

## Written evidence from Dr Michael Lambert (ACU0024)

### Profile and Reason for Submission

I am an academic historical sociologist of the welfare state and social policy in twentieth century Britain specialising in governance and policy processes. My approach has been to develop multi-layered complex small-scale local or regional case studies to understand the dynamics of governance and policy processes, and in turn use these to interrogate existing histories. Such case studies stretch from the personal encounter between an individual child or family and a single official to the larger policy architecture of the welfare state and its 'mixed economy' along a 'moving frontier' between statutory and voluntary services. As part of this I have developed extensive experience of both archival research and conducting oral history interviews including the examination of more than 2000 individual social work case files concerning families and children from the period 1940 to 1980.

In 2017 I completed my doctoral thesis on decision-making in local authority social services (primarily children and families) in the North West of England from 1943 to 1974, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) at Lancaster University History Department.<sup>1</sup> From this research I have submitted evidence to Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Inquiry into the Troubled Families Programme in 2016<sup>2</sup> and the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee of Inquiry into the Funding and Provision of Local Authorities' Children's Services in 2018<sup>3</sup>, and published in peer-reviewed journals including *People, Place and Policy*, *Social Policy and Society*, and *Children and Society*.<sup>4</sup> I have also served as a historical consultant on research projects for leading voluntary organisations Person Shaped Support and Family Action.

From 2017 to 2019 I was a Research Associate on the Governance of Health project at the University of Liverpool funded by the Wellcome Trust. My strand of the project examined decision-making in the National Health Service (NHS) in Liverpool and the city region from 1948 to the present. I have submitted evidence, with colleagues, to the London School of Economics (LSE) and Lancet Commission on the Future of the NHS in 2018,<sup>5</sup> published several witness seminars on aspects of change in the NHS,<sup>6</sup> and led a report on archives and records management in relation to surviving organisational sources.<sup>7</sup> I have a single-authored monography based on this research being published with Liverpool University Press in 2023.<sup>8</sup>

During 2019 I was commissioned by The Prince's Trust to undertake a report assessing policy and practice responsibilities in relation to the activities of the Fairbridge (Child Migration) Society for the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI).<sup>9</sup> I was also an advisory group member of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Leadership Fellows Project 'Child migration to Australia, 1947-1970' awarded to Professor Gordon Lynch at the University of Kent.

Since 2019 I have been a Postdoctoral Fellow in Social Inequalities at Lancaster University, with a research focus on the centrality of care to global understandings of, and developments of alternatives to, social and economic inequalities. Here, I have consolidated my existing research interests through a series of applied case studies on 'learning' from history: on the development of the NHS in Lancashire and South Cumbria for the *Morecambe Bay Medical Journal*,<sup>10</sup> the changing shape of the NHS organisational systems under pressure through the

course of the pandemic for the *History and Policy* network,<sup>11</sup> and as evidence to the Health and Social Care Committee of Inquiry into Delivering Core NHS and Care Services during the Pandemic and Beyond in 2020.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of my academic trajectory and each of these research roles, I have accumulated considerable experience and expertise in analysing policy- and decision-making processes, structures and cultures in both health and social care in twentieth century Britain at street- and elite-level, centred on case studies of the North West of England with a focus on Liverpool. I am therefore in a position of authority to comment on many of the key research questions of the inquiry.

I am in a position to provide further written or oral evidence upon request.

## Executive Summary

1. **The submission addresses three of the six questions concerning family life and its delineation by the state and society in postwar Britain from 1945 to 1979.** It focuses on the relative right to family life of unmarried mothers; social practices and state policies in the removal and adoption of children; and the position of information and consent within such processes.
2. **Attitudes and approaches towards unmarried mothers in Britain cannot be disentangled from similar patterns at an international level.** Whilst patterns of forced adoption or child removal elsewhere point to other national dynamics in decision-making process, the common underpinning justification for removal is the perceived deviancy of unmarried mothers and the challenge they posed to supposedly normal family life. This notion of deviancy was imposed from above by elites and authorities through discourse and policies, but also realised from below in communities through social stigma and marginalisation of unmarried mothers.
3. **Notions of normal ‘family life’ which underpinned the operation of the welfare state were fundamentally gendered.** Concerns over the welfare of children, their purported best interests, and securing their future hinged on an assessment of women as potential mothers the welfare state and its phalanx of officials. These gendered dispositions were embedded in both policy and practice, and inextricable from notions of class and respectability. Any effort to understand how officials selected some unmarried mothers and their children for removal and adoption but not others must account for the underlying gendered and classed processes.
4. **The apparatus of the ‘classic’ welfare state apparatus from 1945 to 1979 was paternalistic from root to branch.** This paternalist outlook was informed by knowledge and professional status. Officials – whether in statutory or voluntary organisations – assumed the right and possessed the capability to intervene in the lives of others in their purported best interests. Their views were informed both by contemporary disciplinary knowledge such as psychology and child development, but also perspectives rooted in folk sociology. Any assessment of the choices open to unmarried mothers faced with the prospect of their child being removed or adopted must recognise this power disparity.
5. **Decision-making processes of unmarried mothers by the welfare state apparatus were inconsistent with wide variation in handling and outcomes.** These processes reflected foundation built on a ‘mixed economy’ of statutory and voluntary welfare which comprised a blurred ‘moving frontier’ in twentieth century Britain, permissive and flexible powers from central government to local authorities and their departments, and the professional discretion of individual officials. Whilst many unmarried mothers had their children forcibly adopted or removed, others did not and lived their family lives either with, or despite, intervention from the welfare state. Many of those who kept their children were judged to be ‘problem families’ which shaped conditional forms of support and ongoing supervision.

6. **Ultimately unmarried mothers were marginalised by the state and society in a context of reconstruction and a return to normality after the Second World War which engendered the power of professional officials under the umbrella of a strengthened welfare state to remove children from unmarried mothers as a policy precept purportedly in the best interests of the child.** This was a sanctioned and structured approach embedded in central elite decision-making, local organisation and the individual action of officials across a welfare state which encompassed both legislated statutory intervention by services and enabled voluntary action by private and charitable organisations. The consequences for mothers separated from their children and the children themselves are a direct result of this concerted action.

## 1. Introduction

1.1. This submission directly addresses three of the six questions asked by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into the Right to Family Life:

- a. Was the right to family life of unmarried mothers and their children, as we understand it now, respected at the time;
- b. How social practices at the time contributed to unmarried women not being able to keep their babies and what if any, other reasons contributed to women feeling compelled to have their babies adopted;
- c. What, if any, information and support were provided to expectant mothers to help them make decisions or enable them to keep their baby.

It also indirectly addresses the issue of consent and the way it was obtained from unmarried women through a wider assessment of the practices of the welfare state and its officials in other areas of discretionary decision-making.

1.2. The submission is organised around understanding the discourses, welfare state apparatus, and attitudes from within communities towards unmarried motherhood which informed removal and adoption at a very young age as being in the best interests of the child in postwar Britain from 1945 to 1979. Reconstructing such complex and interconnected processes which contributed to the large-scale forcible adoption of thousands of children is approached in four stages:

- a. Situating British attitudes, approaches and apparatus in **international context**. This is to foreground the primacy of deviancy as the underpinning justification for removal despite a wide variety of dynamics in other national decision-making processes.
- b. Positioning the centrality of a discourse lionising **normal family life** which informed both the theory and practice of the welfare state. This is inextricable from the gendering process inherent in establishing the limits of normality for women regarded as mothers with varied expectations based on class and respectability.
- c. Understanding the paternalistic ideology of the **'classic' welfare state apparatus** from 1945 to 1979. This relates to forms of knowledge and professional status within its structures which informed a power disparity between officials and unmarried mothers in choices over their lives and above all their children.
- d. Revisiting **discretionary decision-making processes** concerning unmarried mothers and their variable and inconsistent application. These reflected an unclear relationship between statutory and voluntary responsibilities, the position of central and local government, and the professional capacity of individual officials.

1.3. The submission concludes with the view that unmarried mothers were marginalised by both state and society in a context of reconstruction and a return to normal family life after the Second World War which engendered the power of professionals within a strengthened

welfare state to remove children from unmarried mothers and have them adopted by more appropriate parents as a policy precept purportedly in the best interests of the child. This was not individual aberration or limited to small networks of actors working outside legislative parameters. This was a sanctioned and structured approach embedded in central elite decision-making in Whitehall, local authorities and voluntary organisational activities and financial frameworks, and through the individuals action of officials across the welfare state apparatus encompassing both legislated statutory services and enabled voluntary action by private and charitable organisations. The consequences for mothers separated from their children and the children themselves are a direct result of this concerted action.

## **2. International Context**

2.1. The forcible adoption of the children of unmarried mothers in Britain from 1949 to 1976 cannot be disentangled from similar patterns at an international level. Each reflects a conscious, systematic policy processes engendered by the state at a national level. Yet there are common ideological justifications across countries. Attitudes, approaches, and underpinning purposes remained similar, and any inquiry into the process in Britain must be understood in a global context.

2.2. Inquiries into the punitive treatment meted out to unmarried mothers and the forcible adoption of their children have taken place in a number of globally Western nations in recent years. These include the Republic of Ireland, Canada, Australia and the Netherlands. Historical reckonings have also taken place in the United States of America, Norway and New Zealand but formal inquiries have not been held. There has also been extensive historical research into similar processes in former colonial regimes such as Vietnam and authoritarian states including Greece and Spain.

2.3. This international historical reflection on the role of the state, the church and civil society in the forcible removal and adoption of children from unmarried mothers must further be placed in a context where teleological narratives of child welfare have been challenged. A concurrent, but inextricably interlinked, series of inquires into the historical abuse of children whilst in the care of the state have taken place in many globally Western nations and beyond.<sup>13</sup> Although there are wide variations in the practice and due process of such inquiries in foregrounding or marginalising the experiences and testimonies of survivors,<sup>14</sup> they have reached broadly similar conclusions on the place of the state, church and civil society in policies, practices, and processes.<sup>15</sup>

2.4 In the Republic of Ireland this has centred on the place of Magdalen Laundries and Mother and Baby Homes as semi-penal institutions run by the Catholic Church. Whilst emphasis has been placed on faith, these institutions were maintained in close partnership with the state and welfare bureaucracies.<sup>16</sup> A social context of conservatism, stigma of those who transgressed expected sexual behaviour outside marriage, and the institutional fabric of the state and church underpinned the semi-penal incarceration of unmarried mothers and the

forcible removal and adoption of their children.<sup>17</sup> This is also inextricably linked with migration of unmarried Irish mothers to Britain in the postwar period where the British welfare state and voluntary agencies were deeply involved.<sup>18</sup>

2.5. Inquiries into forced adoption in Canada and Australia are inescapably interwoven with historic state policies which socially and racially discriminated against indigenous populations.<sup>19</sup> The subjects of such policies and the processes of coercive adoption were not exclusively racialized, however.<sup>20</sup> Similar processes of often violent removal and separation, purportedly in the best interests of the child, occurred in the United States of America and New Zealand during the twentieth century but so far there have been no formal inquiries.<sup>21</sup> In the Netherlands the compelling motivations were social class rather than race, based on prevailing forms of expert knowledge on deviancy.<sup>22</sup> Such motivations existing in nearby Norway but an inquiry has not been forthcoming.<sup>23</sup> As in the case of Ireland, in each instance there was a strong interpenetration between the church, state and civil society in promoting the removal and adoption of children from unmarried mothers. Although less pronounced owing to a more plural institutional system of Christianity beyond Catholicism in each case, residential arrangements and adoption processes were broadly comparable: removing children from unmarried mothers and placing them with a more affluent, respectable middle-class racially acceptable couple as the basis for a viable family unit.<sup>24</sup>

2.6. The forced adoption of the children of unmarried mothers by the state has not been confined to the actions of liberal democratic welfare regimes in the West alone. In colonial French Indochina, this process was part of a larger policy of racial hegemony in segregating children of mixed parentage from Vietnamese families to preserve White primacy.<sup>25</sup> In authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe during a roughly similar period to forced adoption in Britain, the onus was on the corrosive influence of former Communist families for their children, with the removal of children from unmarried part of a wider state strategy on social reconstruction. This was the case for Francisco Franco's fascist regime in Spain and the 'stolen children' of defeated Republicans,<sup>26</sup> and the restored monarchy in Greece against the children of former resistance and Communist combatants.<sup>27</sup> Here, the adoption of children was also a constituent element of state rebuilding and national social reconstruction in a context of internal conflict by repressive governments.

2.7. Britain's reckoning with its past in relation to forced adoption must be situated in this international context where child removal and normalisation through idealised stable nuclear family units embodying the ideals of the national was omnipresent. Regardless of the nature of government – liberal democracy or authoritarian militarism – the type of Christian faith and denomination – Catholic or Protestant – or the form of the state – collectivist interventionary or laissez-faire enabling – the same underlying principles are in evidence. Forced adoption as a policy processes related to an entanglement between civil society, the church and the state in relation to the idealisation of social reconstruction and national idealisation of the family unit.

### 3. Normal Family Life

3.1. Forced adoption practices – that is, removing children from unmarried mothers and placing them with more desirable, stable nuclear family units – are inseparable from **ideologies of family** rooted in expert knowledge and political discourse, and their realisation through the **activities of the welfare state** in postwar Britain. This practice must be situated in its immediate context following the end of the Second World War in 1945. Here, political priorities embodied both ideals of social reconstruction for a new future, as well as the restoration of normality lost through years of war. Both processes were fundamentally driven by gendered considerations inherent in establishing and policing the limits of normality for women – who were regarded as actual or potential mothers – with varied expectations of what this meant based on their class and purported respectability. These competing objectives were crucial in engendering forced adoption through the fabric of welfare state action.

3.2. Ideologies of the family which underpinned and legitimated the forced adoption of unmarried mothers were centred on an imagined middle-class stable nuclear family ideal. This underpinned social policy, legislation, and the activities of the welfare state. At its core was a gendered division of labour whereby men worked and earned the household income as the breadwinner and women were responsible for maintaining the house and home, raising children and servicing the needs of her husband.<sup>28</sup> Household structures outside this normalised ideal were common to the realities of working class experience before 1945, but they remained the underlying assumptions after the Second World War.<sup>29</sup>

3.3. The postwar moment of reconstruction entailing both a return to normality and the creation of a new world existed in creative disharmony with one another. This was a global process although it possessed distinctive national characteristics. Pat Thane rightly argues that ‘The re-creation of a family life, of a real or imagined normality after the war, was as important in Britain as it was in countries that had been far more severely disrupted’.<sup>30</sup> She goes on to note that the “normal” family life to which many people in Britain aspired after the war and which was promoted through a range of communications media was therefore a new rather than “traditional” model of the family, although it quickly came to be represented as traditional and desirable’.<sup>31</sup> This both bred and legitimated ‘cultural conservatism and complacency’ in attitudes about the family, its form and function.<sup>32</sup> This was not politically neutral, which is why it was found in liberal democracies and authoritarian states alike. Jane Lewis identifies that the ‘family is regarded as bedrock, and yet it is also feared to be fragile’ however, ‘[c]oncern about “the family” has usually been expressed in gender-neutral terms, but behind this lies a well-established and remarkably consistent set of assumptions about the proper activities and behaviour of men and women’.<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, social reconstruction as an ideological burden rested firmly on women. This is crucial to understanding the acceptability of forced adoption.

3.4. The reconstructed ideal “normal” family placed a new onus on the intensification of the work responsibilities and expectation of women. Although overstated, the influence of John Bowlby’s idea of maternal deprivation – that is, the potential damage to children through



prolonged separation from their mothers if absent – was omnipresent in attitudes around mother-child intimate relations, responsibility for the development of their physical, emotional, and intellectual needs, and their future welfare.<sup>34</sup> This intersected with a population panic over declining birth rates and the endorsement of pronatalist policies which intensified these expectations.<sup>35</sup> In relation to her husband, mothers were also increasingly supposed to align their leisure interests to shared pursuits in more companionate marriage.<sup>36</sup> Whilst it is hard to discern the extent, depth and scale of such shifts, it is clear that mass media played a significant part in disseminating and reinforcing such ideas at both the elite expert and popular levels.<sup>37</sup> Whilst new, this ideological construct of the family was anchored in a nostalgic concept of tradition which was gendered and bounded the limits of femininity through this normalized ideal.

3.5. Louise Tracey's blunt statement that 'the welfare state was based on the idea of the family' serves to capture the simple relationship between its ideological construction and its realisation through the welfare state.<sup>38</sup> There is extensive debate on the place of gendered considerations in the foundation and development of the welfare state and their relationship to policies.<sup>39</sup> Regardless of these, what is clear is that gendered understandings influenced and impacted both the organisation and operation of the welfare state at the national and local levels. Indeed, the purpose of children's services established in 1948 was to provide care for children 'deprived of a normal home life'.<sup>40</sup> Fundamentally, establishing, preserving or recreating family life in the interests of children was a central preoccupation of the welfare state in Britain.

3.6. The permeation of this gendered domestic ideal is most visible in the founding premises of the 1942 Beveridge Report that cemented concepts of breadwinning, work and separate spheres into the foundations of the welfare state when implemented by the Labour Governments from 1945 to 1951.<sup>41</sup> However, it can also be seen across a range of policies and policy domains that developed beyond Beveridge. For instance, the development of local authority housing policies centred on this notion defined the location of homes in suburban spaces; the architectural forms of homes serving a single family unit; the organisation of space within the home serving gendered domestic functions; and privatised garden space which shaped patterns of sociability.<sup>42</sup> These were inextricable from wider exigencies of nation-building shaped by race and class.<sup>43</sup>

3.7. The most significant sphere of welfare state activity where family ideology was realised by its officials was in social work and the personal social services. Although a crude generalisation, Elizabeth Wilson's point that '[i]n the social work literature the family is seen as eternal, unchanging, and ahistorical' conveys a considerable amount of truth about how culturally conservative images of the family obtained traction in theory and practice.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, contemporary Eileen Youngusband – an advocate and champion of social work professionalism and education – conceded that '[m]oral judgments stifled curiosity and a heavy paternalism hung over non-professional social work'.<sup>45</sup> Although the same criticism could – and should – be extended to professional social work. This has been confirmed to

varying degrees by several histories of social work during the past two decades that consider how officials used normative mothering to judge deficient, bad or poor parenting.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, one former social worker who worked in both the statutory and voluntary sector later reflected that subsequent experiences of two divorces made him rethink his attitude to marriage, stability and the family during the postwar period.<sup>47</sup>

3.8. In summary, a reimagined ideology of the family was solidified after the Second World War based on the conflicting tensions of social reconstruction premised on the welfare state combined with an underlying desire to return to normality after a period of extensive disruption. This ideology became embedded in the legislative framework of the welfare state through its founding policies and assumptions, leading to its ossification in the practices of officials when dealing with people. This interweaving between ideology and practice was crucial in legitimating the forced removal and adoption of children from unmarried mothers who were deemed to have transgressed or failed this normative mode of family life. Although actions were individualised, they were rooted in these deep, structural formations.

#### **4. 'Classic' Welfare State Apparatus**

4.1. The organisation of the welfare state through its policy apparatus at central government, local authority and personal levels was not wholly stable from 1945 to 1979, but it remained largely unchanged and unreformed from the 1940s until the 1970s, especially during the concurrence of a series of transformations in 1974. This reflected a broad settlement which consolidated its pre-1945 contours.<sup>48</sup> Although adoption policies identified a shift with the 1949 Adoption Act, in terms of services, actors and figures, the pre-1945 systems were also carried across in this new landscape.<sup>49</sup> Whilst our conventional understanding of the welfare state has been driven by a sense of the expansion of its activities through monolithic, technocratic, faceless bureaucracies, this was far from the case. The welfare state remained a 'mixed economy' of statutory and voluntary provision which was delineated by a blurred but 'moving frontier' of responsibilities, jurisdictions, accountability and finance propelled by continued conflicts across the state for resources.<sup>50</sup>

4.2. The welfare state apparatus should not be understood as an unthinking monolithic behemoth because such a view belies its complexity and organisational decision-making processes of its constituent elements. Despite claims by Peter Hennessy that the 1945 moment turned a pre-war 'patchwork of provision into a quilt', the reality was that it became a patchwork quilt shaped by the contours of the intentions, powers and resources of actors within a reconstituted welfare state.<sup>51</sup> As Virginia Noble argues: 'While legislation enacted in the 1940s set out the framework for post-war welfare provision, crucial terms and conditions of participation in the welfare state were often determined elsewhere, in decisions made by bureaucrats and in the interactions between those claiming benefit and those dispensing them'.<sup>52</sup> Roy Parker has captured this point about a lack of clarity between legislation, policy and practice so ossified in thinking. He suggests in relation to child care that '[l]aw and policy are sometimes confused. Legislation may embody identifiable policies, but it may deal with little more than procedural matters that hardly amount to policies. On the other hand

policies may be developed independently of legislative requirements, either explicitly or by default'.<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, despite a settlement which established a period of stability in the constitution and operation of the welfare state from the 1940s to the 1970s, it was in a process of continual reconstruction put in motion by disputes between frontline officials, local welfare organisations and central government.<sup>54</sup> Attempting to identify a clear and delineated set of policies against which practice can be measured misunderstands the nature of welfare state organisation during the period of forced adoption by the state.

4.3. Intervention into the lives of families and, by extension *potential* families with unmarried mothers and their children, was determined by this complex and dynamic apparatus constrained within comparably stable limits. Broadly speaking, this bureaucratic welfare apparatus as a whole was swept by a 'new mood of optimism that social problems could be effectively tackled and eradicated'.<sup>55</sup> To be clear, action by officials and social workers *may* have been undertaken with the best of intentions through a progressive view of improving society riven with visions of New Jerusalem, but given the culturally conservative ideologies of the family and their entrenchment in welfare state principles, this reinforced a narrow model of family life. Chris Chapman and A. J. Withers see this as a violent form of benevolence emergent in the development of social work rooted in state purpose.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, this is a visible example of what Michael Lipsky terms 'street-level bureaucracy': that is, the reality of officials shaping policy processes.<sup>57</sup>

4.4. Here, the view of Michael Peplar confirms local arrangements, that '[m]uch of this intervention into families was in practice to take place at the local level through interaction between local health authorities, councils and voluntary agencies'.<sup>58</sup> Whilst this local apparatus had common contours across areas in terms of organisations, statutory and voluntary relationships, and central government guidance, different policy domains obtained the interest of individuals to a different extent. This impacted the extent to which such policies were developed in encouraging or obstructing efforts of unmarried mothers to keep their children.

4.5. Although each location had a variable set of organisational and individual interests involved in working with unmarried mothers and their children, there was a common policy process involved which means that certain groups can be identified across different places. From a statutory perspective this is primarily the local authority and its children's, welfare, public health, housing, and education departments. It could also include national officials such as the probation service and the National Assistance Board (NAB). From a voluntary perspective this was primarily branches of the Moral Welfare Association (MWA), the Catholic Protection Society (CPS), the Family Welfare Association (FWA) (Charity Organisation Society (COS) until 1949), National Council of Social Service (NCSS), and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). This list is not exhaustive, and it is clear that child migration organisations also played a role.<sup>59</sup> However, writing at the time, Eileen Younghusband is right to recognise that '[e]ven though pressing problems of illegitimate pregnancy required family casework, the service was separate from

the main stream of child care and family welfare, and indeed from the matrimonial work of the probation service'.<sup>60</sup> This operational assumption embedded in social work meant that work with unmarried mothers and their children was channelled and referred to a limited strand of local organisations that were felt to have legitimate responsibility.

4.6. The professional expertise and knowledge of individuals and organisations working with unmarried mothers was variable, with the voluntary sector lagging behind the statutory in terms of training, education and qualifications.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, the principal tenets of the stable family ideology and their propagation discussed in 3.3 and 3.4 meant that there was a widespread belief in the same ultimate aim even if there were professional and disciplinary disagreements over assessments. Whilst psychology and child development, notably the work of John Bowlby, proved influential in university circles, many untrained social workers equally engaged with such views in their own judgments, constituting a 'folk sociology' of social work practice with families.<sup>62</sup>

4.7. Within a complex welfare state apparatus with interpenetration between statutory and voluntary services, particularly at the local level where they were delivered, there were again common elements in relation to the forcible adoption of children from unmarried mothers. Noting that referrals of pregnant unmarried women were referred within local networks to the relevant association – typically the MWA or the CPS – these also had a common format. Branch organisations usually had a committee that provided notional governance and oversight, a secretary, caseworkers – either voluntary or employed, although in smaller bodies this was also the secretary – and a residential institution where unmarried mothers gave birth and subsequently had their children removed.<sup>63</sup> Poor working conditions for fieldworkers and residential workers were common, and a lack of funds led to growing reliance on local authorities who paid for cases or provided ongoing grants for activities.<sup>64</sup> This blurred 'mixed economy' cannot be disregarded when considering issues of liability and responsibility as policies and practices were not clearly demarcated. As Younghusband notes, '[m]oral welfare associations themselves were exploited by the failures of public provision, with the result that they continued for too long and attempted too much'.<sup>65</sup>

4.8. From the point-of-view of officials steeped in postwar family ideology and working in a complex welfare state, it is clear that the adoption of children from unmarried mothers – with varying degrees of compulsion, coercion and force – was seen as an action taken in the best interests of the child. This is a common conclusion from the existing historiographical literature on the subject, examining MWAs, mother and baby homes, and the place of adoption in discourses of the family.<sup>66</sup> This was seen as a benefit for the mother who could begin her normal family at a later stage and the child, who would be offered a normal, stable upbringing in line with family ideology and welfare policy. However, given reliance on primarily published, documentary and existing sources, the historiographical literature is limited by an inability to grasp the local dynamics that propelled and legitimated such practices throughout the period of the "classic" welfare state. Here, the experience and testimony of mothers whose children were forcibly adopted provides a window into this reality. These

should be combined with social work records and situated in an understanding of the local organisational dynamics of the welfare state.

4.9. The reverse side of the coin to the traumatic experience of forcible adoption was unmarried mothers who were able to keep their children. Even at the peak of adoption through MWAs during the 1960s, 350 moral welfare workers nationally were placing an estimated 2,000 to 2,500 children for adoption from 170 mother and baby homes. This represented 11,000 out of more than 70,000 unmarried mothers.<sup>67</sup> This only represents a sizeable but minority of all adoption orders in their peak year of 1968, totalling 16,164.<sup>68</sup> The majority of these were mothers legitimating their own children in reconstituted family units or arranging kinship care of one form or another.<sup>69</sup> Here, there is an extensive contemporary literature that documents the growth of such households – along with fatherless families through divorce, separation, desertion and death – which required mothers to adopt the dual burden of breadwinner and caregiver.<sup>70</sup> This impossible dilemma invariably led to large numbers of such households living in poverty.<sup>71</sup> This is mirrored in much of the historiographical literature that draws upon such sources.<sup>72</sup> Despite recognising that not all unmarried mothers were forced to adopt their children, and that working-class mothers who did typically struggled in poverty to meet the dual burdens of responsibilities, there is no clear analysis of how or why some mothers were able to retain their children and others were not. This distinction is crucial and can be elaborated through a situated understanding of the complex organisation of the welfare state.

4.10. Pat Thane and Tanya Evans have offered the most comprehensive work on unmarried motherhood in twentieth century Britain, using the single parent pressure group Gingerbread as a case study. They argue that ‘[a]doption was the last resort for many mothers, chosen by some, forced on others by parents, by the father, or by the difficulty of bringing up a child independently’.<sup>73</sup> They also contend that ‘[m]others who had their children adopted usually did so, often reluctantly, because they could not support themselves and the child, often because they were very young, especially if they had no stable home’.<sup>74</sup> Whilst recognising the spectre of coercion, this conclusion reflects their sources in situating unmarried motherhood within a range of alternative choices shaped by actors involving themselves in the decision. Whilst, in the view of David Howe, Phillida Sawbridge and Diana Hinings this represented a personal dilemma with considerable agonising, it fails to account for the decision-making processes of welfare organisations and individuals which impacted on the likelihood of forcible adoption.<sup>75</sup>

4.11. The broader contours of the postwar welfare state landscape are markedly more complex than a simplified command-and-control view provides. There were tensions running from the centre through the locality to the personal; from the statutory to voluntary provision of services; the nature of responsibility for functions and services; and in legislative requirements through policy spheres into everyday practice. Without labouring the point further through narrating individual legislative changes and their translation into policies for children, families, adoption and their welfare, what is clear is that in the “classic” welfare

state from the 1940s to the 1970s there remained little change in the practice of forced adoption. The decision of which mothers were able to keep their children and which were not was not wholly the choice of mothers nor was it the prerogative of the state. Instead, a local complex of factors relating to organisational relationships, individual networks, and personal pressures shaped the extent of coercion and the ability of children to remain with their mothers.

4.12. In the final analysis, the key element which requires articulation within welfare state bureaucracy to understand the forcible adoption of some children from unmarried mothers is power. This is the central element in each of the tensions identified in 4.11, and related to the ability of individuals, organisations or mothers to engage with, utilise, or resist the expertise and authority of the complex welfare state apparatus. This power was rooted in paternalism. Social scientist Barbara Wootton captured this dimension – that ‘daddy knows best’ – in seeing that ‘Everything is viewed from the administrative angle, through administrative spectacles – benevolently, no doubt, but always from outside, at secondhand’.<sup>76</sup> For the welfare state, the views of unmarried mothers were always subservient to the family ideology practiced across the complex policy apparatus.

## **5. Discretionary Decision-Making Processes**

5.1. The decision-making processes of welfare state officials to determine which unmarried mothers were able to keep their children and which were forcibly adopted were inconsistent with wide variation in both handling and outcomes. As noted in 4.11, these reflected an ambiguous relationship between statutory and voluntary responsibilities, the position of central government and local authorities, and the professional expertise and capacity of individual officials. In the absence of the voice of mothers in decisions about their fate, and the fate of their children for adoption, social work case files are used to reconstruct decision-making processes for some unmarried mothers who were able to keep their children. They were subsequently labelled a ‘problem family’ and treated differently by the welfare state seeking their normalisation.

5.2. ‘Problem families’, like unmarried mothers, were deemed a deviant element to the normal family ideology and forces of the welfare state. The crucial difference was that ‘problem families’ were those who presented a persistent problem to the administrative paternalism of the state as outlined in 4.12, confounding their intentions and actions. My doctoral thesis was based on the lives of 1,702 mothers from 1,817 case files of women and their young children who were sent to a residential rehabilitation centre – Brentwood, in Marple, near Manchester – for ‘problem families’ from 1943 to 1970 run by a voluntary organisation but largely reliant on the state for funds and referrals. This is comparable in form to mother and baby homes, but its function was the normalisation of the problem family, rather than the forcible separation of the unmarried mother and her child purportedly in her best interests. This was supplemented with hundreds of statutory and voluntary case files from organisations which sent mothers to the centre. These were concentrated in North West England but came from across Britain. I contrasted the experience of Brentwood with the

‘problem family’ centres which existed during the same period. In short, this represents an analysis of the complex welfare state for families in Britain comparable to unmarried mothers, but with a different subject client group.<sup>77</sup>

5.3. I concluded my doctoral thesis by arguing the following: ‘Throughout the “golden age” of the post-war welfare state, officials were authorised to use their shared professional discretion, or “folk sociology”, to determine which families were, or were not a “problem family”. It is for precisely this reason that they were “easy to recognise and describe”. By looking beyond official, printed and published sources, the “problem family” has been reconstructed as a “pertinent silence” of post-war consensus. The everyday decision-making by officials, structured as it was by chief officers and central government dictates, exposes processes of mundane governance and networks of power and authority which underpin the state’.<sup>78</sup> In effect, I am suggesting that the forcible adoption of the children of unmarried mothers was underpinned by a comparable system and logic, requiring a similar understanding, methodology and exploration.

5.4. A significant proportion of mothers who attended Brentwood were unmarried, with more being fatherless in circumstances outlined in 4.9. Poverty was the abiding condition and sole common denominator of being identified as a ‘problem family’ beyond consuming the time, energy and resources of the state. It is impossible to accurately quantify a proportion owing to the processes of recording by social workers and the residential centres, as well as discrepancies between claiming marriage for public appearances to the authorities and concomitant financial liabilities. Nevertheless, the figure runs to almost one hundred. What follows are three examples of professional social worker discretion in unmarried ‘problem families’ to expose the type of relationship between paternalism, power and the welfare state centred on the ideology of the family, but for those who were able to keep their children rather than having them forcibly adopted. This offers insights into counterpart processes.

5.5. Mrs RB<sup>79</sup> was 19 when she was referred as the mother of a ‘problem family’ for residential rehabilitation by Denbighshire County Council public health department in 1958. The referral report from the Medical Officer of Health (MOH), the chief officer for the service, though largely written by the Senior Nursing Officer (SNO), noted that ‘[t]he mother comes from a poor home, and is considered to be rather backward’. Mrs RB was 16 when she gave birth to her son at a mother and baby home, and subsequently lost another child as a baby from pneumonia in 1957, with her third born in 1958. She was pregnant again when referred in 1958. The referral report castigated the father, who married Mrs RB whilst at the mother and baby home in 1955. He was ‘very little older than his wife’ and violent towards Mrs RB, with the report noting ‘his abusiveness towards his wife has been a strain on her health for some time’. Despite this – and behind the decision to try and normalise the ‘problem family’ – the SNO noted that ‘[b]oth children appear to be well cared for, and the mother is very fond of them’. This satisfied the requirements for mothering in a contemporary psychological fashion as identified in 3.4., above. The judgment of the Warden at Brentwood, the rehabilitation centre on Mrs RB’s departure was that she ‘is a very

immature and childish person with a poor background. She loves her children. She is anxious to learn to look after them properly and responded to encouragement'.<sup>80</sup> What the case demonstrates is a closer link between child care and family services with work for unmarried mothers than suggested by Younghusband in 4.5. More crucially, it points to the interconnection between family ideology, welfare practice and the discretion of the state and its officials in pursuing a course of action notionally in the best interests of the children.

5.6. Mrs DS, aged 25, was also referred to Brentwood in 1958, like Mrs RB, a 'problem family' mother in need of rehabilitation and normalisation. Whilst Lancashire County Council public health department, again like Mrs RB, financially sponsored her period there, it was the Secretary of the MWA who provided the information on the circumstances of the case. She wrote that 'There is a long-standing history of social "failure" here, beginning when [Mrs DS] was a schoolgirl', having been sent to an approved school for larceny. She had four illegitimate children, three of which were in the care of two different local authorities, with her youngest child aged just a few weeks remaining with her mother. Although married, her husband had not been seen for years and was not the father of Mrs DS's children. The woman with whom Mrs DS had been lodging refused her entry on leaving the mother and baby home used by the Diocesan MWA after giving birth, worried that she might abandon the child. Again, the Warden judged that Mrs DS 'is fond of her children and looked after them well', noting that '[w]e are sure that [Mrs DS] really wants to keep her children and to have a home for them'.<sup>81</sup> Once more, discretionary decisions shaped by what could be interpreted as Mrs DS's resistance to the normalising demands of the state informed the actions of the welfare services. This example is complicated by crossing several local authority and Diocesan jurisdictions, as well as the close working between the statutory and voluntary sector. Although absent from the above correspondence, it was both the local authority's commitment to financially support these actions of officials, as well as their ultimate sanction through central government grants on a permissive basis, which permitted resources to be spent. These are removed from the large policy considerations and only legible at the granular level of intimate decision-making.

5.7. Mrs DEM was probably aged 30 when referred to Brentwood in 1957, because this was recorded as 32 on different documentation, but repeated more than once subsequently. She was financially sponsored by London County Council welfare department, but the support for her to spend time at Brentwood came from a psychologist at Paddington Green Children's Hospital where Mrs DEM's son, aged one, was receiving treatment for 'irritability'. During an interview the psychologist noted that Mrs DEM was 'depressed and at present unable to work'. He noted that Mrs DEM 'is extremely anxious to keep [her son] with her and to have some help', being 'of average intelligence' and only appearing 'inadequate' because of her depression. The welfare officer's report noted that Mrs DEM was unmarried, has no contact with either her own relatives or the father of the baby, and lived in appalling circumstances in a hostel. The welfare officer hoped that Mrs DEM would be able to obtain work as a domestic servant on successful rehabilitation. The Warden was more condemnatory, noting that 'We think she is rather an inadequate personality but is not really so stupid as she sometimes appears', disguising compliance with officials in order to receive help. The case



concludes with Mrs DEM being met by a MWA worker on leaving Brentwood.<sup>82</sup> The case of Mrs DEM points to the social contexts in which mothers were able to come to decisions noted by Thane and Evans in 4.10. A lack of partner and family support, coupled with the dual burden of breadwinner and caregiver, placed Mrs DEM in a position where she was reliant on the benevolence and decision-making of the welfare state to assist. This, as hinted by the remarks of the Warden, points towards the power behind such a relationship with the prospect of resources, or even being able to keep children if mothers were deemed to be unsuitable.

5.8. What these three examples of unmarried ‘problem families’ point to is the complexity of the welfare state in realising its normalising ideology of family life, and the types of parameters involved in resourcing, discretion and professional decision-making. However, the decisions were not simply those of the state, and reflected a range of outcomes as well as routes into arriving at them. The key distinction of why these unmarried mothers were able to keep their children was the notion of respectability. Each of them were deemed either through their own characteristics, behaviour, choices or actions to be persistently problematic which required a separate and ongoing course of action from the state. This is what made them a ‘problem family’: that they kept their children and continued to consume the resources and energy of the state and its officials. The looming threat of adoption was less apparent than being removed into the care of the state. Each family remained an ongoing problem.

5.9. This distinction between unrespectable ‘problem families’ which required a different course of action and respectable families is key to understanding decision-making around forced adoption. More respectable working-class girls and women who might provide the basis of a future stable, normal union as imagined by the ideology of the family were selected by officials for removal in a way that already ‘known’ and ‘problem’ individuals were not. This judgment was not the sole confine of officials, but embedded in the social stigma, moral condemnation and community gossip that accompanied how women were able to make such choices. As Bev Skeggs argues, the ‘working class is never free from the judgments of imaginary and real others that position them, not just as different, but inferior, as inadequate. Homes and bodies are where respectability is displayed but where class is lived out as the most omnipresent form, engendering surveillance and constant assessment of themselves’.<sup>83</sup> Respectability represents the intersection between working-class community norms, the professional judgment of officials, and the mechanisms of the state which operationalise family ideology. It is this that is the key determinant in understanding decision-making processes in the forced adoption of children from unmarried mothers, and the opaque nature of such consent and choice given their constraints.

5.10. In order to understand the differential dimensions of the forced adoption of the children of unmarried mothers in Britain during the “classic” welfare state, discretionary decision-making is a central dimension. It relates to how and why some mothers experienced different degrees of coercion, the choices open to them, and the view of different organisations in coming to a decision about their fate. Here, a layered analytical approach comparable to my

existing work on ‘problem families’ provides a route into understanding these dynamics and how such a fundamentally oppressive practice was embedded in the “golden age” welfare state and denied thousands of mothers their right to a family life. A family life which, elsewhere in the same welfare state, was granted to other unmarried mothers deemed less deserving and requiring different forms of intervention which begrudgingly accepted their abnormality and the limits of their authority.

## 6. Conclusion

6.1. Unmarried mothers were marginalised by both the state and society in a context of social reconstruction and a return to normal family life after the Second World War. This marginalisation was engendered by the discretionary power of professionals within a strengthened welfare state to remove the children of unmarried mothers and have them adopted by more appropriate, stable and normal parents. This welfare state represented a loose affiliation between statutory purposes and services and voluntary provision by organisations in civil society and the church.

6.2. This policy precept to remove children from unsuitable family units borne by unmarried mothers was taken purportedly in the best interests of the child and aligns with the other policy domains of the welfare state concerning child care and family welfare over the same period. This was not a case of individual aberration or limited to small, isolated, networks of actors working outside of legislative parameters. Such legislative parameters were, at best, elastic and intertwined with policy and practice. The actions of officials were sanctioned across the welfare state apparatus encompassing both legislated statutory services and enabled voluntary action by private and charitable organisations.

6.3. Unmarried mothers were undoubtedly forcibly separated from their children who were subsequently through the concerted action of the state. This formed part of an **international context** whereby a similar process took place in other regimes, whether liberal or authoritarian. The common action of the state in these different contexts was the construction of the ideal of **normal family life** that served the interests of nation-building through a gendered process. In Britain, the definition, boundaries and acceptability of normal family life were shaped by and policed through the ‘**classic**’ **welfare state apparatus** that was fluid, complex and dynamic. The ultimate decision, however, in deciding which unmarried mothers would, or would not, be in a position to keep their children was the **discretionary decision-making processes** of officials at an individual, organisational and local level. Each of these layers compounded one another through the lens of respectability which obtained traction for officials as well as working-class communities to determine whether or not individual mothers could be the basis of a normal family unit in the future. This elastic, malleable and subjective notion was fundamentally rooted in the structures of the state, society, and welfare organisations.

6.4. The methodology pursued in my doctoral thesis on ‘problem families’ which reconstructed comparable processes for a different subject group in Britain during the same period point to direct relationships with how these systems operated as a complex dynamic. Silences in existing official sources must be reclaimed through the voices of those impacted by the actions of the state. However, reconstructing these processes for unmarried mothers and reading individual social work files against the grain, situating them in this welfare apparatus, will show how a large section of the population were denied the right to family life by the very individuals and organisations which were supposed to enable them.

*21/10/2021*

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<sup>53</sup> Roy A. Parker, *Change and continuity in children's services*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2015, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Noble, *Inside the welfare state*, 13; Lambert, "'Problem families'", 115-237.

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<sup>55</sup> Janet Walker, 'Interventions in families', in *Marriage, domestic life and social change: writings for Jacqueline Burgoyne, 1944-88*. London: Routledge, 1991, 191.

<sup>56</sup> Chris Chapman and A. J. Withers, *A violent history of benevolence: interlocking oppressions in the moral economies of social working*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Michael Lipsky, *Street-level bureaucracy: dilemmas of the individual in public services*. New York, NY: Russell Sage, 1980.

<sup>58</sup> Peplar, *Family matters*, 38.

<sup>59</sup> Gordon Lynch, 'Catholic child migration schemes from the United Kingdom to Australia: systemic failures and religious legitimization', *Journal of Religious History*, 44:3 (2020), 292; id., *UK child migration to Australia, 1945-1970: a study in policy failure*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, 111-12.

<sup>60</sup> Eileen Youngusband, *Social work in Britain, 1950-1975: a follow-up study, volume two*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1978, 228.

<sup>61</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report of the working party on social workers in the local authority health and welfare service*. London: HMSO, 1959.

<sup>62</sup> Lambert, "'Problem families'", 115-47.

<sup>63</sup> Virginia Wimperis, *The unmarried mother and her child*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1960, 176-210; M. Penelope Hall and Ismere V. Howes, *The Church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, 88-259; Jill Nicholson, *Mother and baby homes: a survey of homes for unmarried mothers*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1968; Jean Pochin, *Without a wedding-ring: casework with unmarried parents*. London: Constable, 1969, 116-30; Youngusband, *Social work in Britain, volume two*, 229.

<sup>64</sup> Compare, for example, the funding listed in annual reports of local MWAs and the standardised reporting by local authority departments in the case of Manchester. Greater Manchester Record Office (GMRO), Manchester: M629/3/16/4-9 Manchester MWA, Annual reports, 1954-59; Wellcome Library (WL), London: Annual reports of the Medical Officer of Health for Manchester, 1954-59; The National Archives (TNA), London: BN 29/96 Annual reports of the Children's Officer for Manchester, 1956-59.

<sup>65</sup> Youngusband, *Social work in Britain, volume two*, 231.

<sup>66</sup> Martine Spensky, 'Producers of legitimacy: homes for unmarried mothers in the 1950s', in Carol Smart (ed.) *Regulating womanhood: historical essays on marriage, motherhood and sexuality*. London: Routledge, 1992, 100-18; Jane Lewis, 'The problem of lone-mother families in twentieth-century Britain', *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 20:3 (1998), 251-83; Janet Fink, 'Natural mothers, putative fathers, and innocent children: the definition and regulation of parental relationships outside marriage in England, 1945-1959', *Journal of Family History*, 25:2 (2000), 178-195; Alyssa Levene, 'Family breakdown and the "Welfare Child" in 19th and 20th century Britain', *History of the Family*, 11:2 (2006), 67-79; Gillian Clark, 'The role of mother and baby homes in the adoption of children born outside marriage in twentieth-century England and Wales', *Family and Community History*, 11:1 (2008), 45-59; Pat Thane, 'Unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England', *Women's History Review*, 20:1 (2011), 11-29; Annmarie Hughes and Jeff Meek, 'State regulation, family breakdown and lone motherhood', *Journal of Family History*, 39:4 (2014), 364-387; Timothy W. Jones, 'Social motherhood and spiritual authority in a secularizing age: moral welfare work in the Church of England, 1883-1961', *Feminist Theology*, 23:2 (2015), 143-55; Laura M. Ramsay, 'The ambiguities of Christian sexual discourse in post-war Britain: The British Council of Churches and its early moral welfare work', *Journal of Religious History*, 40:1 (2016), 82-103.

<sup>67</sup> Youngusband, *Social work in Britain, volume two*, 230.

<sup>68</sup> David Howe, Phillida Sawbridge and Dianna Hinings, *Half a million women: children who lose their children by adoption*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992, 3.

<sup>69</sup> Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 2, 27, 36-37, 79-81.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Wynn, *Fatherless families: a study of families deprived of a father by death, divorce, separation or desertion before or after marriage*. London: Michael Joseph, 1964; Dennis Marsden, 'Fatherless families on National Assistance', in Peter Townsend (ed.) *The concept of poverty: working papers on methods of investigation and life-styles of the poor in different countries*. London: Heinemann, 1970, 205-19; id., *Mothers alone: poverty and the fatherless family*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.

<sup>71</sup> Rosalind Marshall, *Families receiving supplementary benefit: a study comparing the circumstances of some fatherless families and families of the long-term sick and unemployed* (London: HMSO, 1972).

<sup>72</sup> Keith D. M. Snell and Jane Millar, 'Lone-parent families and the welfare state: past and present', *Continuity and Change*, 2:3 (1987), 387-422; Kathleen Kiernan, Hilary Land and Jane Lewis, *Lone motherhood in*

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*twentieth century Britain: from footnote to front page*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; Virginia A. Noble, "'Not the normal mode of maintenance": bureaucratic resistance to the claims of lone women in the postwar British welfare state', *Law and Social Inquiry*, 29:2 (2004), 343-71; Tanya Evans and Pat Thane, 'Secondary analysis of Dennis Marsden's Mothers alone', *Methodological Innovations Online*, 1:2 (2006), 78-82; Tanya Evans, 'The other woman and her child: extra-marital affairs and illegitimacy in twentieth-century Britain', *Women's History Review*, 20:1 (2011), 47-65; Ofra Koffman, "'A healthier and more hopeful person": illegitimacy, mental disorder and the improved prognosis of the adolescent mother', *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 36:1 (2015), 113-126.

<sup>73</sup> Thane and Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints?*, 96-97.

<sup>74</sup> Thane and Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints?*, 100.

<sup>75</sup> Howe, Sawbridge and Hinings, *Half a million women*, 58-73.

<sup>76</sup> Barbara Wootton, 'Daddy knows best', *Twentieth Century*, 166 (1959), 249.

<sup>77</sup> Lambert, "'Problem families'", 42-80.

<sup>78</sup> Lambert, "'Problem families'", 245.

<sup>79</sup> The closure periods of individual case files means that when mothers are included their names are compressed to initials and identifying details kept to a minimum in relation to the purpose of the research. Officials are identified where appropriate as their perspective is key to understanding professional discretion. For a full discussion see: Lambert, "'Problem families'", xxi-xxii.

<sup>80</sup> Lancashire Archives (LA), Preston: DDX2303/acc. 9037/box 15/case number 2710 Mrs RB (1958) M. T. Islwyn Jones to E. D. Abraham, 2 September 1958; E. D. Abraham to M. T. Islwyn Jones, 6 January 1959.

<sup>81</sup> LA: DDX2302/acc. 9037/box 16/case number 2726 Mrs DS (1958) M. Whitfield to E. D. Abraham, 24 November 1958; E. D. Abraham to S. C. Gawne, 26 February 1959.

<sup>82</sup> LA: DDX2302/acc. 9037/box 13/[no case number] Mrs DEM (1957) Paddington Green Children's Hospital Psychologist to LCC MOH, 2 November 1957; PGCH Psychologist to London County Council Chief Welfare Officer, 22 October 1957; LCC Welfare Officer to E. D. Abraham, 27 November 1957; E. D. Abraham to LCC MOH, 5 February 1958.

<sup>83</sup> Bev Skeggs, *Formations of class and gender: becoming respectable*. London: SAGE, 1997, 90.