> [B]oth the 'economic mistake' and the 'rationality mistake' assume some sort of spaceless world, or at least a spaceless Britain. In fact both the number and types of job are distributed to local labour market areas, through spatial divisions of labour, and it is at this level that lone mothers in particular (who most often have restricted job search areas and constrained mobility) are able to enter the labour market. Furthermore, the geography of lone mothers and the geography of job creation are spectacularly mismatched ... Enhancing employability does not help that much without getting good quality jobs into the places where they are most needed.[27]

---

[24] See Chapter3 at p.83 above.
[25] Duncan and Edwards (1999) see note 17, p.290.
[26] *Ibid.*

The importance of the 'geographical' dimension is evidenced by research which shows wide regional variations in the exit rates of lone parent IS claimants.[28] Moreover, there is ample evidence to suggest that paid work does not guarantee relief from poverty in lone parent families. Gregg et al's analysis of the Family Expenditure Survey showed that between 1979 and 1995/6 child poverty rates remained static over time at 90 per cent where lone parents were not working and fell from 41 per cent to 31 per cent where the lone parent was working.[29] Iacovou and Berthoud show that, among workless families moving into employment, only those who had two full-time earners had a high chance of escaping poverty (85 per cent compared with 57 per cent of those with one full-time and one part-time earner and 33 per cent of those with a sole earner)[30] and the figures from HBAI Survey in 2002 confirmed that WFTC recipients were skewed towards the bottom of the income distribution, albeit less so than IS recipients.[31]

Potentially, at the end of the twentieth century, a lone parent in paid work, receiving child support payments and claiming WFTC (subsequently replaced by CTC and WTC[32]) could expect a standard of living similar to those of many single-earner couples with children.[33] There is also evidence to suggest that take-up of in-work benefits (or tax credits) is higher among lone parents than couples and, although only just under two-thirds of the people eligible for WFTC in year 2000 were receiving it, they were receiving three-quarters of the total amount payable if everyone claimed.[34] The difficulty is that only a minority of lone parents receive all three elements of this income package.[35] Although it is not entirely clear what proportion of lone parents receive child support payments, research evidence suggests that about 25 per cent are receiving payments directly and perhaps

---

[27] *Ibid.* p.291.

[28] Evans et al, *Growing Together or Growing Apart? Geographic Patterns of Change of Income Support and Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants Between 1995 and 2000* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2002).

[29] Gregg et al, *Child Development and Family Income* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999).

[30] DSS Research Report No. 107, Iacovou and Berthoud, *Parents and Employment,* 2000.

[31] DWP, *Households Below Average Income Survey 2000/01* (Leeds: CDS, 2002).

[32] See p.104 above.

[33] Marsh, 'Helping British Lone Parents Get and Keep Paid work' in Millar and Rowlingson (eds), *Lone Parents, Employment and Social Policy: Cross-national Comparisons* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2001), p.13. See also Marsh et al (2001) note 5.

[34] DWP Research Report No. 161, McKay, *Low/Moderate-Income families in Britain: Work, Working Families' Tax Credit and Childcare in 2000,* 2002.

[35] Marsh (2001) see note 5.

another 10 to 15 per cent have payments collected by the DWP (formerly DSS).[36] Without substantial child support payments, even lone parents in paid work continue to face a high risk of living in, or at the margins of, poverty and the intention of Government is thereby thwarted.

It has thus become evident that, to date, New Labour's reforms are founded on a number of assumptions including:

- Most lone parents are willing and able to take up employment.
- Sufficient and suitably flexible jobs will be available to them.
- Lone parents will have access to, will be prepared to use and will claim help with the costs of formal child care.
- Potential recipients will claim their full entitlements to welfare benefits.
- Child support payments will be forthcoming and will adequately supplement lone parents' in-work income.

The data analysis which follows[37] challenges some of those assumptions.

Attitudes to and Experiences of Lone Parenthood

It is clear from the compiled data that adjusting to lone parenthood can be a traumatic process which impacts not only on decisions about paid work but on every aspect of family life including health and well-being. At least half of the participants reported that they and/or their children were suffering some degree of anxiety, sleep problems or depression either brought on or exacerbated by a relationship breakdown and many described substantial upheaval in their day to day lives. The adjustment was generally recognised as a highly individual experience:

[36] *Ibid.* See also DWP Research Report No. 153, Millar and Ridge, *Families, Poverty, Work and Care: A Review of the Literature on Lone Parents and Low-Income Families with Children,* 2001, p.109.
[37] See also Chapter 5 below.

P1 **1(i)**[38] 'Some people might have handled my situation differently and recovered a lot quicker than me, but, I say in my circumstances, it took me a while …'[39]

Some participants expressed their desire to enter into a new partnership and return to a more traditional way of family life:

P2 **1 (f)** '... it's still seen as the norm to have a man and a woman in a household but I'm not going to force it because then you attract the wrong sort of person but I suppose it would be nice but it's not essential …'[40]

P9 **1(q)** 'I find it very hard to cope on my own. Just as me. All I am is mum. You know that's all I ever am and all right [sister] comes down every day, but no-one ever comes to see me on a Saturday night … [N]o-one ever comes at night 'cos they've got their lives and that's what I want. I want a life for me as a person … I want someone to make me feel good and then if I feel good, I'm better with the kids.'[41]

A major consideration was the impact of any new relationship on the children:

P4 **1 (k)** 'I don't think any man could accept ... I don't want him to accept the girls as his kids but at least be friends or get on with each other … I think it's very hard for a man or bloke just to come into a family situation and it'll be like three on one all the time; or it'll be hard for the girls for another man to come into their lives when it's just been us three … Maybe when they're teenagers or whatever or leaving home, yes but not while they're this young.'[42]

---

[38] As explained at note 13 above, this prefix denotes a direct quote from a lone parent who took part in my study and represents an abbreviation for the Participant number used in the accompanying data volume, followed by the relevant paragraph number.
[39] Data Volume, p.9. See also **P12 1(b)**, p.149, **P17 3(e)**, p.215, **P19 1(c)**, p.229.
[40] Data Volume, p.25, See also **P9 4(c)**, p.122, **P13 1(c)**, p.155.
[41] Data Volume, p.178.
[42] Data Volume, p.55.

Hence, at least in the longer term, there was clear evidence of the diversity of present day family life. Many participants came to enjoy the autonomy and independence of lone parenthood;[43] they were content with several aspects of their personal lives and, when they chose to form new partnerships, they often preferred to settle for less traditional relationships:

> **P10 1(b)** 'I'm with someone now ... but we're not together, together. We don't live together or anything like that ... He's divorced. He's got a child and I've got three children. We're just, we're very selfish. We're happy on our own without the children and it's a relationship for us without the kids ... I haven't lived with anyone since the girls' dad and I don't intend to. I've got used to my own space, my own freedom, doing what I like, when I like and ... I can't deal with it to be honest with you. I really can't. It's like we see each other when we want to see each other ...'[44]

Two of the male participants, who gave up paid work to look after their young children, were particularly positive about their experiences of lone parenthood:

> **P3 4(b-c)** 'And really, I feel quite good about it because ... you know, the general trend is dads go out to work so you don't see the kids grow up and it was quite nice that I was seeing them grow up really ... I don't think I would have possibly made a conscious decision to leave the job that I was doing, but ... when it came up, I was more interested in making sure what I did was right for the kids rather than anything else.'[45]

> **P16 1(b-c)** 'The children were more important than the job at that time. I didn't realise how difficult it would be at first, but ... you adjust and I quite enjoyed it ... I enjoyed the time I had with the children and the way we were living. I really did enjoy it in the end ... Very quickly, I didn't feel I'd been hard

[43] See McKendrick, "The 'Big' Picture: Quality in the Lives of Lone Parents" in Ford and Millar (eds), *Private Lives and Public Responses: Lone Parenthood and Future Policy in the UK* (London: PSI, 1998), p.78.

[44] Data Volume, p.127. See also **P8 1(m)**, p.103, **P11 1(f)**, p.141, **P17 1(d-e)**, p.208.

[45] Data Volume, p.47. See also **P2 1(g)**, p.25, **P17 1(e)**, p.208.

done by being left with the children. I felt it was not so much a challenge but a new start almost ... When it first happens you think 'oh, no end of the world sort of thing; everything's going to fall apart' but you realise that it's quite a lot of fun.'[46]

It was concern for their children which governed most decisions following relationship breakdown, not least those, frequently protracted and acrimonious, decisions about where children should live and what contact they should have with their non-resident parent:[47]

P2 **1 (d)** 'I mean once when we were first separated, I was scared that he would take [older daughter] ... even now the school are aware that [she's] not to go off with anybody other than me unless I put it in writing.'[48]

P5 **1 (b)** '... and the court thing is really stressing. I'm fighting for this and it might be that I'm going to end up with no children. Well I can work then (*laughter*).'[49]

In the long term, some families felt that the children would be happier if all contact with their non-resident parent ceased:

P17 **1(f)** 'There's an injunction against him. He's not allowed to see [son] at all ... I mean in the first place he used to see him a lot but then once he realised I wasn't going to go back, it dwindled off, dwindled off and dwindled off. Then he tried to abduct him and I took him to court, not because of the abduction, but to try to get defined access it was called then so that I could tell [son] when his dad was coming. You know, I didn't care if it was once a month, once a year, whatever, as long as I could say to [son] 'this is when your dad is coming' because he never knew and he might go missing for months and then turn up for

[46] Data Volume, p.190.

[47] Davis et al, *Child Support in Action* (Oxford: Hart, 1998); Bradshaw et al *Absent Fathers?* (London: Routledge, 1999); Eekelaar and Maclean, *The Parental Obligation. A Study of Parenthood Across Households* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 1997); Smart and Neale, *Family Fragments?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

[48] Data Volume, p.24.

[49] Data Volume, p.66.

twenty minutes with a bag of sweets and go again. That poor kid was running to the door or the 'phone every time they went ... just in case it was his dad.'[50]

Whilst no contact was the answer for some, others felt it was very important for their children to have contact with their non-resident parent and they were prepared to go to some lengths to maintain that contact:

> **P18 1(d)** 'It's important, very important to me that [the children] have contact with their father ... When I actually had my breakdown ... it was thought better that I just stay away from him completely for my well-being but personally, because of my circumstances, because they have no other family, you know, I put it on my own back that he had contact with them really. Minimal [contact]. They've only got me, so it's important ... They just see him, just for a few hours a week ... He comes to collect them but he doesn't come in ... I mean, he's not the ideal role model. He's not an axe murderer or anything as serious as that but knowing him as I know him now, you know ... He's very immature, very violent and extremely, extremely selfish.'[51]

In some cases, lone parents were even prepared to offer their home as a place for contact:

> **P4 1(f)** 'He has them every Sunday night. He comes here and I go to his place every Sunday night and he has them 'til about dinner time Monday and comes over every day for about an hour or something ... Even if it's just like watching 'Tweenies' with [older daughter] or whatever. Just to be with them or whatever. I mean it is nice for them ... but ... it is a pain as well. I suppose it's being flexible or something (*laughing*).'[52]

For most contact with the non-resident parent was at best a compromise:

---

[50] Data Volume, p.208. See also **P1 1(d)**, Data Volume p.8.
[51] Data Volume, p.221.
[52] Data Volume, p.54. See also **P7 1(f)**, p.88, **P7 1(h)**, p.88, **P9 1(f)**, p.114.

P3 1(f) '[S]o, rather than cause any hassle or rock the boat, I just leave it as it is ... most of the time she comes down for the day or whatever and if it fits in OK with me, well that's fine. You know, because the less hassle that goes on, the better really 'cos I've got enough … to do. She can just swan around and do what she wants.'[53]

However, at least in the long term, some parents did manage more amicable arrangements:

P13 1(d) '[I still have contact with older son's father] totally for [son], no other reason. It's very amicable as well. Extremely amicable … well we are good friends. I mean I would be devastated if something happened. We don't socialise or anything but it wasn't forced into being that way, it's just turned out that way and it's brilliant for [son] 'cos he never sees any animosity, he never hears a cross word between us ... He didn't have much contact at all for round about a year and I think he was still a bit sore about the break-up but after that, he remarried and … then he started seeing [son] regularly…'[54]

In most cases, resolving residence and contact issues clearly requires a significant input of time and energy and inevitably contributes to the anguish following a relationship breakdown. The trauma is still greater if the family also faces housing problems. Some participants became homeless following their separation and their families lived in unsatisfactory conditions while they were waiting to be housed:

P17 1(b) 'I was in the Women's Refuge and then I was in halfway housing and then I was housed here … [It] was abysmal *(laughing*) … The place that I was given, I quite liked it actually because it had a lot of character. It was old but it had an outside toilet … there was no inside toilet. The bathroom was obviously a converted bedroom and the window didn't fit so it was absolutely freezing cold in

[53] Data Volume, p.38.

[54] Data Volume, p.156. See also **P16 5(a)**, Data Volume, p.204.

there. There was no heating, the stairs were falling to bits ... I was there for seven months ... and the Refuge for six months ... thirteen months homeless.'[55]

Others remained in their homes but faced uncertainty as to their future housing and were concerned about the impact on their lifestyles:

P9 **1(n-p)** ''Cos it's all the future ... all the future of the children and it's to a certain extent out of my hands. I can't control their future. I'm the one that's bringing them up but I can't control where they live. You know, it's all down to money and I always thought that if he left me, we should be able to stay in the house but it doesn't seem to work that way. I think he's got to provide us with a house but not necessarily what we're used to ... I'd never get anywhere like this if I had to move ... Well they're [the children] used to living here. It's their home.'[56]

For some, both the uncertainty regarding their housing and the emotional turmoil following their separation were exacerbated by outstanding debts:[57]

P3 **1 (k)** '[W]hen she left ... I was working like in a pretty good paid job. When I finished work there, I had some money owed to me, so that came in ... but of course, she'd run up loads of debts on flippin' club books and things like that ... She got behind on the rent because she was supposed to be paying it but she wasn't ... So to start with I had a load of, you know, people sort of knocking on my door and bad letters coming through so I went in to see the Citizen's Advice and spoke to them about what I was going to do with these debts and because of the rent, they were sort of going to take me to court and get me evicted and all that sort of thing.'[58]

---

[55] Data Volume, p.207. See also **P5**, p.65, **P7 1(b-d)**, p.87, **P8 1(l)**, p.102, **P20 1(b)**, p.24.
[56] Data Volume, p.116.
[57] Rowlingson and Kempson, *Gas Debt and Disconnections* (London: PSI, 1993). Herbert and Kempson, *Water Debt and Disconnection* (London: PSI, 1995). DSS Research Report No. 128, Finlayson et al, *The British Lone Parent Cohort 1991-1998,*2000.
[58] Data Volume, p.39. See also **P11 1(a)**, p.140 and **P11 5(b)**, p.147.

There is evidence that lone parents are very satisfied with some aspects of their family lives,[59] but the pattern of lone parenthood, or at least of early lone parenthood, emerging from my data is one of varying degrees of emotional, financial and household chaos, frequently leaving families feeling debilitated and exhausted. During this time decisions about paid work are often necessarily deferred pending more immediate concerns.[60]

> **P2** **2 (b)** 'I think also the added strain of you know, hang on a minute here: you know, one minute I'm married; the next minute I'm single ... and coping with the children and everything. I don't think mentally I could have coped with continuing with the job. I would have liked to think I could have been Superwoman but I don't think I could have coped with the stress of having a four year old, a three month old and a job.'[61]

Although there is a 'marked' tendency for employed parents to stop working when they become lone parents,[62] there is also some evidence of continuity. One study found that the majority of mothers who were in paid work at the time of their relationship breakdown became working lone mothers whilst non-working lone parents remained out of work and found it very difficult to move into work'.[63] Once again, the overriding concern for participants making such decisions was their children's welfare:

> **P6** **4(a)** 'I just couldn't do it. I couldn't do the early mornings and the late nights. I felt at the time that the children needed me. Their dad had just deserted them and I felt guilty 'cos I wasn't here when my kids were crying and wanting to know what had happened ...'[64]

---

[59] See McKendrick (1998) note 43.
[60] Brown, *Why Don't They go to Work? Mothers on Benefit* (London: HMSO, 1989); Leeming et al, *Lone Mothers: Coping with the Consequences of Separation* (London: HMSO, 1994); DSS In-House Report No. 68, Finch and Gloyer, *A Further Look at the Evaluation of NDLP Phase One Data: Focus on Childcare,* 2000.
[61] Data Volume, p.26
[62] ES Report 23, Holterman et al, *Lone Parents and the Labour Market: Results from the 1997 Labour Force Survey and Review of Research,* 1999.
[63] DSS Research Report No. 138, Marsh et al, *Low-Income Families in Britain: Work, Welfare and Social Security in 1999*, 2001, p. 351.
[64] Data Volume, p.83. See also **P6 2(d)**, p.76.

P16 2(a) 'I looked at it and I thought 'I'm just banging my head against a brick wall here. I'm not getting anything out of it [work]. I'm getting tired all the time and my health's going to suffer at some time if I carry on doing this.' The children I didn't feel were benefiting at all from it and I thought 'well if I gave up work, we'd be a family'. We weren't a family at that time because we were all in different directions from the moment we got up to the moment we went to bed. I felt as though even though we lived, or slept, under the same roof we weren't a family.'[65]

Nevertheless the need to stabilise family income is clearly an early priority and there was more than a little disquiet expressed at the prospect of depending on a former partner for support:[66]

P7 3(j) 'I get my income through him. That's how I look at it 'cos otherwise I couldn't cope with the fact that he's paying money still and it's relying on him. I'm getting paid to look after his children and that's how I have to see it because the thought of him supporting me as well ... I'd prefer me to go out there, work, bring all the money in and not have anything from him ... not have it ... but it's their way of supporting their children. I think that it's down to money all the time but there's different ways of supporting your children. I don't pay for my children financially. Does that mean I'm not looking after them?'[67]

P15 1(h) 'He thinks because he pays maintenance, he can run my life and if he stops paying maintenance, that's one less thing I have to thank him for. If he hadn't paid maintenance, my life would have been so much better. He still tries to run my life even now.'[68]

---

[65] Data Volume, p.191. See also **P2 2(a)**, p.25, **P3 4(a)**, p.47 and **P16 4(a)**, p.200.

[66] See note 37 above. Also Clarke et al, *Small Change the Impact of the Child Support Act on Lone Mothers and Children* (London: Family Policy Studies Centre) 1996; Clarke et al, *Losing Support, Children and the Child Support Act* (London: The Children's Society, 1994); DSS Research Report No.61, Marsh et al, *Lone Parents, Work and Benefits,* 1997.

[67] Data Volume, p.95. See also **P9 3(e)**, p.121.

[68] See Data Volume p.178. See also **P7 1(j)**, p.89 and **P9 3(e)**, p.121.

For those participants with little or no child support and no other income, who ruled out full time paid work, for the time being at least, the only remaining option was to claim IS. The complexity of the benefit system and the inefficiency with which some claims were administered was a major source of distress[69] and the claim process was sometimes a humiliating and exasperating experience:

> **P17 3(e)** 'If I want something, I will find a way to get it but not everybody's like that and particularly when you've just come out of a marriage or a relationship, you're not in a position to be able to cope with all that the Benefit Agency throws at you ... At that particular time, it didn't take much to stop me going anywhere because ... everything was such an effort. Everything was so difficult, particularly once the little one was born and I had a baby as well. To get anywhere was bad enough let alone what you had to face when you get there ... going up to DSS is a nightmare ... I was ashamed to take my son in there. I may as well have taken him on a prison visit or something. That's how it felt ... I'm not blaming the people you get in DSS. Most of them are a victim of their circumstances but you do get some pretty frightening people in there.'[70]

There was also an acute awareness of the stigma attached to lone parenthood, particularly so in the case of those receiving IS:[71]

> **P1 3 (y)** '[I]t felt as though it [IS] was being given to me begrudgingly in a way and that's through reading the media reports about lone parents and hearing what the Ministers are saying; that they want all lone parents off benefits and they've clumped us all together and not looked at us as individuals ... As soon as you say you're a lone parent, scrounger is the word that comes up in their eyes; they don't know the facts.'[72]

---

[69] DSS Research report No. 63, Elam and Ritchie, *Exploring Customer Satisfaction: Customer Satisfaction with Benefits Agency Local Offices,* 1997; DSS Research Report No. 68, Ritchie and Chetwynd, *Claimants' Perceptions of the Claim Process,* 1997.

[70] Data Volume, p.215.

[71] Beresford et al, *Poverty First Hand. Poor People Speak for Themselves* (London: Child Poverty Action Group, 1999).

[72] Data Volume, p.19.

P8 **1(n)** 'I hate being called a single parent. I was married. There was violence. It didn't work out. If they expected me to stay with him to be a married parent, then that's tough luck. I didn't get pregnant to get a council house; I have worked; I have paid taxes and it's just part of life that some people don't live happy ever after. I didn't want to end up poor.'[73]

Attitudes to and Experiences of Poverty

Although there is a wealth of research which demonstrates that even recently increased IS rates are not sufficient to avoid recipients living in poverty,[74] there was some evidence among participants of the ambiguity which envelops the meaning of poverty:[75]

P4 **3 (a-b)** '[W]e're comfortable. I mean you can't really save up for anything but I can still feed my kids and get the bills paid so we're not that bad really. I know I hate this thing 'cos they started going on 'you all live in poverty' ... and it was a big shock 'cos I think I don't consider myself to be poverty stricken ... At least we've got a home and I can still feed and clothe my kids and I can still get the bills paid. I mean I think that's enough really. I mean I would like more but I'd want to earn that ... we're not homeless or anything so I mean I know we are lucky and I don't take anything for granted but I wouldn't say we're on the poverty line or we're living in poverty ... I felt guilty as well because in a way, I have made my bed and the girls have got to like put up with it, but in another way they don't ... I mean I'm sure they would like holidays abroad and whatever but they don't really do without anything. They've still got clothes and toys or whatever but it was just a big shock when they actually mentioned poverty.'[76]

Some even expressed their appreciation of the lifestyle IS affords:

[73] Data Volume, p.103. See also **P17** **3(f)**, p.215, **P2** **3(i)**, p.29, **P5** **3(h)**, p.69, **P19** **3(n-o)**, p.236.
[74] See pp.107-108 above.
[75] See chapter 2 above and Beresford et al, note 71.
[76] Data Volume, pp.57-58.

P3 **3 (r-t)** '[A]s long as you sort yourself out properly [on IS], then it's not that bad, you know. I mean, to tell the truth, ... I felt better about the way I was when I was on Income Support than I do [working] at the moment ... because at the moment ... it's a nightmare ... OK, I didn't have any money on Income Support but I was here all day; the house was up together; when the kids come home they had dad, you know, 100 per cent here and during the day if the house was tidy, the washing was done, the ironing was done, the shopping was done, I could go down the bottom where we got a nine hole golf course and play golf and not have a care in the world. All right, I didn't have any money in my pocket, but I didn't have to worry about it. All my bills were up together. I didn't have the worry that 'who's the next person knocking on the door? who's the next 'phone call from.'[77]

For most, however, living in poverty is overwhelmingly a negative experience which adversely affects not only physical and psychological well-being, but also social and personal relationships and the ability to make choices, particularly with regard to issues of budgeting and raising children.[78] My data revealed ample evidence of the hardship associated with living on IS:

P1 **3 (s-t)** 'I wanted to live because when you're on Income Support, you are just surviving; you're just keeping your head above water ... I just feel when you've got so many children ... you keep saying you can't afford it, you can't afford it, it does ...get you down. The kids, I think start perhaps not wanting to ask for anything because they know the answer will be 'I can't afford it.'[79]

P2 **3 (l)** '[The children] don't really understand ... the financial situation we're in at the moment because ... I try and give them everything that they need,

[77] Data Volume, p.46. See also **P5 3(m)**, p.70, **P6 3(g)**, p.78, **P7 1(n)**, p.90.

[78] See especially Beresford et al, 1999, see note 61. Also Holman, *Faith in the Poor* (Oxford: Lion, 1998); Kempson, *Life on a Low Income* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1996); Kempson et al, *Hard Times* (London: PSI, 1994). Middleton et al, *Small Fortunes, Spending on Children, Childhood Poverty and Parental Sacrifice* (York: JRF, 1997); Cohen et al, *Hardship Britain. Being Poor in the 1990s* (London: CPAG, 1992); Jordan et al, *Trapped in* Poverty (London: Routledge, 1992).

[79] Data Volume, p.18.

not everything necessarily they want, but they don't need for anything specific … because I tend to go without in order to give them …'[80]

P10 5(d) ' I don't know, Income Support always seemed to be with me (*laughter*) … because you've never got any money, you can't ever do anything with the kids … you just can't ever do anything because … you account for every little penny and it's paid out on something …'[81]

P11 3(c) 'I don't want to be on benefit permanently because it's so tight … You find that you're robbing Peter to pay Paul all the time.'[82]

However, there was also some scepticism about the benefits of moving off IS and into paid work:

P13 3(f) So with those figures, I worked out; obviously my income would be greatly up but it's not just the rent I'd have to pay out you see, the extras would be rent obviously; I'd have extra childcare costs to pay out because I'd have to pay my friend (I pay her a third see of everything that I earn, so obviously if I worked more hours, I'd want more childcare so I'd have to take that into account); and the Council Tax and a couple of things that everyone forgets you see, when they're doing all this which I added on because it is an expense is my milk tokens, 'cos I get a milk token so that's worth a couple of quid and the biggie is school dinners as well. [Older child] gets those free and that's about £5/ £6 a week. So I added all that on and when I did all that I worked out at £5 a week worse off which I was stunned at and I was extremely disappointed.'[83]

[80] Data Volume, p.30. See "Women's Hidden Poverty" at p.76 above.
[81] Data Volume, p.138. See also **P17 3(g)**, p.216.
[82] Data Volume, p.144. See also **P6 3(k)**, p.79, **P10 3(p)**, p.133, **P14 3(e)**, p.173.
[83] Data Volume, p.162. Although IS recipients are automatically entitled to free school meals and health benefits (passported benefits), WFTC (WTC) recipients do not qualify for free school meals and will only qualify for health benefits if their income is low enough. Help with childcare costs for WFTC (WTC) recipients is restricted to formal childcare (see p.104 above and pp.140-148 below). See also **P3 (r-t)**, Data Volume p.46, **P2 3(k)**,p.30, **P4 3(c)**, p.58, **P6 3(g)**, p.78, **P8 3(a)**, p.105, **P15 4(d)**, p.184, **P20 3(d)**, p.243.

Nevertheless, paid work can dramatically improve family income, especially in the case of a lone parent who receives an additional credit for working 30 hours or more per week and/ or receives child support:[84]

> **P10 3(n)** '£70 a week better off ... because I get my maintenance now. I've never got that. I get the maintenance. Plus I keep my Family Allowance. Plus get the Family Tax Credit and my wages. So even though I have to pay my rent out of that and my Council Tax and everything else, I'm still better off.'[85]

Most awards of WFTC were unaffected by a change of circumstances occurring during the 26 weeks of the award. This may have been unfortunate for those whose fluctuating hours or earnings resulted in reduced income, but its effect was favourable for others:

> **P16 3(a -b)** 'Well when I started, I went part-time. I was doing 25 hours a week so I claimed my Family Credit on 25 hours a week but within three or four weeks after that, they asked me to go full-time. For that first six months ... it was very beneficial because obviously when you fill in the form, I didn't know they was going to offer me full-time work within the first six, eight weeks or whatever plus it was their Christmas period so it was like overtime and I went full-time and I still claimed the Family Credit obviously because it doesn't change for six months ... Obviously I was better off by about £20 a week I think it was ... It was about £10-£15 before I took all the extra hours on but obviously when I was doing all the extra hours, I was a lot better off. I was quite considerably better off.'[86]

---

[84] See pp.103-4 above.

[85] Data Volume, p.132. Child support payments do not affect an award of WFTC (WTC) see p.103 and pp.118-119 above.

[86] Data Volume, pp.195-196. The system of tax credits operating from April 2003 will respond to changes in annual income between one year and the next by providing for awards to be revised - either during the tax year or at the end of it – to reflect (i) all falls in annual income and (ii) rises in annual income of more than £2,500. See further H.M.Treasury, *The Child and Working Tax Credits: The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System* (No.10), 2002, paras.4.17 - 4.42 and TCA 2002, s5-6.

Although there is some evidence to suggest that bonuses paid on moving into paid work have not had a substantial effect upon the part-time work of lone parents,[87] they were clearly an important consideration for some:

P8 **3(b)** 'In the beginning I did [notice the difference] especially with that carry on part, you know where they carry on paying your rent or whatever. I thought that was the best idea because to me, I thought 'my God, I've got all this money'. That to me was brilliant because ... you do have bills.'[88]

P13 **3(k)** 'I nearly did do it and I'll tell you why I nearly did it, because I added up the bonuses... If I'd have been even £5 a week better off I'd have done it and the reason why is because the bonuses, if you add up the maintenance bonus, the two weeks Income Support, that's probably about £500 plus the four weeks Housing Benefit which is another £280 odd so I would have netted, if I had put all that away as it came in, say between £500 and £700, right?'[89]

Paid work can also offer greater autonomy:

P17 **3(g)** '[When I'm working] I have more autonomy over my money and how it's spent and I can get things that I can't get when I'm on Income Support by juggling if you like ... and by credit but I think when it comes down to the bear bones of it, I'm not really significantly better off. I think we're talking pounds, you know.'[90]

P19 **3(n)** 'I look at it this way, right: if I need something, if I do overtime, I can get the money for it. If I'm on Income Support, I have one set amount every week for God knows however long. There's no saying to the kids 'right if I work

[87] DWP Research Report No.115, Ashworth and Youngs, *Prospects of Part-Time Work: The Impact of the Back to Work Bonus,* 2000. Lone parents were equally as likely to work part-time in 1996 and 1998. The only apparent effects of back to work bonuses were that lone parents appeared to wait longer before taking on part-time work: they were more likely to do so after a year rather than the three months seen in 1996.
[88] Data Volume, p.105.
[89] Data Volume, p.164. See also **P16 3(a-b)**, Data Volume, pp. 195-196.
[90] Data Volume, p.216.

an extra two days, I get this amount, we'll do this.' If you're on Income Support, you're stuck with that one amount ...'[91]

Attitudes to and Experiences of Paid Work

Although most participants recognised that, potentially at least, paid work offered a financial incentive,[92] those lone parents who chose to work often did so for quite different reasons:[93]

P1 3 (f) 'I wanted to go for it and it was a case of if I'm worse off, then I'm worse off. I was going to do it 'cos ... I was very blinkered in as much as ... go forward, keep going, who knows what'll happen?'[94]

P17 3(h) 'The money ... how much I'm being paid doesn't generally come into it. I hate the fact that I might be absolutely knackered at the end of the week and still not significantly better off for it but I'll do it because I can't stand being at home.'[95]

P20 2(b) '[Going back to work] was something I had to do for me. I've not done it for financial reasons at all. I had to do it for me... I needed something to focus on apart from all the problems.'[96]

Many reported having too much time or complained of being bored once their youngest child started school:

P13 4(b) 'When [younger son] goes to school, I won't have that same role at home in the daytime as I do now ... I had a small gap between when [older son] went to school and I was pregnant with [younger son] and so I had no children

[91] Data Volume, p.236. See also **P16 3(n)**, p.199.
[92] See p.132 above.
[93] For a review of the literature see Millar and Ridge (2001) note 4, p.143.
[94] Data Volume, p.15.
[95] Data Volume, p.216.

around if you like. It was only a few months or whatever and even then I was bored stupid. There's no way I'd be able to sit at home once [younger son] goes to school full-time and do nothing just sit here all day, read the paper and do housework and you know, I'm here for [younger son] and once he goes there's no point.'[97]

P16 4(e) 'I didn't [go back to work] for the money. I did it to take up my time originally. That's why it was part-time … It's helped me, if you like, let go of the kids a bit because spending all that time with them. They were with me all the time and when they weren't with me I was wondering what they were doing. … They would have been tied to me for a lot longer I think if it wasn't for work.'[98]

The social contact acquired through paid work also motivated lone parents:

P7 2(j) I mean this is basically it: me walking up and down the school, you know. It's the sort of contact I get at the moment and I suppose being around so many people before, you know I've gone from that to nothing so I want to get back out and meet people as well, you know that aren't fixed to lone parent societies or divorce groups or … I'm sick of being in a group, you know.'[99]

P17 2(o) 'Now I just cannot be a housewife. I just can't. I end up not doing anything because … I've got all day to do it and I'm not particularly interested in doing it whereas if I'm working, it's got to be done in this particular time or else it's never going to get done … This is why I go to the gym because it gets me out and I'm with adults … I'm a social animal (*laughing*) … and being stimulated.'[100]

---

[96] Data Volume, p.243.
[97] Data Volume, p.165.
[98] Data Volume, p.201. See also **P1 2(g)**, p.11, **P2 4(d)**, p.31, **P3 2(d)**, p.40, **P5 2(g)**, p.67, **P10 2(c)**, p.128, **P18 4(a)**, p.226.
[99] Data Volume, p.93.
[100] Data Volume, p.213. See also **P2 2(h)**, p.27, **P7 3(h)**, p.95, **P9 2(k-l)**, p.120, **P10 2(c)**, p.128, **P10 2(i)**, p.129.

These comments are suggestive of Duncan and Edwards' *Primarily Worker* model of motherhood.[101] Other comments were consistent with the *Mother/Worker Integral* model, where participants felt that moving into paid work or further education was good for their self-esteem and that it set a good example to their children:

> **P3 2 (i)** 'It's nice to feel wanted yeah. It's nice to feel that you can do something and you know you're doing a good job. I mean when I go out to work ... I dress up smart, I go out, I'm professional about it, I turn up looking smart, I do the job and I get paid for it and it's a ... I think, you know, a good service and because I live in such a small village, it doesn't take long for people to find out what you're doing so I go down the village and people you know, all the time stopping me 'oh, you're doing this, you're doing that?'[102]

> **P6 3(k)** '[I]t's also motivation for my kids. If I can do it, at my age, with all the problems that we've got anyway, then there's no reason why they can't do it.'[103]

Also consistent with the *Mother/Worker Integral* model were those who cited independence, self-reliance and the opportunity to shake off the stigma of IS and/or dependence on a former partner as reasons prompting their decisions to move into paid work:

> **P1 3 (x)** 'I feel I'm getting somewhere ... [I]t's also one step forward of becoming independent of *the state* (in quotes if you like) ... I feel I can hold my head up higher ... Once I'm off benefits, I won't have anybody digging into my ... accounts or anything as such, telling me I should be spending it on this or I shouldn't be spending it on that. When you're on benefit, you feel everybody is looking at you and if you buy anything, well you know you're not allowed to have

[101] See p.114 above. Duncan and Edwards (1999) note 17.
[102] Data Volume, p.42
[103] Data Volume, p.80. See also **P1 3(w)**, p.19, **P4 3(k)**, p.59, **P9 3(f)**, p.121, **P13 3(i)**, p.163, **P19 3(o)**, p.236.

that 'cos you're on benefits … I suppose it's, in a way, the same way people feel about charity.'[104]

P9 **3(f)** '… I think the more self-dependent I could be, the better. I don't want to live off charity from my ex-husband. I don't want to live off charity from the Government. Ideally, I would like to see when they're at school, I support myself ... I've always been quite independent in that way. I've lived on my own before: supported all my own bills and I would like to do that and I think the children would be proud of that.'[105]

P11 **2(c)** 'I need to be totally independent because at the end of the day the only person you can rely on is yourself and I don't really want to be in the situation where I'm at that rock bottom again because I've been there and I don't want to be back there. So at least this way, if he departs again, then I'm not going to be 'oh my God, I've got no money' and 'those poor girls'.'[106]

P19 **3(n)** 'I'm proud to say I work. I'm not proud to say I scrounge off the Government.'[107]

However, moving into paid work inevitably means making compromises. Household chores are a greater burden for working parents who do not have the support of a partner at home:

P3 **4 (n-o)** 'I think I wish I'd stayed on Income Support … then I was happy with my home life; my house was up together; and everything else. The last couple of weeks I've had to, you know, I've had to ask the lady next door to come in and do some cleaning for me 'cos … I used to walk in the front door and I was instantly pissed off because the house was a mess, you know whereas before … I could walk in and my house was in a decent state … But you know it's a major

[104] Data Volume, p.19. See also **P1 2 (c)**, p.10 and **P1 2(s)**, p.13.
[105] Data Volume, p.121.
[106] Data Volume, p.141.
[107] Data Volume, p.236. See also **P4 2(b)**, p.55, **P11 2(d)**, p.142, **P5 3(j-k)**, p.69.

event if I get to the bottom of the washing basket, you know. I feel like I've really achieved something and then I turn round and I've got to iron it all, you know.'[108]

Perhaps more importantly for most participants, there is obviously less time available to spend with children and relationships can become strained:

P2 **4 (g)** '... I think they will probably lose out with regard to time because I will have to obviously spend the time I have at home doing the jobs I now do at the moment during the day, so I will have less time and they'll notice it with school as well I think, because, you know, at the moment I do go in to each of the schools and do activities: I go on day trips; I go to concerts and whatever; topic sharing and whatever whereas if I get a job, I won't be able to do those things and I think that will have an effect on them because they'll think mummy doesn't care about them any more (*laughing*) ...'[109]

P3 **4 (p-q)** '... I feel that I'm giving them such a crap time half the time because I'm running around or I'm tired or because I've got things on my mind. You know, and it's not their fault and then, you know, you're getting letters home from school saying 'oh and tonight you need to sit down with your kid and read 50 pages'. I haven't got time to do that, you know ... So they're asking me to do more work to help my kids which I should be doing, you know.'[110]

P16 **4(i)** 'It did hit me in the summer because of like being tied down to when I could do this and when I could do that and I missed the time with the children. I really did miss the time with the children ... That was the down side and I still do miss it now.'[111]

Hence some participants ruled out paid work however great the financial incentive:

---

[108] Data Volume, pp.49-50.
[109] Data Volume, p.32.
[110] Data Volume, p.50. See also **P8 4(h-l)**, p108 and **P10 4(m)**,p.137.
[111] Data Volume, p.202.

P9 3(b) 'I've had a book through and I read through the book and although it sounded good when you actually sat down and thought about it, it wasn't as important to me to have an extra £50 a week, or whatever I would get, as it was for me to be here. All the emotional distress of leaving [the children] and it just wasn't worth it. The money wasn't worth it.'[112]

Many lone parents are very aware of the absence of their former partner and, especially where there are very young children or there has been a recent or particularly traumatic separation, they feel a need simply to 'be there' for their children:[113]

P9 4(j) 'Part of me is because I want to see them grow up. That's what I had them for. It was always, I was going to be at home and also I feel that their daddy has left them and I don't want them to grow up with a feeling that mummy left us too ... [I]t's more important to me as far as I'm concerned that they've got mummy here regardless that they haven't got two weeks holiday a year or whatever. You know, mummy's there. Mummy does painting with us every day. You know ... we watch videos together. We go for walks with the dog. You know, we do normal things and that's normal to them.'[114]

P13 4(a) 'I know everybody's got different opinions but I had my children because I wanted them, you know, and I had them with the intention of being here for them. I want to be able to bath them, do their tea and all that rubbish most of the time. That's the whole point. That is my job if you like.'[115]

What lone parent participants were expressing here were private discourses of childcare and paid work which are complex and wide-ranging. In so far as they prioritise their children's needs over and above paid work, they are largely consistent with the *Primarily Mother* discourse identified by Duncan and Edwards.[116] However, the limitations of this

---

[112] Data Volume, p.120.
[113] See p.126 above.
[114] Data Volume, p.124.
[115] Data Volume, p.165. See also **P1 4(a-c)**, p.20, p.20, **P4 4(a)-(e)**, p.61, **P7 4(e)**, p.96, **P12 1(b)**, p.149, **P13 4(d)**, p.166, **P15 4(d)**, p.184, **P15 4 (f)**, p.185.
[116] Duncan and Edwards (1999), see note 17.

typology now become readily apparent; participants often expressed diverse views encompassing all three models of lone parenthood and it was rare for them to be easily categorised. The real revelation of the data though, is not so much the differences exposed between lone parents' private discourses but rather the variance between those discourses and the public discourses of Government.

Attitudes to and Experiences of Childcare

By reason of its substantially different discourse, the Government's partial solution to the dilemmas raised above is the National Childcare Strategy which aims to make good quality childcare accessible and affordable to all those who want to use it. Consequently, research evidence suggests that, although the numbers of registered child minders is decreasing,[117] other formal childcare provision (including nurseries, playgroups, after-school clubs and holiday play schemes) is expanding rapidly, albeit that demand still far exceeds supply.[118] Despite the introduction of a childcare tax credit for WFTC (now WTC) recipients,[119] both the organisation of childcare and the cost remain significant issues: [120]

> **P17 4(h)** 'I think there's an awful lot of jobs where you're not going to know exactly what childcare you're going to need which means that you've got to book them in for hours longer than you need or hope that you're not going to need it when you think you don't need it ... You have to apply for childcare when you apply for [WFTC] the same as with Family Credit, so you can't say 'I'm going to need childcare but I don't know what yet'. I mean nursing jobs and that ... you don't know what childcare you're going to need.'[121]

> **P19 4(d)** '£36 [of £188 a week WFTC] goes to a playscheme in the summer holiday ... and then I have to find the rest of it ... Altogether it's £82 a week for

---

[117] DFEE, *Children's Day Care Facilities at 31 March 2000,* 2000.
[118] See Millar and Ridge (2001) note 4, p.126.
[119] See p.103 above.
[120] DFEE Research report No. 176, La Valle et al, *Parents Demand for Childcare,* 2000. See also Millar and Ridge (2001) note 4, p.126 and www.daycaretrust.org.uk.

three children ... it's nine 'til three ... it's steep actually ... you have to book it in advance and pay for it in advance ... normally just before they're due to start ... I've got to put it away.'[122]

Formal childcare presents particular difficulties for those lone parents whose children have special needs:

P13 4(g) 'There's a problem with the holidays and all that sort of thing as well isn't there? The added problem that I've got is that [older child who has ADHD] isn't a conventional child. [Older child] has been a difficult child to say the least... He's a lot better than he was but he's not an easy child ... some people who have 'normal' children like [younger child] is normal, find it extremely difficult to understand and very overwhelming. Even I find it hard to cope with sometimes. So I've got that added problem that [older child] frankly can be a real pain, I know it sounds horrible. Realistically it might be that some people just might not be willing to have him.'[123]

To an extent, by extending the childcare tax credit to include approved childcare in the WTC recipient's own home[124] the Government has acknowledged those needs and has accepted that there is also little formal childcare provision for those working shifts, evenings or weekends. However, the fundamental flaw in the National Childcare Strategy is the assumption that all parents will choose to use formal childcare where it is available. One participant's, albeit somewhat extreme, view reflects the concerns of many parents:

P18 4(c) 'It wouldn't matter to me how old my children are. My experience of childcare is that there's a lot of perverts out there and it doesn't matter whether they've been police checked; whether they're highly thought of; I know more than the Government does about how the world realistically is and how dangerous it is and unless it's a close friend no-one is going to dictate to me that my children be

[121] Data Volume, p.218.
[122] Data Volume, p.238. See also **P3 4(g-i)**, p.48, **P5 4(i)**, p.71, **P14 4(a)**, p.173, **P16 4(a)**, p.199, **P20 4(g)**, p.246.
[123] Data Volume, p.166. See also **P2 4(a)**, p.30, **P8 1(a)-(g)**, pp.99-101, **P20 1(a)**, p.240.
[124] See p.104 above.

endangered in any way. So unless I could find a very good friend that I do dearly trust, and I do have my friends, you know, there's absolutely no way ... That's the only way I can guarantee it won't happen.'[125]

Clearly children's safety is parents' primary concern, but ensuring their safety is not always enough:

P6 **4(f)** 'What I find frustrating about the system at the minute is that they concentrate on people who have got children from the age of five which is all very fine because you can find childcare for children from the age of five and under five even. I mean, that's the easy bit, but when they get to nine,10,11, they're not old enough to be in the house on their own; they're too old to be looked after by a childminder; they don't fit into any of their nursery schemes and playschemes and things; they're too old for that.'[126]

P17 **4(d)** 'I think if they're not going to have you, and as best as I can since I've had my children most of the time they've had me, and I think if they're not going to have you, then you have to make sure that whatever they have instead, is acceptable to them. Not acceptable to you but acceptable to them and they may well be safe but that doesn't make it acceptable to them.'[127]

Where they are available,[128] after-school clubs offer a solution for these children, but once again, parents are concerned about the quality of the care provided:

P7 **4(f)** 'I did feel [the after school club at the children's school] was very strict 'cos obviously, there's a lot of children, three or four members of staff and I thought 'well, a five year old being in school for six hours and then going on there for another two to three hours.' They like to let loose don't they? and be children at the end of the day but I mean it's a good group. They take them into the hall

[125] Data Volume, p.226. See also **P1 4(b)**, p.20, **P9 4(i)**, p.124, **P10 4(e)**, p.135, **P12 4(c)**, p.152, **P20 4(b)**, p.245.
[126] Data Volume, p.84. See also **P1 4(c)**, p.20, **P8 4(c)**, p.107, **P17 4(f)**, p.217.
[127] Data Volume, p.217.

and do PE with them. They give them something to eat but that can mean a sandwich whereas I know my children don't eat very well so all they'd eat in the week is sandwiches.'[129]

P17 4(c) 'I think most of these [clubs] after school are not what you envisage after school care is going to be ... My eldest one was getting really fed up with going ... because he was bored ... There was one worker there that they both particularly got on with and seemed to be quite receptive to their needs and used to take them up to the computer room and things like that and encourage them to make things whereas a lot of these things, I think you have to be careful because basically they just run around or they're given a piece of paper and some crayons, which is alright if they're like six, seven, eight but once they get much beyond eight, my youngest one wouldn't cope with that now.'[130]

Accordingly, informal care from family members and friends is the preferred option for many lone parents,[131] even though WTC recipients are not entitled to the childcare tax credit when they are using informal care:

P10 4(e) 'I don't claim any ... childcare expenses. I don't claim for that 'cos I'd rather my kids were looked after by somebody I know and trust rather than send them to somebody that I haven't got a clue about ... I could change my hours no problem and work days and get a childminder but [son] is happy with [friend] and [friend] is happy with [son] and there's not too many people I trust my kids with to be honest.'[132]

---

[128] Smith and Barker, *The Childcare Revolution: A Decade of Kids' Clubs,* (London: Kids Club Network, 2000).
[129] Data Volume, p.96.
[130] Data Volume, p.216. See also **P12 4(b)**, p.152, **P20 4(k)**, p.247.
[131] Finlayson et al, 'Paying More for Childcare', *Labour Market Trends,* 104 (7) pp.289-336, 1996; Bridgwood et al, *Living in Britain: Results from the 1998 General Household Survey,* London: Office for national Statistics, 2000; Marsh et al (2001) see note 5; Bryson et al, *Women's Attitudes to Combining Paid Work and Family Life,* Report for Women's Unit, (London: Central Office of Information for the Cabinet Office, 1998); La Valle et al (2000) see note 120.
[132] Data Volume, p.135.

P13 4(e) 'I do think about [registered childcare] because I realise that was one of my stumbling blocks ... I did realise that obviously I'd be able to get that back if it was a registered childminder but I didn't like that idea because [younger child], he's not a strange child or anything like that but I'm quite protective of [younger child] really. He's known my friend since he was born and she's like an aunt to him and I don't feel any guilt whatsoever when he's with her because to him, it's like being with me almost, it really is.'[133]

However lone parents are aware of the burden which informal care can place on family and friends:

P6 4(d) 'Mum's really good and has the kids for nothing but I mean, I feel really guilty about it. If it wasn't for mum, I'd have to pay somebody ... Mum comes here ... you're not going to get a childminder, you see, to have children for that hour in the morning and a couple of hours in the afternoon.'[134]

P7 4(b) '... it would mean like me saying to my mum 'can you have the children?' It's not like 'can you look after the children for a couple of weeks?' This is a two year course we're talking about, you know and you can't tie somebody down. I'd end up losing it half way through. She's got her life too and I can't afford to pay a childminder for two whole years.'[135]

Like many other aspects of their lives, paid work represents a compromise and that sometimes involves making childcare arrangements which are not entirely satisfactory, including leaving children on their own or in the care of older siblings:

[133] Data Volume, p.166. See also **P5 5(b)**, p.72, **P6 4(d)**, p.83, **P7 4(c-d)**, p.96, **P9 4(f-g)**, p.123, **P13 4(e-f)**, p.166.
[134] Data Volume, p.83.
[135] Data Volume, p.96. See also **P1 4(f)**, p.21, **P2 4(b)**, p.31, **P9 4(h)**, p.124, **P11 4(h)**, p.146, **P18 4(b)**, p.226, **P20 4(h)**, p.246.

> **P8** **4(e)** 'My main fear is with it being dark. I hate it when it's dark. He'll 'phone up and say 'can I go out' and it's 4.30pm and I'll say 'no sorry ...' [But] I have had times when ... I've got in [early] and he's not in.'[136]

> **P16** **4(d)** 'Now they're older, I get home and sometimes the house is empty, especially in the summer. They'll have gone out with their friends. They may have left a note, they may not have ... I'm concerned because I think 'cor, I hope they got home from school', you know. You do worry about that.'[137]

> **P19** **4(c)** 'I couldn't do those hours. The kids had actually got out of hand and they were going out and it was a choice between me giving that up and finding a day job or they get into trouble and I'd definitely get into trouble.'[138]

Clearly the challenge for all parents, and particularly for lone parents, is to balance the interests of their children against the perceived advantages of being in paid work. That often means staying at home to care for young children until they start school and then doing something which fits in with school hours and holidays until the children are sufficiently independent to enable lone parents to work full-time.[139]

> **P20** **4(n)** '... but because I'm here after school hours; I think if I wasn't here then, it would be different because they've only got me, whereas if there were like two of you, it's not quite so difficult because I mean they normally accept that one parent's at work and they've always got someone to fall back on. Well my two have only got me to fall back on so I have to be here for them. Yes, I would like to go to work full-time. Course I would. I'd like to have adult company and conversation and a focus on life apart from what the children need ... I can't have that and I know I can't have that for years to come ... I've had to accept that. It took me a while but yes I do accept it.'[140]

---

[136] Data Volume, p.107.
[137] Data Volume, p.201.
[138] Data Volume, p.237. See also **P10 4(b-c)**, p.172, **P16 4(b-c)**, pp.200-201, **P17 4(f)**, p.217.
[139] 'It is significant that almost as many lone parents with children aged five and over work full-time as do married women'. Noted in MacDermott et al 1998, see note 5, p.24.

Though it has yet to make a significant impact on the lives of many working parents, the Government's work-life balance campaign[141] recognises that employer flexibility can be key to the successful combination of paid work and parenthood.

> **P9** **4(l)** 'Very often when it's 20 hours a week, it's a very small company where I could say 'right, come summer holidays, can I take a little work home and do it from home?' and I'm sure you know if I was working there and I was good at my job, they're not going to complain. Or else go in Sundays or something ... You know, I wouldn't object to working Sundays.'[142]

> **P16** **4(o)** 'They don't do term-time contracts now which they used to do with a lot of the ladies down there ... where they didn't work the summers and they were part-time ... which would have been nice. Sometimes I've looked at that and I think ... that would suit me down to the ground ... She doesn't do that our manager now.'[143]

For some, the flexibility of education makes it a preferred (if sometimes costly[144]) option when children are still young:

> **P15** **4(b-c)** 'That's why I waited 'til [youngest son] was at school before I actually done anything because it gives me half eight 'til half two to do anything ... I'd rather do it at home because I'm here for the children if they're ill, you know, or if they've got teacher training ... well if they're ill, they're on the settee they're asleep, I can do some work ... [I prefer to study] part-time. Evenings and

[140] Data Volume, p.247. See also **P1 4(g)**, p.21, **P2 4(e)**, p.32, **P3 4(d)**, p.47, **P9 4(e)**, p.123.

[141] See www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance. Also ES Research Report 64, Lewis et al, *Employers, Lone Parents and the Work-Life Balance*, 2001 and National Family and Parenting Institute, *Is Britain Family-Friendly? The Parents' View* (London: NFPI, 2002) www.nfpi.org.uk.

[142] Data Volume p.125.

[143] Data Volume p.203.

[144] See **P6 2(e-g)** and **3(a-i)** Data Volume pp.76-79. Note that income from grants, loans and certain other forms of financial support for students is taken into account when calculating benefit entitlements. See further Child Poverty Action Group, *Welfare Benefits Handbook*, 2002/2003 (London: CPAG, 2002), pp.597-611. From April 2003, students with children can claim the Child Tax Credit and may thereby receive a boost in income.

when I'm not dealing with [the support group] or doing the shopping or anything else.'[145]

For others, self-employment or working at home seems like a good solution:

P3 4 (e) 'Well that's, I mean that's really why I started [the business] off in the first place. My view was that it would be nice to, you know, have some money at the end, but to be employable is, you know, ... a bit hard 'cos especially with three kids. Now if they're ill on Monday morning, I can 'phone up whoever and say 'look, I've got a problem. Can we rearrange it?' That's fine, you know ... If I don't turn up and I have to go for a job interview and I say 'well, every time the kids are ill I need time off and if I could have a couple of hours Friday afternoon to go and do the shopping 'cos I don't want to go and do shopping with three kids 'cos it costs me twice as much...And six weeks in the summer holiday; I'd like six weeks holiday please 'cos my kids are off. ... they'd sort of look at you and say 'well I don't think...(*laughing*) you're quite what we're after.''[146]

However, some participants found working at home problematic:

P17 4(j) '... You were based at home. You had to be contactable at most of the day and night for emergencies of which there were many and that meant that I'd get stuck on long difficult 'phone calls. My children were still quite young then ... and it meant that an awful lot of the time, I was here but I wasn't here ... I wasn't really here for them and they started to suffer because of it. I noticed a difference in them. They weren't as happy as they had been and it was ... simple things like cooking the dinner was almost impossible some days; reading a story at bedtimes. You know it interfered in a big, big way ... I actually involved them in the decision and said that I felt that none of us were happy. How would they feel if I stopped work? It would mean this, this, this and this and they both said that they didn't want me to do that job any more, that they didn't like it.'[147]

---

[145] Data Volume, p.184.
[146] Data Volume p.48. See also **P11 4(f)**, p.146.
[147] Data Volume, p.218. See also **P3 4(k)**, p.49.

The data reveals, as Duncan and Edwards have shown,[148] that lone parents' decisions about paid work are complex and varied; they change as family circumstances change. The ensuing uncertainty causes some to hesitate about making plans for the longer term:

> **P7 2(l)** 'I can't really look forward. I've learnt sort of not to try and plan too much 'cos you always get disappointed so I sort of live day to day. Just getting stronger and going forward whatever really. Just take what comes.'[149]

> **P16 2(o)** 'I just want an easy life. I want to turn up, do a few hours, get paid at the end of the week and spend it on me and my children. I don't want any hassle. Taking [a better] job would be a lot of hassle.'[150]

What is clear is that, whilst paid work is the primary concern for Government, for most lone parents, decisions about paid work are secondary to their conceptions about what is best for their children; essentially, their family's well-being is more important than its prosperity. Under current policy, some choose to manage their poverty, or to live on the margins of poverty, in preference to taking on paid work which they consider to be incompatible with their family lives. Hence policies, which aim to eradicate child poverty within lone parent families by insisting that 'paid work is the best route out of poverty', can only succeed for those whose private discourses concur with the public discourses of Government. For others, those policies will necessarily fail. Successful policy making requires a far more holistic and inclusive approach which challenges the perception that lone parents are unreliable and feckless; recognises the positive aspects of lone parenthood[151] and values the contribution all lone parents have to make, in terms of both policy debate and policy delivery. In the words of one lone mother:

---

[148] Duncan and Edwards (1999) see note 17.
[149] Data Volume, p.93.
[150] Data Volume, p.195. See also **P2 2(g)**, p.27, **P4 2(g)**, p.57, **P6 2(g)**, p.67, **P15 2(h-i)**, p.182, **P18 2(c)**, p.223, **P20 2(a)** p.242.
[151] See McKendrick (1998) note 43.

P4 **4 (c)** 'Basically at the end of the day, every family is different and they've got different circumstances, different norms or different priorities and I don't think you can make one rule for hundreds of people.'[152]

[152] Data Volume, p.61.

Chapter 5

Self-Help for Lone Parents

A Way Forward

Introduction

It has already been suggested that NDLP, and the Government's wider anti-poverty policy, is fundamentally flawed because it is founded on New Labour's misguided assumption that, irrespective of personal or family circumstances, 'work is the best route out of poverty'. The data presented in Chapter 4 above illustrate the traumas sometimes associated with lone parenthood; demonstrate that economic considerations do not necessarily prevail when lone parents make decisions about moving into paid work and reveal a clear discrepancy between the public discourses of Government and the private discourses of lone parents.

As a programme intended to help lone parents move into, and stay in employment, NDLP obviously has little to offer those lone parents who feel that, for whatever reasons, paid work would not be right for them or their families in their present circumstances. Nevertheless, since it also aims to increase the long-term employability of lone parents, NDLP could indeed offer a useful service to all lone parents who might wish to move into paid work either now or at a later date. Accordingly, whilst remaining opposed to any compulsion for lone parents to participate, pressure groups, such as the National Council for One Parent Families, Gingerbread and Daycare Trust have generally welcomed NDLP, and, despite relatively low rates of participation, evaluation evidence has been predominantly positive[1]. As the focus of my thesis now shifts from policy debate to policy delivery, it is worth reiterating that its aim, and the reason for my choice of methodology described in Chapter 1 above, is to begin to understand what it means to live

[1] See Appendix D pp.213-215 below, in particular ES Report 5, Hasluck, *The New Deal for Lone Parents: A Review of Evaluation Evidence*, 2000, and Evans et al, *New Deal for Lone Parents: First Synthesis Report of the National Evaluation*, CASE, 2002. See further p.158 below.

in a lone parent family and to consider how government can genuinely offer a programme of support. The objective here is to examine the service provided by NDLP and consider the extent to which that service meets the needs of lone parents and their families.

It had always been my intention to ascertain participants' views of NDLP, but I had not expected to explore any aspect of self-help support. My main reason for contacting the group to which all study participants belonged was to meet lone parents who might be willing to take part in my study, but adopting a research method which gave participants an opportunity to lead our informal discussions[2] soon revealed that, for most, their group membership was of far greater significance to their everyday lives than NDLP. Of course other lone parents, who are not members of a similar support group, may express contrasting views both of NDLP and of self-help support. Unfortunately time constraints have prevented me from exploring this any further. Nevertheless, listening to the views of lone parents who benefit from self-help support has provided a useful insight into the support their families need.

NDLP, the Impact of ONE and Jobcentre Plus

At the outset, it is important to note that the fieldwork for this research, completed between October 1999 and April 2000, took place during the infancy of NDLP (launched nationally in October 1998). Consequently the data inevitably reflect teething troubles:

> **P4 3 (p)** 'Well the adverts are all very nice but once you actually get to the nitty gritty ... it's so new, everyone's trying to feel their way and nobody knows at the DSS what they're really supposed to be doing or whatever. I mean they're still waiting for training days and stuff.'[3]

Many of those teething troubles have been, at least partially, resolved as administrators have become more experienced and amendments have been made to the scheme. The

[2] See p.28 above.
[3] Data Volume p.60. See also **P3 3(h),** p.43 and **P8 3(f)**, p.106

time line in Appendix C[4] shows how NDLP has developed and Appendices D to G[5] give details of a substantial body of ongoing research commissioned by DWP (formerly DSS and the Employment Service (ES)) designed to monitor the programme, and associated policies, and to shape its continued development.

Initially available only to lone parents receiving Income Support (IS), the scheme was targeted at those whose youngest child was aged five years and three months or above, although other lone parents receiving IS could take part if they so wished. The target group was subsequently extended to include those whose youngest child was aged three and above. Thus far, the scheme remains voluntary[6] and, from October 2001, the service is being gradually expanded to include all lone parents who are not working or who are working less than 16 hours per week, whether or not they are receiving IS.[7] The data presented below, which reflect much of the evaluation evidence to date, suggest that the programme's success is dependent on its capacity to take account of personal circumstances and to tailor the service to meet individual needs and aspirations. It must also effectively overcome unfavourable preconceptions and deal sensitively with legitimate fears and inhibitions.

The role of Personal Advisers (PAs) is pivotal since they provide the main point of contact for those lone parents who wish to take part in NDLP. PAs guide lone parents through all aspects of the programme and should offer support throughout, including in-work support for those who successfully move into paid work. In addition to costs which may be met from the Adviser Discretion Fund, PAs can offer a training grant, help with travel costs, and with childcare costs for those who start part-time work (i.e. less than 16 hours per week). They can also offer wide-ranging advice on:

- in-work benefits (or tax credits), providing 'better-off' calculations and assisting with the claims process where applicable;
- childcare arrangements;
- access to education, training and other New Deal programmes;

[4] See pp.209-212 below.
[5] See p.213-226 below.
[6] From April 2001, all lone parents claiming IS are required to attend a work-focused interview with a Personal Adviser. See p.154 below.

- job search and job vacancies.[8]

At this juncture it may be helpful to note how the role of the PA is being developed as part of a fundamental change in service delivery. Before 2002, benefits for people of working age were administered by two separate agencies: the Employment Service (ES) processed claims for Jobseeker's Allowance through local Jobcentres while the Benefits Agency (BA) processed claims for IS and other benefits through local Social Security offices. Whilst most ES customers were looking for work, many BA customers used the service as a last resort to obtain urgently needed funds. The Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) noted how this produced a difference in attitudes to the public between the two sets of staff and influenced the way that customers interacted with staff.[9] Moreover ES was 'an outcomes-driven organisation', competing with commercial employment agencies to match potential employees with suitable vacancies, whilst BA was a 'rules-driven organisation', determining and paying legal entitlements to state benefits.[10] Hence the SSAC have noted how the merger of the ES and parts of the BA in 2002, to create Jobcentre Plus, presents tensions for staff coming from both organisations and how 'defining and building a new common culture, will play a vital part in the successful transition to the new agency'.[11]

Jobcentre Plus offers a fully integrated work and benefit service for all people of working age. Essentially it is the same 'one-stop', work-focused benefit service earlier piloted in ONE pathfinder areas. Although it is anticipated that it will take several years to integrate the entire local office network of Jobcentres and the BA,[12] the ultimate aim of ONE, and now Jobcentre Plus, is to improve the quality and quantity of labour-market participation. The service envisaged, described in the vision for Jobcentre Plus,[13] will be driven by the clear objective set by Ministers of 'work for those who can, support for those who cannot'. It aims to offer a much higher quality of customer service:

---

[7] Announced in H.M. Treasury Pre-Budget Report, November 2000 available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk. See also www.newdeal.gov.uk.

[8] See further www.newdeal.gov.uk. For a helpful summary of NDLP provisions see Child Poverty Action Group, *Welfare Benefits Handbook*, 2002/2003 (London: CPAG, 2002), p. 1236.

[9] Social Security Advisory Committee, Fourteenth Report (2000-2001), para.3.6.

[10] *Ibid.*, para.3.7.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] See www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk.

[13] *Jobcentre Plus: Pathfinder Service Delivery Vision* available at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk.

> We will build on the existing successes of the Benefits Agency and the Employment Service by introducing more personal advisers with greater flexibility; more contact to keep people in touch with the labour market; more focus on meeting employers' needs and more emphasis on benefit integrity and accuracy.
>
> Our service will treat each customer as an individual rather than as one group narrowly defined by benefit entitlement. Our aim will be to tailor what we can offer to what each individual needs.[14]

Since, thus far, lone parents have not been required to be available for work as a condition of receiving IS, their dealings were mainly confined to the BA and consequently they were noticeably distanced from the labour market.[15] One consequence of the envisaged culture change is that lone parents are now clearly expected to stay in touch with the labour market. In common with other benefit claimants, they must, as a condition of receiving benefit, attend a work-focused meeting with a PA within four days of making a claim, unless the meeting is waived or deferred (in exceptional circumstances).[16] There will subsequently be annual meetings to encourage more lone parents to access the support available to help them find work and to increase the proportion who agree to participate in the NDLP.

An evaluation carried out for the ES, which involved individual in-depth interviews with lone parents and administrators in three pathfinder areas, indicated that, despite the misgivings of pressure groups, administrators and lone parents themselves, compulsory PA meetings are working well.[17] Lone parents were generally very positive about PAs, describing them as friendly, helpful, sensitive and responsive to individual circumstances.

---

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Most people of working age must be available for work as a condition of receiving welfare benefits (Jobseeker's Allowance). However, lone parents claiming for a child aged under 16, need not be available for work in order to qualify for IS. IS (General) Regulations 1987, Regs. 15-16 and Schedule 1B.

[16] Social Security (Work-focused Interviews for Lone Parents) and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2000 (SI 2000 No. 1926) as amended by the Social Security (Jobcentre Plus Interviews) Regulations 2001 (SI 2001 No. 3210), Reg. 15 and Schedule 2.See also ES Report 90, Pettigrew et al, *An Evaluation of Lone Parent Personal Adviser Meeting Pathfinders*, 2001, pp.7-8.

[17] *Ibid.*

They also welcomed PAs' help with information relating to benefit issues, in-work benefits calculation, childcare and training. Initial fears of lone parent resistance to the meetings were apparently unfounded; staff clearly regarded the meetings as the start of a **process** and believed that most lone parents were pleased by the approach taken by PAs. Although NDLP was mentioned to all lone parents attending a PA meeting, it was not always referred to as NDLP 'because it was felt that lone parents would not understand the term'.[18] Instead it was described as 'a system of ongoing advice or support administered through regular meetings with their own adviser, and available whenever the lone parent was ready to look for work.'[19] If lone parents expressed an interest in taking part, the PA arranged a provisional NDLP meeting at a later date but PAs were careful not to push NDLP at this early stage if they felt that lone parents were not ready for it, fearing that to do so would be to 'give the impression that their sole concern was to try to get lone parents into work' and that 'by pushing NDLP too early they would put the lone parent off from ever using them again. By not emphasising it now, lone parents were more likely to return to them.'[20]

However, ONE evaluations have raised doubts about the quality of the service provided by PAs in pathfinder areas.[21] The Select Committee on Work and Pensions noted:

> Advice agencies are not happy with the quality of benefits advice and information being given by ONE advisers. The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux gave numerous examples of confusing or inaccurate advice, pointing out that "the consequences for clients in many cases are serious, resulting in considerable loss of income." Advice Rights, an advice project operating within the Warwickshire ONE pilot, commented "While we accept that anyone can make a mistake and that sometimes wrong advice can be given, what worries us is that this is not always down to an individual piece of advice, it is the case that advisers do not know about certain aspects of benefit and therefore important advice is never given ... **We have concluded that greater recognition should be given**

[18] *Ibid.* p.27.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] For details of ONE evaluations see Appendix F at p.217 below. See also Evans et al (2002) note 1.

> **within Jobcentre Plus to the expertise needed in giving good and complete benefits advice.**[22] (Original emphasis).

It is also worth noting that staff in one of the Pathfinder areas were concerned about the impact that 'the set-up and operation of PA meetings was having on existing NDLP provision, believing that it had affected the numbers in their caseload, because they had less time to deal with people asking about NDLP on a voluntary basis.'[23] Staff also felt they required greater training in helping this more "difficult to serve" group.[24]

The Government's vision for Jobcentre Plus includes, for all staff (including PAs), 'additional support and training (including E learning)' which is intended to help them meet the needs of 'our new culture' and enable them to 'deliver an efficient and effective service'.[25] Further changes will include 'a better working environment' which will be 'safe and professional' as well as 'greatly improved IT, accommodation and support services'.[26] Behind this rhetoric, some serious doubts about service delivery persist. The Select Committee on Work and Pensions concluded:

> The goals for ONE and now Jobcentre Plus are ambitious. We pay tribute to the staff and managers of the ONE pilots who have worked, often in difficult conditions, to put the vision of ONE into practice. Much has been learned through the ONE process. There is still a considerable way to go, and the scale of the task in creating a new culture of work and independence should not be underestimated. Our inquiry has uncovered a considerable implementation gap between policy makers' aspirations and delivery on the ground. This will take effort and considerable resources to overcome. It is important that the lessons from the ONE pilot areas are fully absorbed, if Jobcentre Plus is to succeed.[27]

---

[22] Select Committee on Work and Pensions, First Report, 2001-2002, *'One Pilots': Lessons for Jobcentre Plus*, 57-58.
[23] Pettigrew et al (2001) note 16, p 28. See also Evans et al (2002) note 1, para.6.13.
[24] DSS Research Report No. 166, Kelleher et al, *Delivering a Work-Focused Service: Interim Findings from the ONE Case Studies and Staff Research*, 2002.
[25] *Jobcentre Plus: Pathfinder Service Delivery Vision* available at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk.
[26] *Ibid.*

Attitudes to and Experiences of NDLP

Since the fieldwork for this study was conducted before the introduction of compulsory PA meetings, study participants only came into contact with a PA if they elected to take part in NDLP, at which time they received the support and guidance of specialist advisers.[28] My data indicate that some lone parents would not even contemplate participating in NDLP because they had preconceived ideas about the service they could expect, based on their own previously poor experiences of the benefits system and/or NDLP and those of people they knew: [29]

> **P17 3(b)** 'I have had contact with the NDLP Adviser ... not on my own behalf but through [the support group]. She was lousy ... I knew of three people who either didn't or nearly didn't get their extended Housing Benefit because she didn't make it clear to them, the time limit for applying for it and when they had to apply for it. She was their Adviser for some time before that became an issue and they should have all the information, all the forms, all the timetable worked out for them because it's a hell of a lot to think of ... in any circumstances but when you're on your own with children and you've got all those things to sort out by yourself ... You've got to get your child to childcare and you've got to get yourself to work by so and so time, you've got to pick your children up at so and so time, you've got to pay for this, you've got to pay for that, you've got to pay for the other and you've got to fill in all these forms as well ... I've done it all myself so far ... and what I've learnt myself and what I've learnt through working, I don't think, apart from the calculations, I don't think that there's much really that they can tell me and from what I've seen, they don't help much anyway.'[30]

[27] Select Committee on Work and Pensions, First Report, 2001-2002, see note 22, para.106.
[28] See p.152 above.
[29] See DSS Research Report No. 63, Elam and Ritchie, *Exploring Customer Satisfaction*, 1997. Also DSS Reseacrch Report No. 97, Pettigrew et al, *Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Delivery: Claimant Experiences*, 1999.
[30] Data Volume p.214. See also **P2 3(c-e)**, p.28, **P6 3(q-r)**, pp. 82-83, **P18 3(d),** p.225. See also p.128 above.

Overcoming the lack of self-confidence and self-esteem which often follows the trauma of relationship breakdown[31] was also a major barrier even for those who would have liked to move into paid work. One participant described how she felt about the prospect of attending an interview to discuss NDLP:

> **P18 3(g - h)**'I'd have a complete heart attack, I think ... not because I'm lazy, not because I don't want to work; just because, you know, I'm a bit of a mess at the moment, mentally ... I've had a lot of mental abuse and I've been hanging in there for a long time and I've put up with a lot and it's just totally broken me, but it's been a long time coming ... At the moment I can't imagine feeling confident enough to hold a job down although I would like it so much ... To come off benefit and try and attempt to hold a job down and maybe not succeed because I'm not ready or the job's too much for me anyway and then not being able to support my family and having to start all that again with benefit and it frightens me so much.'[32]

National evaluations have shown that such preconceptions are often ill founded since the majority of lone parents who elect to take part in NDLP are very satisfied with the service they receive.[33] The service was reported to be informative; participants appreciated having 'someone to talk to' who 'was trying to help them' and they found that it helped with self-confidence.[34]

> **P13 3(g)** '... I 'phoned up the Lone Parent Adviser for the New Deal at the Job Centre ... I never actually saw her but that particular service I found brilliant. She was extremely helpful. She was extremely prompt. She rang me back that day with the answer of how much better off I'd be ... Then she sent me the printed information within a couple of days and she was very helpful on the 'phone ... I felt confident that if I had chosen that path that she would have been there to guide

[31] See Chapter 4 above.
[32] Data Volume pp. 225-226. See also **P12 1(b)**, p.149, **P14 3(c)**, p.173 and **P17 3(e)**, p.215.
[33] See Appendix D at p.213 below.
[34] DSS Research Report No. 108, Hales et al, *Evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents: Early Lessons from the Phase One Prototypes – Findings of Surveys*, 2000, p.17.

me through it step by step which is what you need 'cos I think that transitional period is potentially quite wobbly isn't it really?'[35]

The crucial role of NDLP PAs was firmly established by early evaluations and has continued to provide a common thread in subsequent reports.[36] The role and manner of PAs was also found to be a critical factor in determining lone parents' overall assessment of the NDLP programme and, significantly:

> a good adviser was valued more for qualities that were supportive and understanding of the lone parent's situation than for practical assistance. Great benefit was attributed to having someone to talk to, 'on their side', who could provide information about options and help make sense of the system.[37]

The research shows that lone parents' own descriptions of their relationships with their PAs clearly delineated between an 'effective' and 'ineffective' adviser[38] and views tended to polarise between these extremes, with four-fifths of participants in NDLP taking the more favourable view.[39] Participants in my study expressed similarly diverse views:

> **P1 3 (c)** 'I quite like the Adviser. She was one to put you at your ease and talk and she was sort of giving ... she was sort of throwing out some bits and pieces to help me to make up my mind which way to go ... I think she was still allowing me to make that decision of going forward or not ... I certainly didn't feel under pressure.'[40]

> **P1 3 (n)** '... and it's nice knowing that there is someone who I know at the end of the line and you know, I can put a face to it as well ...'[41]

---

[35] Data Volume p.163. See also **P1 3(c-e)**, p.14 and **P5 3(f-g)**, p. 69.
[36] See Appendix D, p.213 below. In particular, see DSS Research Report No. 92, Finch et al *New Deal for Lone Parents: Learning from the Prototype Areas,* 1999 and DSS Research Report No. 108, Hales et al(2000) note 34.
[37] Hales et al (2000) note 34, p.17.
[38] Finch et al (1999) note 36.
[39] Hales et al (2000) note 34.
[40] Data Volume p.14.
[41] Data Volume p.17. See also **P1 3(c)**, p.14 and **P13 3(f-h)**, pp.162-163.

> **P3** **3 (g)** '[The NDLP Adviser] just doesn't seem to be awake, you know (*laughter*). You'd ask her something and she never knows ... she never seems to know anything and I'd 'phone up and I'd say you know 'I need such and such' or 'can you find out about this?' and I'd forever be having to chase her around. I mean ... well it was a complete nightmare from beginning to end really.'[42]

For a significant minority, the NDLP service fell some way short of that ultimately envisaged by Government. One study reported that 20 per cent of full NDLP participants said that the programme had not provided information or advice about childcare, training, benefits, jobs which were available or help with job search. A minority (seven per cent) also said they had been encouraged to do things they did not want to do, such as start work when they were not ready for it, take any job that came along or start working when they preferred to do training. A few people said they had been encouraged to do a training course when this was not wanted.[43] Some participants in my study similarly felt that the service provided by NDLP left room for improvement:

> **P4** **3 (q-r)** 'No, it wasn't what I expected. She [NDLP PA] was just like a sales person for Family Credit ... She gave me the wrong information anyway. Because she was telling me to go on Family Credit [whilst childminding]. She was really selling it to me, comparing it on the computer. I mean her computer crashed anyway and then it wasn't until I told [the Project Worker in the support group] all this and [the Project Worker] looked up in her like bible, you know the benefits, and she said 'no, you can still stay on Income Support' and she got a copy from inside so I could take it along, but she was really trying to sell me Family Credit.'[44]

---

[42] Data Volume p.43. See also **P4 3(q-s)**, pp.60-61, **P5 3(c-d)**, p.68 and **P17 3(b)**, p.214.

[43] Hales et al (2000) see note 34, p.17.

[44] Data Volume pp. 60-61. See also **P3 (f-j)**, p.43-44, **P6 3(n)**, p.81, **P10 3(c)**, **3(h)**, **3(j)**, pp.130-132 and **P19 3(e)** p.234. For the purposes of WTC, WFTC and IS a person who is in paid work for at least 16 hours per week is treated as being in full-time work and those in full-time work are excluded from receiving IS. However, childminders working from home are not treated as in full-time work for the purposes of IS (IS General Regs., reg. 6(1)(b)). Consequently childminders working from home for at least 16 hours per week may claim either IS or WFTC (WTC) and, depending on their level of earnings and housing costs, may be better off on IS.

P5 **3 (c)** 'I'm not a very experienced person to talk about another person in her job, but she [the NDLP Adviser] was helpful but I think that a person that does this kind of job should have been like a lone parent and gone through [it] all ... and these people, they're doing their best, they're doing a good job but they haven't been in that situation that you've really been worried or you've been saying 'this could happen: this could not happen'.'[45]

Though abated by subsequent amendments to the NDLP programme, my data also revealed some frustration with its limitations:

P4 **3 (l -o)** 'I went initially [to see the NDLP Adviser] because of trying to get back to college 'cos my thing was I want to go back to college and I was scared that as soon as [younger child] was going to go to school, they were like going to demand and cut my benefits and stuff and say 'you've got to go out to work' when I wanted to go back to college and I did find out that you can do certain courses but they won't give you a list of what they were willing to pay for or which courses you can go on 'cos I asked for a list and she said 'no, you don't do that, you just say what you want to do' and then they'll tell you which course to go on ... it wasn't any good.'[46]

P7 **3(c-d)** 'It just feels like they want to help you get off this benefit but if you're not on it already then pffff ... do your own thing ... I just wish there wasn't this thing about you've got to be on the benefit. If you're a lone parent, you should be able to go and just get help. Not even help in you know all the benefits that you get, but just steering in the right direction a bit more and giving you the support you need until your children are in full time school.'[47]

---

[45] Data Volume p.68.

[46] Data Volume pp.59-60. See also **P6 3(p)**, p.82. Phase Three included enhanced provision for assistance with training, education and work experience but makes very little provision for qualifications beyond NVQ level 2 and none for degree level and above (for further details see www.newdeal.gov.uk). From April 2003, students with children can claim the Child Tax Credit and may thereby receive a boost in income.

[47] Data Volume p.94. Note that from October 2001, NDLP is being gradually extended to include all lone parents who are not working or who are working less than 16 hours a week. See p.152 above.

A lack of certainty about benefit entitlement, due either to the complexity of the benefits system or to conflicting or inaccurate information given by administrators, gave rise to considerable anxiety among participants:

> **P4 3 (d)** 'If it wasn't so much upheaval, I think a lot of people would go on it or try to get into work, if they like had kids under five but ... it's so much hassle. Well not hassle but it's just, they won't just give you a yes or no, it has to be worked out, yes or no for like three months or two months or whatever ... and if you're like in between, like you've just come off Income Support and you're waiting for your wage, I don't think they realise how little it is or it's so hard ... It's just the uncertainty 'cos you still don't know if you'll be allowed Family Credit and if so how much and ... it's just the uncertainty.'[48]

> **P13 3(f)** 'What I did first of all was I rang up the helpline and gave them you know, they want your age and your kids' ages and what you're going to earn and all that. I gave them all that and they gave me an approximate figure which I would expect to get in Working Families' Tax Credit. They gave me that figure but they actually varied it. I spoke to them on three occasions ...'[49]

Despite measures such as back to work bonuses and benefit run-ons incorporated into the scheme in order to ease the transition from IS to paid work,[50] the uncertainty described above was most acutely felt when participants first moved into paid work:

> **P16 3(k)** ' ... it can get complicated on the forms because you need to have the job to fill in the form with your wages and your employer has to fill in a bit and everything and you don't know how long it's going to take ...You have to plan it ... It would be very difficult just to go out, get the job and think 'I'm going

---

[48] Data Volume p.58. See also **P5 3(b)**, p.68.

[49] Data Volume p. 162. See also **P1 3(g-k)**, p.15, **P3 3(l)**, p.44, **P5 3(b)**, p. 68**, P6 3(n)**, p.81 and **P10 3(c)**, p.130.

[50] See p.104 above. See also DSS Research Report 175, Harris and Woodfield, *Easing Transition to Work*, 2002.

to have to survive for the next, you know, so many weeks, if it was going to be weeks. You didn't know how long it was.'[51]

Some participants felt that the true costs of moving into paid work were not made explicit:

> **P1** **3 (z)** 'It's a bit of a con I think. I think it's misleading ...They don't tell you ...the pitfalls; that, you know you may not get NHS prescriptions; your Housing Benefit is also affected; your Housing Benefit now you have to get the application in by a certain time; that's all sort of glossed over, you know ...'[52]

> **P8** **3(j)** 'I think [NDLP] is a good idea but half the stuff they brag about, as in childcare (yes of course, if you do get a registered person and you do spend that money, then yeah you'll get it back) I don't think they're actually giving us enough. I think the run on was good but I just think that there should be just a bit more ... that you don't have to work under the table to get that bit more to survive.'[53]

One aim of Jobcentre Plus is to have less paperwork, more customer contact and 'a system by which we capture information only once.'[54] It is to be hoped that this will maximise the transparency of the benefits system and minimise the need for form-filling; a task which many participants found particularly burdensome during the transition from IS to paid work.

> **P3** **3 (b)** '[T]hat's all it seems to be all the time is filling in forms .... it's like, you need a flippin' degree in what they're talking about to start with to fill 'em in and then they want all this information ... whereas when I was on Income Support, filled in a form and that was it 'til the next year or whenever, you know.'[55]

---

[51] Data Volume p.198. See also **P1 3(g)**, p.15, **P17 3(b)**, p.214 and **P20 3(j)**, p.245.
[52] Data Volume p.19. See also p.131 above.
[53] Data Volume p.106. See also **P13 3(h)**, p.163, **P19 3(e)**, p.234 and **P20 3(h)**, p.244.
[54] *Jobcentre Plus: Pathfinder Service Delivery Vision* available at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk.
[55] Data Volume p.42. See also **P8 3(e)**, p.105.

Once in work, the angst was prolonged for some lone parents by delays and errors in the processing of benefits claims, most notably in the case of Housing Benefit:

> **P17 3(d)** 'If I get a problem when I'm filling in the forms [for WFTC] I may ['phone the helpline] because I used to with the Family Credit ... They often don't particularly understand what you're trying to say. I mean, maybe that's as much my fault as it is theirs but I don't know that they've had the experience of the benefit system to understand where it can all go wrong because it's a minefield ... Things like delays in payment ... with Income Support, with Family Credit and with Housing Benefit ... I've managed to sort it out but to a certain extent I know my way round the system. For other people it may be a huge, huge problem.'[56]

> **P20 3(e)** '[It] took quite a few weeks to sort out because Housing Benefit were behind in their admin., so it must have been the end of November before they sorted out how much they were going to pay. So initially when I started work which was the end of July ... [the Project Worker] at [the support group] advised me to try and pay like £40 rent because she said it was going to be something like that ... so I was paying the £40 rent and I was struggling. I really was struggling. In fact, my dad was buying my food for me and things ... I was well in credit but [the Housing Association] actually sent me a letter in November threatening to take legal action against me... because my rent was in arrears and I 'phoned them up and said 'this rent isn't in arrears; it's not my arrears; it is the Housing Benefit side of it ...' They were really stroppy. They said ' well I'm sorry but you are the tenant so therefore you've got to pay it ... and it's up to you to chase Housing Benefit ...'[57]

The Government's vision for Jobcentre Plus includes 'greatly improved IT' and 'additional support and training (including E learning)' for all staff (including PAs), thereby helping them to meet the needs of 'our new culture' and enabling them to

[56] Data Volume p.214.

[57] Data Volume p.243. See also **P1 3(g)**, p. 15, **P3 3(m-n)**, p.45, **P10 3(h-j)**, pp.131-132, **P16 3(h)**, p.197 and **P19 3(b) & 3(h)**, pp.233-234.

'deliver an efficient and effective service'.[58] Jobcentre Plus aims to develop close partnerships with other organisations with whom its customers have contact and to use those partnerships to share information, where appropriate, to avoid duplication and to improve security.[59] However, the Select Committee on Work and Pensions found that not all partner organisations were equally committed to this vision and noted that the ONE pilot areas reported particular liaison and communication problems with local authorities, who will continue to administer Housing Benefit following the introduction of Jobcentre Plus:

> In essence, the partnership did not work. Local authorities were an 'add-on' to an initiative being driven by central government and, particularly in relation to Housing Benefit, there were practical difficulties preventing an integrated approach. It is therefore not surprising that local authorities will have no direct involvement in Jobcentre Plus – a decision which the Minister blamed on "overload of change"... In the project to create a 'work first' welfare system, the role of Housing Benefit is crucial. Research has shown that worries about paying housing costs can be a major deterrent to unemployed people contemplating work. Failings in the administration of Housing Benefit, particularly in processing changes of circumstances quickly, can act as a major disincentive for people facing low paid or intermittent work opportunities. Fast and accurate delivery of in-work benefits including Housing Benefit at the start of a job can reduce the financial uncertainties of moving off stable out-of-work benefit income...[60]

Once again, since it is within their remit to assist with the efficient processing of benefit claims as NDLP participants move into paid work, the importance of the PA role becomes evident. There is clear potential for far greater in-work support in the longer-term:[61]

---

[58] *Jobcentre Plus: Pathfinder Service Delivery Vision* available at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk.

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] Select Committee on Work and Pensions, First Report, 2001-2002, see note 22, paras.60 – 62. There is a considerable body of evidence on the inefficiencies of local authorities administering Housing Benefit. See for example, Social Security Select Committee's Sixth Report, Session 1999-2000, *Housing Benefit*, HC385 (I-II). See also Pettigrew et al, 1999, note 29 and National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, *Falling Short: The CAB Case for Housing Benefit Reform* (NACAB: London, 1999).

[61] DSS Research Report No. 122, Lewis et al, *Lone Parents and Personal Advisers: Roles and Relationships. A Follow-up Study of the New Deal for Lone Parents Phase One prototype*, 2000.

> **P3 3 (j-p)** 'I thought [the NDLP Adviser] was sorting all this out behind the scenes, you know, knowing at the end of the 16 weeks that I'm going to go on to Family Credit 'cos I told her on day one that that's what I was going to do and then she's all in a flap: she hasn't got anything done, so I have to go in to see her and we sat down and, you know, she did a ... thing on the computer to show me how much I'd be better off or how much I'd get by going on to Family Credit and this that and the other and she needed all my details ... After the 16 weeks, that was it: cut off, you know and I think that should be longer because after 16 weeks you're only just getting the idea of what's going on ... [The NDLP Adviser] hasn't 'phoned me up, you know to ask if I've got my Family Credit OK; if things are going OK, nothing.'[62]

Data on the numbers continuing to receive in-work support are misleading because it is not clear when participants leave NDLP; some may be in work and have little or no contact with their Advisers but are still recorded as on NDLP.[63] PAs stress the importance of in-work support, but research has shown that contact between working clients and their Advisers is fairly minimal and relies mainly on the clients getting in touch if they experience problems. In a study of the roles and relationships of lone parents and their PAs, none of the lone parents with in-work problems contacted their Advisers, even when their relationship had been a close and effective one, because they felt that the situation was outside the remit or control of the Adviser.[64]

Lone parents tend to enter low-paid, low-skilled jobs which are precarious and which are associated with high turnover.[65] They can find themselves worse off than expected, sometimes struggling and in debt and work can be an unfriendly and hostile environment for some. Problems have arisen where employers try to change agreed hours or are inflexible about time off for family or health reasons; childcare arrangements do not

[62] Data Volume p.44-45.
[63] See Evans et al (2002) note 1, p 61.
[64] See Lewis et al (2000) note 61.
[65] See Evans et al (2002) note 1, p 61.

always work successfully and some lone parents find that their hours of work intrude too much on the time they spend with their children.[66]

> **P17 3(i)** 'I think I would say to anybody who was thinking about going back to work to just get something where they earn their £15 to start off with, to get them back into working mode if you like and to just give them a little bit of a reward so that they ease back into it because I think it's too much of a shock otherwise.'[67]

An effective in-work support service may help to increase the sustainability of work and thus improve lone parents' prospects in the longer-term. However, my data raises doubts about whether a work-focused service will ever succeed for lone parents; firstly, because it largely ignores the family-focused discourse of many (as discussed in Chapter 4 above) and secondly, because it effectively limits its service to those who are 'job ready'. It has already been noted how the traumas sometimes associated with lone parenthood, especially early lone parenthood, can lead to varying degrees of emotional, financial and household chaos which can leave families feeling debilitated and exhausted and necessarily mean that decisions about paid work are deferred pending more immediate concerns about children, housing, debt and personal relationships.[68] Of course, in these circumstances, the compulsory PA meeting may be deferred (or waived in extreme cases[69]), but it is essentially the sensitivity of PAs which will determine whether lone parents benefit from the service on offer. There is some evidence that, prior to compulsory PA meetings, NDLP was attracting lone parents already in the job/training market rather than bringing in people 'totally cold':[70]

---

[66] *Ibid.* See also pp.138-139 above.

[67] Data Volume p.216. For lone parents working less than 16 hours per week and claiming IS, the first £20 (formerly £15) of their earnings is disregarded. IS (General) Regs. 1987, Schedule 8, para.5.

[68] See Chapter 4 above.

[69] Pettigrew et al (2001) note 16, p 23. See also The Social Security (Work-focused Interviews for Lone Parents) and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2000 (SI 2000 No. 1926) Reg. 6 and The Social Security (Jobcentre Plus Interviews) Regulations 2001 (S1 2001 No. 3210) Reg.15 and Schedule 2.

[70] ES Research Report No. 39, Hamblin, *A Report on Lone Parent Client Satisfaction Survey: Part of Evaluation of NDLP Phase 3*, 2000.

> Where potential participants want work, are able to work and feel that with the assistance of New Deal it is feasible for them to obtain work, they will participate. Where this is not the case, they will not participate.[71]

Hence the NDLP service is helping lone parents only when they are ready to move into paid work. By contrast membership of a self-help support group can offer far wider support covering all aspects of family life, without which some lone parents may never reach a stage where they feel ready and able to move into paid work.

Attitudes to and Experiences of Self-Help Support

All participants of this study were members of a support group described in its annual report as a 'professional social and community work project' which 'endeavours to make available to lone parent families support, information, resources, opportunities and experiences which enable them to take control of their own lives.'[72] The work of the project focuses on informal self-help support groups, the number of which varies according to demand,[73] and although much of the work is carried out by lone parent volunteers, there were three paid positions at the time of the study (a full-time project worker; a part-time assistant and a part-time social worker). The project relies on charitable donations and long-term funding through a service agreement secured with the local authority in 1998. It has also been supported by the Church of England which has hitherto fully funded the positions of project worker and assistant and partially funded that of the social worker. Due to its own financial difficulties, the Diocese withdrew its support with effect from December 2002, thus precipitating a major funding crisis within the organisation which has subsequently registered as an independent charity.

The annual report provides the following statement of the services offered:

---

[71] Hasluck (2000) see note 1, p 28.
[72] Source not cited in order to protect the anonymity of research participants.
[73] In September 1998, there were six groups with a total of 52 members (135 children) and in September 1999, there were four groups with a total of 42 members (104 children) although the later figures do not include a group set up in 1999 specifically for women aged under 21.

- Confidential support, information and advice for lone parents
- Information and advice on DSS benefits, housing, divorce/separation, debt, child care and local resources
- Self-help support groups for lone parent families which include creche facilities
- A weekly 'drop in' centre
- Baby and children's clothes, baby equipment, curtains and bedding
- Second hand furniture scheme for lone parent families.

For many study participants, the support of this group was vital:

> **P17 5(c)** '[The support group] got me back on equal footing if you like ... I felt very isolated before. Apart from the fact that I had two small children, one of whom was born after I was on my own, and my mother had died and all kinds of things had happened, I really missed the Refuge because you knew that there was somebody there who would understand or who could help, who could give you advice and things like that. Then all of a sudden, Bang! I was approached by [the support group] to be a member of this new group and it was the making of me I think.'[74]

In one case, group support may even have been life-saving:

> **P14 5(g)** 'If it wasn't for the [support group], I wouldn't be here. I was in such a messed up state over the divorce.'[75]

Although some lone parents can rely on support from family and friends, participants were wary of becoming a burden:[76]

> **P2 5 (a-d)** ' I mean she [mother] helps ... a couple of nights a week ... and then sort of on a Sunday we'll go and have tea at my mum's house but other than that, she can't help sort of during the day or anything like that because she has a

[74] Data Volume p. 219.
[75] Data Volume p.175.
[76] See p.144 above.

full time job ... Yeah, I mean I've got some friends but you know they all have obviously their own lives, full time jobs and whatever so, you know, they do sort of help out occasionally but it's not very often.'[77]

Moreover, support provided by Social Services was often felt to be inadequate or a service of last resort:[78]

P14 **5(c)** '[Son] has a social worker. I see her once every couple of months. She comes here to see [son]. She promises the earth but never delivers anything (*laughing*). She promises respite, help with this that and the other and nothing ever comes of it ...'[79]

A quote from one participant encapsulates how many felt about their group membership:

P13 **5(b-d)** 'So that's why I went to [the support group] was simply to meet people in my position and also to give [older son] someone to mix with 'cos he didn't know anyone and he wasn't at play group just then ... I've met a lot of other people. I've made lots of friends, good friends from [the support group] ... it's just that sense of union, I can't explain it really that every one there, they just know. You don't have to say anything. You don't have to have a big conversation about it. They've been there and they've done it. We've all been in very similar situations somewhere along the line. Especially with money and that ... we'll go and sit there and nobody bats an eyelid if somebody has only got £2 or 3p in their purse for the next three days sort of thing. It's just (*laughing*) I can't explain it ... [T]o find yourself with other people who know where you're coming from, know how tough it is. I think, it's like anything isn't it? If you're not in that situation, I don't think you can really truly understand ... When you're feeling really low and you're having problems and all that and you can do whatever. You know, if you want to go in there and talk for the whole two hours you can and if you want to sit there with your head bowed. I've gone to sleep in there before now (*laughing*).

[77] Data Volume p.33. See also **P5 5(b)**, p.72, **P7 5(b)**, p.97 and **P14 5(a)**, p. 174.
[78] See Jones "Voices From the Front Line: State Social Workers and New Labour" in *British Journal of Social Work (2001)* vol.31, pp.547-562.
[79] Data Volume p.175. See also **P2 5(e-f)**, p.34 and **P8 5(b)**, p.51.

I've been going for five years now and although periodically my life's changed, like I did get married at one point etc. etc., I've still continued to go. I've never felt that I wanted to let go of that and I don't know when that time will come.'[80]

For some, group meetings provided an opportunity to have a break from their children:

P3 **5 (a-b)** 'So I used to go down there and then they had the child, you know the carers looking after the kids and we used to go and have a chat and that ... it was nice to go there and have somebody else look after your kids for a couple of hours.'[81]

However, many felt that the group's support was as important for their children as it was for themselves:

P2 **5 (m-n)**'So, you know, [the children] they're aware of the sort of work that [the support group] do and I think they've got like a sort of group of friends who they meet on the day trips and at Christmas parties and whatever, who aren't special but are different from their everyday friends ... and I think it's nice that they can relate to children who've only got the one parent and I think that's important because even now, you know the media and society and books and whatever, it's always mummy and daddy ...'[82]

P18 **5(a-d)** 'Just going to the meetings and doing it for the children to mix ... noticing how clingy they were compared to some of my friends' children, I was worried that they weren't actually having contact because nobody else looked after them so I mainly used to go for them and it did help.'[83]

The group was also highly valued as a source of practical help:

---

[80] Data Volume p.168. See also **P1** **5(b)**, p.22, **P3** **5(a-b)**, p.51, **P5** **5(d-g)**, pp.72-73, **P6** **5(a)**, p.84, **P9** **5(c)**,p.126, **P10** **5(d)**, p.138, **P12** **5(b)**, p.152, **P14** **5(d-g)**, p.175, **P15** **5(p)**, p.188, **P16** **5(e)**, p. 205, **P18** **5(a-b)**, p.227 and **P19** **5(b)**, p.238.

[81] Data Volume p.51. See also **P9** **5(c)**, p.126 and **P18** **5(a)**, p.227.

[82] Data Volume pp.34-35.

P11 **5(b)** '[The Project Worker] was an absolute life saver. I'm absolutely certain I would just have gone under. I would have lost the plot if I hadn't been helped with the financial situation because it puts so much strain on you, being in debt and having people chasing you when you haven't got the money to pay them ... I mean just make appointments to see people, come with me, write letters, make 'phone calls and just help organise me 'cos I was just in a heck of a state ...'[84]

P15 **5(c-e)** 'If it wasn't for [the support group], I wouldn't know half the things I know now and the people. When I moved [here] I didn't know no-one. ...[The support group] has given me a voice. I can actually talk back to people now. Tell them what I think. I have rights now. Especially with my ex-husband ...[and] when I was going through really bad times like with [third son] last year. I had loads of support from [Project Workers]. Going to court with me, you know. Just being on the other end of the 'phone. As well as [other members] and when I had this trouble with [third son]. He was abducted sort of thing. I don't want to go into that now but I had great support. I mean they went up the hospital with me, police and all of that.'[85]

P16 **5(f)** '[At the support group] there was always someone to speak to if you had a problem. I mean even if it was a formal type problem, you know, with your benefits or whatever, at least you had someone there 'cos they knew all the contacts and the forms you needed and who you needed to see. So it wasn't 'oh God, what do I do?' Just pop in.'[86]

Even those who felt able to deal with their own problems were gratified to know that they could rely on group support if they needed it:

---

[83] Data Volume p.227. See also **P4 5(b-h)**, pp.62-63, **P5 5(h)**, p.73, **P10 5(d) &5(g)**, p.138, **P11 5(c-d)**, pp.147-148 and **P16 5(g-i)**, pp.205-206.
[84] Data Volume p.147.
[85] Data Volume p.185.
[86] Data Volume p.64. See also **P5 5(c)**, p.72, **P8 5(f)**, p.109, **P19 5(d-f)**, p.239 and **P20 5(d)**, p.249.

P4 **5 (f)** 'I've never really actually gone to [the Project Worker] with a problem ... I think because you learn things along the way, so you don't really need to go to her ... but I mean I'd seen people go to [the Project Worker] and say 'oh, what shall I do? what shall I do?' but because I'd seen her advice and know what she's going to say then I could do it for myself basically.'[87]

P6 **5(g)** 'Well she [The Project Worker] knows that I'm capable of attacking the DSS myself and you know, doing the research that's necessary. I can do all that myself. But it was just somebody to off-load on ... just to be able to put things in perspective and prioritise if nothing else.'[88]

Hence, the degree and nature of support was tailored to meet individual needs and, inevitably, the type of support offered altered as group members became more established and more confident as lone parents. Although the input of Project Workers was clearly important, the service was predominantly delivered by lone parent volunteers enabling them to build confidence and self-esteem, to develop useful skills and to gain valuable work experience at their own pace. Any expenses were reimbursed and, because crèche facilities were provided when children could not accompany their parents, volunteers were free of the childcare dilemmas sometimes associated with paid work.[89]

P2 **5 (h-l)** '[T]hey [the support group] have been very good, I must admit, over the years, you know especially when I first joined ... it was purely volunteers and I think in a way that was good because I met people doing things for themselves and, you know, I saw the benefits through Harvest and Christmas and it was all through the volunteers' work and I thought 'Wow, you know, these are people who've got .. some of them ... more children than I had or, you know, a worse situation than I had' and I thought 'well if they can do it, why can't I get off my rear end?' ... It gave me a little bit of self confidence and made me want to sort of get up and do something with my life basically ... I think I've grown within myself and gained more self confidence ... I've done minutes for meetings; I've

[87] Data Volume p.64.
[88] Data Volume p.86. See also **P8 5(e)**, p.109.
[89] See p.140 above.

held meetings; I've done agendas; I've spoken at the annual general meeting (*laughing*); I've been involved in meetings and conferences and, you know, quite a lot I've been involved in and it's been great experience.'[90]

P8 **5(g-h)** 'I started off as a member; then I became an Assistant Rep ...; then I started doing the clothing bank in the office; then I started doing the drop-in; then I started as a crèche worker ...; I became a Group Rep ... and then I became the Treasurer ... I've done it all but I would never have had the courage to do any of it because, to me, I was a foreigner in the country ...'[91]

P17 **5(g)** 'I think [volunteering] is a good idea and you can put that on a CV as well ... It gave me management skills in a way and plus I did a few informal training courses with [the support group] as well. You know things like basic, very, very basic counselling stuff and anger management and stuff like that which again, I was able to put on my CV.'[92]

The opportunity to help other families in circumstances similar to their own was often welcomed by volunteers:

P15 **5(m)** 'When I first got divorced and moved here, I mean they were good in the group. I mean they all supported everyone else and that but now it's sort of like I haven't got so many problems as what the new ones have. They're going through like the new stage ... Well I do get new members coming in and I'm supporting them now so I'm giving back what they gave me.'[93]

They also appreciated the opportunity to help their own families:

P15 **5(j)** 'I'm on the committee as well ... [and we do fundraising]. We do car boots, we do [local] festival every year, I done a half marathon one year. In our group ... if I do a sponsored event or I do a car boot, we get points for how

[90] Data Volume pp.34-35.
[91] Data Volume p.110. See also **P4 5(b-d)**, p.62, **P5 5(k)**, p.73 and **P12 5(c-d)**, p.153.
[92] Data Volume p.220. See also **P4 5(e)**, p.63.

long it takes or how much money we actually raise on a sponsored thing and, like the end of every three months, I count up all the money we've got so far and I give half of it to the office and half of it goes into the group bank account and your points become pounds ... I took my children on holiday with that money. We had a holiday with [other members of the group].'[94]

One participant described similar experiences with a different support group:

P11 **5(d)** '[Another family support group] has probably played a more important role because I get to do the crèche facilities which keeps me out of the house and makes sure that my daughter gets plenty of contact with other children because I can't afford to send her to play school more than two sessions a week. Although they don't actually pay me for doing it you get travelling expenses so you're not out of pocket ... You help in fundraising, you participate in fundraising and just basically help when you can ... [My involvement with this group] was from a lot earlier on. I think I'd not long lost my husband ... but that helped me so much because I had very bad post-natal depression with both children and that helped get me back together if you like. Whilst I appreciate its value in society more because I've benefited from it so much, so I want to be able to put something back in for other people that are struggling like I was.'[95]

However, volunteering can be very demanding and time consuming and some participants expressed their irritation with those group members who were not prepared to share the workload:

P15 **5(r-t)** 'I mean sometimes, you get so many people got so many problems and they're 'phoning you up and I mean some problems you can deal with straight away. You can say 'all right, go down there, do this, do this, you know' or it's just moral support ... but some people have so many problems. They have major problems all in one go and you just think 'arghhh' and you can guarantee it's a

---

[93] Data Volume p.187. See also **P2 5(i)**, p.34, **P12 5(c-d)**, p.153, **P8 5(g-h)**, p.110 and **P11 5(d)**, p.148.
[94] Data Volume p.186.
[95] Data Volume p.148.

Friday and [Project Worker's] not in the office 'til Monday and you've got to deal with this …Sometimes [the children] really get naffed off with it but most of the time, they're OK with it. I mean, they've seen me go through really bad problems and really bad times and they've seen other people come to me when I've been going through it. And I've said 'well look, they were there for me, I've got to be there for them when it's their turn, you know … [but] I mean, some people in [the support group], they take, take, take. That's all they do. They really naff me off them people. They really do. They'll be there for the trips; they'll be there for Christmas; they'll be there for Easter; they'll be there for Harvest … but as soon as you ask them to do a bit of fundraising or you need some support yourself, they just don't bother.'[96]

Inevitably there comes a time when group members feel ready to take a step back from the group and to move on.

P17 **5(f)** 'It was a big part of my life for a long time but there came a point where … not only I had to move on from it, but I needed to move on from it because I would have been in a real rut otherwise … If I was still being Group Rep., I wasn't moving my life on. Nothing was changing. It meant I wasn't working. It meant I was still where I was in 1990 really.'[97]

However, when they did move into paid work, lone parents sometimes found it difficult to maintain contact with the group and they missed the companionship:

P16 **5(b-e)** 'I do [miss the support group]. I pop in and see them every now and again … They did a lot for me, if you like, in the past and I quite enjoyed the voluntary stuff I did with them … but it was filling in time as well because if I wasn't doing that, I'd be stagnating … I was meeting people in a like position, if you like. You can empathise with them really and I miss that, you know. The people I see at work, they come from a different lifestyle whereas at [the support group] everyone was in the same boat almost, to a certain extent. I mean, you

[96] Data Volume p.189. See also **P4** **5(c)**, p.63 and **P6** **5(b-d)**, p.85.
[97] Data Volume p.220. See also **P6** **5(d)**, p.85, **P8** **5(j)**, p.110 and **P15 (r-t)**, p.189.

knew what their problems were; you could understand when they had a bad day and why, because you'd been there yourself. So I miss that side of it.'[98]

P19 5(d-f) '[I miss the Support Group] big time. I could really do with it right now. I really could because I work and I don't get time to see anybody.'[99]

The clear message emanating from the data is that lone parent families greatly value support in all areas, and at all stages, of their lives. A substantial body of research suggests that NDLP can provide some welcome support to those lone parents who wish to move into paid work.[100] However, there is also evidence that, despite an increase in participation following the introduction of compulsory PA meetings, the majority of eligible lone parents do not participate in NDLP.[101] Their complex and varied reasons for non-participation are not due solely to the design and implementation of NDLP,[102] but evaluation findings indicate that 'the intensive support needed by most eligible lone parents who have not come forward for NDLP cannot be delivered through the current structure of NDLP' and reveal 'a need for intermediary services able to deliver client-focused and personalised support to small groups of lone parents who are beginning their journey from reliance on benefits to supporting themselves and their family through participation in the labour market.'[103]

Following some success with Innovative Pilots (IPs) which ran between 1999 and 2001,[104] the NDLP Innovation Fund has been established to develop innovative ways of improving the quality and effectiveness of NDLP and, consequently, lone parents' prospects within the labour market.[105]Although most IPs were beset by start-up problems and were too small scale to test for significant effects,[106] evaluation evidence suggests that the most successful IPs focused on helping lone parents deal with personal and pastoral issues, addressed

---

[98] Data Volume pp.204-205. See also **P10 5(e)**, p.138.
[99] Data Volume p.239.
[100] See details in Appendix D, p.213 below.
[101] Evans et al (2002) note 1, para.3.5. See pp.109 above.
[102] Evans et al (2002) note 1, para.3.4 and Chapter 4 above.
[103] ES Research Report No. 89, Yeandle and Pearson, *New Deal for Lone Parents: An Evaluation of Innovative Pilots*, 2001, p.49.
[104] *Ibid.* and see Appendix E at p.216 below.
[105] For further details see www.newdeal.gov.uk.
[106] Evans et al (2002) see note 1, p 33.

childcare issues and adopted holistic approaches, identifying all aspects of a participants' circumstances which were preventing them from moving into employment.[107] PAs found it helpful when such issues had been addressed prior to clients coming forward to mainstream NDLP, and where a degree of trust in NDLP had been established.[108] Community based organisations for lone parents which established a good liaison with PAs could greatly increase awareness of NDLP, help to build trust and so increase participation in NDLP. There is also some evidence from the IP evaluation that outreach activity could attract the hardest to reach and most disadvantaged lone parents, including those who had been out of the workplace for some time.[109] Evidently, there is a role here for the type of self-help support enjoyed by those lone parents taking part in my study.

Referring to his involvement with a project called Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse (FARE), Bob Holman explains how self-help groups or 'neighbourhood groups', greatly benefit both their members and the wider community. [110] They strengthen neighbourhoods by creating a more positive image of the area and facilitating the readiness to help each other which is the essence of a good neighbourhood. Although they cannot eradicate poverty, neighbourhood groups do provide practical services through credit unions, food co-ops and furniture stores, which can alleviate material social deprivations and so reduce family stress. Moreover they enable local voices to be heard so that poor people are no longer dismissed as unable to speak or write about social problems and policy. The groups are essentially mutual; that is, participants accept obligations towards others in the expectation that they will cooperate in building a neighbourhood which is better for all.[111]

> In terms of shaping social and economic life, these groups of low-income people in deprived zones are tiny compared with government agencies, private enterprise and establishment think-tanks. Yet they are not irrelevant to the structural causes of poverty and inequality. Ultimately, all policies spring from values.

---

[107] Yeandle and Pearson (2001) see note 103, p.5.
[108] Evans et al (2002) see note 1, p 33.
[109] *Ibid.*
[110] Holman, *Champions for Children: The Lives of Modern Child Care Pioneers* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2001), pp.186-187. See also Best and Hussey, *Women Making a Difference* (London : SPCK, 2001).
[111] Holman (2001) see note 110, pp.186-187.

> Neighbourhood groups give expression to beliefs in cooperation, equality and mutuality which would have to become widespread if income, wealth and power were ever to be redistributed. The hope must be that – in conjunction with others - the whisper from the bottom is eventually heard above those who can shout from the top.[112]

This view echoes that of the Policy Action Team on Community Self-Help in its report to the Social Exclusion Unit in 1999:

> Through community self-help, everybody wins - the individual, the local community, the providers of formal public services and society as a whole. But it needs careful and patient cultivation: by definition, this is activity done by local communities, not for or to them. Ill-judged, poorly directed or even over-enthusiastic intervention will smother rather than support community involvement. Sensitive, well-judged and supportive assistance will release community potential and repay the investment many times over.[113]

The Government has declared its commitment to encouraging and supporting all forms of community involvement.[114] The 1998 Compact and a series of more detailed codes, including the Funding Code, which followed its publication, provides a framework for effective partnerships between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in England. The Compact is not legally binding but is a guide to good practice and it clearly acknowledges the value of the VCS:

> Voluntary and community organisations make a major and literally incalculable contribution to the development of society and to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the nation. They act as pathfinders for the involvement of users in the design and delivery of services and often act as advocates for those who otherwise have no voice. In doing so they promote both equality and

[112] *Ibid.* p.187.
[113] *Report of the Policy Action Team on Community Self-Help*, 1999. Available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/vcu/shelp.pdf.
[114] See *Giving Time, Getting Involved: A Strategy Report by the Working Group on the Active Community*, 1999.

> diversity. They help to alleviate poverty, improve the quality of life and involve the socially excluded. The voluntary and community sector also makes an important direct economic contribution to the nation.[115]

A Consultation Document issued by the Government's Active Community Unit in May 2001 accepted that there is an urgent need to simplify the funding system and make existing sources of funding more accessible to community groups which 'are often faced with a complex and confusing picture and unnecessarily bureaucratic processes in order to access quite small amounts of money.'[116] Its proposals for reform were criticised by Bob Holman:

> The government paper Funding Community Groups is deficient in two directions. It reckons that community groups need "peanuts" funding and gives examples of grants for typewriters and toys. Yet community groups can only make a difference, can only do what they want, when they have salaries for staff. It is odd that a government which recently approved increases of £4,000 a year to the already high salaries of MPs is so opposed to making proper funding to people at the hard end. Next, it does not take into account that community groups need to survive long-term. Three year projects are not sufficient: no more than three years would be sufficient for schools or police stations. If the government is sincere about promoting community groups it must develop a strategy for their long-term funding.[117]

These criticisms were partially met by the 2002 Spending Review which included a Cross Cutting Review of the role of the VCS in Service Delivery highlighting a number of areas for reform and setting out an action plan for their implementation.[118] Its proposals include the streamlining of the application process by developing 'a common point of access and

---

[115] *Compact: Getting it Right Together. Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England*, 1998, para 6. Available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/acu/goodprac.pdf.

[116] *Funding Community Groups: A Consultation Document issued by the Government's Active Community Unit on behalf of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Resourcing Community Capacity Building*, May 2001. Available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

[117] Holman, *What Makes a Difference in a Deprived Neighbourhood*, 2001, at www.newsdesk.gla.ac.uk/extra/baholmansep5.htm.

[118] *The Role of the Voluntary Sector in Service Delivery: A Cross Cutting Review*, 2002, available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk .

a common application process for central government grant aid and strategic funding.'[119] Moreover, funding should more accurately reflect costs as all departments ensure 'that the price for contracts reflects the full cost of the service, including the legitimate portion of overhead costs,'[120] although it is unclear just how the 'legitimate proportion' will be established. Funding relationships should also become more stable following a shift from one year to three year spending settlements, subject to satisfactory performance,[121] although there remain no proposals for longer term funding. As the group which features in this study faces a major funding crisis after the Diocese withdrew funding for its Project Workers with effect from December 2002, the impact of the Cross Cutting Review has still to be felt. Unless it can secure alternative funds as an independent charity, the group will cease to function in its present form which will mean a tragic loss for many of its members and for the wider community.

[119] *Ibid.* Recommendation 17, p.41. See also www.volcomgrants.gov.uk.
[120] *Ibid.* Recommendation 13, p.40.
[121] *Ibid.* p.21 and p.26.

Conclusion

A Better Deal for Lone Parents

I began by describing my thesis as the record of an academic journey and I end by acknowledging the many twists and turns which have led me, for the time being at least, to journey's end. The purpose of the journey was to acquire some understanding of what it means to live in a lone parent family, to consider how government can genuinely offer a programme of support and to discover whether New Labour's NDLP, and its wider anti-poverty strategy, will genuinely tackle poverty among lone parent families. In other words, I sought to ascertain whether the social exclusion which, despite profound economic and social change, became a way of life for many lone parent families in the twentieth century is set to continue in the twenty-first century. It was only once I had embarked upon the journey that I became aware of its uncertain terrain and to realise the unpredictability of both its route and its destination.

The first obvious challenge was to devise an appropriate research method. It was this search which alerted me to the fundamental importance of gender and discourse and so provided the thread which now binds my thesis together.[1] The work of feminist scholars demonstrates how conventional research methods reflected a world constructed and described almost exclusively by the discourses of white, middle-class, able-bodied and heterosexual men.[2] Thus, until relatively recently at least, the views of women and the poor or socially excluded have been largely absent from both methodological and policy debates. Hence my primary objective was to devise a research method which would make known the views of lone parents (most of whom are lone *mothers*) who have direct experience of poverty and social exclusion.

Eventually I decided on an approach which I describe as a feminist ethnography.[3] Initially this involved my working as a volunteer with a community project for lone parent

[1] See Chapter 1 above.
[2] See pp.15-21 above.
[3] See pp.25-30 above.

families and latterly my interviewing 20 lone parents, all of whom I met through the project.[4] Striving to minimise my own intervention and maximise lone parents' participation, I chose an informal, participant led method of data collection and processed the resulting data in two ways. First, in order to facilitate subsequent sorting and analysis, the data were loosely coded during their transcription[5] and secondly they were condensed into individual profiles for each participant. Those profiles (now contained in a separate volume[6]) support the data which are presented in my thesis through a series of quotes. Readers are thereby invited not simply to reflect upon conclusions I have drawn but to draw their own, perhaps different, conclusions from the data they have before them. My method was thus designed to give lone parents some control over the research process and ultimately ensure that the voices the reader hears are, substantially at best and partially at least, the voices of the lone parents who took part.

Of course, that is not to claim that my thesis is entirely impartial; my own input in terms of both the collection and presentation of data cannot simply be ignored and the data can never entirely speak for themselves. The sheer volume of data generated by this method would have been inaccessible without substantial editing (and therefore some intervention) on my part. Moreover, both the reader and I may have been able to draw different conclusions had time and other resource pressures not prevented my interviewing a control group who may have expressed different views.

I came to accept at a fairly early stage of my journey that, however desirable it may be, a participatory, egalitarian research process which generates an authentic account of women's (or men's) experiences may be simply unattainable.[7] Distinctions giving rise to power imbalances between researcher and researched (such as those of sex, race, class, life chances, educational and cultural backgrounds) can never be completely eliminated and, save perhaps for some very rare examples of fully participatory or action research, control over the agenda, process and presentation of research remains almost exclusively with the researcher. In addition, participants' accounts of their experiences are subject to multiple interpretations and multiple meanings not just in terms of the discourses which

---

[4] See pp.112-114 above.
[5] See Appendix B at p.206 below.
[6] Wright, *Towards a Better Deal for Lone Parents,* Vol. 2, 2002.

locate and position the researcher as author of the text, but also those which participants use to interpret their own experiences and therefore to locate and position themselves. A prolonged search for the 'perfect' method is a futile exercise which risks inaction and serves only to feed a predominantly academic, and sterile, methodological debate.

My small scale study may not necessarily be said fairly to represent the views of the wider population of lone parents. Rather, it is just one of many accounts adding to the wealth of (past and ongoing) research about lone parent families[8] which, like all families, are individual and cannot be represented as a homogeneous group no matter how large or supposedly representative the sample. It adopts a different approach which helps to inform a growing body of research by generating an account of participants' attitudes to, and experiences of, lone parenthood, of poverty, childcare and of reconciling paid work with family life. The conclusions drawn are perhaps necessarily tentative, but their surprising implications for methodological debates and for policy direction are at least worthy of further investigation.

As my journey advanced beyond the search for an appropriate method, I began to explore the changing meanings of citizenship, poverty and social exclusion in post-war Britain and, once again, it became clear that issues of gender and discourse are fundamental. The discussion here centres on the Beveridge Plan[9] and the subsequent development of the welfare state. Since New Labour reforms remain ongoing and earlier promises of fundamental reform to the social security system failed to live up to expectations, the Plan, published in 1942, constitutes the only comprehensive review and reform programme for social security produced during the twentieth century. Essentially, it provided for benefits, paid as 'of right' and at subsistence rates, in times of need in return for contributions from individuals and employers paid in times of relative sufficiency. Hence, with an emphasis on reciprocity, the Plan established the social rights and responsibilities of citizens and paved the way for the discourse of citizenship which came

---

[7] See pp.22-24 above.

[8] See in particular research referred to in Appendices D to G at pp. 213-220 below.

[9] Beveridge, *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (London: HMSO, 1942), Cmnd. 6404. See pp.33-35 above.

to prevail in the latter part of the twentieth century and which Lister calls a *practice* view[10] of citizenship.

For a time, during the early post-war period of economic prosperity, there was a widely held view that the welfare state was delivering a more equal and more integrated society for British citizens, but it gradually became clear that Beveridge's aspiration to abolish 'Want' had been overly optimistic. The implemented version of the Plan had two major shortcomings: first, Beveridge's definition and measurement of poverty, and therefore his response to it, were far too limited and, secondly, it was clear that he had not anticipated the pace and scale of change in British society, especially in family practices.

The first of these shortcomings is concerned with discourse. By the late 1950s, social scientists were beginning to redefine, and so 'rediscover', poverty[11] and it was their definition of a relative concept which ultimately led to the preferred use of the term 'social exclusion'. Although it is often thought that this is no more than a relabelling of poverty and the two terms are frequently used interchangeably, social exclusion is a much broader concept. Unlike poverty and deprivation, which Alcock suggests might be seen as a state of affairs, social exclusion is seen as a process involving us all, with a focus on relations between people rather than the distribution of resources.[12] Social exclusion thereby reaches beyond individuals and families to encompass whole communities.

During the latter part of the twentieth century it became evident that lone parent families faced a particularly high risk of social exclusion and, somewhat ironically, the welfare state had helped to construct the so-called 'problem' of lone parenthood. Hence the second of the Plan's shortcomings is concerned with gender. Beveridge had firmly endorsed the concept of a family wage, which presupposes that all men have dependent families and that all women have men they can rely on for economic support.[13] Thus, the already established gender roles of women as carers and men as waged workers became

[10] Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist* Perspectives (New York: New York University Press, 1997). See pp.35-37 above.
[11] See Chapter 2, especially p.42 and pp.45-50 above.
[12] Alcock, *Understanding Poverty* (second edition) (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997) p.95. See pp.42-43 above.
[13] See Chapter 3, especially pp.76-82 above.

yet more deeply embedded in our culture and ensured that the vast majority of lone parents are in fact lone mothers. Feminist analyses of social policy reveal how the support of successive UK Governments for this traditional breadwinner/homemaker model of family life disadvantaged women in the workplace and led many to become reliant either on their partners or the state for a large part of their incomes, so leaving women (and their children) over-represented among the poor.

Moreover, by offering lone parents the capacity for, albeit poor, autonomous living, the means-tested National Assistance scheme (now Income Support) boosted their visibility, contributed to their increased number and ultimately triggered public concerns about the extent of their poverty, the welfare of their children and the cost of supporting them from the public purse. These concerns brought noticeable shifts of emphasis from a collective to an individual responsibility for families; from the importance of marriage as an institution to the importance of responsible parenting within and beyond marriage and from the primacy of parenthood to the primacy of paid work. They became the focus of much public debate and continue to provide the impetus for reform.

New Labour has made much of its 'new' approach to this debate and the Prime Minister has described his Government's 'Third Way' as 'New Politics for the New Century'.[14] However, New Labour's approach to welfare reform (explained in its Green Paper entitled 'New Ambitions for our Country: a New Contract for Welfare'[15]) is not as 'new' as its rhetoric proclaims. Finding 'new' solutions to 'old' dilemmas is problematic. Policy development is never static; discourses and policy responses, like the issues they address, are rarely 'new'; rather, they evolve and continually build upon those which preceded them.

Drawing a distinction between what might be termed 'public' and 'private' discourses, Duncan and Edwards have helpfully identified a number of discourses of lone motherhood which developed in the last century and which might also be applied to lone

[14] Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for the New Century* (London: The Fabian Society, 1998).
[15] DSS, *New Ambitions for our Country: A New Contract for Welfare*, 1998, Cm. 3085.

fatherhood.[16] Of course, none of these discourses is distinct; all are intended only as models with obvious overlaps and possible omissions. The four public (i.e. political and popular) discourses depict lone motherhood as: a 'social problem', which posits lone parents as economically and socially disadvantaged victims in need of greater state support; a 'lifestyle change' whereby lone parents are autonomous agents who have a right to choose lone parenthood as a family practice; a 'social threat' which regards lone parents as members of a growing underclass rejecting both traditional family practices and the work ethic and encouraged to become 'dependent on welfare' by over-generous state support and, finally, 'escaping patriarchy' whereby women seek to live their lives without being controlled by men. In ungendered terms, although it comes closely to resemble the 'lifestyle change' discourse, 'escaping patriarchy' might be thought of as 'escaping gendered family practices' whereby both women and men seek autonomy in their everyday (working and family) lives.

New Labour's 'Third Way', contains elements of all four discourses and is delivering mixed messages to lone parents.[17] On the one hand, it seeks to endorse the traditional model of family life, comprising father as breadwinner and mother as homemaker, while on the other, it largely ignores the home-making role of lone parents and prescribes paid work as the best route out of poverty irrespective of family circumstances. This is a stance which is typical of Levitas's construct of SID, a social integrationist discourse of social exclusion (a hybrid between RED, a redistributionist discourse, and MUD, a moral underclass discourse[18]). SID focuses on paid work as the means to social inclusion. It aims to *control* the behaviour of both *individuals* and *communities* by seeking to *prevent* poverty and social exclusion in 'working families', but only to *relieve* it in 'workless households'. Thus, work incentives have been bolstered by the Government's National Childcare Strategy, by its campaign for a 'work-life balance' and by the greatly improved in-work incomes generated by its tax and benefit reforms. The stated aim is 'to deliver services of such high quality that there would be simply no reason why people should not

[16] Duncan and Edwards, *Lone Mothers, Paid Work and Gendered Moral Rationalities* (London: Macmillan, 1999). See pp.83-102 and pp.114-117 above.
[17] See pp.102-110 above.
[18] Levitas, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998). See pp.43-67 above.

take them up.'[19] My data suggest that the flaw in the strategy is that the services provided for lone parents are not necessarily the services they either want or need.

My thesis contrasts the 'public' discourses of New Labour with the 'private' discourses of albeit a small group of lone parents.[20] Although, as Jane Millar has noted, their work fails to address the issue of gender and their sample includes only lone *mothers*,[21] Duncan and Edwards refer to these private discourses as 'gendered moral rationalities' and they show how lone mothers give priority to a moral and practical responsibility for children.[22] Interestingly, though my own sample included three lone fathers, the data do not reveal significant differences between their attitudes and experiences and those of the lone mothers who took part. Rather, they reveal families' uniquely individual experiences; each with different considerations, different problems and different perspectives which necessarily evoke a whole variety of responses to lone parenthood, irrespective of gender.

Accordingly, among both male and female participants, there was clear evidence of the diversity of present day family life.[23] Whilst some expressed their desire to enter into a new partnership and return to a more traditional way of family life, many came to enjoy the autonomy and independence of lone parenthood. They were content with several aspects of their personal lives and, when they chose to form new partnerships, they often preferred to settle for less traditional relationships. Nevertheless, adjusting to lone parenthood is often a lengthy and traumatic process which impacts on every aspect of family life including health, confidence, self-esteem and well-being. Resolving issues such as children's residence and contact with former partners and non-resident parents requires a significant input of time and energy which inevitably contributes to the anguish following relationship breakdown. The anxiety and distress is greater still when the family faces uncertainty about housing and/or outstanding debts. Hence, the pattern emerging from the data, at least of early lone parenthood, is one of varying degrees of emotional, financial and household chaos, which can frequently leave families feeling debilitated and exhausted.

[19] DSS (1998) see note 15, para.3.38.
[20] See Chapters 4 and 5 above.
[21] Comments made at my viva on 13 May 2003.
[22] Duncan and Edwards (1999) see note 16.
[23] See pp.119-125 above.

The turmoil following relationship breakdown often means that decisions about paid work are necessarily deferred pending more immediate family concerns, although the need to stabilise family income is clearly an early priority. Participants expressed more than a little disquiet at the prospect of depending either on their former partners or the state for financial support and would have preferred to become self-supporting. Many felt that this would lessen their ties with former partners, avoid the uncertainty arising from the complexity and inefficiency of the benefit system and free them of the stigma associated with claiming IS.

Some participants expressed their appreciation of the lifestyle IS affords, but there was also clear evidence of the hardship endured by families on IS and there was some scepticism about the benefits of moving into paid work.[24] Whilst most participants recognised the increasing financial incentives following tax and benefit reforms, those who chose to work often did so for quite different reasons.[25] Many reported having too much time and complained of being bored once their youngest child started school. They welcomed opportunities to become more independent of former partners and the state; to boost their self-esteem and to set an example to their children. They were also motivated by the greater autonomy and wider social contact achieved through paid work, although their overriding consideration was their children's welfare.

What lone parent participants were expressing here were private discourses of childcare and paid work which are complex and wide-ranging. In so far as they prioritise their children's needs over and above paid work, those discourses are largely consistent with the *Primarily Mother* model identified by Duncan and Edwards.[26] However, the limitations of this typology now become readily apparent; participants often expressed diverse views encompassing all three models of lone motherhood (i.e. *Mother/Worker Integral*, *Primarily Worker* and *Primarily Mother*) and it was rare for them to be easily categorised. This serves to show that, like those for public discourses of lone parenthood,

[24] See pp.130-135 above.
[25] See pp.134-139 above.
[26] Duncan and Edwards (1999), see note 16.

citizenship or social exclusion, this typology is useful only as a loose framework and becomes unhelpfully restrictive if applied too rigidly.

The real revelation though, is not so much the differences the data expose between lone parents' private discourses but rather the variance between those discourses and the public discourses of Government. Lone parents' concern to do what is best for their children impacts not only on decisions about remaining in, or moving into, paid work but on all decisions following relationship breakdown including decisions about forming new partnerships, about where children should live and what contact the family should have with former partners and non-resident parents.

For some participants, the inevitable compromises of paid work were unacceptable, however great the financial incentive. Many were very aware of the absence of non-resident parents and, especially where there were very young children or there had been a recent or particularly traumatic separation, they felt a need simply to 'be there' for their children. Being in paid work inevitably means less family time which can cause relationships to become strained. Household chores are also a greater burden and childcare a more significant issue for working parents who do not have the support of a partner at home.

The Government's National Childcare Strategy[27] aims to make good quality childcare accessible and affordable to all those who want it. However, limited availability and issues of organisation and cost continue to prohibit its use, sometimes leading to childcare arrangements which are not entirely satisfactory, including leaving children on their own or in the care of older siblings.[28] For most parents, the primary concern is their children's safety, but ensuring their safety is not always enough; parents are also very concerned about the quality of the care provided. Accordingly, informal care from family members and friends is still the preferred option for many, even though lone parents are aware of the burden this can place on family and friends and it does not entitle WTC recipients to the childcare tax credit payable for formal care.

---

[27] DSS, *Meeting the Childcare Challenge: A Framework and Consultation Document,* 1998, Cm 3959 and www.daycaretrust.org.uk

[28] See pp.141-145 above.

Clearly the challenge for all parents, and particularly for lone parents, is to balance the interests of their children against the perceived advantages of being in paid work. That often means staying at home to care for young children until they start school and then doing something which fits in with school hours and holidays until the children are sufficiently independent to enable lone parents to work full-time. For some, the flexibility of education makes it a preferred (if potentially costly) option when children are still young. Others find that self-employment or working from home offers a good solution, although for some participants this too was problematic.[29] The Government's work-life balance campaign, though it has yet to make a significant impact on the lives of many working parents, recognises that employer flexibility is key to the successful combination of paid work and parenthood.[30]

There is a whole body of research which shows that childcare dilemmas and employer attitudes are only two, albeit two major, factors making paid work notoriously difficult for lone parents. Other barriers include: the hardship and constraints of lone parents' current circumstances; lack of transport; lack of skills, confidence and work experience; low pay, scarce and insecure jobs; concern about meeting housing costs and the complexity of the benefit system.[31] New Labour's NDLP, launched nationally in October 1998, aims to help lone parents overcome some of these barriers whilst the subsequent introduction of compulsory Personal Adviser meetings for lone parents claiming Income Support is intended to ensure that they continually remain in touch with the labour market. To some extent this package of measures provides cause for optimism: the Government is delivering policies which afford lone parents at least an element of choice about balancing paid work and family life. However, there is some evidence to suggest that those policies are too heavily weighted in favour of paid work. It appears that, despite his insistence that he is 'listening',[32] in the case of lone parents, the Prime Minister may not be listening carefully enough.

[29] See pp.144-145 above.
[30] See www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance. See pp.106-107 and pp.145-146 above.
[31] See pp.93-94 above.
[32] T. Blair, Prime Minister's speech, Labour Party conference, Brighton, 2000.

Since its inception, NDLP has been subject to ongoing national evaluations.[33] Their use of both quantitative and qualitative techniques and their capacity to sample on a larger and more representative scale have produced a valuable body of research which assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the service provided and facilitates amendments which continue to improve the programme's efficiency and effectiveness. However, because they do not question the assumption that 'paid work is the best route out of poverty', national evaluations share the Government's aim of reducing poverty and social exclusion by increasing participation in the labour market. The value of my study is that it does not rest on this assumption. Its principal aim was to discover the type of services which would most effectively alleviate poverty and social exclusion among lone parent families whilst its primary objective was to enable lone parents to express their own views and ideas. The data generated, and discussed further below, raise doubts about the effectiveness of NDLP.

The fieldwork for my study took place during the scheme's infancy when lone parents would expect to have contact with a Personal Adviser only if they elected to take part in NDLP, at which time they received the support and guidance of specialist advisers.[34] My data indicate that some lone parents would not even contemplate participating in NDLP because they had preconceived ideas about the service they could expect, based on their own previously poor experiences of the benefits system (and/or NDLP) and those of people they knew.[35] However, the data also confirm national evaluation findings that such preconceptions were often ill founded since those who elected to take part were generally satisfied with the service they received, although the role and manner of Personal Advisers was critical to lone parents' overall assessment of the programme.[36]

For a significant minority of study participants, the NDLP service fell some way short of their expectations. There was some frustration with the scheme's limitations, form-filling was felt to be excessive and some participants felt that the true costs of moving into paid work were not made explicit. A lack of certainty about benefit entitlement, due either to

[33] See Appendix D at p.213 below.
[34] See Chapter 5, especially p.151-153 above.
[35] See pp.157-158 above.
[36] See p.158 above.

the complexity of the benefits system or to conflicting or inaccurate information given by administrators, gave rise to considerable anxiety. Despite measures to ease the transition from IS to paid work, including back to work bonuses and benefit run-ons, the uncertainty was most acutely felt when participants first moved into paid work and the angst was prolonged for many by delays and errors in the processing of benefits claims, most notably in the case of Housing Benefit. Although the Government envisages a much improved service following the merger of the Employment Service and parts of the Benefits Agency, its vision is blighted by persistent and serious doubts about the efficiency and effectiveness of the service now principally delivered by the newly created Jobcentre Plus.[37]

Lone parents tend to enter precarious low-paid, low-skilled jobs associated with a high turnover.[38] Work can sometimes be an unfriendly and hostile environment; childcare arrangements do not always work successfully and some simply find that their hours of work intrude too much on the time they spend with their children. Problems may also arise with agreed hours or with employers who are inflexible about time off for family or health reasons, whilst some lone parents may be worse off than expected, perhaps struggling and in debt. Their decisions about paid work are complex and varied; they change as family circumstances change and there is some hesitation about making plans for the longer term. It is clear that an effective in-work support service may help to increase the sustainability of work and thus improve lone parents' prospects in the longer-term, but study participants confirmed national evaluation findings that, once in work, contact with Personal Advisers is minimal.[39]

The clear message emanating from the data is that, although NDLP can and does provide a useful service for some, lone parent families would benefit from far wider support in all areas, and at all stages, of their lives. There is evidence that, despite an increase in participation following the introduction of compulsory Personal Adviser meetings, the majority of eligible lone parents do not participate in NDLP[40] and evaluation findings reveal a need for intermediary services which offer a more holistic approach able to

---

[37] See p.155 above.
[38] See pp.166-168 above.
[39] *Ibid.*

deliver intensive and client-focused support to small groups of lone parents.[41] Community organisations which establish a good liaison with Personal Advisers can help to build trust and so increase awareness of, and effective participation in, NDLP. Moreover, organisations such as the self-help support group at the centre of my study are better able to deal with the wider personal and pastoral issues which may inhibit NDLP participation.

For many study participants, self-help support was vital.[42] Social Services were often felt to be inadequate or a service of last resort and, though some lone parents could rely on family and friends, they were wary of becoming a burden. The support group was therefore an important source of social contact. Lone parents particularly valued the group's solidarity, welcoming the chance to meet, befriend and share experiences with people in situations similar to their own and, whilst meetings provided an opportunity for members to have a break from their children, many felt that the group's support and social contact was as important for them as it was for the parents themselves. The group was highly valued as a source of practical help, even for those who felt able to deal with their own problems. The degree and nature of support was thus tailored to meet individual needs, adjusted accordingly as group members became more established and more confident as lone parents.

Although the input of Project Workers was clearly important, the service was predominantly delivered by lone parent volunteers enabling them to build confidence and self-esteem, to develop useful skills and to gain valuable work experience at their own pace. Any expenses were reimbursed and, because crèche facilities were provided when children could not accompany their parents, volunteers were free of the childcare dilemmas sometimes associated with paid work.[43] Members appreciated the opportunity to help their own families, but they also greatly welcomed the opportunity to 'give something back' by helping other families in circumstances similar to their own. Nevertheless, some volunteers found their work very demanding and time consuming and some participants expressed their irritation with those group members who were not

[40] See pp.109-110 above.
[41] See pp.177-178 above.
[42] See Chapter 5 above, especially pp.169-173.

prepared to share the workload. Inevitably there came a time when members felt ready to take a step back from the group and to move on, though when they did move into paid work, time restrictions made it difficult for them to maintain contact with the group and they often missed the companionship.

It is the group's pivotal role in the lives of participants which constitutes my most significant finding and, coincidentally, serves to vindicate my choice of research method. Initially I contacted the group as a means of getting to know potential participants and it was only when I gave them the opportunity to express their own views that I became aware of the importance of their group membership. It is this kind of interaction which is presently lacking in policy; whilst paid work is clearly the Government's primary concern, for most lone parents decisions about paid work are secondary to their conceptions about what is best for their children. Unless lone parents feel ready and able to move into paid work, NDLP is largely irrelevant to them. Essentially, their family's well-being is more important than its prosperity and personal and pastoral issues, such as forming new partnerships, agreeing contact with a former partner, children's residency, debt and housing, can be more pressing than a perceived need to move into the workplace. Hence these issues need to be addressed if the Government's campaign to eradicate child poverty[44] is to meet with more than partial success.

New Labour's present strategy offers a limited service which substitutes the 'public' discourses of Government for the 'private' discourses of individuals. It tries to impose political opinion by moving lone parents into paid work without taking account of how they reach what they consider to be morally appropriate decisions in their own particular circumstances. Consequently it is only partially meeting the needs of their families. Social problems do not simply occur: they are constructed by public discourses which fail to respond to the flux and multiplicity of private discourses. The 'problem' of lone parenthood is no exception.

---

[43] See pp.140-148 above.

[44] See Blair *Beveridge Revisited: A Welfare State for the 21st century* (The Beveridge Lecture given at Toynbee Hall, London, on 18 March 1999 as part of the celebrations for the 750th Anniversary of University College, Oxford), reproduced in Walker (ed), *Ending Child Poverty: Popular Welfare for the 21st Century?* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 1999), p.7.

Self-help support offers a service which is family focused rather than work focused. Crucially, this is a service determined and delivered not by Government but by lone parent volunteers with a unique insight into the needs of their fellow group members. It therefore caters directly for its current membership and aims to enable lone parents to take control of their own lives.[45] That is not to suggest that NDLP and self-help support are mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they have the potential to complement each other very successfully. NDLP should continue to build upon the personal, tailored service valued by many whilst ensuring that a consistently reliable, transparent and efficient service increases confidence in others. It should be extended to include greater in-work support and efforts should continue to raise awareness of the services available, particularly the back to work bonuses and benefit run-ons welcomed by some participants.[46] NDLP can thereby greatly assist a move into paid work for those lone parents who feel this would be an appropriate step for them and their families in their present circumstances, Alternatively, for those who have not reached that stage, self-help support can help to prepare them for paid work whilst increasing their awareness of, and trust in, NDLP, and increasing the likelihood of their using the service at a later date.

Meanwhile, self-help support can provide lone parents with a welcome opportunity to socialise with others in similar situations; helping their families (and others) to adjust to changing circumstances and encouraging them to spend time caring for children at home and in the community. The value of the help and support both given and received should not be underestimated; this is tackling social exclusion at its roots and represents active citizenship and joined-up thinking at its very best. Accordingly, these groups and their members, deserve much wider recognition and far greater state funding and support.

The growing diversity in family practices is unlikely to be suppressed, yet cannot be ignored. Thus far, New Labour's response has been to 'combine public and private provision in a new partnership for the new age'[47] and in its view 'opportunity to all and responsibility from all equals community for all'.[48] However, because discourses

[45] Group's Annual Report. Source not fully disclosed to protect the anonymity of participants.
[46] See p.133 above.
[47] DSS (1998) see note 15, para.13.See further Chapter 2 above, particularly p.63.
[48] Blair, Prime Minister's Speech to the Women's Institutes' Triennial General Meeting, 7th June 2000 available at www.number-10.gov.uk.

underpinning current policy equate opportunities and responsibilities with paid work, they tend to preserve full citizenship rights for paid workers and their families. Full social inclusion demands a more holistic and inclusive approach which values the contribution and perspective of each and every citizen. This necessarily includes ensuring that incomes are sufficient to enable all families to participate fully in everyday activities of their own choice within their own communities, irrespective of parents' gender and of their marital or working status. Throughout the course of my academic journey, lone parents have consistently demonstrated that paid work is not the only means of discharging their full responsibilities as citizens and paid work should not therefore be the only means of enjoying their full rights as citizens.

Appendix A

Prompt Cards

Introduction

The following pages contain a series of prompt cards used during interviews with research participants. The aims of the interviews were:

(i) to explore lone parents' experiences of, and attitudes towards, the NDLP;

(ii) to look at the types and levels of practical and emotional support offered by the NDLP; and

(iii) to compare those with the types and levels of practical and emotional support which lone parents feel they need.

Beneath each card is an indication of the question it was intended to address (though not in the form in which it was asked) and its objectives.

1. ETHICS

- purpose of study
- use of findings
- confidentiality
- voluntary participation
- choice of name*

Question: Has the participant given fully informed consent?

Objectives:

(i) to ensure (as far as possible) that each participant has understood the purpose of the research including its scope and its limitations;

(ii) to explain the role of the participants; to put them at their ease and actively encourage them to lead the discussion;

(iii) to offer assurances of anonymity and confidentiality;

(iv) to stress the voluntary nature of participation and the opportunity to withdraw at any stage of the research;

(v) to invite questions and to answer them as fully and as honestly as possible; and

(vi) to invite participants to choose the names by which they would be known (if they so wished).

* Since participants showed little or no interest in making this choice, the use of names was subsequently abandoned in favour of participant numbers (see separate Data Volume).

2. FAMILY

- children
- health and well being
- duration of lone parenthood
- contact with former partner
- housing
- support

Question: Could paid work be sustained in present family circumstances?

Objectives: to establish

(i) family composition;

(ii) family health and well being;

(iii) family stability

- emotional trauma following separation or pregnancy;
- stable housing/schools/community or disrupted following separation or pregnancy;

(iv) levels of support/isolation

- contact with former partner;
- family and friends;
- social services;
- voluntary organisations.

3. INCOME

- benefits (including passported benefits)
- child support
- earnings
- other income

Question: Is participant within the NDLP target group?

Objectives: to establish

(i) participant's income level relative to IS;

(ii) reliability of income sources (stable or fluctuating);

(iii) consequences of managing on current income for self and children;

(iv) whether participant receives child support and

(v) feelings about child support

- responsibilities of 'absent parent';
- financial dependence on former partner.

4. WORK

- Past
- Present
- Future

- type of work
- duration
- education/training
- income (hours/pay/expenses)
- job satisfaction
- aspirations

Question: **Has lone parenthood changed the nature of the work participant does or would like to do?**

Objectives: see page 213 below

5. WORK and PARENTHOOD

- childcare
- time management
- financial implications
- relationships
- flexibility of employer
- obligations (to family and employer)

Question: **How does participant feel about combining paid work and parenthood?**

Objectives (for 4 and 5 above): to establish

(i) participant's career history and future work aspirations;

(ii) reasons for combining parenthood with paid work or for electing full-time parenthood
- career choice; personal satisfaction;
- income differentials;
- quality of life - priorities before and after lone parenthood;
- feelings about leaving babies/pre-school children/school-age children/sick or disabled children in someone else's care;
- implications for relationships with children, friends, family and wider community;
- perceived pressure from family/community/media/politicians;

(iii) ease of combining parenthood and paid work
- relevant experience/qualifications /skills;
- arranging (and paying for) childcare;
- attitude and flexibility of employers (especially re school holidays and sickness);
- competing time demands.

6. NDLP

- awareness
- principle
- participation
- outcome

Question: **How significant is the NDLP for this oarticipant?**

Objectives: see page 215 below.

7. NDLP SERVICE

- Adviser
- local advice
  - training/education - jobsearch - childcare
- benefit entitlements
- form completion
- transition
- in-work support

Question: **Does the NDLP provide the support participant needs?**

Objectives (for 6 and 7 above): to evaluate the NDLP

(i) is the NDLP reaching the target group?
- awareness;
- should the NDLP be restricted to lone parents receiving IS?
- should participation be voluntary?

(ii) extent of support and quality of service provided
- relationship with Adviser before and after starting work;
- usefulness and accuracy of advice;
- perceived pressure to move into work;
- opportunities for education/training

(iii) consequences of participating/ declining to participate in NDLP
- successful placement (work/education/training);
- change of lifestyle/income;
- transition: benefits and personal adjustment (for self and children).

Appendix B

Data Codes

Introduction

Each of the 20 interviews was transcribed into a table as follows:

Column 1: Line number (entered automatically as data input).

Column 2: A repeat of the line number as it appeared in column 1 (this was essential because the line number in column 1 changed at the sorting stage and the original number was required to locate the data).

Column 3: Either a single number identifying the participant or a J followed by the number identifying the participant but indicating that the contribution in the text was mine.

Column 4: A code (see p.207 below) according to the type of data contained in the text.

Column 5: The text of the interview.

Column 6: Any other information (eg. tape number/ comments etc.)

The data was subsequently merged into one large table and sorted according to the codes entered in column 4. These codes were very general and represented only a convenient way of sorting the data. As explained in Chapter 1 (see page 29 above), I subsequently chose to compile a supplementary data volume in an endeavour to minimise selection and analysis and to retain the identity (or the individual voice) of each participant. Consequently the codes are not relevant to the participant profiles contained in the data volume but were useful when selecting data for Chapters 4 and 5 above.

Codes for Column 4 (see page 206 above)

FAMILY:	**A**
Composition:	1
Health:	2
Breakdown:	3
Housing	4
SUPPORT:	**B**
Contact and relationship with former partner	1
Family	2
Friends	3
Support Group	4
Other agencies (including Social Services)	5
Other relationships	6
Exclusion	7
INCOME:	**C**
Income support:	1
Family credit:	2
WFTC:	3
Other benefits: (including passported benefits but NOT work related bonuses)	4
Child support:	5
Past earnings:	6
Present earnings:	7
Other income:	8
EDUCATION/TRAINING:	**D**
Past:	1
Present:	2
Future/unmet need:	3

Codes for Column 4 (cont.) (see page 206 above)

WORK:	**E**
Past:	1
Present:	2
Aspirations:	3
Transition (from is to work):	4
Work related bonuses:	5
Voluntary	6
Motivation	7
Income differentials	8
WORK AND PARENTHOOD:	**F**
Childcare:	1
Time management:	2
Flexibility of employer:	3
Conflicts (family/work):	4
NDLP:	**G**
Awareness:	1
Participation:	2
Principle:	3
Service received:	4
Service desired:	5

Appendix C

NDLP Time Line*

DATE	STAGE	DETAILS
July 1997	**Phase One – Prototype**	*Eight separate locations. ES and BA responsible for four locations each. Part of "Welfare to Work" agenda introduced to encourage work amongst groups perceived as having some disadvantage in the labour market. Voluntary, with the aim of improving their job readiness and increasing their ability to take up paid work. Target Group: those who claim IS and youngest child is aged more than five years and three months.*
April 1998	**Phase Two**	*Co-ordinated at regional level. National roll-out of programme to new and repeat claimants whose youngest child is five years, three months and over and who have been claiming IS for eight weeks.*
October 1998	**Phase Three**	*Full national roll - out programme to all lone parents on IS. Inviting existing claimants for interview on gradual basis. [Process of inviting existing clients completed by April 1999]. Target group: lone parents with youngest child more than five years and three months old. Delivered by ES, supported by BA. Enhanced assistance with training, education and work experience.*
1998	**National Childcare Strategy**	*Government Programme to improve childcare provision.*
January 1999	**NDLP**	*Major national advertising campaign run*
April 1999	**National Minimum Wage**	
	NDLP	*Eight/nine ES Regions devolved management of NDLP to district level.*

cont..

* Reproduced and adapted from *New Deal for Lone Parents: First Synthesis Report of the National Evaluation* prepared for the Department of Work and Pensions, June 2002, by Martin Evans, Abigail McKnight and Ceema Namazie, CASE, London School of Economics, p.4.

NDLP Time Line (cont.)*

DATE	STAGE	DETAILS
June 1999	ONE	*12 pilot areas – single point entry into benefit system for working age claimants. Requiring them to attend work-focused interview. Three models introduced; basic model, private/voluntary sector model and a call centre model. Participation voluntary for non-JSA clients until April 2000. Objective: increase labour market participation by benefit recipients and raise sustainable levels of employment.*
October 1999	WFTC	*Working Families' Tax Credit (replacing Family Credit). In-work benefit, including 100% maintenance disregard and childcare tax credit towards registered childcare.*
October 1999	Jobfinder's Grant	*A discretionary £200 grant made available to NDLP participants to meet some of the costs of starting work. Not payable to those who receive back to work or child maintenance bonuses.*
October 1999	Benefit Run-On	*Claiming JSA or IS for over six months, entitled to two weeks extra benefit (lone parent run-on) if working more than16 hours a week and job is for at least five weeks. Also extended payments of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, initially subject to claim being made within eight days of entitlement to IS ceasing but subsequently paid automatically if entitled to lone parent run-on. Mortgage interest run-on (and assured coverage of IS mortgage payments if returning to IS within 12 months) to follow in April 2001*
2nd Half 1999	Innovative Pilots	*Ten established across the country with each pilot running approx. 12 months. Objectives: Increase participation in NDLP; improve lone parents' prospects within the labour market.*
May 2000	In-work Training Grant Pilots	*Commence in 40 selected ES district and run for 12 months. Aim to increase the number of lone parents in sustainable work and increase the longevity of work. Lone parents who start work could claim £750 training grant for training not usually provided by employer.*

cont..

* Reproduced and adapted from *New Deal for Lone Parents: First Synthesis Report of the National Evaluation* prepared for the Department of Work and Pensions, June 2002, by Martin Evans, Abigail McKnight and Ceema Namazie, CASE, London School of Economics, p.4.

NDLP Time Line (cont.)*

DATE	*STAGE*	*DETAILS*
April 2000	**ONE**	***Compulsory attendance by non-JSA clients at first meeting with PA, as condition of receiving benefit.***
October 2000	**PA meetings**	***PA meetings introduced as conditional for IS for new and repeat claimants with youngest child aged over five years three months in three pathfinder areas.***
March-April 2001	**Innovation Fund**	***Explore innovative ways of helping and encouraging take-up or improve job readiness. 10 projects running for an initial 12 month period.***
April 2001	**Adviser's Discretionary Fund**	***ADF replaces Jobfinder's Grant for NDLP participants.***
April 2001	**IS Earnings Disregard**	***Amount lone parents can earn each week without altering IS entitlement increases from £15 to £20. Also help with registered childcare and travelling costs available through NDLP for lone parents working less than 16 hours per week.***
April 2001	**Training Grant**	***£15 a week training grant payable to lone parents on IS who take up training through NDLP.***
April 2001	**PA meetings NDLP**	***PA meetings compulsory, nationally for new and repeat claimants and stock claimants with youngest child 13-15 years.***
October 2001	**Jobcentre Plus**	***Piloted in 56 pathfinder areas. Similar to the existing ONE conditionality regime, provide a single gateway to the welfare system based around PAs.***

cont..

* Reproduced and adapted from *New Deal for Lone Parents: First Synthesis Report of the National Evaluation* prepared for the Department of Work and Pensions, June 2002, by Martin Evans, Abigail McKnight and Ceema Namazie, CASE, London School of Economics, p.4.

NDLP Time Line (cont.)*

DATE	*STAGE*	*DETAILS*
October 2001	**NDLP**	***NDLP to be gradually extended to include all lone parents who are not working or who are working less than 16 hours a week.***
April 2002	**Jobcentre Plus**	***Benefits Agency and Employment Service replaced nationally by Jobcentre Plus. Local social security offices and Jobcentres ontinue to provide services pending gradual integration of entire local office network.***
April 2002	**PA meetings**	***Compulsory PA meetings for stock of lone parent IS claimants with youngest child 8-12 yrs.†***
April 2003		***Compulsory PA meetings for stock of lone parent IS claimants with youngest child 5-7yrs.‡ To be followed by gradual introduction of compulsory PA meetings for all stock of lone parent IS claimants.***

* Reproduced and adapted from *New Deal for Lone Parents: First Synthesis Report of the National Evaluation* prepared for the Department of Work and Pensions, June 2002, by Martin Evans, Abigail McKnight and Ceema Namazie, CASE, London School of Economics, p.4.

† Tentative dates.

Appendix D

Evaluations of NDLP

Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

No.	Date	Title	Authors
-	1997	A New Deal for Lone Parents: Moving forward. Progress report on the first three months.	Produced by the Department of Social Security.
92	1999	New Deal for Lone Parents: Learning from the Prototype Areas.	Helen Finch, William O'Connor with Jane Millar, Jon Hales, Andrew Shaw and Wendy Roth.
108	2000	Evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents: Early Lessons from the Phase One Prototype – Synthesis Report.	Jon Hales, Carli Lessof, Wendy Roth, Mandy Gloyer, Andrew Shaw, Jane Millar, Matt Barnes, Peter Elias, Chris Hasluck, Abigail McKnight and Anne Green.
109	2000	Evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents: Early Lessons from the Phase One Prototype – Findings of Surveys.	Jon Hales, Wendy Roth, Matt Barnes, Jane Millar, Carli Lessof, Mandy Gloyer and Andrew Shaw.
110	2000	Evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents: Early Lessons from the Phase One Prototype – Cost-benefit and Econometric Analyses.	Chris Hasluck, Abigail Knight and Peter Elias.
122	2000	Lone Parents and Personal Advisers: Roles and Relationships. A follow-up Study of the New Deal for Lone Parents Phase One Prototype.	Jane Lewis, Laura Mitchell, Tessa Sanderson, William O'Connor and Marion Clayden.

In-House Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
42	1998	Evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents: A Preliminary Assessment of the 'Counterfactual'.	Jon Hales, Andrew Shaw and Wendy Roth
63	2000	Evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents: A Comparative Analysis of the Local Study Areas	Anne E. Green
67	2000	Evaluating Welfare to Work	Dr Chloe Chitty and Gillian Elam
68	2000	A Further Look at the Evaluation of NDLP Phase One Data: Focus on Childcare	Helen Finch and Mandy Gloyer

Reports of the Employment Service (ES), now DWP, Jobseeker Analysis Division.

No.	Date	Title	Authors
39	2000	A Report on Lone Parent Client Satisfaction Survey: Part of Evaluation of NDLP Phase 3.	Martin Hamblin
49	2000	Early Lessons from the Evaluation of New Deal Programmes.	Chris Hasluck, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick.
51	2000	New Deal for Lone Parents: A Review of Evaluation Evidence.	Chris Hasluck, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick.
55	2000	New Deal for Lone Parents: Report on Qualitative Studies with Individuals.	Tim Dawson, Sarah Dickens, Stephen Finer. Cragg, Ross and Dawson.
85	2001	New Deal for Lone Parents: Case Studies on Delivery.	GHK

Reports of the Employment Service (ES), now DWP, Jobseeker Analysis Division.

No.	Date	Title	Authors
101	2001	New Deal for Lone Parents Evaluation: A Quantitative Survey of Lone Parents on Income Support.	Carli Lessof, Jon Hales, Miranda Phillips, Kevin Pickering, Susan Purdon & Melissa Miller, National Centre for Social Research.
116	2002	New Deal for Lone Parents: First Synthesis Report of the National Evaluation.	Martin Evans, Abigail McKnight and Ceema Namazie. CASE, London School of Economics.

Appendix E

Evaluations of NDLP Innovative Schemes

Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

No.	Date	Title	Authors
89	9	New Deal for Lone Parents: Evaluation of Innovative Schemes.	Kathy Woodfield and Helen Finch.

Reports of the Employment Service (ES), now DWP, Jobseeker Analysis Division.

No.	Date	Title	Authors
86	2001	Evaluation of the New Deal Innovation Fund: Rounds One and Two.	Del Roy Fletcher, The Centre for Regional Economic & Social Research.
89	2001	New Deal for Lone Parents: An Evaluation of Innovative Pilots.	Sue Yeandle & Sarah Pearson, The Centre for Regional Economic & Social Research.

Appendix F

Evaluations of ONE

Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

No.	Date	Title	Authors
90	1999	Modernising Service Delivery: The Lone Parent Prototype.	Andrew Thomas, Vanessa Stone and Daphne Cotton.
104	1999	Modernising Service Delivery: The Integrated Services Prototype.	Tim Rose.
126	2000	First Effects of ONE.	
		Part One: Survey of Clients.	Hazel Green, Alison Smith, Robert Lilly and Alan Marsh.
		Part Two: Qualitative Research with Clients.	Clare Johnson and Shaun Fielding.
127	2000	Why Not ONE?	Daphne Cotton, Vanessa Stone and Andrew Thomas.
139	2001	Recruiting Benefit Claimants: A Survey of employers in ONE pilot areas.	Karen Burnt, Jan Shury, David Vivian and Faye Allard.
140	2001	Moving towards work: The short-term impact of ONE.	Vicky Davies and Clare Johnson.
149	2001	The Medium-Term Effects of Voluntary Participation in ONE.	Hazel Green, Helen Connolly, Alan Marsh and Alex Bryson.
150	2001	Recruiting Benefit Claimants: A qualitative study of employers who recruited benefit claimants.	Karen Bunt, Jan Shury and David Vivian.
154	2001	ONE year on; Clients' Medium term experiences of ONE.	Vicky Davies, Laura Sirett and Jean Taylor.
156	2001	The Short-Term Effects of Compulsory Participation in ONE – Survey of Clients: Cohort 2 Wave 1.	Hazel Green, Alan Marsh and Helen Connolly.

Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (cont.)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
166	2002	Delivering a Work-Focused Service: Final Findings from ONE Case Studies and Staff Research.	John Kelleher, Penny Youll, Adrian Nelson, Kari Hadjivassiliou, Claire Lyons and Julie Hills.
167	2002	Delivering a Work-Focused Service: Views and Experiences of Clients.	Jayne Osgood, Vanessa Stone and Andrew Thomas.
170	2002	From job seekers to job keepers: job retention, advancement and the role of in-work support programmes	Karen Kellard, Laura Adelman, Andreas Cebulla and Clare Heaver.
171	2002	Qualitative research with clients: Longer term experiences of a work-focused service.	Mary Costello, Vicky Davies, Clare Johnson, Laura Sirett and Jean Taylor.

In-House Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
6	1995	An Evaluation of One Stop: One Place	Dr Suzanne King and Catherine Miller
84	2001	Delivering a Work-focused Service: Interim Findings from the ONE Case Studies and Staff Research	John Kelleher, Penny Youll, Penny Nelson and Kari Hadjivassiliou
87	2001	The Medium-Term Effects of Compulsory Participation in ONE: A Short Report	Hazell Green and Helen Connolly
88	2001	The Employment Effects of ONE: Interim Findings from the full participation phase	Simon Kirby and Rebecca Riley
103	2002	Longer Term Experiences of a Work-focused Service among Lone Parent Clients in the ONE Pilots – ONE Client Survey: Cohort 2 Wave 3	Helen Connolly and Hazel Green

Reports of the Employment Service (ES), now DWP, Jobseeker Analysis Division.

No.	Date	Title	Authors
90	2001	An Evaluation of Lone Parent Personal Adviser Meeting Pathfinders.	Nick Pettigrew, Christine Garland, BMRB & Pat Irving, ECOTEC.
132	2002	Early Findings from Lone Parent Personal Adviser Meetings: Qualitative Research with Clients and Case Studies on Delivery.	Andy Thomas and Rita Griffiths of Insite Research and Consulting.

Appendix G

Research Relevant to NDLP and Commissioned by DWP

Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

No.	Date	Title	Authors
6	1991	Lone Parent Families in the UK	Jonathan Bradshaw and Jane Millar
25	1994	Lone Parents and Work: The effects of benefits and maintenance.	Stephen McKay and Alan Marsh
30	1994	Lone Mothers.	Anna Leeming, Judith Unell and Robert Walker
32	1995	Employers and Family Credit.	Claire Callender, Gill Court, Mark Thompson and Adrian Patch
35	1995	Choosing Advice on Benefits.	Jill Vincent, Anna Leeming, Anne Peaker and Robert Walker
36	1995	First Time Customers.	Tim Williams, Maureen Astin and John Ditch
40	1995	Changes in Lone Parenthood.	Reuben Ford, Alan Marsh and Stephen McKay
45	1996	Changing Lives and the Role of Income Support.	Roy Sainsbury, Sandra Hutton and John Ditch
46 & 47	1996	Social Assistance in OECD Countries	Tony Eardley, Jonathan Bradshaw,John Ditch, Ian Gough and Peter Whiteford
48	1996	Leaving Family Credit.	Alex Bryson and Alan Marsh
53	1996	Moving Off Income Support: Barriers and Bridges.	Andrew Shaw, Robert Walker, Karl Ashworth, Stephen Jenkins and Sue Middleton

Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (cont.)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
61	1997	Lone Parents, Work and benefits.	Alan Marsh, Reuben ford and Louise Finlayson.
63	1997	Exploring Customer Satisfaction.	Gillian Elam and Jane Ritchie.
65	1997	Customer Contact with the Benefits Agency.	Bruce Stafford, Karen Kellard and Elizabeth Horsley.
68	1997	Claimants Perceptions of the Claim Process.	Jane Ritchie and mark Chetwynd.
71	1997	Stepping Stones to Employment	Gill Elam and Andrew Thomas
74	1998	Customer View on Service Delivery in the Child Support Agency.	Sandra Hutton, Jane Carlisle and Anne Corden.
77	1998	What Happens to Lone Parents.	Reuben Ford, Alan Marsh and Louise Finlayson.
78	1998	Lone Parents' Lives.	Joan Payne and Martin Range
79	1998	Moving into Work: Bridging Housing Costs.	Bruce Stafford, Claire Heaver, Nicola Croden, Anne Abel Smith, Susan Maguire and Jill Vincent.
80	1998	Lone Parents on the Margins of Work.	Louise Finlayson and Alan Marsh.
85	1998	Getting the Message Across.	Gillian Elam, Mark Diffley and Andrew Shaw.
88	1999	Attitudes to the Welfare State and the Response to Reform.	Teresa Williams, Maxine Hill and Rachael Davies.
95	1999	Low Paid Work in Britain.	Alan Marsh, Claire Callender, Louise Finlayson, Reuben Ford, Ann Green and Michael White.
96	1999	Keeping in touch with the Labour Market.	Andrew Thomas, Nick Pettigrew, Daphne Cotton and Paul Tovey.
97	1999	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Delivery: Claimant Experiences.	Nick Pettigrew, Andrew Thomas, Paul Tovey, Vanessa Stone.

Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (cont.)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
103	1999	Relying on The State, Relying on Each Other.	Dawn Snape and Donna Molloy with Marion Kumar.
107	2000	Parents and Employment.	Maria Iacovou and Richard Berthoud.
115	2000	Prospects of Part-Time Work: The Impact of the back to Work Bonus.	Karl Ashworth and Rachel Youngs.
128	2000	The British Lone Parent Cohort 1991 to 1998	Louise Finlayson, Reuben Ford, Alan Marsh, Stephen McKay and Arpita Mukherjee.
138	2001	Low-income Families in Britain.	Alan Marsh, Stephen McKay, Alison Smith and Augusta Stephenson.
152	2001	National Survey of Child Support Clients.	Nick Wikeley, Sarah Barnett, James Brown, Gwynn Davues, Ian Diamond, Teresa Draper and Patten Smith.
153	2001	Families, Poverty, Work and Care: A Review of the Literature on Lone Parents and Low-Income Couple Families.	Jane Millar and Tess Ridge.
157	2001	The Dynamics of Poverty in Britain.	Stephen P Jenkins, John A Rigg and Francesco Devicienti.
158	2001	Outcomes for Children of Poverty.	John Ermisch, Marco Francesconi, David J Pevalin.
161	2002	Low/Moderate – income Families in Britain: Work, Working Families' Tax Credit and Childcare in 2000.	Stephen McKay.
164	2002	Low/Moderate – income families in Britain: Changes in Living Standards.	Sandra Vegeris and Stephen McKay.
165	2002	Low/Moderate – income families in Britain: Changes in 1999 – 2000.	Alan Marsh and Karen Rowlingson.
174	2002	A Comparison of Child Benefit Packages in 22 Countries	Jonathan Bradshaw and Naomi Finch

Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (cont.)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
175	2002	Easing Transition to Work	Tim Harris and Kandy Woodfield
177	2002	Self-employment as a Route off Benefit	Karen Kellard, Kate Legge and Karl Ashworth
180	2002	Family Change 1999 to 2001	Alan Marsh and Jane Perry
181	2002	Working Families' Tax Credit in 2001	Stephen McKay

In-House Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
2	1994	In-Work Benefit Project: A Report on an Evaluation	Alan Hedges
7	1995	Benefit Agency Customers and the 1994 Review of the Benefit System	Robert Walker and Katie Brittain
17	1996	Customer Contact and Communication with the Benefits Agency	Bruce Stafford, Robert Walker, Lisa Hull and Elizabeth Horsley
18	1996	Barriers, Bridges and Behaviour: Learning from Income Support Recipients	Andrea Shaw, Karen Kellard and Robert Walker
20	1996	Communication with the Benefits Agency	Lawrence F. Bailey and Judy Pryes
29	1997	Housing Benefit Data and Literature Sourcebook	Peter A. Kemp
36	1998	Processing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit	Rachel Trott and Carli Lessof
39	1998	National Insurance and the Contributory Principle	Bruce Stafford

In-House Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (cont.)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
43	1998	Public Attitudes to State Provision for Widows and Widowers	Andrew Thomas and Nick Pettigrew
46	1998	Public Attitudes to Child Support Issues	William O'Connor and John Kelly
47	1999	Unemployed Couples: Attitudes Towards Proposals Affecting Partners of Jobseekers	Kandy Woodfield and Helen Finch
49	1999	The Effectiveness of CSA Customer Communications	Vikki Everett, Joanne Hames and Brenda Setchell
50	1999	Views About State Support for Lone Parents and their Children	Dawn Snape and John Kelly
51	1999	Attitudes Towards Methods of Paying Benefits	Andrew Thomas and Nick Pettigrew
55	1999	Practise In Administration of Housing Benefit	Toby Taper, Trinh Tu and Anne Caughey
57	1999	Minimal Income Households: Circumstances and Strategies	Gillian Elam, Simon Lee and Elizabeth Tadd
58	1999	Financial Arrangements of Couples on Benefit: A Review of the Literature	Donna Molloy and Dawn Snape
59	1999	Costs of Being in Work: A Review of the Literature	Roy Sainsbury
65	2000	Data and Literature on Mortgage Interest: State Provision and Private Insurance An Evaluation and Source Book	Janet Ford and Jude England
69	2000	Housing Benefit Administration and the Speed of Claims Processing	Bruce Stafford, Laura Adelman, Heather Trickey and Karl Ashworth

In-House Reports of the Department of Social Security (DSS), now Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (cont.)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
72	2000	The Employment of Lone Mothers in Denmark and Great Britain	Michael White
76	2001	Work and Welfare: Attitudes, Experiences and Behaviour of Nineteen Low-Income Families	Augusta Stephenson
77	2001	Leaving Jobseeker's Allowance for Part-time Work	Karl Ashworth and Rachel Youngs
80	2001	Jobseeker's Allowance: Transition to Work and Early Returns to JSA	Karl Ashworth and Woon Chia Liu
98	2002	Job Retention and Advancement in Employment: Review of Research Evidence	Anthony Johnson
100	2002	Attitudes toward Child Support and the Child Support Agency	Daphne White
104	2002	Investigating Low Labour Market Participation Among Lone Parents in London: A Review of the Methods	William O'Connor and Richard Boreham

Reports of the Employment Service (ES), now DWP, Jobseeker Analysis Division.

No.	Date	Title	Authors
15	1999	Evaluation of the 1997/1998 National Development Programme, Phase One.	The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University.
23	1999	Lone Parents and the Labour Market: Results from the 1997 Labour Force Survey and Review of Research.	Sally Holtermann, Julia Brannen, Peter Moss and Charlie Owen, Thomas Coram Research Unit.

Reports of the Employment Service (ES), now DWP, Jobseeker Analysis Division (cont.)

No.	Date	Title	Authors
27	1999	Summary of ES and BA Staff opinion about the operation of aspects of the benefit system, pre- and post- introduction of the jobseeker's allowance.	Ann Jackson OPD5
28	1999	Employers as Customers	John Atkinson, Barbara Kersley, Jenny Kodz of the Institute of Employment Studies.
64	2001	Employers, lone parents and the work-life balance.	Jane Lewis, Laura Mitchell, Steve Woodland, Rachel Fell& Amanda Gloyer, National Centre for Social Research.
74	2001	Jobfinders Grant: Research Among Lone Parents.	BMRB Social Research.
80	2001	National Customer Satisfaction Survey 2000	David Savage of the Office for National Statistics.

Abbreviations

BA	Benefits Agency
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group
CSA	Child Support Agency
CTC	Child Tax Credit
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment (now DFES)
DFES	Department for Education and Skills
DHSS	Department of Health and Social Security (now DWP)
DSS	Department of Social Security (now DWP)
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DWP	Department For Work and Pensions
ES	Employment Service
FC	Family Credit
FIS	Family Income Supplement
GMA	Guaranteed Maintenance Allowance
IFS	Institute for Fiscal Studies
IP	Innovative Pilot
IS	Income Support
MUD	Moral Underclass Discourse
NAB	National Assistance Board
NCOPF	National Council for One Parent Families
NDLP	New Deal for Lone Parents
NIC	National Insurance Contribution
NRU	Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
P (No.)	Participant (Number)
PA	Personal Adviser
RED	Redistributionist Discourse
SB	Supplementary Benefit
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SID	Social Integrationist Discourse
SSAC	Social Security Advisory Committee
TCA	Tax Credits Act
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
WFTC	Working Families' Tax Credit
WTC	Working Tax Credit

Bibliography

Introduction

Although the relevant literature cannot be neatly compartmentalised, its diversity and abundance demand that the bibliography has a structure and, accordingly, it has been organised under headings listed below. These are not intended to represent distinct categories but loosely correspond to the first three chapters of my thesis. However, due to the volume of some sections of the literature, they have been listed separately. All relevant research commissioned by DWP (formerly DSS and ES) is listed in Appendices D to G above, while policy documents, Select Committee reports and other Government research is listed separately below. Papers published by the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) and useful Websites are also listed separately.

	Page
Research Commissioned by DWP (Formerly DSS and ES):	
Evaluations of NDLP (Appendix D)	213
Evaluations of NDLP Innovative Schemes (Appendix E)	216
Evaluations of ONE (Appendix F)	217
Research Relevant to NDLP and Commissioned by DWP (Appendix G)	220
Research Methods, Feminist Theory and Feminist Methods	229
Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy	232
Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits	240
Policy Documents, Select Committee Reports and Government Research	249
Papers Published by the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE)	253
Websites	254

Research Methods, Feminist Theory and Feminist Methods

Bell J. (1993) *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science* (second edition), Buckingham: Open University Press.

Borland K. (1991) " 'That's not what I said': interpretive conflict in oral narrative research" in Gluck S.B. and Patai D. (eds), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, London: Routledge.

Brannen J. (ed) (1992) *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research*, Aldershot: Avebury Press

Bryman A. (1988) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, London: Unwin Hyman Ltd.

Bryman A. and Burgess R.G. (eds) (1994) *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, London: Routledge.

Burgess R.G. (1984) *In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research*, London: Allen & Unwin.

Cotterrell R (1992) *The Sociology of Law: An Introduction* (second edition), London: Butterworths.

Diamond I. and Quinby L. (1988) *Feminism & Foucault, Reflections on Resistance*, Boston: North Eastern University Press.

Fay B. (1996) *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science: a Multicultural Approach*, London: Blackwell.

Finch J. (1984) " 'It's great to have someone to talk to': the ethics and politics of interviewing women" in Bell C. and Roberts H. *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Fine M. (1994) *Dis-Stance and Other Stances: Negotiations of Power Inside Feminist Research* in Gitlin A. (ed), *Power and Method: Political Activism and Educational Research*, London: Routledge.

Flax J. (1993) "The end of innocence" in Flax J. (ed), *Disputed Subjects: Essays on Psychoanalysis, Politics and Philosophy*, London: Routledge.

Gilligan C. (1982) *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Cambridge,Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Gilligan C. (1997) *Getting Civilized* in Oakley A. and Mitchell J. (eds), *Who's Afraid of Feminism?*, London: Hamish Hamilton.

Research Methods, Feminist Theory and Feminist Methods (cont.)

Gunew S (ed) (1990) *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct*, London: Routledge.

Harding S (ed) (1987) *Feminism and Methodology*, Bloomington: Indiana Press.

Harding S (1991) *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Hekman S (1990) *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a Postmodern Feminism*, Oxford: Polity Press.

Hillyard P. and Watson S. (1996) "Postmodern social policy: a contradiction in terms?", *Journal of Social Policy* 25(3), pp321-346.

Hobbs D., and May T. (1993) *Interpreting the Field: Accounts of Ethnography*, Oxford: Open University Press.

Lal J. (1996) "Situating locations" in Wolf D. (ed), *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Levitas R. and Guy W. (1996) *Interpreting Official Statistics*, London: Routledge.

Mason J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching*, London: Sage.

May T. (1997) *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process* (second edition), Buckingham: Open University Press.

Maynard M. and Purvis J. (1994) *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*, London : Taylor and Francis.

McKenzie G., Powell J., and Usher R. (1997) *Understanding Social Research: Perspectives on Methodology and Practice*, London: The Falmer Press.

McNay L. (1992) *Foucault and Feminism*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Oakley A (2000) *Experiments in Knowing: Gender and Method in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Oakley A. (1981) *Interviewing Women: a contradiction in terms?* in Roberts H. (ed), *Doing Feminist Research*, London: Routledge.

Phillips E.M. (1994) *How to Get a PhD: a Handbook for Students and Their Supervisors* (second edition), Buckingham: Open University Press.

Research Methods, Feminist Theory and Feminist Methods (cont.)

Reinharz S. (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ribbens J. (1989) "Interviewing - an 'unnatural situation'?" *Women's Studies Int. Forum*, **12**(6), pp. 579-592

Rowland R. and Klein R. (1990) "Radical feminism: critique and construct" in Gunew S., *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct*, London: Routledge.

Smart C. (1989) *Feminism and the Power of the Law*, London: Routledge.

Stacey J. (1991) *Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?* in Gluck S.B. and Patai D. (eds), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, London: Routledge.

Stanley L. (1990) *Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*, London: Routledge.

Stanley L. and Wise S. (1993) *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology* (second edition), London: Routledge.

Tong R (1989) *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction*, London: Routledge.

Usher P (1996) *Feminist Approaches to Research* in Scott D. and Usher R. (eds), *Understanding Educational Research,* London: Routledge.

Usher P (1997) *Challenging the Power of Rationality* in McKenzie G. et al (eds), *Understanding Social Research: Perspectives on Methodology and Practice*, London: The Falmer Press.

Walker R. (ed) (1985) *Applied Qualitative Research*, Aldershot: Gower.

Weedon C (1997) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (second edition), Oxford Cambridge Mass.: Blackwell.

Williams F., Poppay J., and Oakley A (1999) *Welfare Research: A Critical View,* London: UCL Press.

Wolf D. (ed) (1996) *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy

Abel-Smith B. and P. Townsend (1965) *The Poor and the Poorest*, London: Bell

Acheson D. (1999) *Report of the Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health*, London: Stationery Office.

Alcock P. (1997) *Understanding Poverty* (2nd edition), Basingstoke: Macmillan Press

Alcock P. (1999a) "Poverty and social security" in Page R.M. and Silburn R. (eds), *British Social Welfare in the Twentieth Century*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

Alcock P. (1999b) "Development of social security" in Ditch J.(ed), *Introduction to Social Security*, London: Routledge.

Atkinson A.B. (1998) "Social exclusion, poverty and unemployment" in *Exclusion, Employment and Opportunity,* CASEpaper 4, London: CASE.

Barlow A. and Duncan S. (2000) "Supporting families? New Labour's communitarianism and the 'rationality mistake': Part I", *Journal of Social Welfare Law,* **22**(1), pp.23-42.

Barlow A. and Duncan S. (2000) "Supporting families? New Labour's communitarianism and the 'rationality mistake': Part II", *Journal of Social Welfare Law,* **22**(2), pp.129-143.

Beresford P., Green D., Lister R., and Woodward K., (1999) *Poverty First Hand: Poor People Speak for Themselves*, London: CPAG.

Berthoud R. (1984) *The Reform of Supplementary Benefit*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Berthoud R. and Brown C. (1981) *Poverty and the Development of Anti-Poverty Policy in the UK*, London: Heineman.

Berthoud R. and Ford R. (1996) *Relative Need*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Best M. and Hussey P. (2001) *Women Making a Difference*, London: SPCK.

Beveridge W. (1942) *Social Insurance and Allied Services,* Cmnd. 6404, London: HMSO.

Blair T. (1998) *The Third Way: New Politics for the New Century*, London: The Fabian Society.

Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy (cont.)

Booth C. (1889) *Labour and Life of the People of London*, London: Macmillan.

Bradshaw J. (ed) (1993) *Budget Standards for the United Kingdom*, Aldershot: Avebury

Bradshaw J. and Holmes H. (1989) *Living on the Edge: a Study of the Living Standards of Families on Benefit in Tyne and Wear*, Tyneside: CPAG.

Bradshaw J. (2001) "Child poverty under Labour" in Fimister G. (ed), *Tackling Poverty in the UK: An End in Sight?*, London: CPAG.

Cohen R. et al (1992) *Hardship Britain. Being Poor in the 1990s*, London: CPAG.

Brewer M., Clark T and Goodman A (2002), *The Government's Child Poverty Target: How Much Progress Has Been Made?*, London: IFS.

Commission for Social Justice (1994) *Social Justice: Strategies for National Renewal, Local Routes to Social Justice*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Coote A. (ed) (2000) *The Gender Agenda*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Corden A. (1999) "Claiming entitlements: take-up of benefits" in Ditch J. (ed), *Introduction to Social Security*, London: Routledge.

Cox R.H. (1998) "The consequences of welfare reform: how conceptions of social rights are changing", *Journal of Social Policy* **27**(1), pp.1-16.

Deacon A. (2000) "Learning from the US? The influence of American ideas upon 'New Labour' thinking on welfare reform", *Policy and Politics* , **28**(1), pp. 5-18.

Dean H. and Taylor Gooby P. (1992) *Dependency Culture: the Explosion of a Myth*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Dickens R., Fry V. and Pashardes P. (1995) *The Cost of Children and the Welfare State*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Dominelli L. (1988) "Thatcher's attack on social security: restructuring social control", *Critical Social Policy*, **23**(8)(2), pp.46-60.

Douglas G. (1990) "Family Law under the Thatcher Government", *Journal of Law and Society*, **17**(4), pp.4111-425.

Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy (cont.)

Driver S. and Martell L. (2000) "Left, Right and the third way", *Policy and Politics*, **28**(2), pp. 147-61.

Dwyer P. (1998) "Conditional citizens? welfare rights and responsibilities in the late 1990s", *Critical Social Policy* **18**(4), pp. 493-517.

Evans M., Piachaud D. and Sutherland H. (1994) *Designed for the Poor-Poorer by Designed Effects of the 1986 Social Security Act on Family Incomes*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Field F. (1989) *The Emergence of Britain's Underclass*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Fimister G. (ed), *Tackling Poverty in the UK: An End in Sight?*, London: CPAG.

Franklin J. (ed) (1998) *Social Policy and Social Justice, Local Routes to Social Justice*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Gladstone D. (1999) *The Twentieth-Century Welfare State*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

Glendinning C. and Millar J. (1991) "Poverty: the forgotten Englishwoman" in MacLean M. and Groves D. (eds), *Women's Issues in Social Policy*, London: Routledge.

Goode J., Callender C. and Lister R. (1998) *Purse or Wallet? Gender Inequalities and Income Distribution within Families on Benefit,* London: Policies Studies Institute.

Gordon D. et al (2000) *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Gowridge C., Williams A.S., and Wynn M. (eds) (1997) *Mother Courage: Letters from Mothers at the End of the Century*, London: Penguin Books.

Harris J. (1999) "Society and the twentieth century state in twentieth century Britain" in Thompson F.M.L. (ed), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950,* Vol.3 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harris J. "Beveridge and the Beveridge Report - life, ideas, influence" (1999) in Walker R. (ed) (1999) *Ending Child Poverty: Popular Welfare for the 21st Century?* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Harris N. (ed) (2000) *Social Security Law in Context*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herbert A. and Kempson E. (1995) *Water Debt and Disconnection*, London: PSI.

Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy (cont.)

Hewitt M. and Powell M. (1998) "A different 'Back to Beveridge'? Welfare pluralism and the Beveridge welfare state" in *Social Policy Review* **10**, 1998, pp.86-104.

Hills J. (1995) *Income and Wealth: Report of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Inquiry Group*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Hills J. (1998) *Income and Wealth: the Latest Evidence*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Hills J. Gardiner K. (1997) *The Future of Welfare: A Guide to the Debate*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Hirsch D. (ed) (1997) *Social Protection and Inclusion: European Challenges for the United Kingdom*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Holman B. (1978) *Poverty: Explanations of Social Deprivation,* London: Martin Robertson & Company.

Holman B. (1998) *Faith in the Poor*, Oxford: Lion Publishing.

Holman B (2001) *Champions for Children: The Lives of Modern Child Care Pioneers*, Bristol: Policy Press.

Howard M., Garnham A., Fimister G. and Veit-Wilson J. (2001) *Poverty: The Facts* (4th edition), London: CPAG.

Howarth C., Kenway P., Palmer G. and Miorelli R. (1999) *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 1999*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Howarth C., Kenway P., Palmer G. and Street C. (1998) *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion: Labour's Inheritance*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Jones C. (2001) "Voices from the front line: state social workers and New Labour", *British Journal of Social Work* (2001) **31** pp.547-562.

Jordan B., Agulnik., Burbage D. and Duffin S. (2000) *Stumbling Towards a Basic Income,* London: Citizen's Income Trust.

Jordan B. et al (1992) *Trapped in Poverty*, London: Routledge.

Kempson E. (1996) *Life on a Low Income*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Kempson E., Bryson A. and Rowlingson K. (1994) *Hard Times: How Poor Families Make Ends Meet.* London: PSI.

Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy (cont.)

Kempson E. and Whyley C. (1999) *Kept Out or Opted Out? Understanding and Combating Financial Exclusion*, London: Polity Press.

Le Grand J. (1982) *The Strategy of Equality*, London: Allen and Unwin

Le Grand J. (1999) "Conceptions of social justice" in Walker R. (ed), *Ending Child Poverty: Popular Welfare for the 21st Century?* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Leisering L. and Walker R. (1998) *The Dynamics of Modern Society*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

Levitas R. (1998) *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

Lewis J. and Piachaud D. (1992) "Women and poverty in the twentieth century" in Glendinning C. and Millar J. (eds), *Women and Poverty in Britain in the 1990s*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Lister R. (1996) "Back to the family: family policies and politics under the Major Government" in Jones H. and Millar J. (ed), *The Politics of the Family*, Aldershot: Avebury.

Lister R. (1997) *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*, New York: New York University Press.

Lister R. (1998) "From equality to social inclusion: New Labour and the Welfare State", *Critical Social Policy* **18**(2) pp.215-225.

Lister R., (2000) "Citizenship, exclusion and 'the Third Way' in social security reform: reflections on T.H.Marshall", *Journal of Social Security Law* **7**, pp70-87.

Lister R., Goode J. and Callender C. (1999) "Income distribution within families and the reform of social security", *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, **21**(3), pp.203-221.

Loney M. with Bocock R. et al (eds) (1991) *The State or the Market: Politics and Welfare in Contemporary Britain*, London: Sage.

Lowe R. (1995) "The rediscovery of poverty and the creation of the Child Poverty Action Group 1962-68", *Contemporary Record* **9**(3) pp.602-611.

Mack J. and Lansley S. (1985) *Poor Britain*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy (cont.)

Marshall T.H. (1950) *Citizenship and Social Class,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy M. (1986) *Campaigning for the Poor: CPAG and the Politics of Welfare*, London: Croom Helm.

McCarthy W. (1997) *New Labour at Work*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

McCormick J. and Harvey A. (eds) (1997) *Local Routes to Social Justice*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

McCormick J. and Oppenheim C. (eds) (1998) *Welfare in Working Order*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Middleton S., Ashworth K. and Walker R. (1994) *Small Fortunes*, London: CPAG.

Middleton S., Ashworth K. and Braithwaite I. (1997) *Small Fortunes, Spending on Children, Childhood Poverty and Parental Sacrifice*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Murray C., (1990) *The Emerging British Underclass*, London: IEA.

Murray C., (1994) *Underclass: The Crisis Deepens*, London: IEA.

Oldfield N. and Yu A. (1993) *The Cost of a Child*, London: CPAG.

Oppenheim C. (1997) "The growth of poverty and inequality" in Walker A. and Walker C. (eds), *Britain Divided: the Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s* London: CPAG.

Oppenheim C. (ed) (1998) *The Inclusive Society*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Oppenheim C. and Harker L. (1996) *Poverty the Facts*, London: CPAG.

Oppenheim C. and Lister R. (1996) "Ten Years after the 1986 Social Security Act" in *Social Policy Review* **8**, pp.85-105.

Page R. and Silburn R. (eds) (1998) *British Social Welfare in the Twentieth Century*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy (cont.)

Pahl J. (1980) "Patterns of money management within marriage", *Journal of Social Policy* **9** pp313-35.

Pahl J. (1989) *Money and Marriage*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Parker H. (ed), (1999) *Low Cost But Acceptable: A Minimum Income Standard for the UK, Families with Young Children, January 1998 Prices*, London: Polity Press.

Pascall G. (1997) *Social Policy: A New Feminist Analysis* London: Routledge.

Pearce N. and Hallgarten J. (2000) *Tomorrow's Citizens*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Piachaud D. (1981) "Poverty in the United Kingdom" in Townsend P., *The International Analysis of Poverty*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).

Plant R. (1999) "Supply side citizenship?", *Journal of Social Security Law* **6** pp.124-136.

Rees A.M. (1995) "The other T.H.Marshall", *Journal of Social Policy* **24**(3), pp.341-362.

Rees A.M. (1995) "The promise of social citizenship", *Policy and Politics* **23**(4) pp.313-325.

Room G. (ed) (1995) *Beyond the Threshold: the Measurement and Analysis of Social Exclusion*, Bristol Policy Press.

Rowlingson K. and Kempson E. (1993) *Gas Debt and Disconnections*, London: PSI.

Rowlingson K., Whyley C. and Warren T. (1999) *Wealth in Britain: A Lifecycle Perspective*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Rowntree B.S. (1902) *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (4th edition), London: Macmillan.

Rowntree B.S. (1941) *Poverty and Progress: A Second Social Survey of York*, London: Longmans, Green and Co.

Rowntree B.S. and G.Lavers, (1951) *Poverty and the Welfare State*, London: Longmans, Green and Co.

Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy (cont.)

Runciman G. (1992) in Smith D. (ed), *Understanding the Underclass*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Sainsbury R. (1999) "The aims of social security, Ditch J.(ed), *Introduction to Social Security*, London: Routledge.

Shropshire J. and Middleton S, (1999) *Small Expectations: Learning to be Poor?* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Stepney P., Lynch R. and Jordan B. (1999) "Poverty, exclusion and New Labour", *Critical Social Policy,* **19**(1), pp.109-127.

Taylor M. (1997) *The Best of Both Worlds: The Voluntary Sector and Local Government*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Thane P. (1982) *The Foundations of the Welfare State*, New York: Longman.

Thatcher M. (1993) *The Downing Street Years,* New York: Harper Collins.

Timmins N. (1995) *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State*, London: Fontana Press.

Timmins N. (2001) *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State*, (second edition) London: HarperCollins.

Townsend P. (1962) "The meaning of poverty", *British Journal of Sociology*, **13**, pp.210-227.

Townsend P. (1979) *Poverty in the United Kingdom*, London: Penguin.

Townsend P. (1993) *The International Analysis of Poverty*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester and Wheatsheaf.

Townsend P. (1997) "The strategic alternative to privatisation" in Walker A. and Walker C. (eds), *Britain Divided: the Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s* London: CPAG.

Veit-Wilson J. (1999) "Poverty and adequacy of social security" in Ditch J. (ed), *Introduction to Social Security*, London: Routledge.

Veit-Wilson J. "Consensual approaches to poverty lines and social security" (1987), *Journal of Social Policy*, **16**(2), pp.

Citizenship, Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy (cont.)

Veit-Wilson, J. (1998) *Setting Adequacy Standards: How Governments Define Minimum Incomes*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

Walker A. and Walker C. (eds) (1997) *Britain Divided: the Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s* London: CPAG.

Walker R. (ed) (1999) *Ending Child Poverty: Popular Welfare for the 21st Century?* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Wann M. (1995) *Building Social Capital*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Williams C and Windebank I. "Helping people to help themselves: policy lessons from a study of deprived urban neighbourhoods in Southampton", *Journal of Social Policy*, **29**(3), pp.355-373.

Wikeley, Ogus and Barendt (2002) *The Law of Social Security*, (fifth edition) London: Butterworths.

Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits

Allan G. (ed) (1999) *The Sociology of the Family*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Beck U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London: Sage.

Beck U. and Beck-Gernsheim E. (1995) *The Normal Chaos of Love*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bevan S, Kettley P. and Patch A. (1997) *Who Cares? The Business Benefits of Care-Friendly Practices*, Institute for Employment Studies Report 330,1997.

Bowlby J. (1950) *Maternal Care and Mental Health*, Geneva: WHO.

Bradshaw J. (1996) *Lone Mothers and Work*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Bradshaw J. et al (1996), *The Employment of Lone Parents: A Comparison of Policy in 20 Countries*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Bradshaw J. et al (1999) *Absent Fathers?* London: Routledge.

Brown. J.C. (1989) *Why Don't They Go to Work? Mothers on Benefit*, London: HMSO

Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits (cont.)

Bryson A., Ford R. and White M. (1997) *Making Work Pay: Lone Mothers, Employment and Well-being*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Bryson A., McKay S. (1994) *Is it Worth Working? Factors Affecting Labour Supply*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Burgess A. and Ruxton. S. (1996) *Men and Their Children: Proposals for Public Policy*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Burghes L. (1994) *Lone Parenthood and Family Disruption: The Outcomes for Children*, London: The Family Policy Studies Centre.

Burghes L. and Grown M. (1995) *Single Lone Mothers: Problems, Prospects and Policies,* London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Burghes L., Clarke L. and Cronin N.(1997) *Fathers and Fatherhood in Britain*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre,

Casey B., Metcalf H, and Millward N. (1998) *Employers' Use of Flexible Labour,* London: Policy Studies Institute.

Cheal D. (1999) "The one and the many" in Allan G. (ed), *The Sociology of the Family*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Child Poverty Action Group (2002) *Welfare Benefits Handbook 2002/2003*, London: CPAG.

Clarke K. Glendinning C. and Craig G. (1998) "Supporting children: the impact of the Child Support Act on lone mothers and children" in Ford. R. and Millar J. (eds), *Private Lives and Public Responses: Lone Parenthood & Future Policy in the UK*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Clarke K. et al (1994) *Losing Support, Children and the Child Support Act*, London: The Children's Society.

Clarke K. et al (1996) *Small Change: The Impact of the Child Support Act on Lone Mothers and Children*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Cockett M. and Tripp J. (1994) *The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and its Impact on Children,* Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

Coote A., Harman H. and Hewitt P. (1990) *The Family Way*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits (cont.)

Court G. (1995) *Women in the Labour Market: Two Decades of Change and Continuity*, Institute for Employment Studies Report 294,1995.

Davis G. Wikeley N. and Young R. (1998) *Child Support in Action*, Oxford: Hart.

Dench G (1996) *The Place of Men in Changing Family Cultures*, London: Institute of Community Studies.

Dex S. (ed) (1999) *Families and the Labour Market: Trends, Pressures and Policies*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Diduck A and Kaganas F. (1999) *Family Law, Gender and the State*, Oxford: Hart Publishing.

Duncan S. and Edwards R. (eds) (1997) *Single Mothers in an International Context: Mothers or Workers?* London: UCL Press.

Duncan S. and Edwards R. (1999) *Lone Mothers, Paid Work and Gendered Moral Rationalities*, London: Macmillan.

Edholm F. (1991) "The unnatural family" in Loney M. with Bocock R. et al (eds), *The State or the Market: Politics and Welfare in Contemporary Britain*, London: Sage.

Eekelar J. and Maclean M. (1997) *The Parental Obligation. A Study of Parenthood Across Households*, Oxford: Hart Publishing.

Elliot F. R. (1989) "The family: private arena or adjunct of the state", *Journal of Law and Society* **16**(4) p.445.

Elliot F.R. (1996) *Gender, Family and Society*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Esam P. and Berthoud R. (1991) *Independent Benefits for Men and Women*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Evans M. (1994) *Not Granted? An Assessment of the Change from Single Payments to the Social Fund*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Evans M., Noble M., Wright G., Smith G., Lloyd M. and Dibben C. (2002) *Growing Together or Growing Apart? Geographic Patterns of Change of Income Support and Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants Between 1995 and 2000*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Ferri E. and Smith K. (1996) *Parenting in the 1990s*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits (cont.)

Finch J. (1989) *Family Obligations and Social Change*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Finch J. and Mason J. (1993) *Negotiating Family Responsibilities*, London: Routledge.

Finer M.(1974) *Report of the Committee on One Parent Families*, Cmnd 5629, London: HMSO.

Finlayson L. et al (1996) "Paying more for childcare", *Labour Market Trends* **104**(7) pp.289-336.

Ford R. (1996) *Childcare in the Balance: How Lone Parents Make Decisions about Work*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Ford R. and Millar J. (eds) (1998) *Private Lives and Public Responses: Lone Parenthood & Future Policy in the UK*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Forth J., Lissenburgh S., Callender C and Millward N. (1996) *Family Friendly Working Arrangements in Britain*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Gardiner K. (1997) *Bridges from Benefit to Work: A Review*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Garnham A. and Knights E. (1994) *Putting the Treasury First: The Truth about CHild Support*, London: CPAG.

Giddens A. (1992) *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gorrick J.C., Meyers M.K. and Ross K.E., (1997) "Supporting the employment of mothers: policy variation across fourteen welfare states", *Journal of European Social Policy*, 7(1) pp. 45-70.

Gosling A., Johnson P., McCrae J and Paull G. ((1997) *The Dynamics of Low Pay and Unemployment in Early 1990s Britain*, London: The Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Gregg P. and Wadsworth J. (ed) (1999) *The State of Working Britain*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Gregg P. Harkness S. and Machin S. (1999) *Child Development and Family Income,* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Gregg P., Johnson P. and Reed H. (1999) *Entering Work and the British Tax Benefit System*, London; Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits (cont.)

Hardy M. and Crow G. (eds) (1991) *Lone Parenthood: Coping with Constraints and Making Opportunities*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Hewitt P. (1993) *About Time: The Revolution in Work and Family Life,* Rivers Oram Press.

Hewitt P. and Leach P. (1993) *Social Justice, Children and Families*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Hooper C. (1996) *Rural Lone Parents: The Evaluation of a Self-Help Support Project*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Jones H. and Millar J. (ed) (1996) *The Politics of the Family*, Aldershot: Avebury.

Joshi H. and Newall M. (1989) *Pay Differentials and Parenthood: Analysis of Men and Women Born in 1946*, Coventry: University of Warwick, Institute for Employment Research.

Joshi H. *et al.*(1995) *Dependence and Independence in the Finances of Women aged 33*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Joshi H., Dale A., Ward C and Davies H. (1995) *The Extent of Financial Independence for Women born in 1958*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Joshi H., Davies H. and Land H. (1996), *The Tale of Mrs Typical*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Kempson E., White M. and Forth J. (1997) *Rents and Work Incentives*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Kiernan E. and Estaugh V. (1993) *Co-habitation, Extra-marital Child-bearing and Social Policy*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre (Occasional Paper 17).

Kiernan K. (1992-1993) *Men and Women at Work and at Home* in Jowell R. et al (eds), *British Social Attitudes, the 9th Report*, Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Kiernan K. and Wicks M. (1990) *Family Change and Future Policy*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Kiernan K., Land H. and Lewis J. (1998) *Lone Motherhood in Twentieth-Century Britain: From Footnote to Front Page*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits (cont.)

Land H. (1980) "The family wage", *Feminist Review* **6** pp.55-77.

Lee N. (2000) "The Working Families' Tax Credit: An integration of the tax and benefit systems?", *Journal of Social Security Law* 7, pp. 59-185.

Lewis C. (2000) *A Man's Place is in the Home: Fathers and Families in the UK*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Lewis J. (1992 (a)) "Gender and the development of welfare regimes", *Journal of Social Policy,* **2**(3), pp.159-173.

Lewis J. (1992(b)) *Women in Britain since 1945: Women, Family, Work and the State in the Post-War Years*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Lewis J. (ed) (1993) *Women and Social Policies in Europe. Work, Family and the State,* Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Lewis J. (1997) *Lone Mothers in European Welfare Regimes*, London: Jessica Kingsley.

Lewis J. (1998) "The problem of lone-mother families in twentieth century Britain", *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law,* **20**(3) pp.251-283.

Longstaff E. (2000) *Father's Networks*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

MacDermott T., Garnham A. and Holterman S. (1998) *Real Choices for Lone Parents and their Children*, London: CPAG.

Maclean M. (1998) "The origins of child support in Britain and the case for a strong child support system" in Ford. R. and Millar J. (eds), *Private Lives and Public Responses: Lone Parenthood & Future Policy in the UK*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Main G.M. (1989) *Women's Hourly Earnings over the Life Cycle*, Coventry: University of Warwick, Institute for Employment Research.

Marchbank J. (200) *Women, Power and Policy: Comparative Studies of Childcare*, London: Routledge.

Marsh A. (2001) "Helping British lone parents get and keep paid work" in Millar J. and Rowlingson K. (eds), *Lone Parents, Employment and Social Policy: Cross-national Comparisons*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits (cont.)

McKay S. and Marsh A. (1995) *Why Didn't They Claim?* London: Policy Studies Institute.

McKendrick J. (1998) "The 'Big' picture: quality in the lives of lone parents" in Ford R. and Millar J. (eds), *Private Lives and Public Responses: Lone Parenthood & Future Policy in the UK*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

McLaughlin E. (1994) *Flexibility in Work and Benefits*, London: Institue for Public Policy Research.

McLaughlin E. (1999) "Social security and poverty: Women's business" in Ditch J. (ed), *Introduction to Social Security*, London: Routledge.

McLaughlin E., Millar J. and Cooke K. (1989) *Work and Welfare Benefits*, Aldershot: Avebury.

Meadows P. (1996) *The Future of Work: Contributions to the Debate*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Meadows P. (1997) *The Integration of Taxes and Benefits for Working Families with Children,* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Millar J. (1994) "State, family and personal responsibility: the changing balance for lone mothers in the UK", *Feminist Review* **48** (Autumn) pp.24-39.

Millar J. (2000) *Keeping Track of Welfare Reform: The New Deal Programmes*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Millar J. and Rowlingson K. (eds) (2001) *Lone Parents, Employment and Social Policy: Cross-national Comparisons*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

Millar J., Webb S. and Kemp M. (1997) *Combining Work and Welfare*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Morgan D.H.J. (1996) *Family Connections*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Morgan D.H.J. (1999) "Risk and family practices: accounting for change and fluidity in family life" in Silva E.B. and Smart C. (eds), *The New Family*, London: Sage.

Morris A. & O'Donnell T. (1999) *Feminist Perspectives on Employment Law*, London: Cavendish.

Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits (cont.)

National Family and Parenting Institute (2002) *Is Britain Family-Friendly? The Parents' View* London: NFPI.

Nelson H.L. (ed) (1997) *Feminism and Families*, London: Routledge.

Noble M., Smith G. and Cheung S.Y. (1998) *Lone Mothers Moving in and out of Benefits*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Okin S.M. ((1997) "Families and feminist theory: some past and present issues" in Nelson H.L. (ed), *Feminism and Families*, London: Routledge.

Penn H. (2000) "Policy and practice in childcare and nursery education", *Journal of Social Policy*, **29**(1), pp.37-54.

Perry A., Douglas G., Merch M., Bader K. and Borkowski M. (2000) *How Parents Cope Financially on Marriage Breakdown*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Purdy L.M. (1997) "Babystrike" in Nelson H.L. (ed), *Feminism and Families*, London: Routledge.

Ritchie J. and Mathews A. (1985) "Problem definition: attitudes to benefits" in Walker R. (ed) *Applied Qualitative Research*, Aldershot: Gower.

Rodgers B. and Pryor J. (1998) *Divorce and Separation: the Outcomes for Children*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Roll J. (1992) *Lone Parent Families in the European Community: A Report to the European Commission*, London: European Family & Social Policy Unit.

Rowlingson K. and McKay S. (1998) *The Growth of Lone Parenthood: Diversity and Dynamics*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Scott G. (1998) "Child care; the changing boundaries of family, economy and state", *Critical Social Policy*, **18**(4)

Shaver S. and Bradshaw J. (1995) "The Recognition of wifely labour by Welfare States", *Social Policy & Administration*, **29**(1), pp.10-25.

Silva E.B. (1996) *Good Enough Mothering? Feminist Perspectives on Lone Motherhood*, London: Routledge.

Silva E.B. and Smart C. (ed) (1999) *The New Family?* London: Sage.

Lone Parenthood, the Family, Work and Welfare Benefits (cont.)

Smart C. (1984) *The Ties That Bind: Law, Marriage and the Reproduction of Patriarchal Relations*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Smart C. "Securing the family? Rhetoric and policy in the field of social security" in Loney M. with Bocock R. et al (eds), *The State or the Market: Politics and Welfare in Contemporary Britain*, London: Sage.

Smart C. (ed) (1992) *Regulating Womanhood: Historical Essays on Marriage, Motherhood and Sexuality*, London: Routledge.

Smart C. (1997) "Wishful thinking and harmful tinkering? Sociological reflections on family policy", *Journal of Social Policy,* **26**(3), pp.301-321.

Smart C. and Neale B. (1999) *Family Fragments*, London: Polity Press.

Smart C. and Stevens P. (2000) *Cohabitation Breakdown*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Smith F. and Barker J. (2000) *The Childcare Revolution: A Decade of Kids' Clubs*, London: Kids Club Network.

Ungerson C. and Kemver M. (1997) *Women and Social Policy: A Reader* (second edition), Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Walker J. (1991) "Whose fault? Is the Law Commission getting it right?" [1991] Family Law 235.

Ward C. Dale A. and Joshi H. (1996) "Combining employment with childcare: an escape from dependence?", *Journal of Social Policy,* **25**(2), pp.223-247.

Warin J., Soloman Y., Lewis C. and Langford W. (1999) *Fathers, Work and Family Life*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

White M. and Bryson A. (1998) *Looking for Work: The Impact of State Benefits on Job Search*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Willets D. and Hillman N. (2000) *A Raw Deal for Lone Parents: Evaluating the Evidence*, Centre for Policy Studies.

Windebank I. (1999) "Political motherhood and the everyday experience of mothering: a comparison of the child care strategies of French and British working mothers", *Journal of Social Policy*, **28**(1), pp.1-25.

Policy Documents, Select Committee Reports and Government Research*

Bevan S., Dench S., Tamkin P. and Cummings J. (1999) *Family-Friendly Employment: the Business Case,* DFEE Research Report RR136

Bryson C., Budd T., Lewis J. and Elam G. (1999), *Women's Attitudes to Combining Paid Work and Family life*, London: The Cabinet office (The Women's Unit).

Cabinet office (1999) *Giving Time, Getting Involved: A Strategy Report by the Working Group on the Active Community.*

Conservative Party (1979) *Conservative Manifesto 1979*

DFEE (1998) *A New Contract for Welfare: The Gateway to Work*, Cm 4102.

DFEE (2000) *Work-Life Balance: Changing Patterns in a Changing World. A Discussion Document.*

DFEE (2000) *Children's Day Care Facilities at 31 March 2000.*

DFEE, DSS and H.M. Treasury *Towards Full Employment in a Modern Society*, Cm 5084.

DHSS (1979) *Reform of the Supplementary Benefits Scheme.* Cmnd. 7773.

DHSS (1985) *Reform of Social Security*, Cmnd. 9517-19.

DSS (1998) *Meeting the Childcare Challenge: A Framework and Consultation Document*, Cm 3959.

DSS (1998) *New Ambitions for our Country: A New Contract for Welfare,* Cm 3085.

DSS (1999) *Opportunity for All: Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion.* First Annual Report, Cm 4445.

DSS (2000(a)) *Households Below Average Income: A Statistical Analysis 1994/95-1998/9.*

DSS (2000(b)) *The Changing Welfare State: Social Security Spending. A Social Security Paper.*

* See Appendices D to G above for details of Research Reports (including In-House Reports) of DSS, ES and DWP.

Policy Documents, Select Committee Reports and Government Research* (cont.)

DSS (2000(c)) *Opportunity for All, One year On: Making a Difference.* Second Annual Report, Cm4865.

DSS (2001) *Opportunity for All: Making Progress.* Third Annual Report, Cm 5260.

DSS (2002) *Opportunity for All.* Fourth Annual Report, Cm 5598.

DWP (2002) *Households Below Average Income Survey2000/01.*

DTI (1998) *Fairness at Work*, Cm 3968.

DTI (2000) *Part-Time Work Public Consultation*, URN 99/1224.

DTI (2000) *Work & Parents: Competitiveness and Choice*, Cm 5005.

Education and Employment Select Committee (1997 /1998) Second Report: *The New Deal.* HC 263-I (1997), HC 263-II (1997), HC263-III (1998).

Education and Employment Select Committee (1998) Seventh Report: *Pathways into Work for Lone Parents*, HC 646.

Education and Employment Select Committee (1998) Seventh Special Report: *Government's Response to the Seventh report from the Committee, Session 1997-98: Pathways into Work for Lone Parents*, HC 1122.

Education and Employment Select Committee (1999) Second Report: *Part-Time Working*, HC 346-I, HC 346-II.

Education and Employment Select Committee (1999) Sixth Report: *The One Service Pilots*, HC 412.

Greener K., Cracknell R., (1998) *Child Benefit*, House of Commons Library Reseacrh Paper 98/79.

H.M.Treasury (2000) *The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System: Number Six. Tackling Poverty and Making Work Pay-Tax Credits for the 21st Century.*

* See Appendices D to G above for details of Research Reports (including In-House Reports) of DSS, ES and DWP.

Policy Documents, Select Committee Reports and Government Research* (cont.)

H.M. Treasury (2001(a)) *Tackling Child Poverty: Giving Every Child the Best Possible Start in Life.*

H.M. Treasury (2001 (b) *Investing for the Long Term: Building Opportunity and Prosperity for All*, HC 279.

H.M.Treasury (2002(a)) *The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System: Number Ten. The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System.*

H.M. Treasury (2002(b)) *The Role of the Voluntary Sector in Service Delivery: A Cross Cutting Review.*

Home Office (1998(a)) *Supporting Families: A Consultation Document.*

Home Office (1998(b)) *Compact: Getting it Right Together. Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England.*

Home Office (1999(a)) *Report of the Policy Action Team on Community Self-Help* Policy Action Team 9.

Home Office (1999(b)) *Giving Time, Getting Involved: A Strategy Report by the Working Group on the Active Community.*

Home Office (2001) *Funding Community Groups: A Consultation Document issued by the Government's Active Community Unit on behalf of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Resourcing Capacity Building.*

Labour Party(1997) *New Labour: Because Britain Deserves Better,* 1997 manifesto.

La Valle I. et al (2000) *Parents Demand for Childcare*, DFEE Research Report No.176.

Office for National Statistics (1998) *Living in Britain: Results from the 1998 General Household Survey.*

Office for National Statistics (2001(a)) *Labour Market Trends: Women in the Labour Market. Results from the 2000 LFS.*

Office for National Statistics (2001(b)) *Social Trends* No.31.

Rake K. (ed,) (2000) *Women's Incomes Over the Lifetime*, London: The Cabinet office (The Women's Unit).

* See Appendices D to G above for details of Research Reports (including In-House Reports) of DSS, ES and DWP.

Policy Documents, Select Committee Reports and Government Research* (cont.)

Social Exclusion Unit (1999) *Teenage Pregnancy*, Cm 4342.

Social Exclusion unit (2000) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: a Framework for Consultation*, Cm 4045.

Social Exclusion Unit (2001(a)) *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal – National Strategy Action Plan.*

Social Exclusion Unit (2001(b)) *Preventing Social Exclusion.*

Social Security Select Committee (1998) First Report: *Tax and Benefits: Implementations of Tax Credits*, HC 029.

Social Security Select Committee (1999) Ninth Report*: Social Security Implications of Parental Leave*, HC 543

Social Security Select Committee (1999) Second Special Report: *Tax and Benefits: Implementations of Tax Credits. The Government's Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 1998-99*, HC 170.

Social Security Select Committee (1999) Seventh Report*: The One Service Pilots*, HC 412.

Social Security Select Committee (2000) Fifth Report: *The Contributory Principle,* HC 56.

Social Security Select Committee (2000) Sixth Report: *Housing Benefit*, HC 385.

Social Security Select Committee (2001) Second Report: *Integrated Child Credit*, HC 72.

Strickland P. (1998) *Working Families Tax Credit and Family Credit*, House of Commons Library research Paper 98/46.

Worcester R.M., Elgood J., Maidment A., Williams R., Wallace E. (1999) *Listening to Women*, London: The Cabinet Office (The Women's Unit).

Work and Pensions Select Committee (2001) First Report: *'One Pilots': Lessons for Jobcentre Plus,* HC 426.

Work and Pensions Select Committee (2002) Third Report: *The Government's Employment Strategy,* HC 815.

* See Appendices D to G above for details of Research Reports (including In-House Reports) of DSS, ES and DWP.

Papers Published by the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), London School of Economics

---

CASE/1 (1997) Kiernan K., *The Legacy of Parental Divorce: social economic and demographic experiences in adulthood.*

CASE/4 (1998) Atkinson A.B. and Hills J., *Exclusion, Employment and Opportunity.*

CASE/12 (1998) Barry B., *Social Exclusion, Social Isolation and the Distribution of Income.*

CASE/13 (1998) Hills J., *Thatcherism, New Labour and the Welfare State.*

CASE/28 (2000) Hobcraft J. and Kiernan K., *Childhood Poverty, Early Motherhood and Adult Social Exclusion.*

CASE/30 (1999) Harkness S. and Waldfogel J., *The Family Gap in Pay: Evidence from Seven Industrialised Countries*

CASE/38 (2000) Piachaud D. and Sutherland H., *How Effective is the British Government's Attempt to Reduce Child Poverty?*

CASE/40 (2000) Burgess S., Gardiner K., Jenkins S.P. and Propper C., *Measuring Income Risk.*

CASE/41 (2000) Hills J., *Taxation for the Enabling State.*

CASE/42 (2000) Glennester H., *US Poverty Studies and Poverty Measurement: The past 25 years.*

CASE/44 (2000) Sefton T., *Getting Less for More: Economic Evaluation in the Social Welfare Field.*

CASE/47 (2001) Waldfogel J., Danziger S. K., Danziger S. and Seefeld K., *Welfare Reform and Lone Mothers' Employment in the US.*

CASE/51 (2002) Micklewright J., *Social Exclusion and Children: A European View for a US Debate.*

CASE/53 (2002) Stewart K., *Measuring Well-Being and Exclusion in Europe's Regions.*

CASE/55 (2002) Burchardt and Le Grand J., *Constraint and Opportunity: Identifying Voluntary Non-Employment.*

Papers Published by the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), London School of Economics (cont.)

CASE/57 (2002) Richardson L. and le Grand J., *Outsider and Insider Expertise: The Response of Residents of Deprived Neighbourhoods to an Academic Definition of Social Exclusion.*

CASE/60 (2002) Piachaud D., *Capital and the Determinants of Poverty and Social Exclusion.*

CASE/62 Sefton T., *Recent Changes in the Distribution of the Social Wage.*

CASE/63 Piachaud D. and Sutherland H., *Changing Poverty Post-1997.*

Web sites

http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case — Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion

www.childcarelink.gov.uk

www.cpag.org.uk — Child Poverty Action Group

www.cps.org.uk — Centre for Policy Studies

www.daycaretrust.org.uk

www.demos.co.uk

www.dfes.gov.uk — Department for Education and Skills, formerly DFEE

www.dfes.gov.uk/eydcp/ — Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership

www.dti.gov.uk — Department of Trade and Industry

www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance

www.dwp.gov.uk — Department for Work and Pensions, formerly DSS

www.employment-studies.co.uk/ies — Institute for Employment Studies

Web sites (cont.)

www.eoc.org.uk	Equal Opportunities Commission
www.hm-treasury.gov.uk	
www.homeoffice.gov.uk	
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/acu	Active Community Unit
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/cpd/fmpu	Family Policy Unit
www.iea.org.uk	Institute of Economic Affairs
www.ifs.org.uk	Institute for Fiscal Studies
www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk	
www.ippr.org.uk	Institute for Public Policy Research
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk	
www.jrf.org.uk	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
www.kidsclubs.com	Kids Clubs Network
www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk	
www.lowpay.gov.uk	Low Pay Commission
www.neighbourhood.gov.uk	Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
www.newdeal.gov.uk	
www.nfpi.org.uk	National Family and Parenting Institute
www.npi.org.uk	New Policy Institute
www.number-10.gov.uk	
www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk	National Council for One Parent Families
www.open.gov.uk	
www.parliament.uk	
www.psi.org.uk	Policy Studies Institute

Web sites (cont.)

www.scpr.ac.uk National Centre for Social Research

www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk

www.ssac.org.uk Social Security Advisory Committee

www.statistics.gov.uk Office for National Statistics

www.strategy-unit.gov.uk Formerly the Performance and Innovation Unit

www.tiger.gov.uk Tailored Interactive Guide on Employment Rights

www.warwick.ac.uk/ier Institute for Employment Research

www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk