This item was submitted to Loughborough's Research Repository by the author.
Items in Figshare are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

A child's-eye view of social difference

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

PUBLISHER

© Loughborough University, Centre for Research in Social Policy, Dept of Social Sciences

LICENCE

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

REPOSITORY RECORD

Sutton, Liz, Noel Smith, Chris Dearden, and Sue Middleton. 2019. "A Child's-eye View of Social Difference". figshare. https://hdl.handle.net/2134/3045.

Loughborough University

This item was submitted to Loughborough's Institutional Repository by the author and is made available under the following Creative Commons Licence conditions.

creative commons

COMMONS DEED

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.5

You are free:

- to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work

Under the following conditions:

Attribution. You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor.

Noncommercial. You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

No Derivative Works. You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

- For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work.
- Any of these conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holder.

Your fair use and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

This is a human-readable summary of the Legal Code (the full license).

Disclaimer

For the full text of this licence, please go to:
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/

A child's-eye view of social difference

Liz Sutton, Noel Smith, Chris Dearden and Sue Middleton

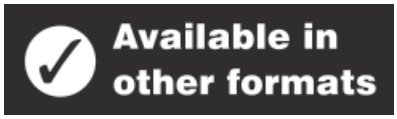
This report explores two contrasting groups of children's views and experiences of social difference.

Children are increasingly the focus of Government policy, and improvement of outcomes for children in disadvantaged areas is a priority. However, little is known about how children see and experience poverty, wealth, and 'social difference' in their everyday lives. This report explores their own views, using their terms. A participatory approach was used, which enabled the children to lead the research focus. The report compares the similarities and differences between the findings from the two groups.

The study was conducted with 42 children aged between 8 and 13. Of these, 19 were from a disadvantaged housing estate and 23 attended a fee-paying independent school. The children participated in a series of workshops and helped to choose the research methods, which included role play, photography, mapping and 'draw and write' techniques.

The report will be of interest to researchers and policymakers in the fields of education and child poverty.

JOSEPH ROWNTREE
FOUNDATION



This publication can be provided in other formats, such as large print, Braille and audio. Please contact:
Communications, Joseph Rowntree Foundation,
The Homestead, 40 Water End, York YO30 6WP.
Tel: 01904 615905. Email: info@jrf.org.uk

A child's-eye view of social difference

Liz Sutton, Noel Smith, Chris Dearden and Sue Middleton

JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION

The **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** has supported this project as part of its programme of research and innovative development projects, which it hopes will be of value to policymakers, practitioners and service users. The facts presented and views expressed in this report are, however, those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Foundation.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation
The Homestead
40 Water End
York YO30 6WP
Website: www.jrf.org.uk

© Loughborough University, Centre for Research in Social Policy, Dept of Social Sciences 2007

First published 2007 by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

All rights reserved. Reproduction of this report by photocopying or electronic means for non-commercial purposes is permitted. Otherwise, no part of this report may be reproduced, adapted, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

ISBN: 978 1 85935 563 3

A CIP catalogue record for this report is available from the British Library.

Prepared by:
York Publishing Services Ltd
64 Hallfield Road
Layerthorpe
York YO31 7ZQ
Tel: 01904 430033; Fax: 01904 430868; Website: www.yps-publishing.co.uk

Further copies of this report, or any other JRF publication, can be obtained from the JRF website (www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/).

Contents

Acknowledgements vi

Executive summary vii

1 Introduction 1
Inequality and poverty 1
The policy context 2
Social difference, 'poverty' and disadvantage 3
Children's perspectives on social difference: a participatory approach 4
The children 5

2 Children's perceptions of social difference 9
Introduction: poor, rich, 'chavs' and 'posh' 9
Children, poverty and stigma 9
Being 'normal' ('not being different') 10
The 'otherness' of poverty and affluence 11
Socio-economic difference: being 'chavs' and being 'posh' 12
Social difference, identity and diversity 16

3 Children's experiences of social difference 18
The children's lived experience 18
Education 18
Favourite things and personal space 24
Free time (1) – organised activities 25
Free time (2) – 'street play' 27
Parenting 30
Friendships 33
Contrasting life experiences 34

4 Observations for policy 35
A child-centred view: relationships and activities 35

Note 39

References 40

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank: Helen Barnard, Senior Research Manager at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, for her enthusiastic support throughout the research; Carol Sexty at Save the Children for all her help; and the other members of the Project Advisory Group for their invaluable expertise and advice.

We are also extremely grateful to Professor Ruth Lister for her interest in the research and her thoughtful comments on an earlier draft of this report.

We would also like to thank Sharon Walker and Thahmina Mannan at CRSP for their administrative support. We are also extremely grateful to the project workers at the youth centre, and the Deputy Headmaster and his staff at the independent school. They all made the research process much easier.

Most importantly, we would like to thank all the children who took part in the groups for giving their time and sharing their views and experiences with us so openly. We hope that we have managed to do them justice.

Executive summary

This study is about children's experiences and perceptions of social difference as stratified in terms of relative poverty/affluence. The use of participatory methods meant that the lines of inquiry followed in the study were guided significantly by the children themselves and so the study shows a 'child's-eye view' on social difference. This unique perspective is particularly important at a time when, for example, reducing child poverty is a headline policy target in the UK. The aims of the research were to expand our understanding of children's own views of poverty, social exclusion and social inequality in order to inform both public opinion and government strategies to eradicate poverty and social exclusion.

The research was conducted in England with and by 42 children, aged between eight and 13 years, recruited to the study from two contrasting backgrounds. One group of children lived in a disadvantaged housing association estate and attended services provided by Save the Children and Groundwork. The second group of children were recruited from an independent, fee-paying school.

The study resulted in a number of key findings.

1 The children did not see themselves in terms of being 'rich' or 'poor'. All children claimed a middle ground and asserted the importance of being seen as 'not different'. 'Rich' and 'poor' were terms that referred to extreme and absolute types. Poverty, for example, was related narrowly either to Third-world circumstances or, in the UK, to homeless beggars. Instead, social difference on socio-economic grounds was keenly perceived and described in terms of 'chavs' and 'posh' children – associated with lower and higher socio-economic circumstances respectively. The children's perceptions on social difference were often antagonistic in tone: 'other' children, from different socio-economic backgrounds, were discussed most commonly in critical or disparaging terms. This has broad, general implications. The importance of promoting a more informed and reflective appreciation of socio-economic difference is an issue, for example, for the citizenship education curriculum.

2 One of the most contrasting differences between the two groups of children was their experience of and attitudes towards education. The private schoolchildren had a much more intensive school life, with greater access to a wider range of after-school activities, and they expressed a markedly positive attitude towards education. The school day for estate children was shorter and access to after-school activities was sometimes obscured by the additional costs they entailed. Attitudes towards school were generally negative: school was boring

and controlling; somewhere they tried to spend as little time as possible. The implications this has for education are widespread. Among other things, this highlights a key challenge for the design of Extended School programmes. The attractiveness to children of Extended School – and any educational benefits to be derived from it – will be limited for those who, in theory, stand to gain most from it (children in low-income households) if it is perceived and experienced merely as an extension of 'normal' school – just 'more of the same'.

Another of the most striking differences between the two groups of children was in their free-time play. Outside of school, the private schoolchildren were more likely than the estate children to be involved in clubs and organised activities, or to visit to play with friends at each other's houses, being escorted on most journeys by adults. For the estate children, free time was dominated by 'street play' – games and socialising, unaccompanied by adults, in the streets and open spaces across the estate. Street play was valued and enjoyed by the children. Its popularity was likely to have been further underscored by the obstacles of entertaining friends at home because of the limited space and resources within children's homes, and limited opportunities to access clubs and organised activities. Three further key findings stem from this theme.

3 Out of all the issues discussed in the estate children's groups, the point about which they felt most aggrieved was the loss of certain areas of open space, boarded off and used as building land. The importance of open space for children – not just playground areas – does not appear to be recognised or addressed properly in the Cleaner, Safer, Greener Communities programme.

4 Given the estate children's lack of opportunities for after-school activities, the introduction of Youth Opportunity Cards enabling disadvantaged 13–16 year olds to take up a subsidised range of activities in the community is welcome. However, Government needs to be mindful of penalising children by withdrawing cards and subsidies from those deemed to engage in unacceptable behaviour. Our findings indicate that some children may be more likely to be perceived in this way than others – because of their high visibility during street play – and therefore more at risk from further exclusion from these opportunities. Our findings also show that children from as young as eight would also benefit from being able to take part in the scheme.

5 The quality of parenting has recently become an increasingly explicit focus of social policy. In the media, street play has become increasingly associated with anti-social behaviour. From policy and media perspectives, parents who permit children to play in the streets are at risk of being deemed as not fulfilling their

parental responsibilities. However, the children in the research emphasised parents' active role in setting and monitoring rules and restrictions on their street play. The research, thus, highlights the need to avoid and challenge assumptions about associations between street play, anti-social behaviour and inadequate parenting.

The research also highlights the similarities between children from different backgrounds. For example, asked to identify the most important things in their lives, both the estate and private schoolchildren came up with the same core list: family and friends, free-time activities, their favourite belongings (games, toys, pets, etc.) and education. The similarities between children from contrasting backgrounds serve as a reminder of the everyday experience of being a child. This is especially important when children from low-income households are often regarded as problematic and different: they are first and foremost children.

1 Introduction

In this chapter, we outline the context of the report in terms of inequality, poverty and social policy. We then discuss the parameters of the project – how and to what extent the research illuminates issues of social difference, relative income poverty and disadvantage. This chapter also explains how the research was undertaken and which children participated in it. Chapter 2 discusses the children's perceptions of social difference and their attitudes towards poverty and affluence. Chapter 3 explores the different children's experiences of social difference in relation to education, material possessions and space, free time, and family and friends. Chapter 4 concludes by considering the implications for policy and practice.

Inequality and poverty

Britain remains a fundamentally unequal society with the gap in before-tax income inequality remaining constant since 1997 (Paxton and Dixon, 2004). Simultaneously, there has been an increase in the disparity between people's *disposable* income, while the richest in our society continue to get richer (Paxton and Dixon, 2004). Social mobility has also declined so that children who are born into families from lower socio-economic groups are more likely to remain within this group than in previous generations (Blanden and Gibbons, 2006).

In 2004–05, there were 3.4 million children living in households with less than 60 per cent of the contemporary median income after housing costs in Britain (DWP, 2006). Poverty in childhood has serious negative consequences for later life. Growing up in poverty impacts on children's educational and future job prospects, and health and behaviour outcomes (Gregg *et al.*, 1999, Ermisch *et al.*, 2001). Those who are born into low-income families and grow up in poverty are likely to gain fewer educational qualifications, enter unemployment or low-paid work, suffer from poor health as children and as adults, get into trouble with the police and remain poor throughout their lives.

Tess Ridge (2002) has shown how poverty and social exclusion impact on the lived experiences of children and young people. She observed how children in low-income families were socially excluded both at school and in their wider communities. Limited financial resources meant that uniforms, classroom materials and school trips were often prohibitive factors in children's ability to participate fully in school life alongside their peers. Moreover, lack of money and transport makes it difficult for these children to participate in leisure activities and, in turn, impacts on their ability to maintain and

sustain friendships. Ridge's research was of seminal importance not least because it offered a perspective on social exclusion from children's points of view. A child-centred approach enables the voices of children to be heard and most importantly put at the heart of poverty policy debate.

The policy context[1]

Historically and ambitiously, the UK Government has pledged to end child poverty by 2020. The Government accepts that low income and disadvantage in childhood impact on children's life chances across the life course. It has introduced a raft of policies, such as tax credits, SureStart, Education Maintenance Allowances and Excellence in Cities (see SEU, 2004), to counteract the long-term effects of child poverty and to improve the opportunities and life chances of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Government's Green Paper, *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), outlines proposals for reforming the delivery of services to children. It aims:

> … to reduce the numbers of children who experience educational failure, engage in anti-social or offending behaviour, suffer from ill-health, or become teenage parents.
> (DfES, 2003, p. 5)

It concentrates on preventative measures against the effects of poverty, poor childcare and early years education, poor schooling and a lack of access to health services. This includes the aim of raising primary and secondary school standards and improving school attendance and behaviour, with the intention of intervening earlier when problems arise. Central to this is the integration of education, health and social care services around children's needs through Extended Schools. Each extended school will offer a core of childcare, study support, family and adult education, health and social care, parenting support, sports and arts facilities and access to information technology (DfES, 2003, p. 29).

> By 2010 all parents of primary-age children will be able to access affordable childcare at, or through, their school from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., all year round. By 2010 all secondary schools will provide access to a range of activities for young people such as music, sport and holiday activities with at least a third making this available by 2008.
> (DfES, 2005a, p. 9)

Social difference, 'poverty' and disadvantage

Children from two contrasting backgrounds – relatively speaking – were approached to take part in this project. This gave us an insight into how the attitudes and experiences of children in the UK reflect their material circumstances. The *relativity* of their circumstances needs to be emphasised: no claim is made here that the children were living in *absolute* poverty or wealth. Most of the parents of the estate children were interviewed about their children's socio-economic circumstances and history, and this revealed evidence among many of these families of low income (under 60 per cent of national median income) and material hardship. This relative income measure – and, less so, material deprivation indices – is used by the UK Government to measure poverty. However, we need to be aware that 'poverty' is an essentially contestable term and that, as Lister (2004) reminds us, technical measurements of income and material resources are devices to identify and assess the extent of poverty across the population, but do not necessarily match up with the *meaning* of poverty. In the case of the estate children, many had experience of living below the relative income poverty threshold but none in the course of the research defined themselves as 'poor'. This situation was mirrored in the case of the private schoolchildren. While the relative income poverty threshold is well established, there is no equivalent official threshold for affluence. Although attendance at a fee-paying school in the UK suggests relative affluence, the private schoolchildren did not define themselves as 'rich'.

On the one hand, the research does not purport to compare 'rich children' and 'poor children'; among other things, to do so would be to artificially impose such terms on individuals who rejected them. On the other hand, it is able to inform policy in the sense of providing insight into the lives of children with experience of relative income poverty. This tension clearly reflects the problematic nature of the term 'poverty' in research. This reiterates a key finding of a study carried out by IpsosMORI (funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation), which showed that the (adult) public found the term 'poverty' alien, that it was unhelpful for public understanding about disadvantage in the UK and that alternative 'lay terms' might be better (Thompson and Castell, 2006).

A unique strength of this project was the participation of children from contrasting backgrounds and the research clearly maps the dimensions of social difference from the perspective of children themselves. It examines how children identify themselves in relation to others. It also reflects what children perceive as the most important aspects of their lives and how their experiences in these areas vary depending on whether they come from a relatively low- or high-income background. In this, it helps us to develop a child-centred view of the themes and issues that are associated with, and result from, social disparity and relative dis/advantage in childhood.

Children's perspectives on social difference: a participatory approach

In order to develop a child-centred view of socio-economic difference, the project used a participatory methodology. In participatory research, the subjects of an inquiry become co-researchers, ideally involved in all aspects of a project from design to dissemination. Where participatory methods have been used in poverty research, for example, this has reflected a concern to 'put into practice the belief that people in poverty have a right to participate in analysing their own situation and how to tackle it' (Bennett and Roberts, 2004, p. 6). The use of a participatory approach in this project meant moving away from conducting research *on* children, to conducting research *with* children. Overall, it avoided imposing an adult-centred research agenda but instead enabled the children to set the agenda and steer the research themselves.

The research sessions involved a range of methods, including drawing, mapping and writing activities, games and role play. The content and hard-copy material arising from these exercises constituted 'data' for the research, but of equal or greater importance were the conversations, discussions and commentaries stimulated by the activities. With the children's permission, all sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed. The sessions were structured around topics that the children themselves had defined as being important to them. All the children (from both groups) identified the same four areas: education; their favourite things; free time; and their family and friends. However, different groups included additional items in their lists. For example, the estate girls identified health and safety as an important issue, and followed this up by designing questions and recording interviews with their peers about health and personal safety. The younger estate boys wanted to further explore certain aspects of school life by conducting role plays about a good and bad day at school. Other groups followed a similar pattern so that we worked through the lists of important issues, exploring topics through using 'draw and write' methods, games and role play.

The research focused primarily on the children's direct life experience. In considering social difference, the research could not depend on children merely surmising about the lives of 'other' children. It was for this reason that two different groups of children – representing contrasting backgrounds – participated in the project. However, in order to compare their perceptions and experiences, a shared agenda across the groups was required and it would have undermined the participatory nature of the project had this agenda been determined by the researchers. Instead, the direction and focus of the research sessions was organised by facilitating reflexivity between the groups. That is, the themes arising in a session with children in one group were fed back in the next session to the other group of children to inform the focus for that session. This 'bouncing' back of findings between groups ensured that the children

themselves generated a coherent agenda, drawing from their own interests and 'real-life' experiences.

The way in which the children introduced the notion of poverty into the research illustrates how this reflexive, comparative approach worked within a participatory framework. In the early fieldwork, the estate children identified street safety as an important topic. When we repeated the exercise with the private schoolchildren they highlighted their houses and personal space as being important but did not mention safety. During the next wave of fieldwork, we asked the estate children to compare their lists with those of the private schoolchildren and vice versa, and to reflect on the differences between lists. The estate children interpreted the fact that the private schoolchildren had not mentioned safety as being that they lived in a 'nicer' area and therefore were 'posh'. The inclusion of safety as an issue on the estate children's lists was interpreted by the private schoolchildren as being that they lived in 'rough' areas and were 'poor'. In this way, the terms 'poverty' and 'poshness' were introduced into the fieldwork by the children. Although the children raised these terms in relation to describing *others* as 'poor' or 'posh', it enabled us to follow up these concepts in relation to their own lives during later sessions.

After the main fieldwork, preliminary findings, that summarised what the researchers proposed were the key differences between the two groups, were presented to the children. Emphasis here was given to 'difference' in order to stimulate further debate on the topics they had raised. We also wanted to know whether our interpretation of the findings was correct, with the aim of empowering the children to challenge us about what we had found. These key findings were summarised into three Powerpoint slides, which the children were invited to revise. The children's feedback and comments from these sessions inform the findings presented in this report.

The children

Participation in the project

Access to recruiting the children was negotiated though a youth centre for the estate children and an independent fee-paying school for the private schoolchildren. In order to protect the identity of the children involved (and their families and communities), it was agreed that the anonymity of individuals, the estate and the school would be preserved in all project outputs.

The research was explained verbally and in an accessible written form to all the children. Written information explaining the research was sent to all the children's parents. All children gave written consent to their involvement in the research. Consent from the estate children's parents was obtained by an 'opt-in' method (that is, they proactively agreed to their child's involvement). Consent from the private schoolchildren's parents was obtained through an opt-out method (that is, they were asked to state if they did not want their children to participate), which was the school's preferred approach. The researchers began each research session by repeating the purpose of the research and checking that the children were still happy to continue to take part. In this way informed consent became an ongoing process. It was made clear to the children that participation was voluntary and that they could leave at any point if they no longer wanted to take part. We rewarded all the children for their participation by giving them gift vouchers as a thank you for their time and effort.

The project was explained as a study of a child's-eye view on social difference. The children were told that we were conducting the research in two different sites – a 'council estate' type setting and a private school. However, no explicit reference was made to issues such as inequality, relative poverty or social exclusion. For a start, asking children to a group setting and identifying them as 'poor' would be likely to be stigmatising and emotionally harmful. Even if this were not the case, if children were recruited to a project explicitly on the criteria of living in relative poverty or affluence it would prejudice their interaction, imposing an agenda on the way they talked about their lives and their world views. Previous poverty research has drawn children from a pre-existing sample of families living on a low income (see Roker, 1998; Ridge, 2002), or through charitable organisations (Daly and Leonard, 2002) and has focused directly on asking children – in one-to-one interviews – about life on low income. This research is different in that it focuses on what children feel is most important to them *per se*, how they identify themselves and whether – and how – themes associated with income inequality and social exclusion emerge in their own world views.

The 'estate children'

The 'estate children' (a term suggested by the children themselves during the feedback session) were recruited from a youth centre run by project workers from Groundwork, which, at the beginning of the research, was funded partly by Save the Children. The youth centre was located in a housing association estate, which was in receipt of Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding. The estate was predominantly white British and had proportionately high numbers of lone parents

with dependent children, high incidents of family stress (family and marital conflict) and large numbers of children in receipt of free school meals. Housing tenure was predominantly rented.

Nineteen children, all of whom were white, which reflected the overall ethnic composition of the estate, took part in the research. The children were allocated into four groups on the basis of age and gender, with separate groups of older (11 to 13-year-old) and younger (eight to ten-year-old) boys and girls. Each of these subgroups participated in five research sessions over a year (2005–06), with each session lasting between two and four hours.

Most parents of the estate children were interviewed using a structured pro forma to establish the children's household circumstances. Most of these parents claimed either benefits such as Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Housing Benefit, or tax credits such as Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. The children were evenly divided between partnered and lone-parent households, and between workless households and households with one or more parent in work.

Details about income in these interviews were often withheld or incomplete, but it is illustrative to note that, where sufficient details were reasonably reliable, nine families had equivalised income (after housing costs) below 60 per cent of median, and three had incomes above this threshold. In terms of material hardship, most parents reported finding it hard to afford new clothes (particularly school uniforms) and shoes for their children, and a holiday away from home, to replace worn-out or broken-down household equipment and to make ends meet in general. Although the parents were not asked directly whether they defined or described themselves as 'poor', many did talk in terms of 'getting by', 'just managing', 'struggling' and 'finding it hard (to manage) at the moment'. A few parents also reported that they had debts, in particular through buying items from catalogues, and some of these reported difficulties with repayments.

The majority of the children had lived in the area of the estate since birth and many had large, local extended families who, for example, provided childcare and helped their families financially. Most of the children lived in households with more than one sibling and many shared bedrooms. The children attended a range of local primary and secondary state schools. Some children reported that they 'wagged' or played truant from school, and a few of the older boys in particular talked of getting into trouble at school, at home and with their neighbours. Several children had special educational needs and a few had parents with long-term disabilities.

Holidays were generally spent attending estate youth club activities and playing football, or 'hanging out' around the estate with friends. During the holidays, the children frequently complained that they were bored and had nothing to do. A few went on trips away but not all the children expected to go away on holiday.

The private schoolchildren

Twenty-three children were recruited to the research from a fee-paying independent school. Most of the children were white British, although three came from black and minority ethnic groups. However, the sample of children involved in the study was too small to undertake a detailed analysis of ethnicity in any meaningful way. The children were divided into groups in the same way as the estate children, with separate groups of older (11 to 13-year-old) and younger (eight to ten-year-old) boys and girls. Each subgroup was visited four times over 2005–06. Sessions were held in school lunch breaks so each was completed within an hour. However, the private school sessions tended to be more focused and involved more sustained discussion than those with the estate children, and issues tended to be covered more quickly.

Given the lack of recognised measures of relative income affluence or material well-being, attendance at a fee-paying independent school was itself taken as an indicator of these children's household circumstances. The school fees range from £2,300 to over £5,000 per term.

The children were a mixture of day students and boarders. Day students lived mainly in the surrounding villages and some had previously attended state schools. Several children's families owned more than one home in the United Kingdom. Many had moved house several times during their lives, often having lived in different locations in the United Kingdom and abroad. Few of the children saw each other outside school.

Nearly all the children were driven to and collected from school by their parents. They tended to have long school days, staying at school until up to 6.15 p.m. doing 'prep' or homework. They also took part in a wide range of after-school clubs and activities, and a few of the children (mainly girls) kept ponies. Most went on holiday abroad at least annually, including skiing trips and trips to family holiday homes.

2 Children's perceptions of social difference

Introduction: poor, rich, 'chavs' and 'posh'

This chapter considers how the children viewed themselves in relation to others from different backgrounds. They did not identify themselves as poor or affluent. Indeed, both the estate children and the private schoolchildren used these terms to distinguish 'other' people from themselves. As this chapter considers how children use 'poverty' as a term to identify others, we begin by locating these observations in other research that highlights the stigmatising potential of the 'poverty' label. We then explore how children perceive themselves in relation to poverty and affluence, before considering how they talked about social differences. Social difference on socio-economic grounds was keenly perceived and described in terms of 'chavs' and 'posh' children – associated with lower and higher socio-economic circumstances respectively. The chapter concludes by considering the implications of these observations for children and policy.

Children, poverty and stigma

Tess Ridge (2002) found that poverty had a profound impact on every aspect of the lives of children and young people, from the material through to the social and emotional. Poverty is, as Ridge demonstrated, a stigmatised social position. It carries with it the notion that poorer people have 'less' and do 'worse'. Thus, in the words of one 16 year old:

> I don't think anybody's ever going to tell you that they're in poverty.
> (Quoted in Willow, 2001, p. 5)

Ridge also argued that:

> … the labels that society attaches to poor children will have a profound impact on how children see themselves and on how other children see them.
> (Ridge, 2002, p. 144)

Children as members of society are also responsible for labelling and stereotyping each other. We need to explore how children from different socio-economic

circumstances perceive themselves and each other, in order to contribute towards a fuller understanding of different childhood identities and experiences.

Being 'normal' ('not being different')

The children were asked to consider pictures of different children engaged in various activities and to talk about where they saw them belonging when placed in a line from rich through to poor. This promoted a discussion about their own circumstances. Neither the estate children nor the private schoolchildren defined or talked about themselves as either poor or rich. They were all eager to be seen as 'average' along a continuum of poverty through to affluence:

> *G:* I've got one dog and I had a cat when I had the dog, now I've still got that cat and I've got two more kittens.
>
> *LS:* Really?
>
> *G:* Yes and I'm not rich and I'm not poor. I'm nearly in the middle.
> (Older estate girl)

The children's desire to avoid differentiating themselves from others was reflected in how they presented their circumstances. The estate children tended to 'talk up' what they owned; as one estate boy said 'I've got all the stuff I want'. The private schoolchildren sometimes 'talked down' their material possessions and, particularly, played down their relative economic status:

> We live in a nice big house with a drive, but I wouldn't say I was more highly put than anybody else really. We are moving into a big house with a drive, but I wouldn't really be like that to anybody else. There are some children who get like absolutely everything they ask for, but like I don't get everything I ask for.
> (Older private schoolgirl)

It is hardly surprising that children living in relative poverty do not wish to identify with the terms 'poor' or 'poverty', not least because being poor is such a stigmatised position. Furthermore, some of these children may have felt that they had to 'save face' within a group setting. Similarly, some affluent children did not want to be considered 'spoilt' or as having things that other children might go without. Indeed, when the private schoolchildren saw the estate children's list of important things, some of them remarked that they felt 'shallow' by comparison.

The 'otherness' of poverty and affluence

The fact that the children distanced themselves from notions of poverty and affluence reflected the fact that they defined poverty and wealth in extreme terms and to signify social 'otherness'.

This was demonstrated, for example, during the exercise in which the estate children were asked to order pictures of different children along a rich–poor continuum. The children identified only one as belonging in the 'poor' group – a black girl with dreadlocks wearing a white dress. When asked why, the children explained that she was poor because she came from Africa.

> *G:* Because it's Africa. They can't afford proper clothes. And these *[other pictures of children]* are right up here because they've got Burberry tops on and they've got Bench, they've got make-up, clothes.
> (Older estate girl)

Both the estate children and the private schoolchildren then talked about poverty, to begin with, in relation to the absolute definition of poverty. They referred to people who were homeless and hungry. During role-play sessions with the estate children, poor people were always represented as beggars living on the streets and desperate for food and money. There were some subtle differences in how the estate children and the private schoolchildren discussed poverty. The private schoolchildren, for example, acknowledged the relative nature of poverty and were aware that people who 'hadn't got as much stuff as us' were poorer. They therefore recognised that they could be considered 'better off' because they had more material possessions than others. The private schoolchildren also identified that those living on council estates would not have much money and, as such, would have less choice about where they lived.

The estate children, on the other hand, believed that several things contributed to being poor. For example, having a low-paid or in their terms 'unsuccessful' job meant that they might have difficulties in being able to pay for or retain a house. In the estate children's eyes, being poor also made a person less selfish than being rich:

> They would have to think about other people, even though they're starving on the streets, they could be thinking about their family and their friends who have died and stuff. They wouldn't just be thinking about themselves and how hungry they are. Because they're thinking about how to help other people who've lost their jobs.
> (Older estate girl)

They also demonstrated a keen sense of social justice with regards to helping 'poor people', who were generally viewed with sympathy:

> Give them food and give them some more money so that they can buy themselves a house and they can buy some food.
> (Younger estate boy)

Wealth or affluence was also generally viewed in extreme terms by both the estate children and the private schoolchildren. Being rich meant having larger material possessions and more of them. Typical comments were that the rich owned very large houses and lots of cars. Their houses would have numerous bathrooms, 'golden baths' and spacious rooms. They would have an enormous garden – usually complemented with a swimming pool, a conservatory and invariably a huge trampoline. However, the estate children perceived people who owned certain things to be wealthier than others. For example, rich people owned horses and children who wore 'nice', 'clean' or designer clothes were also perceived to be rich*er* than others.

Socio-economic difference: being 'chavs' and being 'posh'

While poverty and wealth were generally associated with extreme one-dimensional caricatures, the children presented a far richer and in-depth discussion on social difference through their frequent references to 'chavs' and 'posh people'.

The children defined themselves in terms of what they were *not* rather than what they were. For example, the private schoolchildren spoke about 'chavs' as being at one end of a spectrum and 'rich' as being at the other end, and they placed themselves somewhere in the middle of that continuum. The private schoolchildren opined that 'chavs' – distinguishable because of their outfits of tracksuits, hoods and baseball caps – were not necessarily poor, but were 'common' and behaved badly.

> *B1:* Chavs just are like the people who mess around.
>
> *B2:* Common people are chavs.
>
> *B3:* Poor people are just people who don't have any money and common people are like they hate like people who like going to *[private]* schools like *[ours]* and they'll like beat you up.
>
> B2: And if you go to like a school where you have to pay a lot, saying like you're really rich.
> (Older private schoolboys)

Some children described having been picked on by 'chavs' because they went to a private school and had a highly identifiable uniform. They also highlighted how their uniforms marked them out as being 'posh' or 'snobs' when they considered themselves not to be. They believed that they were often misjudged and mislabelled.

'Chav' was used specifically by the private schoolchildren to refer to children who lived on estates and who had parents who were unemployed, with poor parenting skills. When we explored these perceptions further, by asking how life might be different for children living on council estates, the private schoolchildren began by blaming the children's parents for chavs' bad behaviour.

B1: Their parents would be a bad example, they would smoke in front of them and they would swear and drink, you know.

B2: The parents wouldn't care about them, would they? They wouldn't care what they do and just let them go off.
(Older private schoolboys)

This attitude is also evident in the following discussion between two private schoolgirls when they were also asked how life might be different for children living on a council estate. Their views resonate with current research undertaken by MORI on public attitudes towards poverty (Thompson and Castell, 2006):

G1: I suppose kids would have it rough because they wouldn't have as much money. But they still might have as much love, like the families might be there because they can't get a good enough job, because their parents haven't had the money to give them an education or they were brought up wrong, they weren't brought up to be bright. So they might love their children very much but they can't give them what they need.

G2: It's tough on the parents. If they didn't have a good job they should have worked extra jobs to get the money.

G1: I know, they might try but they still wouldn't have as much money would they?

G2: Yes but they could have had more.

G1: It is like saying because we aren't millionaires we should work ten other jobs just to get to be a millionaire.

> *G2:* No. What I am saying is they don't have enough money to give to the children the extra schooling to give them more opportunities or help them on the way to university.
> (Older private schoolgirls)

The above quote demonstrates a common theme among the private schoolchildren when they discussed those living on council estates. Two views were generally put forward on the topic. One view would be more sympathetic, acknowledging the 'tough' job that parents have in bringing up children in poorer economic circumstances. The other view tended to blame parents for their poor parenting skills or their inability to get enough work to enable them to 'lift' children out of poverty. What is also apparent from this discussion is the girls' belief that poorer children do not have the opportunities that they have to get a decent education.

The estate children used an alternative way of distinguishing themselves from others. For example, they referred frequently to people with drug and alcohol problems who lived on their estate, describing them as 'druggies' and 'smack heads'. The children perceived these people to be a major source of problems on the estate and they were unsympathetic, disparaging and critical about them. In this sense, the estate children's 'starting point' for their social continuum was different to that of the private schoolchildren. Whereas the private schoolchildren distinguished themselves from 'chavs' and rich people, the estate children suggested a continuum that ranged from 'druggies' through to posh people.

Rather than the term 'chav', the estate children tended to talk about 'scallys' (short for scallywags) and 'gangsters'. Gangsters and scallys were described in the same way as the private schoolchildren described 'chavs' – in terms of both dress codes and bad behaviour – except the estate children talked about scallys as a feature of local life, sometimes referring to and discussing alleged 'scallys' by name. The girls tended to be more critical about scallys than the boys, whose discussions belied some sense of disguised admiration.

Although some of the private schoolchildren felt that 'chavs' were not necessarily poor, they nevertheless associated 'chavs' with disadvantaged backgrounds and public housing. Some of the estate children similarly felt that being a 'scally' did not necessarily equate with poverty, though one of the older girls commented that 'you could be [rich and a scally] but they'd only call you a scally if you're poor'. This indicates that these children were also aware of the negative labels – generally associated with bad behaviour – that can be attached to less well off children.

The estate children were reproachful about people they perceived as being rich. They used role play to express their opinions about rich people being spiteful, mean and greedy. Being rich also meant being 'posh' and 'snobby'. It meant being different – talking differently, living in a different type of house and wearing a different style of clothes.

During later discussions, the estate children believed that richer children would have difficulty in making and keeping friends. They felt that having money meant that they would be likely to 'show off' and that jealousy would mean that some children would shun them while others would bully them. The estate children also felt that private schoolchildren would have little fun in their lives because their parents would be paying for them to get a 'good' education and the emphasis therefore would be on working hard:

B1: They've got the money but they don't have the fun.

B2: We have the fun without money and they have the money without the fun.

B3: They stay in too much doing homework and they don't make hardly any friends. That's why people pick on them.
(Older estate boys)

These assumptions made by the estate children about the private schoolchildren's lives were both confirmed and challenged during the fieldwork. First, some of the private schoolchildren confirmed that the amount and extent of the work they needed to do at private school was demanding. However, they also knew that it was a requirement in their lives and ostensibly 'for their own good'. They had to do their 'prep' or homework before they could consider doing any other activity. Their particular childhood culture was focused on learning and, particularly, learning in order to get on and do well in the future. However, they argued that they did have friends but we found that they did not always see them as often as they wanted to because of the amount of homework they had to do. They also did not share a community or neighbourhood where they could play out with friends in the same way as the estate children did.

Private schoolchildren also confirmed that they had been picked on by 'chavs' because they were different and to some extent because they were perceived to have money. Indeed the older private schoolboys talked about what happened to them when they went to stay in a residential adventure setting, which accepted both state and private schools:

B1: There was like this adventure place where you go to stay for a week and there was these three chavs and they just kept on like messing around with our school and hurting people in our school and that …

B2: … they took my wallet and I had £20 in it.

B1: I know. One of them nicked my watch and he was like throwing it at, because they're taller than us, they were throwing it around and I was trying to jump and catch it but I couldn't.
(Older private schoolboys)

The estate children's assumptions that the private schoolchildren would not have any fun were partly borne out by the private schoolchildren's extra emphasis on learning and achieving. However, the private schoolchildren recognised that this educational focus gave them advantages and opportunities for the future that they felt estate children would not have.

Social difference, identity and diversity

The children living in relative poverty did not perceive themselves to be poor. Arguably, this could relate to one or a number of factors. As mentioned previously, poverty is a socially stigmatised position and the children were aware of this. Parents may also protect their children from the immediate manifestations of poverty. Indeed, a few parents mentioned their strategies for aiding their financial situation and protecting their children by buying cheaper items of school uniform so the children were not identified as different in this respect. The children's parents may also have transmitted to their children that there were people who were 'worse off' than them. Poverty and affluence in today's society are, after all, relative concepts. This does not mean, however, that we should understate the impact of poverty – especially as the research does not look at the longer-term or lifelong effect of poverty – but it does carry implications for researching relative poverty from children's perspectives.

Allison James (1993) has argued that there is no single childhood culture. Children are a heterogeneous group whose only commonality is that they are children. She has also highlighted the role of stereotyping in children's culture and demonstrated how being different has had a profound impact on the lives of children. This chapter suggests that, while the children share some elements in their world views – namely their desire to avoid standing out – their socio-economic backgrounds have a strong impact on their understanding of who they are and who they are *not.*

This research suggests that the children, from as young as eight years of age, perceive social divisions on socio-economic grounds. Although the children – when invited to reflect on these divisions – could appreciate that individuals were not necessarily responsible for their circumstances, and could demonstrate non-judgemental attitudes and a sense of social justice, this was not their dominant language. Instead, when the estate children discussed 'rich/posh' people, and the private schoolchildren discussed 'chavs', all of them presented a markedly antagonistic attitude towards social difference. By saying that 'chavs' misbehave, live in families that do not care about them and go to 'rough' schools, the private schoolchildren are effectively saying that this is not *us* and *we* do not belong to *them*. Similarly, by saying that 'posh' children are snobby, have no friends or fun, the estate children are also stressing that they do not belong to that group or way of life.

The children, then, were aware of how they could be perceived in wider society. Their socio-economic backgrounds help to constitute their understanding of their own sense of belonging and identity. The children's antagonistic attitude towards social difference on these grounds has implications for their lives now and in the future – particularly for the self-esteem and life chances of those from poorer backgrounds. If children are to grow up in a society that truly respects diversity, we need to address some of the ways that they view socio-economic differences. Critically reflecting on these issues as part of a school's citizenship education curriculum may be one way of doing so.

3 Children's experiences of social difference

The children's lived experience

In the last chapter, we discussed how the children perceived social difference in terms of poverty and socio-economic difference. In this chapter, we focus on the experiences of these children from contrasting backgrounds. At the outset of the research, both the estate children and private schoolchildren were asked to identify the most 'important things' in their lives. Different groups constructed different lists, but there were four common areas identified by both the children living in relative poverty and those living in relative affluence. Therefore, what appeared to matter most to *all* the children involved in this study, regardless of their background, was:

- education
- favourite things (their possessions)
- free time (activities)
- families and friends.

Given the participatory approach of the project, these four elements became the focal points of the research. Consequently, this chapter discusses the children's lived experience in these areas.

Education

Clearly, education and educational achievement are major components of social mobility. Gaining qualifications and skills are key indicators of future employment opportunities and future earnings potential (Babb, 2005). The Government's aims in implementing the Extended Schools programme include improving children's access to a wide range of opportunities.

Education was viewed by both the estate children and the private schoolchildren as one of the most important aspects of their lives. 'Important' here meant dominant or significant even if not enjoyable!

The children's educational experiences were very different. The private schoolchildren had long school days (typically 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.), put a greater emphasis on homework and were involved in a wide variety of after-school clubs and activities. In contrast, the estate children had shorter school days (typically 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.), were not as focused on their homework and were involved in fewer after-school clubs and activities. Although the children had very different experiences, most recognised the value of education in terms of future opportunities:

> Education *[is important]* really because you need it. If you don't get an education then you don't get a proper job and then you don't, like, get the proper things you need. Because if you don't know maths then you won't know how to sum up all the money and everything.
> (Younger estate girl)

> *[Education is important]* because if you don't get a good education you won't get a good job when you're older and you won't be able to make money.
> (Older private schoolboy)

Although the children recognised the value of education, that did not necessarily mean they enjoyed their time at school. It was apparent that discipline was more of an issue to the estate children than to the private schoolchildren. Many of the estate children talked about getting regular detentions and other forms of punishment at school, and at least two of them had been (temporarily) excluded. In contrast, the children who attended the private school were less likely to talk about punishments – although they did exist and followed a similar form to measures in the estate children's schools.

The amount of homework the children had to do also differed between the two groups. At the private school, homework is known as 'prep'. The boarders do their prep after the normal school day ends and day pupils may also stay behind and do their prep at school. The only comparable arrangement in the state schools was learning support. As one of the boys said:

> Learning support is where you can do all your homework and everything in there. Because you get *[support]*, if you're not, like, clever or something. I have to go in learning support for my spelling.
> (Older estate boy)

As this boy noted, in state education, learning support is regarded as solely for those who have some difficulty with their work and as such it is a stigmatised facility.

The estate children did not feel that they were missing out because 'prep' was not available to them. On the contrary, they were grateful not to have to stay at school and considered that anyone who did so was a 'swot'.

The private schoolchildren did more homework than the estate children, while the estate children often did not complete their homework. Some commented that they often told their parents that they had completed homework or that none had been set. While their parents encouraged them to do homework they rarely supervised it, meaning that it was easier for these children to avoid doing it. It was more difficult for the private schoolchildren to fail to submit homework, especially since they attended 'prep' at school.

Some of the children from the private school, particularly those who had previously attended state schools, were aware of the relevant affluence of the private sector compared to the public:

> Depending on what your school has, like some schools won't be able to get Bunsen burners for example, whilst others can afford to get them for experiments.
> (Younger private schoolboy)

> Well, in a way *[there is a difference]*. Like, say we were doing a rugby match and you are going to play a rugby match in a huge tournament. If you had better rugby equipment like tackle bags and rugby balls, and all the equipment that you needed, and lots of pitches to help you practise, the more you will be able to practise the better you would become and you would be able to beat the other team if they only had, like, a few tackle bags.
> (Younger private schoolboy)

The private schoolchildren observed that more resources in the private school sector improved the quality of the facilities, which in turn could help towards facilitating achievement. As Jenkins *et al*. (2006) note, higher levels of per pupil expenditure are associated with significantly higher levels of attainment at GCSE.

Perhaps the most marked contrast between the estate children and the private schoolchildren was in relation to their attitudes to school. Compared with private schoolchildren, the estate children associated school with coercive control, and there was a certain kudos in skipping lessons, 'wagging' or playing truant, or misbehaving in school. The older estate children, in particular, expressed a real sense of dissatisfaction with their schooling and the quality of the teaching they received.

Some complained that their lessons were boring and that they were often shouted at for not knowing what they were supposed to do.

The only issue over which the estate children appeared to be resentful towards the private schoolchildren (rather than feeling sorry for them) was with regard to what they perceived as the disparity in how they were treated in school:

> *NS:* Is life more unfair to some children than others?
>
> *G1:* Yes, it is. It is, it's unfair for us because we have to just listen to teachers all the time.
>
> *NS:* But isn't that the same for all children?
>
> *G2:* No. It's not, because if you're rich you get to go to a posh school where the teachers probably teach you with respect.
> (Older estate girls)

This finding has implications for the *Every Child Matters* Extended Schools policy in that children and young people are unlikely to relish the prospect of longer days at school if they are only receiving 'more of the same' beyond their usual hours.

Compared with the estate children, the private schoolchildren's lives were oriented towards and dominated by education. This was particularly evident with regard to *achieving* in their school lives and also, to a lesser extent, in their free time. They recognised and valued their school as a means of enabling them to achieve and have more opportunities.

> *LS:* When you say more opportunities, what sort of things?
>
> *G:* Like after-school clubs, like you can do what you want to do and they give you like wide ranges and you take exams and you have got really good teachers and in year six you get to do senior school lessons, which is quite good as well because you get the advice of the teachers and other people, meeting other people.
> (Younger private schoolgirl)

Opportunities for the future

Growing up in a low-income household is likely to affect children's career aspirations. As Babb (2005) notes, children from poorer backgrounds are less likely to go on to

higher education, which in turn limits their opportunities for the future. While there were some similarities between the estate children and the private schoolchildren's career aspirations, in particular among the youngest children, we found that there were differences between the older estate and private schoolchildren with regard to how they thought about the future. In line with Shropshire and Middleton's (1999) research we found that the older estate children, for example, had quite limited career aspirations. Some of the older estate children talked about wanting to do office work ('doing photocopying'), shop work, childcare, motor engineering ('I want a car-making career, I want to fix cars') or, in the case of one boy, to work with his father as a plumber. A few also said that they either wanted to do nothing at all or they did not know.

The private schoolchildren, on the other hand, talked more than the estate children did about gaining professions that required academic training, such as solicitors, vets and doctors. However, older private schoolchildren also discussed the 'pros' and 'cons' of focusing on their futures more than the estate children. For example, they discussed the extent to which they should live for the present rather than concentrate on their futures.

The younger estate girls often mentioned hairdressing as a future job, while most of the younger estate boys wanted to be footballers. Across both the estate and private school younger children, career aspirations tended to be more 'childlike'. Girls, for example, often focused on careers in show business – wanting to sing and dance. The boys mainly wanted to be professional sports players. Moreover, we discovered that the estate children did not spend a lot of time thinking about their futures. As one older estate girl summed up:

NS: Do you think a lot about what you want to do when you're older?

G: No.

NS: Or not very much?

G: Not at all.

When the private schoolgirls discussed prospective careers, they were divided about how much emphasis they should give to their futures rather than to the present. Those who felt that the future was important placed more emphasis on gaining a profession than the estate children did:

G1: Thinking about the future, if you don't work hard and get GCSEs then your future is going to be a misery. If you really wanted a certain job, to be a doctor and a vet and you need some GCSE or some A-level results and, if you don't think about the future when you are doing them, you think, 'oh it is fine at the moment, I am enjoying myself, I am not really bothered', then your future is not going to be very good.
(Older private schoolgirl)

By contrast, the estate girls were more concerned to avoid 'ruining' their future lives. Having children at too early an age and unhealthy behaviour were seen as the main risks for the future:

NS: What are the important bits about the future?

G1: Don't ruin your life … you could start smoking or drinking or taking drugs or anything. It would be horrible … you could have kids! … if you are too young when you have kids that could ruin your life. If you have them in your thirties, then you can enjoy most of your life and then you can spend more time with your kids then. If your mum's working and your dad has left and there is no one to look after you, say no one lives next door to you then you wouldn't be able to ask someone to look after your kids.
(Older estate girl)

The youth workers had previously conducted health sessions at the youth centre. These had covered topics such as teenage pregnancy and drug taking, which may have contributed towards the estate girls' awareness of such issues.

'Earned' money

Both the estate children and the private schoolchildren had experience of earning money. Most frequently, receiving pocket money depended on the children tidying their bedrooms or helping with chores in the home. While some of the estate children earned extra money from paid work, only a couple of private schoolchildren did. There were also some differences in the type of work that the different children did. Some of the older estate girls and boys had paper rounds either before or after school (and sometimes both) as a means of earning extra income. One of the older boys had also been involved in a money-making scheme that involved buying crates of 'pop' cheaply and then selling them on for a profit at school. In contrast, there

were fewer private schoolchildren with paid work and these were usually occasional or weekend jobs such as cleaning out stables. It would appear then, in line with previous research (Middleton *et al.*, 1994; Daly and Leonard, 2002; Ridge, 2002) that the estate children were more likely to use a variety of strategies to maximise their means than the private schoolchildren.

Furthermore, several of the private schoolchildren also received extra money from relatives in the form of allowances ranging from £20 to £50 per month. A few also received extra money as a reward for doing well at school or for practising on their musical instruments:

> I get £20 for my end-of-year SATS results.
> (Younger private schoolboy)

> I get, well I play every week and if I don't do my practice every day then I lose 50p, so I get £5 if I do all of my flute lessons.
> (Younger private schoolgirl)

Other private schoolchildren received money from relatives for their 'university funds'. There was quite clearly a family expectation that they would be continuing on into higher education.

There were no comparable instances of financially rewarding educational achievement among the estate children. We can only speculate as to whether rewarding children financially for doing well in their studies makes a difference to their success at school. It may be the case that financial incentives, along with other aspects of parental involvement in education, all help to contribute towards securing their children's engagement.

Favourite things and personal space

Although a number of the private schoolchildren owned specific items of major cost – for example, a pony, a home cinema and more expensive goods such as laptops – a notable observation here is that both groups of children owned a similar range of 'core possessions' that they valued as important in their lives. These included their pets, their Playstations and games, and other toys. There was also a similar regard among both estate and private schoolgirls for shopping for clothes and, among boys, for shopping for Playstation games. However, these items were not considered *the* most important in their lives and other issues were put first on their lists.

A marked difference between the two groups of children was the importance that the private schoolchildren assigned to having their own personal space. This manifested itself in discussions about their homes:

> … it's nice to have a big house because you have a lot of space.
> (Older private schoolboy)

Houses were also considered important during discussions about the private schoolchildren's communities. For example, one private schoolboy highlighted the concern his parents placed on the value of their property when discussing a new bus stop near their home.

> There is a bus stop right opposite our house, and my mum asked about it, she was quite cross because she thought that would make the value of our house lower.
> (Older private schoolboy)

By contrast, the estate children did not mention their houses or bedrooms on the lists of 'important things'. When we asked the estate children to reflect on why they thought the other children had put houses on their list of important things, one older girl responded:

> Maybe they live in a nicer part of the country where their houses are more important than anything else.
> (Older estate girl)

Only one estate boy referred to having space at home – because his end-of-terrace house was famed among his friends for its large garden. Otherwise, the importance of space was not emphasised by the estate children, despite the fact – or because of the fact – that the majority shared rooms with their siblings. It could be suggested that the lack of space within the estate children's homes led them to spend more of their free time outside.

Free time (1) – organised activities

Free time was considered tremendously important to both groups of children. However, there were striking differences in how free time was spent. The estate children took part in fewer organised activities than the private schoolchildren, and could not always afford to take part in them. Their ability to travel to and from activities was also limited by cost and lack of transport. By contrast, the private

schoolchildren took part in a wide range of activities organised by the school and their parents. Their sporting activities included rugby, netball, tennis, football, hockey, cricket, Taekwondo and swimming. Their non-sporting activities included choir, science, chess, orchestra and maths clubs. Some activities took place at lunchtimes and breaks during the school day, though sports tended to take place after lessons had finished for the day. This contributed to the length of the school day for the private schoolchildren, with some staying until 6.20 p.m. if they were completing 'prep' and participating in other clubs and activities. They also had to complete any outstanding homework before they could play. This left them very little time when they got home from school to play or do anything else.

> *NS:* When you get home in the evenings, what do you do then?
>
> *G:* I do my homework and then go to bed.
> (Younger private schoolgirl)

Outside of school, the private schoolchildren participated in a wider and more expensive range of activities than did the estate children:

> Some Fridays me and my dad and my sister go go-carting.
> (Younger private schoolboy)
>
> I do quite a lot of riding lessons, I have tennis lessons, I have gymnastics lessons.
> (Older private schoolgirl)
>
> Well I have riding lessons and I sometimes have fishing lessons, I go with my dad on fishing lessons … and I go for shooting lessons.
> (Older private schoolgirl)

The examples above show how, for many private schoolchildren, their free time retains an emphasis on learning. This is evident in the number of children that received lessons. The estate children, on the other hand, took part in only a few extra-curricular activities. The estate girls took part in more activities, including cheerleading, choir, netball and drama, than the estate boys. A couple of the estate boys attended football and karate clubs. Both estate girls and boys appeared to be keen to leave the school at the end of the school day. As mentioned earlier, this may have been because they considered anyone who was staying behind potentially to be engaged in more work a 'swot'. Costs of activities also limited the estate children's involvement in extra-curricular opportunities:

> Yes, leotards in our school cost £30 … you should get them for free really but you have to pay for them to be in the dance class. And it costs a lot to do lessons, doesn't it?
> (Younger estate girl)

> Say, if you do lots afterwards *[after school]* you have to have the kit and everything, you have to buy it. And it costs a lot of money, the school uniform costs like £400 for everything.
> (Older estate girl)

Some of the estate children also commented that they did not attend after-school activities because they could not easily get home afterwards.

Occasionally, estate children went with parents to see local rugby matches, or went swimming or shopping with their parents. Some of the estate children took part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme or scouts. Three of the older estate boys took part in the local army cadet movement. This was a popular activity, which was considered by these boys as 'keeping them out of trouble' and as enabling them to 'get off the estate'. Simultaneously, however, they were acutely aware of the associated costs to their parents:

> I was going to get the same boots as him *[another estate boy who went to the cadets]* but at the weekend my mum got this giro through the post because she can't work because she is disabled really, and it didn't say it was going to be her money for the Monday. She just gave me and my sister some money to go and get new clothes but then the money hadn't come through on the Monday and so then she didn't have enough for my boots. So my mum just got me some second-hand ones but they look brand new. After Christmas she is going to get me some new ones.
> (Older estate boy)

During the school holidays in particular, the estate children frequently complained that, apart from the youth centre, there was nothing for them to do. As Ridge (2002) found, how much extra activities cost, and having transport to get to and from them, affected the extent to which children from low-income households were able to participate in organised activities.

Free time (2) – 'street play'

There were some other key differences between how the private schoolchildren and the estate children spent their free time. The estate children tended to spend the

majority of their free time 'hanging out' with friends in the neighbourhood rather than taking part in organised leisure activities:

> *NS:* When you come home from school, what do you do?
>
> *B1:* Go to skate. Sometimes I go to the skate park and sometimes I go to the late shop and hang around there.
>
> *B2:* Go to the snooker hall.
> (Younger estate boys)

The estate children also appeared to spend a lot of time outdoors playing communal games such as 'manhunt' and 'kickstone'. An older estate girl explained the games:

> With kickstone, someone is at a lamp-post and you have all got to hide and you have to count to 30 and you go and look for them and then kick them if they are caught. Manhunt is where there are two teams and you have to catch each other and then when they have caught all of them they have to catch the other team.
> (Older estate girl)

Other popular communal games included 'knocker door run' and 'den' building.

'Knocker door run' is a game whereby a group of children tie one end of a length of cotton or string onto a 'target's' door knocker. They then take the other end and hide, pull the string and watch the ensuing confusion when the occupant answers the door and no one is there. Den building, which was a favourite of the younger estate boys, involved different groups of boys building their own den out of tree branches in a nearby wooded valley with the purpose of using it as a place to camp and hang out with friends. They also took great delight in competing to see whose den was the best. This invariably resulted in the destruction of their rivals' dens.

In line with research conducted by Burke (2005), these types of 'traditional' childhood games and activities are particularly evocative of a 'bygone' era of childhood – the assumption being that children no longer play like this in today's society. Our findings challenge this assumption and show that open public space is particularly important in enhancing communal 'street play'.

Research conducted by Dines *et al.* (2006) noted the importance of 'hard' spaces such as streets and markets to communities. They contended that these spaces were vital in providing opportunities for casual social encounters and promoting

positive social relations. Our research indicated that open spaces were also of vital importance to children's social relations. A major irritant to the estate children was the loss of some of their 'green land' to local developers who were building new houses on the grass lots, and car parks between houses and on the outskirts of the estate. The loss of this land made it harder for them to congregate and play with their friends in the relative safety of being near home and off roads. The children's frustration was evident on our 'walkabouts' in the estate with the older boys who heckled and abused the builders on site and placed obstacles in the paths of construction machinery. The loss of their land highlights the tension between developing on and maintaining public space, with direct consequences for how children live their lives. Losing land to local developers had profound consequences for the children's ability to socialise and move around their neighbourhood. The Government's drive to build more homes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the Sustainable Communities plan (ODPM, 2005) to revitalise neighbourhoods overlooks the impact this can have on the children who live in these neighbourhoods. Research conducted by Elsley (2004) has also found that inadequate attention has been paid to children and young people's need for public open space in one urban community, and calls for a greater prioritisation of public space in public policymaking. Our findings support this contention.

Street play meant that the estate children were, therefore, highly visible around their estate in comparison to the private schoolchildren who only gathered together in a group when at school. This visibility sometimes led to problems between the estate children and their neighbours. It could also result in them being moved along by police if they gathered in groups.

> There's only one park and no one goes on anything because the 18 year olds go on and vandalise everything. There's a playground near the shops and if the police catch you they take you back to your house. You're not allowed to go in.
> (Younger estate girl)

Public space, then, was fundamentally important to the estate children's social interactions. The loss of space impacts on children's abilities to congregate with friends, which could result in the withdrawal of children into their homes. This may result in increased family tension, particularly for those struggling with a lack of space and/or freedom within their homes. Going out, on the other hand, means that these children are more likely to get into trouble – their resulting visibility contributing to being branded and targeted by those in authority as 'nuisances' or 'troublemakers'.

Youth Matters (DfES, 2005b) highlighted the aim of involving disadvantaged young people in 'constructive' activities through the introduction of Youth Opportunity Cards. However, as noted earlier, it also states that it will withdraw subsidies and cards if young people engage in what it deems as 'unacceptable behaviour' – effectively penalising those who might benefit the most from participating. Our findings show that the lifestyles the estate children lead mean that they are more likely to be stereotyped as misbehaving and, therefore, susceptible to these penalties. Furthermore, they show that younger children frequently engage in street play. Youth Opportunity Cards are being trialled only with those aged between 13 and 16, leaving younger disadvantaged children without the means to participate.

The private schoolchildren, on the other hand, spent much of their free time involved in activities organised by their parents, or playing with friends inside their own or their friends' homes. Many of the private schoolchildren were driven to and from friends' houses, and their trips and outings tended to be accompanied by adults.

The following section will continue by exploring how the street play of the estate children, and the organised and chaperoned social lives of the private schoolchildren, are reflected in differences in parenting.

Parenting

Both the private schoolchildren and the estate children emphasised the paramount importance of family in their lives. Given certain media-driven stereotypes of parents of socially excluded families – and in the context where parenting skills have become the focus of government interventions designed to overcome social exclusion and to tackle anti-social behaviour – it is important to make clear the central and proactive role parents had in the estate children's lives. As with the private schoolchildren, the estate children highlighted the dominant roles of their parents in nurturing them and providing protection, rules and boundaries. The estate children also talked about the range of parental sanctions they received if they got into trouble at school or in the wider community. These generally involved being sent to bed early or being 'grounded'.

Our research suggests that the contrasting environmental and lifestyle contexts for the families of the private schoolchildren and estate children were reflected in different parental perceptions of risk to their children's safety and well-being. This is discussed in terms of the 'acute' or immediate risks to the estate children's safety within the estate versus the 'latent' or less immediate risks to the private schoolchildren's well-being.

Acute risks and being 'streetwise'

Research by Seaman *et al*. (2005) highlighted how risks to children's safety in disadvantaged communities were dependent on the local context, in particular the threat from other people, rather than from the physical environment. Our research found that the estate children were sensitive to the potential risks in their neighbourhood and frequently referred to how parents informed and warned them about these risks and set rules so that the children could avoid them. The children were aware of where supposedly dangerous characters lived (usually alleged paedophiles) or where drug dealers tended to congregate.

Some children described experiences when they had actually been confronted with potentially dangerous situations. For example, one estate girl recounted such an acute risk:

> Coming down here, B******* Road at night, it was like 7.00 p.m. and … I just looked behind me and this white van pulled in and this man's head turned in the car and it just pulled in very quick, and then I just started walking past there and the van got a bit faster and then I started running and the van went speeding, stopped, so I went right back and knocked on A****'s door, because I know her, asked her if she'd take me in and then she walked me down to, past the park, up to nearer my house and then walked home herself. And then I walked the rest of the way home. And the man who was in the van went to the flats near where all the people take drugs and stuff … I told my mum about the van as soon as I got in and she said if it happens again I must phone the police.
> (Older estate girl)

This story was echoed by other estate children whose parents had also placed restrictions on where they could go on the estate because of what they perceived to be the threat presented by people with drug and alcohol problems.

In general, the younger estate children were allowed out less frequently and were supervised more closely than the older estate children. Furthermore, there appeared to be a strong sense of parental concern, particularly among the younger boys' parents – about their sons being bullied by older children on the estate. The older estate children, on the other hand, were allowed more freedom to roam.

Families on the estate were aware of the potential risks and 'risky' areas in their neighbourhood. Parents still allowed children to take part in street play, but this was on the condition of the children remaining in certain areas of the estate and avoiding others, and returning home at agreed times. As Seaman *et al*. (2005) found,

when children chose not to inform their parents of their whereabouts, they took responsibility for their safety themselves. Our research also found that older estate children, in particular, took on this responsibility. Having to look after themselves in the streets and, at times, negotiate acute risks meant acting independently and responsibly. Being 'streetwise' meant being able to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions.

Latent risks and 'infantilisation'

By contrast, the private schoolchildren faced more latent and less tangible risks to their safety and well-being. Their organised and chaperoned lifestyles could be associated with 'infantilisation' – the extension of dependency in childhood resulting from restrictions on children's independent activity:

G: I am not allowed to go to town on my own.

LS: Why do you think that is?

G: Because they want to protect me and I am their baby. I think Mama won't let me because in town there could be anyone around there, if you stay in your area you mostly know people than going into town.
(Younger private schoolgirl)

G: I am allowed down to the postbox at the bottom of our close but I am not allowed past there and I am set times so like, if you are not back within ten minutes, they'll call the police.

LS: How does this make you feel?

G: Strange. My friend who lives in the village next to the graveyard, she has been able to walk the dog as far as she wants since she was five or ten and I am not allowed to go further than the postbox.
(Older private schoolgirl)

The private schoolchildren explained that their parents worried about them getting attacked or 'mugged' when out and about. Their perceptions appeared to be heightened by incidents in the media of anti-social behaviour, gun crime and 'rough' hooded youths picking on other children to 'mug' them for their mobile phones. This fear for their safety was transmitted to the children, making them wary of other children when out and about.

B1: Once I popped into my local Co-op to get some milk for my mum but she needed to go home and pay our cleaner, so I had to walk home and there was this hooded guy right behind me. So I ran.

B2: Did he have a gun?

B1: No he didn't have a gun. But I ran.
(Older private schoolboys)

Friendships

While both the estate children and the private schoolchildren viewed friends as fundamentally important in their lives, and both had major concerns about maintaining and sustaining friendships, there was one key difference between the two groups. Friendship networks among the estate children, for example, were very protective and concerned with helping each other in times of trouble or need. As Seaman *et al*. (2005) found, children from disadvantaged communities drew on peers to provide protection. The estate children in our study talked about 'banding together' to provide help and support to each other, and to ward off threats from others:

G1: ... if one of us gets hurt all of us will go after the …

G2: You all stick together.
(Younger estate girls)

Furthermore, the estate older boys used their peer group to ward off attacks from bullies or outsiders – and often congregated in larger groups to bolster their courage when required. This group visibility has implications for how young people are perceived by those in authority. Furthermore, the difference between the children's friendships highlights that friendship styles are also based in the different lifestyles and circumstances of the two groups of children.

The private schoolchildren had friends that they had made through school and through clubs they attended. However, they appeared to see them less frequently, as many lived in different locations around the school. They often had to make arrangements to meet up beforehand by telephone. This made their friendships more organised and less impromptu than those of the estate children. It also made them reliant on their parents to take them there and bring them back. Those private schoolchildren who had previously attended state schools had experience of 'losing'

friends and of being bullied because they now attended what was perceived to be a 'posh' school. They were, therefore, seen as no longer belonging to their former social group. In this way, the private schoolchildren were often more isolated than the estate children.

Contrasting life experiences

Although the two groups of children shared a number of the same values and perceptions – not least in what they held most important in life – they also had contrasting life experiences. The two groups had very different experiences of and attitudes to education. Arguably, this was reflected in the contrasting aspirations of the older children – the private schoolgirls placed more emphasis on gaining careers, while the estate girls placed emphasis on avoiding 'ruining' their lives through early parenthood and hazarding health. It is also feasible that the private schoolchildren's attitudes towards education were buttressed by financial rewards given by their families.

Neither group dwelt on the importance of material possessions. While the private schoolchildren suggested the importance of personal space – bedrooms and homes – the estate children clearly valued the outdoor space used for street play in their estate. This reflected the fact that, compared with the private schoolchildren, access to organised activities could be constrained (often by cost) and the staple free-time activity was street play. Children engaged in street play were very visible as groups and liable to be suspected of being anti-social. Street play also meant that the estate children faced more tangible risks than the private schoolchildren. The private schoolchildren's movements outside of the home were usually accompanied by parents and the risks of public places seemed exaggerated. Although street play was unsupervised, the estate children gave detailed accounts of the rules and conditions set down by parents on where they could go and for how long. At the same time, friendship networks among the estate children offered some protection from the risks of street play.

4 Observations for policy

A child-centred view: relationships and activities

An overarching observation from the project is that all the findings from the research relate to the children's relationships and activities, rather than their material circumstances. Neither group of children's concerns were based on what they had or did not have. Instead both groups dwelt on the significance of education, activities, space and the value placed on friends and families.

Within this overarching observation, five key points that relate to specific policy issues emerged from the project.

Citizenship education

The children in the study expressed a desire to be seen as 'normal' or, more accurately, as not different. Terms such as 'poor' and 'rich' were rather alien to the children and applied to 'others'. Nevertheless, the children were aware of social difference – referring to the difference of 'others'. Moreover, the children from as young as eight display a distinctly antagonistic attitude towards social difference in their discussions about 'posh' and 'chav' children. Children who are rich were considered posh, mean and snobby by the estate children. Moreover, rich children were perceived to be friendless and lacking in fun, with lives revolving around learning and homework. On the other hand, the private schoolchildren believed that poor children were 'rough', got into trouble, lived on council estates, had parents that did not care about them and went to 'rough' schools. Strongly and deeply held views were aired by the children during our discussions with them, and in both cases the most tolerant voices were the most muted. Many of the issues they raised remained unresolved at the end of our sessions. There is obviously a real need for more information about socio-economic difference, which will enable children to be less judgemental and hostile towards their better/worse-off peers.

Since September 2000, citizenship has been part of the guidelines for personal health and social education (PHSE) in primary schools and has been a statutory entitlement in secondary schools since 2002 (http://www.citizen.org.uk/education.html). Citizenship education 'enables pupils to understand and respect cultural diversity where pupils can view positively the differences in others' (QCA, 2001). However, diversity on the curriculum encompasses only those differences arising from race, gender, ability or disability. While we recognise the sensitive nature

of discussing aspects of poverty and material deprivation with children in the classroom, this research highlights a real need for children to be better informed about poverty and affluence, and some of the advantages and disadvantages that go hand in hand with these concepts.

Education and extended schools

Our findings concerning education have shown a striking disparity between the private schoolchildren and the estate children's experiences of school. The private schoolchildren held very positive attitudes towards their education. They recognised that they had opportunities to learn and achieve throughout their school lives. Moreover, private schoolchildren felt supported, motivated and encouraged by their teachers. This was also reinforced by the rewards they received for their achievements from their parents. The estate children, on the other hand, held mainly negative attitudes towards their education. They were generally disappointed in and disaffected from the quality of their teaching. They associated school with coercion and control, and often received penalties and sanctions for what they perceived to be a need for more information and support. Furthermore, the estate children were concerned about protecting their parents from the extra costs associated with participating in extra-curricular activities. It should not be surprising, then, that many could not wait to leave school behind at the end of the day.

These findings have implications both for education in schools generally and for the new Extended Schools policy. In relation to education more generally, it highlights the need to improve the quality of the experience that children from more disadvantaged backgrounds have in the classroom. In particular, their relationships with teachers and the way in which teachers and pupils interact seem to be vital in influencing these young people's attitudes to school and education.

The Extended Schools policy seeks to enable parents and children to access services and activities in schools from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. all year round. The intention is to enable children to achieve better test results through homework support, for example, and to have access to a range of new opportunities. However, as our findings indicate, the design of services and activities provided through extended schools will be crucial in order to encourage children to stay on beyond their usual hours and to engage in what is on offer. The *quality* of what is provided is of equal or greater importance than the *quantity*.

Open spaces for children

The issue that most frustrated the estate children was the loss of some of their land to local developers. They had previously used this land as a place to meet and play with their friends within the estate. In the absence of affordable organised activities and with a lack of space at home, these areas were central to the estate children's lives and vital as relatively safe venues for social interaction.

The Government's Sustainable Communities five-year plan (ODPM, 2005) stresses the intention to build more and better houses in disadvantaged communities, while its Cleaner, Safer, Greener programme seeks to improve the quality of public open spaces, to enhance residents' quality of life (DCLG, 2006). However, there is little recognition given to the importance of preserving public open space *per se* for children. As our findings show, it is not just a case of improving the *quality* of public spaces that is of concern. There is also a need in neighbourhoods to preserve public open spaces that children feel able, safe and comfortable to use – without being considered a nuisance. Policymakers need to recognise that public open spaces are used by and are of benefit to *everyone* within communities, and of course this should include children.

Youth Opportunity Cards

Our findings concerning free time also highlighted that the estate children had limited opportunities to participate in organised extra-curricular activities. In this sense, it could be argued that they were disadvantaged in terms of access to both formal social interaction and the broader educational benefits (and cultural capital) associated with such activities. The introduction of Youth Opportunity Cards enabling disadvantaged 13–16 year olds to take up a subsidised range of activities in the community is welcome. However, plans to penalise children by withdrawing cards and subsidies from those deemed to engage in unacceptable behaviour should be questioned. We show that some children, by virtue of their visibility in street play, may be more susceptible to this perception than others and therefore more at risk from further exclusion from these opportunities. Moreover, Youth Opportunity Cards are being piloted only with disadvantaged 13–16 year olds. Our findings suggest that children from as young as eight would also benefit from being able to take part in this scheme.

Parenting: street play and anti-social behaviour

The Respect Action Plan (Home Office, 2006) addresses the issue of parenting in disadvantaged communities, targeting particularly those the Government deems to be unwilling or unable to tackle their children's behaviour. The concern to address anti-social behaviour through dealing with *parental* behaviour has been taken up and expanded on by the media, with its constant referral to the visibility of youth on the streets. As O'Brien *et al*. (2000) point out:

> … increasingly in the UK context at least, letting children roam or play out unaccompanied is becoming a marker of neglectful or irresponsible parenthood.
> (O'Brien *et al.,* 2000, p. 273)

The research presents a rather different picture of street play, and of parents' involvement in their children's street play. For example, the estate children gave detailed accounts of the rules and conditions set down by parents governing their unsupervised play outside of the home. Our findings suggest that parenting styles reflected the different lifestyles and circumstances of the two groups of children. Whether or not children are permitted to play in the streets without adult supervision does not reflect a simple dichotomy between 'good' and 'bad' parenting, and policymaking needs to be cautious to avoid fostering this assumption.

This research has highlighted the value of using a child-centred perspective on issues that have direct consequences for children's lives. A child-centred approach has provided a timely, fresh and usually unvoiced perspective on policy.

Note

Chapter 1

1 The research was conducted in England and the policies outlined in the report relate to England and Wales.

References

Babb, P. (2005) *A Summary of Focus on Social Inequalities*. London: Office for National Statistics

Bennett, F. and Roberts, M. (2004) *From Input to Influence: Participatory Approaches to Research and Inquiry into Poverty*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Blanden, J. and Gibbons, S. (2006) *The Persistence of Poverty across Generations: A View from Two British Cohorts*. Bristol: The Policy Press

Burke, C. (2005) 'Play in focus: children researching their own spaces and places for play', *Children, Youth and Environments*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 27–53

Daly, M. and Leonard, M. (2002) *Against all Odds: Family Life on a Low Income in Ireland*. Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency

DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) (2006) *Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener*. Executive summary. www.communities.gov.uk

DfES (Department of Education and Skills) (2003) *Every Child Matters*. London: DfES

DfES (2005a) *Extended Schools: Access to Opportunities and Services for All, a Prospectus*. 1408 -2005DOC-EN. London: DfES

DfES (2005b) *Youth Matters*. London: DfES

DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) (2006) *Making a Difference: Tackling Poverty – a Progress Report*. London: DWP

Dines, N., Cattell, V., Gesler, W. and Curtis, S. (2006) *Public Spaces, Social Relations and Well-being in East London*. Bristol: The Policy Press

Elsley, S. (2004) 'Children's experience of public space', *Children & Society*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 155–64

Ermisch, J.F., Francesconi, M. and Pevalin, D.J. (2001) *Outcomes for Children of Poverty*. DWP Research Report No. 158. Leeds: Corporate Document Services

Gregg, P., Harkness, S. and Machin, S. (1999) *Child Development and Family Income*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Home Office (2006) *Respect Action Plan*. Ref. 272299. London: Respect Task Force, Home Office

James, A. (1993) *Childhood Identities*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Jenkins, A., Levacic, R. and Vignoles. A. (2006) *Estimating the Relationship between School Resources and Pupil Attainment at GCSE*. Research Brief No. RB727. London: DfES

Lister, R. (2004) *Poverty*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Middleton, S., Ashworth, K. and Walker, R. (1994) *Family Fortunes: Pressures on Parents and Children in the 1990s*. London: Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)

O'Brien, M., Jones, D., Sloan, D. and Rustin, M. (2000) 'Children's independent spatial mobility in the urban public realm', *Childhood*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 253–77

ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) (2005) *Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity. A Five Year Plan from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister*. Cm. 6425. London: ODPM

Paxton, W. and Dixon M. (2004) *The State of the Nation: An Audit of Injustice in the UK*. London: IPPR

QCA (Qualifications Curriculum Authority) (2001) *Citizenship: A Scheme of Work for Key Stage 3: Teachers' Guide*. London: DfES

Ridge, T. (2002) *Childhood Poverty and Social Exclusion*. Bristol: The Policy Press

Roker, D. (1998) *Worth more than this: Young People Growing up in Family Poverty*. London: The Children's Society

Seaman, P., Turner, K., Hill, M., Stafford, A. and Walker, M. (2005) *Parenting and Children's Resilience in Disadvantaged Communities*. London: National Children's Bureau

SEU (Social Exclusion Unit) (2004) *Breaking the Cycle: Taking Stock of Progress and Priorities for the Future*. London: ODPM

Shropshire, J. and Middleton, S. (1999) *Small Expectations: Learning to be Poor*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Thompson, J. and Castell, S. (2006) *UK Poverty and Disadvantage: Interim Findings*. Strategic communications research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. London: MORI.

Willow, C. (2001) *Bread is Free: Children and Young People Talk about Poverty*. London: Children's Rights Alliance for England