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Parenting and Childhood in a Culture of Fear

by

Leanne Franklin

A Doctoral Thesis

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for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

November 2010

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ABSTRACT

This thesis draws primarily upon the work of Furedi (2001; 2002) and his notion of a 'culture of fear' to explore contemporary parenting and childhood from a social psychological perspective. Furedi argues that contemporary society is dominated by a sense of anxiety which is ubiquitous and free-floating (2007) and it is arguable that this fear is particularly easily attached to issues around childhood as children are considered increasingly vulnerable - giving rise to the phenomenon of 'paranoid parents' (Furedi, 2002). While these and related issues have been explored elsewhere in the social sciences (e.g. Jackson & Scott, 2000; Katz, 2008; Valentine, 1996) there has yet to be a study from a social psychological perspective which would seek to understand how these fears are articulated, constructed and managed in relational interaction. The first stage of analysis is a content analysis of newspaper articles, providing partial information about the socio-cultural backdrop of the study. This is complemented by focus group data from both parents and children (aged 12-13) which is analysed using strategies and tools drawn from discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992). This approach allows for an examination of how participants construct fears, anxieties and concerns that exist in and around modern parenting and childhood. Themes that emerged from this analysis include a focus on the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, a fear of hypothetical dangers, and a catalogue of potential risks. These concerns are also worked up in the participants' talk as related to wider social changes (such as an increase in crime and changes in family structure) and connected with a nostalgia for a past which is constructed as safer, simpler and more liberated; even the children display a fondness for this utopian childhood. Hence the study begins to develop an empirical understanding of how aspects of a culture of fear may be worked up in relation to contemporary parenting and childhood, and so points toward some of its possible psychological implications.

KEY WORDS:

Childhood, Culture of Fear, Danger, Discourse, Emotion, Fear, Media, Parenting and Risk.

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This is for my family – I love you

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PREFACE

This preface will provide an overview to this piece of work and a brief introduction to the individual chapters. Each chapter will be overviewed and its position within the thesis clarified.

Chapter 1 - The Emotion Of Fear

This introductory chapter sets out the dominant theories of emotion; specifically research that states that emotions are basic, universal and inherent and that which conversely argues that emotions are socially constructed. The notion of basic emotions is overviewed, particularly the work of Ekman and colleagues (Ekman & Friesen, 1971; Ekman et al., 1987; Ekman, 1999), before issues with this approach are analysed. The theory of social constructionism is then forwarded, with a particular focus on the historical and cultural specificity of emotions. However these theories are both found to be lacking as they fail to adequately assess the complexity of fear due to a focus on either the social or the biological and so the notion of 'co-constitution' (Cromby, 2004) will be forwarded as a way of understanding the biological, social, material and historical factors and practices that contribute to our experience of emotion.

Chapter 2 - The Development And Socialisation Of Fear

While the previous chapter focused on emotion as a general concept this chapter concentrates the discussion of developmental processes, with a particular focus on how fear is socialised. This chapter will look at several theories which seek to better understand this process, including the work of Izard (1971; 1977) who argues that the emergence of basic emotions is dependent upon social demands. We then look to Rachman's pathways (1990) which proposes that fear develops in three ways: through direct conditioning, through vicarious learning and through verbal

information. The work of psychoanalysts (e.g. Sullivan, 1953) and attachment theorists (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1969; 1973; 1980) is then turned to for a better understanding of the development and management of anxiety and fear in childhood. Finally we turn to Vygotsky (1978; 1986) for a consideration of how culture and the social environment play an integral role in the socialisation of fear and we look to Russell (1989) for a detailed account of how this process might occur. In this chapter therefore we look to these theories to further appreciate how fear is socialised.

Chapter 3 - Culture Of Fear

The notion of a 'culture of fear' is described in this chapter, with the work of Furedi (2002) featuring heavily. In the first section of the chapter certain aspects of change in contemporary society are explored (such as individualisation, the development of technology and the all pervasive nature of the media) as these are intimately linked to a cultural sense of fear and anxiety. Through this exploration it is clear that modern society is rapidly evolving and developing, meaning that adults are living in a world which is very different to the one they were raised in. The chapter then goes on to examine the culture of fear which has arisen due to these rapid changes, before the potential effects of this culture on parenting and childhood are considered while introducing the notion of 'paranoid parenting' (Furedi, 2001). This chapter describes the specific cultural environment with which this thesis is concerned and in which children are currently being socialised.

Chapter 4 - Method: Parent And Child Focus Groups

This chapter introduces the method used for the analysis of discourse which draws upon techniques and strategies from discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992). This builds upon a social constructionist framework which locates a culture of fear as a historically and culturally specific phenomenon which also posits language as a basis for an understanding of the participants' constructions of their experiences of contemporary parenting and childhood. The analysis is forwarded as a way of understanding how fear is linguistically co-constituted.

The focus group data is also introduced in this chapter, which includes an examination of the benefits of using such discussion groups. The schools involved in the study are described, as are the location of the research and the participants in general, which helps to contextualise the participants' discourse. The process of recruiting participants is described in this chapter, as are the parenting websites involved. The structure of the focus group discussions and the importance of detailed transcription are also covered. The step-by-step process of analysis is also described, including the transcription and coding of data.

Chapter 5 - Newspaper Review

The first of the chapters that consists of data looks at a review of newspaper articles which was conducted in the summer of 2008. The chapter sets out the method used for the content analysis before introducing some of the results (due to space constraints the remainder of the results can be seen in Appendix ix). This forms background research which will allow for a glimpse of the social, economic and political context of the participant's lives. The chapter then moves to a detailed discursive analysis of two of the newspaper articles in order to explore how these reports are constructed and how issues of parenting and childhood are represented.

Chapter 6 - Fear Of The 'What If?'

This is the first of the chapters that introduces the talk of the participants; all of the analysis chapters focus on one of the main themes that emerged from the discourse. This chapter explores constructions of a fear of the hypothetical and is divided into two main sections: the first examines formulations of fear of the 'what if?' while the last section examines the descriptions of achieving a balance between allowing children to attain independence and a desire to protect them. Conceptualising this described anxiety as fear of the 'what if?' is a useful way of attending to expressed fear of hypothetical risks; the 'what if?' is not formulated in terms of statistical likelihood, but in terms of the worst case scenario. The 'what if?' is also useful in referring to the imagined response of the parents to the worst case scenario, for example in one extract (Extract 3 - 'Racked With Guilt') we see Marie hypothesising as to how she would feel if her daughter disappeared. In the latter

half of the chapter we explore the constructed balance between encouraging children to recognise potential threats, but also not wanting to promote global fear; participants also referred to a second type of balance with the acknowledgement that children need to be exposed to some risk in order to achieve independence.

Chapter 7 - Objects Of Concern, Danger And Fear

Several dangers were identified by participants and these are explored in this chapter in alphabetical order: alcohol, children, drugs, the internet, multiple dangers, paedophiles and violence. Alcohol was identified by parents of older children as a risk with regards to excessive consumption, while children themselves were identified as a potential danger with teenagers in particular constructed as intimidating which is located as a example of the wider paradoxical construction of children as 'angels' or 'devils' (Valentine, 1996). Drugs were also described as a danger, although this was only with reference to excessive consumption and the use of 'hard' drugs, while the internet was constructed by both parents and children as a risk with regards to online grooming. There were also instances when participants discussed multiple dangers associated with a single object, for example in Extract 16 ('Traffic, Strangers, Drugs and Robberies') we see a mother describing the risk of traffic, strangers, drugs and robberies which she attaches to her former residence. Additionally the risk of paedophiles and violence were described by the participants with regards to children, with the menace formulated as ubiquitous and as having increased over the course of a generation.

Chapter 8 - Aspects Of Crime, Danger And Safety

This chapter is divided into four sections: the first presents some of the participants' personal accounts of crime, specifically attempted abductions, violence and non-contact sexual exposure. We then look at aspects of safety and risk through an examination of the over-regulation of adult/child relations and safety behaviours which the participants' describe as adopting to protect themselves from potential harm. In the third section of this chapter we move on to explore the temporal and spatial aspects of danger as participants construct the dark and public spaces as more risky. Finally this chapter draws to a close with talk that questions an assumption of

danger as the parents and children portray the media and the local community as having a mediating effect on the level of perceived danger.

Chapter 9 - Change, Pressure And Nostalgia

Here we explore the participants' talk of wider social changes that have impacted upon modern parenting and childhood, such as an increase in technology (particularly communications technology). Cultural developments are also referenced through participants' talk of changing family structures and relationships, such as an increase in working mothers and a pressure upon parents to keep up to date with the latest parenting advice. Finally in this chapter we look at the participants' nostalgic recollection of the past, particularly of previous childhoods as carefree and liberated which simultaneously act to position contemporary childhood as lacking in freedom and dominated by fear.

Chapter 10 - Poster Cases And The Media

This final chapter of analysis looks at talk of poster cases: Madeleine McCann, James Bulger, Rachel Nickell, the Soham Murders and the Moor Murders. Also discussions of news stories contemporary to the time of the focus groups (such as the kidnap of Shannon Matthews, the Baby P case and the Belgian Nursery murders) are considered which demonstrates the utilisation of high profile cases to evidence arguments and concerns regarding safety and risk. Finally the nature of the media itself is considered with participants describing the news as both negative and ever present, with the children particularly critical of the media representation of the young.

Chapter 11 - Discussion

This chapter acts to bring the issues raised in the analysis and literature review together. Several themes which were common throughout the data set will be explored in order to demonstrate how the participants' talk can be considered to reflect wider issues with regards to parenting and childhood in a culture of fear. Talk of the Madeleine McCann case in particular will then be discussed as talk of

the case was present throughout the focus group data set, while the case is also representative of several issues around contemporary parenting and childhood, so is deserving of particular attention. Finally the implications this work will be considered.

CHAPTER 1

THE EMOTION OF FEAR

This introductory chapter seeks to explore the emotion of fear. This is done by first presenting conflicting metatheories regarding emotion: a basic emotions approach versus a social constructionist framework. The former argues that emotions are universal across cultures whereas the latter locates them as culturally and historically specific. These dominant views arguably represent the two sides of dualisms in psychology which seek to divide the individual and biological from the social. However, as presented later, these theories have fundamental flaws which render them limited in their ability to produce a nuanced understanding of a complex experience such as emotion. Therefore we will move towards a more cohesive definition of fear which will be adopted for the purposes of this work which will understand emotion as an experience that is co-constituted by a multitude of factors and practices, including aspects of the cultural, biological, material and individual. This definition will allow for a further exploration in the next chapter as to how fears develop and are socialised within childhood.

1.1. BASIC EMOTIONS

The first section of this chapter will explore basic emotion theories and first our attention will be focused on the work of the main proponent of the approach, Ekman. We will then move on to look at the work of other researchers before drawing attention to several issues relating to research in this area.

1.1.1. 'Constants Across Cultures In The Face And Emotion'

The theory of basic emotions is crucial to many current researchers (e.g. Suzuki, Hoshino & Shigemasu, 2010), with the majority of work following in the vein of Ekman and associates (particularly Ekman & Friesen, 1971). Ekman (1982) is of the opinion that basic emotional states can be inferred from common facial expressions of emotions. Other emotions are viewed as secondary (i.e. not innate) with cross-cultural variations explained by arguing that it is the display of these emotions that varies, not the actual emotion itself. It was Darwin who initially theorised that this was the case in his classic work 'The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals' (1872/1998). [1] He believed that the expression of several emotions in humans could be traced through evolutionary lineages to similar emotional manifestations in animals and primates in particular. Darwin's work was largely ignored for several decades however, partly because citing a biological or evolutionary origin for emotion was seen as questionable for much of the twentieth century due to the association of biological determinism with National Socialism and also due to a focus on the cultural nature of the emotions forwarded by ethnographers (e.g. Mead, 1928). Therefore research work into emotions focused on their cultural nature, with the idea of a universal expression of emotion treated as an embarrassment by some.[2]

It was not until over a century after the publication of Darwin's (1872/1998) work on emotion expression that researchers continued his theorising and (also building on the work of Tomkins (1962; 1963)) Ekman and Friesen (1971) endeavoured to discover with certainty whether emotions could indeed be recognised across

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[1] On an interesting note it is worth mentioning that the facial expression of emotions is a relatively recent development in the study of emotions, as studious discussion of emotions predates Christianity (e.g. see Menon, 2000), but the study of the facial expression of emotion was first initiated by Darwin (1872/1998) (Solomon, 2004), and yet the study of emotion in the face is one of the major trends in contemporary emotion research. Following technological advances, more recent attempts at approaching emotions which are considered to be universal have focused on neuroscience and imaging studies with attempts to pinpoint specific brain regions associated with specific basic emotions (e.g. Eugene et al., 2003; Phan, Wager, Taylor, & Liberzon, 2002; Stark et al., 2003).

cultures. They took photographs of emotional facial expressions posed by westerners to a tribe called the South Fore in New Guinea and for participants they used 319 adults who had no previous contact with western culture and yet these tribe members were able to identify the emotions expressed in the photographs. In an attempt to minimise language barriers, the experimenters (through translators) relayed stories to the participants and asked them to select the photograph of the emotion that was most suited to that vignette from a set of three; for example a description of the death of a parent would be associated with the photograph demonstrating sadness. They then used the same photographs, as well as images that the South Fore had posed, to test American college students and again found a correlation. Thus the exercise was deemed successful and has been held up since as the foremost study that demonstrates the global nature of facial expressions of emotion and resulted in the researchers categorising six basic emotions: happiness, fear, anger, disgust, sadness and surprise. Ekman, Friesen and colleagues (1987) later attempted to strengthen the foundations of their thesis by widening the scope of their research; they worked with researchers in ten cultures (Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Scotland, Sumatra, Turkey and the USA) and again, cross-cultural recognition of the basic emotions was deemed significant. However, closer examination of the results from the original 1971 study shows that there are also notable disagreements. In the set of results generated by the least westernised tribe members, in only one trial did all of the participants correctly chose the correct photograph (the correct photograph was of happiness and the two other photographs were disgust and anger). The rest of the trials had results that ranged from 93% to as low as 28%, when participants were unable to differentiate between fear, sadness and surprise. Thus, even what is probably the most influential study in this field is not entirely conclusive.

We will now leave the work of Ekman and look to other research in the field of basic emotions.

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[2] See Ekman's afterword in Darwin (1872/1998) for a discussion of this climate, the researchers involved and his own personal entry into the research

1.1.2. Basic Emotion Research

Ekman's main research focus is the expression of these emotions in the face: this is so much at the heart of his work that he has previously argued that if no universal expression exists, then it should not be considered an emotion (1984). Ekman, however is not the only researcher in this field, albeit probably the most influential (for a review of his career and influence see Matsumoto, 2004). Izard (1992), for example, views basic emotions as "a feeling or state or motivational condition, a direct and immediate product of the particular neural processes associated with that emotion" (ibid: 361) and he has spent the majority of his career researching the presence and development of basic emotions in infants (e.g. Schwartz, Izard, & Ansal, 1985) (see further detail in section 2.2). Alternatively, the evolutionary importance of basic emotions is focused upon by Plutchik (1980). His model of basic emotions takes into account the relationship between the emotions and the intensity of the experience, and also includes secondary emotions.[3]

The multiplicity of basic emotion theorists is both a testimony to the significance of the concept, but paradoxically also leads to one of the greatest problems associated with it. A fundamental problem with basic emotion theories is the inability of researchers to formulate a definitive, agreed taxonomy of basic emotions, with each theorist creating a somewhat different set. The following table lists some of the more influential theories concerning basic emotions and highlights this variation:

[3] Secondary emotions are derivative of combinations or variations of primary emotions, for example a combination of disgust and anger might be contempt while a passive form of happiness might be considered to be contentment.

Table 1: Lists of Basic Emotions (Adapted from Ortony & Turner, 1990)

AUTHOR	BASIC EMOTIONS CITED
Ekman, 1973	Fear, Anger, Sadness, Happiness, Disgust & Surprise.
Ekman, 1999	Amusement, Anger, Contempt, Contentment, Disgust, Embarrassment, Excitement, Fear, Guilt, Pride In Achievement, Relief, Sadness/Distress, Satisfaction, Sensory Pleasure, & Shame.
Izard, 1971	Fear, Anger, Joy, Interest, Disgust, Surprise, Shame, Contempt, Distress, & Guilt.
Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1987	Happiness, Sadness, Anger, Fear, Attachment, Parental Love, Sexual Attraction, Disgust & Personal Rejection.
Panksepp, 1982	Fear, Rage, Panic, & Expectancy.
Plutchik, 1962; 1980	Fear, Anger, Sadness, Joy, Acceptance, Disgust, Anticipation, & Surprise.
Tomkins, 1962; 1963	Fear/Terror, Anger/Rage, Enjoyment/Joy, Interest/Excitement, Contempt/Disgust, Surprise/Startle, Shame/Humiliation, & Distress/Anguish.

As can be seen from the above there is variable agreement among researchers as to the nature or number of the basic emotions. Whilst fear and anger commonly feature in the lists, there is far less agreement with respect to other emotions. It should also be noted that there is some controversy over specific emotions that should be included within basic emotion theories. Startle has been considered by some to be an emotion (Landis & Hunt, 1939) as it has a universally recognised facial expression; however it was formally dismissed as an emotion by Ekman and colleagues (1985) and reduced to a reflex. Interest has also been specified as a basic emotion by some (for example Frijda, 1986), but rejected by others who deem it to be a cognitive or motivational state (Ortony & Turner, 1990). It has also been convincingly argued that love should be included as a basic emotion (Shaver, Morgan, & Wu, 1996) due to its prevalence and importance in interpersonal relationships, although Cornelius (1996) argues that love is not an emotion but an artefact of western culture. Thus the number of academics who have built upon or provided alternatives to Ekman's (Ekman & Friesen, 1971; Ekman et al., 1987)

work is recognition of the importance and popularity of the basic emotion concept, however it also threatens the credibility of the work due to the number of competing lists of supposedly universal emotions. We will now move on to explore other criticisms that can be levelled at the notion of basic emotions.

1.1.3. Criticisms Of Basic Emotions

There are a number of critics of the theory of basic emotions including Ortony and Turner (1990) who argue against the automatic connection between basic emotions and universal facial expressions. They maintain that even though an emotion expression is universally recognised, this does not automatically mean that the emotion has a special status and that it is possible to have emotions and signals that diverge, for example weeping when happy or nervous laughter. An upturned mouth, for example, is universally recognised as a reflection of a positive emotion, but this should not be considered to translate exactly to the English term of 'happy' (Wierzbicka, 2009). Ortony and Turner (1990) also argue against the notion that basic emotions are discrete and cannot occur with another emotion; they find this counterintuitive, citing the fact that by the very nature of fear and anger, distress must also occur. There is no doubt that facial expressions are a vital tool in the interpersonal communications that are essential to the success of humankind: what can be queried is whether these communicative tools are indicative of a small number of discrete and basic emotions.

Research into basic emotions also fails to consider the difference in the cultural importance of emotions; for example the emotions of happiness, anger, etc may well exist in other cultures, but this does not mean that they are culturally significant. In Japan for example the emotion of *amae* is central to the social norms of that culture; *amae* loosely translates as 'sweet dependence' and gestures towards the co-operative nature of Japanese society and family relations. This cultural inter-dependence is also reflected in the expression of emotions as "in Japanese cultural contexts, compared to American cultural contexts, expressions of emotion often co-occur with reference to others or interpersonal relationships" (Uchida, Townsend, Markus, &

Bergsieker, 2009:1437). Thus, while emotions can be recognised across cultures, the significance and the meaning of the emotion is variable.

There is an important distinction to make at this point between emotion and feeling. Damasio writes that feeling is used to describe the "perception of an emotional state" (2004: 52) while Wierzbicka (1999) argues that feelings are universal and not culture-bound, as everyone has them, but not everyone recognises emotions. She writes that "the English word emotion combines in its meaning a reference to "feeling," a reference to "thinking," and a reference to a person's body" (1999: 2), but this combination is unique to English. In German, for example, there is not a direct translation for the word 'emotion,' the word *gefühl* is used but this does not refer to the three aspects that the English term does, only feeling. Similarly Russian, and French, and Samoan are cited as not having an equivalent term either; all languages, however, have a term for 'feeling' (Wierzbicka, 1999). Thus the very concept of emotion itself is a cultural entity (Russell, 1989; 1991). With this in mind this thesis is interested in emotion, rather than feeling, and this is approached with the acceptance that emotion is an artefact of both western culture and the English language.

There is also an issue of interpretation and translation when attempting to access a universal definition of emotion. Differences in the language and labelling of emotions means that, for the purposes of research, commonalities must be drawn from these labels and experiences, resulting in concepts of emotion being managed at an abstract level (Davitz, 1969). However these commonalities must be arrived at with care, for example while the Ifaluk notion of *metagu* may translate approximately as fear, this translation negates the cultural specificity of *metagu*. Wierzbicka (1999) argues that proponents of universality are ethnocentric by assuming that the Ifaluk are actually, although they are unaware of it, experiencing fear. Goddard writes:

> "Indigenous emotion concepts are merely "tagged" with English glosses. This practice not only brings with it an obvious danger of ethnocentric distortion, it also excuses the analyst from engaging in deep conceptual analysis of English folk categories which continue to

> be mistaken for objective categories of psychological reality" (2002: 19)

By positioning western notions of emotion and corresponding emotional terms as a universal and innate truth, researchers will never define or consider emotion accurately, but will continue to see 'natives' as mistaken and not 'normal' (Schweder, 2004). Differences in emotion terms do not simply reflect linguistic differences, but also mean very real differences in experience: one cannot represent an emotion to self and others, if one cannot conceptualise of it (Langer, 1967).

In conclusion, the work of theorists within the field of basic emotions can be seen as useful as it provides a pertinent springboard for research. However, currently there are too many lists of basic emotions, too many variables, too many research positions for a cohesive and acceptable theory of basic emotions to be formed; furthermore the basic premise of universality negates the importance of the cultural variation of emotions. Nevertheless, the approach does provide researchers with a focus for the investigation of the biological aspects of emotions. We shall now move onto explore the social constructionist approach which emphasises the cultural dimension of emotions.

1.2. CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH TO EMOTION

Social constructionists[4] argue for a socio-cultural framework of emotions which are viewed as a socially learnt phenomenon. Harré, one of the leading social constructionists goes so far as to say that "there is no such thing as "an emotion." There are only various ways of acting and feeling emotionally, of displaying one's judgements, attitudes and opinions in an appropriate bodily way" (1991: 142). In line with this notion of emotion as a communicative and performative process, Parkinson (1995) maintains that the communicative aspect of an emotion is its most

[4] A detailed discussed of the social constructionist perspective can be found in the Method Chapter (section 4.1.1.).

important function, and that emotions should not be considered culturally specific private experiences, rather that they should be viewed as a communicative phenomenon. He argues that:

> "One needs to know how to get emotional properly by expressing it in public before one ever gets to the stage of experiencing a private emotion and holding it back. Similarly, it is clear that people only learn how to talk to themselves on the basis of their experience of actual interpersonal conversation (cf. Vygotsky, 1986)" (Parkinson, 1995: 279).

Parkinson argues that emotional responses are determined by cultural expectations and that the main function of experiencing an emotion is the expression; facial expressions of emotion, typically interpreted as a function of innate and universal emotions (e.g. Ekman & Friesen, 1971), can therefore be seen as evidence of the communicative and interpersonal nature of emotions. Furthermore Fridlund writes "when we are alone, we often imagine social interactants. We see our partner's smiling face in our "mind's eye," and we find ourselves affiliatively returning the smile" (1991: 229). In a study that demonstrates the interactive nature of emotions Fridlund (ibid.) asked participants to watch a film and found that just the psychological presence of a co-viewer (participants were told a friend was watching the same film in another room) was enough to create the same smiling effect as the actual presence. Denzin (1984) also argues that emotions can only exist as part of a social interaction (either real or imagined). These arguments maintain the constructionist notion that emotions are social: their expression and sensation is dependent upon culture.

Research in the field of sociology supports the notion of emotions as cultural entities and this research area is a relatively recent development, having emerged in the last 30 years (Thoits, 1986; Turner & Stets, 2006).[5] A 2006 review (Turner & Stets)

[5] While sociologists have investigated emotions in the past (e.g. Erving Goffman's (1956) work on embarrassment) it was not until 1986 that the Sociology of Emotions was officially recognised as section of the American Sociological Division (Thoits, 1986).

identifies five theoretical approaches to sociological research into emotions; dramaturgical theories which position actions and presentations as determined by cultural scripts, while social interactionist approaches see emotions and actions as more directed by the self. A body of work, the interaction ritual theories, considers emotions as bound up with social rituals, there is additionally a cohort of sociologists particularly concerned with the power and status of emotions, and finally, exchange theories consider the cost/benefit aspect of emotions. Fear, for example, is theorised in reference to power and status as arising when individuals lack the power to change their circumstances. The flight or fight response then leads to divergent responses: the flight approach leads to withdrawal and acceptance of a lack of power, whereas aggression and determination to succeed follow in a fight response (Turner & Stets, 2006). These theories reinforce the social nature of emotions and in order to explore more fully the social constructionist approach to emotion the rest of this chapter will now focus in on one of the main arguments of the social constructionist perspective: the cultural and historical specificity of emotions.

1.2.1. Cultural And Historical Specificity Of Emotions

It is crucial to remember that the lists of basic emotions proposed by western theorists are put forward by people who have only ever experienced western emotions. Consequently, they do not take into account emotions which are considered fundamental in other cultures, for example Bender (2003) reports on a Mexican condition called *coraje*. This term is translated into English as 'anger,' but is extremely different from western conceptions of anger. *Coraje* is contagious and is a set of physical symptoms which differ according to where the *coraje* hits the person; the individual experiences stomach ache or diarrhoea if the *coraje* strikes the stomach or a headache if it initially makes contact with the head for example. While Russell (1991) lists a whole range of emotions which do not transfer to

contemporary western cultures, emotions like *schadenfreude*, *obhtman*, and *accidie*.[6] Similarly, Wierzbicka (1999) reviews the German emotion of *angst* finding that despite its use in English language, the term is not used in the same way: in English it is used to denote anxiety, but in German it refers to an oppressive and threatening emotional state. Wierzbicka (1999) goes further to state that for Germans fear is not considered a culturally significant emotion, but *angst* is.

Consedine and Magai (2002) examined variations in the experience of so-called basic emotions between four ethnic groups and found that cultures emphasised different basic emotions. They found that nine out of the ten emotions they questioned participants about showed some variation in experience across these ethnic groups (guilt, disgust, sadness, contempt, shame, fear, anger, joy and interest showed variation, but only surprise did not). African Americans, for example, were said to experience more contempt that Jamaicans, while European Americans reported greater levels of disgust than Russians; thus the prevalence of different emotions varies across cultures. Wierzbicka (1999) discusses the concept of happiness and how historically to be 'happy' in certain cultures was restricted in use to great occasions or occasions of bliss and contentment. She comments:

> "The fact that some American psychologists have elevated the state of being "happy" to the status of a basic human emotion is revealing in this respect: from a cross-cultural perspective, the word joy (with equivalents such as Freude, joie, gioia, radost, etc. in other European languages) might have seemed a much better candidate for this status. But in American culture, the concept of happy is indeed much more central than the concept of joy. It is easy to understand how the centrality of this concept in American culture may have influenced the researchers' perspective on human emotions in general" (ibid: 248-249)

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[6] In Germany *Schadenfreude* is personal pleasure in the sorrow of others. *Obhtman* originates from Bengali and, resulting from the insensitivity from a loved one, is a type of sorrow. *Accidie* is an emotion said to have existed previous to the Middle Ages in England, but which is now extinct.

Thus, while an image of a 'happy' face may be recognised globally, it does not necessarily refer to the same emotional experience across cultures. Naturally differences in languages will account for some variations between emotional 'translations,' but this does not account for all the differences in emotional experience. A particularly good example of the importance of an understanding of the importance of the language of emotions is raised by Wierzbicka, who writes that:

> "Polish does not have a word corresponding exactly to the English word disgust. What if the psychologists working on the "fundamental human emotions" happened to be native speakers of Polish rather than English? Would is still have occurred to them to include "disgust" on their list?" (1986: 584).

The following table further demonstrates the importance of language with specific regard to the basic emotion theories:

Table 2: Possible Problems for the Universality of Hypothesized Basic-Level Emotion Categories (Russell, 1991: 441)

BASIC-LEVEL TERM	**PROBLEM**
HAPPINESS	Missing in Chewong (Howell, 1981)
SURPRISE	Missing in Fore, Dani (Ekman, 1980), Malay (Boucher & Carlson, 1980), & Ifaluk (Lutz, 1982)
ANGER	Overlaps with sadness or grief in Luganda (Davitz, 1969; Leff, 1973; Orley, 1970), Illongot (Rosaldo, 1984) & Ifaluk (Lutz, 1982)
FEAR	Missing in Ifaluk (Lutz, 1982), Utku (Briggs, 1970), & Pintupi (Morice, 1978); not distinguished from shame in Gidjingali (Hiatt, 1978)
SADNESS	Missing in Tahitian (Levy, 1973) & Chewong (Howell, 1981); not sharply distinguished from anger in Luganda (Davitz, 1969; Leff, 1973; Orley, 1970)
DISGUST	Missing in Polish (Wierzbicka, 1986), Ifalukian (Lutz, 1982), & Chewong (Howell, 1981); not distinguished from hate in Samoan (Gerber, 1975)

The ethnocentricity of the basic emotion lists considered thus far can be further demonstrated by comparison with an alternative within Hindu culture in India, which relies heavily on an intrinsic theory of basic emotions (Menon, 2000). The theory of *rasa* affects many aspects of social aesthetic acts, including dancing, poetry and music. Drawn up between 200AD and 200BC the theory states that there are eight *sthayi bhava* (primary emotions) and 33 *vyabhicari bhava* (fleeting emotions). The eight *sthayi bhava* are: *shingara* (love), *vira* (heroism or valour), *bibhitsa* (disgust or odiousness), *rauora* (anger or wrath), *hasya* (humour or mirth), *bhayankara* (terror), *karuna* (pity or compassion) and *adbhura* (wonder or amazement) (Kishore, 2007; Singh, 2001). This list has been in use for over 2000 years and is still core to certain aspects of Hindu culture; thus while it may not be as heavily cited or academically respected as some basic emotion research, it can be said to have more cultural potency.

In this section culturally specific emotions have been presented which act to reinforce the earlier criticisms of universal emotions theories, while also demonstrating that emotions are always embedded in specific cultures. However, a fundamental flaw in the social constructionist approach is that it ignores the biological. This is a mistake which is particularly apparent when researching a deeply embodied experience, such as the emotion of fear. We will now move on to look at a more nuanced definition and an approach to emotion that will be adopted for the purposes of this work.

1.3. DEFINITION OF EMOTION

A firm definition of emotion has thus far proved elusive as in the words of Fehr and Russell “everyone knows what an emotion is, until asked to give a definition. Then, it seems, no one knows” (1984: 464). Attempts have been made to arrive at an authoritative definition of emotion by integrating and reviewing previous researchers work (e.g. Fehr & Russell, 1984; Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981) and this has proved an interesting, yet unfruitful task as the descriptions that have arisen

are not widely accepted by the academic community. Efforts to define emotions by researchers often result in catch-all explanations, such as:

> "Emotion is a complex set of interactions among subjective and objective factors, mediated by neural/hormonal systems, which can (a) give rise to affective experiences such as feelings of arousal, pleasure/displeasure; (b) generate cognitive processes such as emotionally relevant perceptual effects, appraisals, labelling processes; (c) activate widespread physiological adjustments to the arousing conditions; and (d) lead to behaviour that is often, but not always, expressive, goal-directed and adaptive" (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981: 353)

Another researcher has managed to reduce the complexity of the emotional experience to an equation: $\Psi = f(x[t], y[t], z[t])$[7] (Cabanac, 2002). Others have argued that the only way to define emotion is to refer to prototypes (Fehr & Russell, 1984) and some assert that there is no need for a definition (e.g. Oatley, 2007; Reisenzein, 2007). Alternatively Griffiths (1997) argues for a complete re-examination of emotion concepts, urging researchers to move away from lay terminology and to adopt a more scientific approach to the classification of emotions. He appeals for a classification system of emotions citing the biological methods of natural kinds and cladistics as a model, with theoretical levels of explanation as appropriate. Reinforcing this notion, Kagan (1974) makes the point that psychology and related social disciplines have adhered to definitions that originated centuries ago, unlike other fields of academia. Physics, for example, no longer uses the terms used by Newton such as 'aether'[8]; i.e. physicists have adapted their terminology as the discipline has advanced. Kagan (ibid.) suggests that the subject of emotions should similarly undergo a process of updating of language and technical terms:

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[7] Where Ψ = emotion, y = intensity, z = hedonism, x = quality and t = time.

> "The research on human emotions, for example, has continued to use the labels philosophers invented more than 35 centuries ago – fear, joy, happiness, anger. The habit is so fixed that the names have become reified. We begin our work by assuming that fear, anger, and sadness are definite, palpable, and true entities, and we conceive of our task as discovering the events that produce them and devising methods of measuring them, however, putting the name aside temporarily and behaving as if there were none that may be useful for psychology, whose lexicon has become encrusted with ancient, unexamined, and by implication misleading categories. Let us return afresh to the natural phenomena and see what new concepts we might generate" (1974: 229-230).

This approach would be revolutionary and could greatly enhance our understanding of emotional processes as it would free academics from a lay terminology which is often found to be lacking when subjected to scientific examination. Unfortunately such a project is beyond the remit and scope of this thesis and so a working definition must be arrived at that is suitable for this particular piece of work.

This definition shall be satisfied by turning to the concept of "co-constitution" (Cromby, 2004; Nightingale & Cromby, 2002) which moves beyond the primarily discursive realm of constructionism. The notion of co-constitution arose from the ongoing realist/relativist debate in psychology and a critical realist approach which argues that there are material, social, and physical factors and practices which shape our experience, which is counter to the purely relativist stance of some social psychologists (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999).[9] This lack of acknowledgment or inclusion of the extra-discursive led to an approach which favours a different discourse regarding these types of issues and so instead of being concerned with the construction of reality, the co-constitution of reality and experience is discussed (Cromby, 2004; Nightingale & Cromby, 2002). In these terms, language is not the

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[8] 'Aether' historically referred to an unknown particle that was involved in the process of light radiation

[9] See section 4.1.1. for further discussion of the realist/relativist debate.

primary site of construction, but is instead one of several components that interconnect to constitute our reality. Equal weighting is given to our subjective and embodied experiences, the biological underpinnings that shape that embodiment, the social environment in which the experiences are located and the language which gives rise and voice to our descriptions of reality as lived. Nightingale and Cromby write:

> "The play of linguistic meaning and signification is shaped and constrained by embodiment, materiality, socio-cultural institutions, interpersonal practices and their historical trajectories (all of these structured by, and reproducing structures of, power) such that language does not independently and thoroughly constitute our world, but within such constraints, language, in its objective materiality, discursively co-constitutes the realities we experience." (2002: 706)

Thus language and biology are re-positioned as features which contribute to and shape the whole experience.

In a 2004 paper, Cromby demonstrates how the co-constitution of subjective experience can contribute to a further understanding of depression, the 'common cold of psychiatry.' He uses Harré's (2002) notion of three grammars[10] to demonstrate how depression is co-constituted at a social, biological and molecular level. The social aspect of depression is accounted for in terms of subjectivity, which itself is seen to have two aspects: discursive and embodied (Shotter 1993). The biological grammar of depression is associated with the somatic marker hypothesis[11] (Damasio, 1994) and 'the interpreter'[12] (Gazzaniga, 1998a, 1998b),

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[10] In this sense the phrase 'grammar' refers to "systems and clusters of rules ordering human activity" (Cromby, 2004: 801). Harré (2002) argues that successful psychological theories must contain P (persons), O (organisms) and M (molecules) grammars. P grammar refers to the socially constructed aspects of life, O refers to our bodies, and M refers to molecules, such as hormones and neurotransmitters.

[11] Somatic markers refer to changes in homeostatic balances that are associated with an affective state. These changes are then remembered and stored in the prefrontal cortex and are used in future decision making. The hypothesis was presented by Damasio (1994) following his work with brain-injury patients who had suffered damage to the cortical area in question and who subsequently had great difficulty making decisions. The hypothesis reinforces that the brain relies on the body for

with the latter also accounting for the discursive aspect of embodied practices. Finally the molecular aspect of the co-constitution of depression is explained in terms of changes in levels of neurotransmitters (such as serotonin) which frequently accompany experiences of depression. Consequently:

> "A vicious spiral may ensue: transactional scripts and social practices (P Grammar) generate somatic markers and discursive repertoires (O Grammar), leading to lowered levels of neurotransmitters (M Grammar), which in turn make further disempowering transactions and self-perceptions (P grammar) more likely" (Cromby, 2004: 814)

The approach of relativist constructionism is unable to appreciate the full influence of the physical and material practices which reinforce the discursive and social while the reductionist/essentialist stance of mainstream psychology fails to account for the role of the social; positions which will both result in abstract, deficient and misleading conclusions. It is necessary to acknowledge the factors which result in a co-constitution of an experience or phenomenon if a rounded, complete and worthwhile analysis is to be achieved.

Using co-constitution as a way of re-connecting the social and the physical allows a more nuanced view of emotion and goes beyond the social construction/basic emotion debate which further entrenches the divide between biological and social. The false nature of this division is highlighted in the following:

> "Our bodies and body parts are loaded with cultural symbolism, public and private, positive and negative, political and economic, sexual, moral and often controversial; and so are the attributes, functions and the states of the body, and the senses. Height and weight, eating and

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signals during decision making and so highlights the error of Descartes (that is the brain/body divide which is inherent in mainstream psychology).

[12] 'The interpreter' hypothesis arose from work with split-brain patients (following injury or the severing of the corpus callosum which connects the right and left hemispheres). Gazzaniga (1998b) proposed an 'interpreter' in the left hemisphere which provides a narration and explanations for

> drinking, making love, gestures and body language, even various diseases, colds or AIDS, are not simply physical phenomena; they are also social" (Synott, 1993: 1)

It is essential that any successful theory of emotion take into account both physical and social aspects as this is more reflective of the emotional experience. Thus for the purposes of this work, we will understand fear as co-constituted through and by language, the body, history, and the material, as well as social and interpersonal practices and focus of this work will be on how fear is linguistically co-constituted.

1.4. SUMMARY

We began this chapter with a look at the basic emotions; however, problems with the Anglo-centric nature of the research, a saturation of basic emotion lists and the dismissal of culture are just a selection of the problems that make the basic emotion approach unfeasible for a project of this nature. The chapter then moved to examine a social constructionist approach, focusing in particular on the cultural and historical specificity of emotions. This allowed us to witness how different emotions are experienced and expressed across cultures demonstrating how emotions are culturally and historically specific. However, while this approach accounts for cultural specificity, it fails to adequately consider the fundamentally embodied character of emotional responses which renders it inadequate; particularly for the study of a deeply physical emotion such as fear. The shortcomings of both approaches make a more nuanced approach to emotions essential and this is provided by an understanding of fear as co-constituted by biological, social and material factors and practices. This working definition of the emotion of fear will be adopted for the purposes of this thesis and bearing this in mind, we will now move on to explore the development of fear in childhood in the next chapter in order to better understand how this emotion is socialised.

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activities. Thus when the right side of the brain is given instructions (which are unavailable to the left side) the left hemisphere provides a reasonable explanation for the activity.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIALISATION OF FEAR

This chapter builds on the foundations of the previous one and will explore how the co-constitution of fear arises. The development of fear is crucial to an understanding of the possible impacts of a culture of fear upon childhood and this process of socialisation shall be considered in several ways. Firstly the biological and evolutionary characteristics of fear shall be briefly explored as an acknowledgement of the embodied nature of this emotion, before then going onto explore how this biological element is transformed through the social and interpersonal. This will be looked at from several directions which will demonstrate how the development of fear is a complex process with many factors contributing to the co-constitution. Firstly the work of Izard (1971; 1977) will be considered which describes the role of the social in the emergence of basic emotions before the research of Rachman (1990) will be explored with his notion of the three pathways to fear: direct conditioning, modelling and through fearful information. We will then move to explore theories of psychoanalysis and attachment which can contribute to the understanding of anxiety and fear. We will also look to Vygotsky (1978; 1986) for inspiration when looking at the socialisation of fear, before looking at Russell (1989) for a more detailed look at how this socialisation develops in stages. This chapter seeks to explore just how fear is socialised and is co-constituted within and by a particular social environment.

2.1. THE BIOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF FEAR

Prior to an engagement with the development of fear, there should first be an acknowledgement that fear is a very physical experience and has a strong evolutionary heritage. The physical sensations of fear are familiar to all: the panicked breathing, sweating palms and racing heart rate. These responses are often linked to the 'Fight or Flight' syndrome which was first identified in 1929 (Cannon) and describes the general tendency of animals to either fight a danger, or to flee from it. In preparation for either behaviour a number of physiological changes are witnessed: hormonal changes, an increase in pulse and breathing rate, inhibition of digestion, constriction of blood vessels, and preparation of muscles for action. Some researchers now argue that 'Fight or Flight' is too broad and it should be relabelled 'Freeze, Flight, Fight or Fright' (Bracha, Ralston, Matsukawa, Williams, & Bracha, 2005) as this encompasses more of the responses to danger that are witnessed in the animal kingdom; as Bracha and colleagues (ibid.) point out fear is an integral part of these survival reactions.

Neurologically speaking, the amygdala is the "heart and soul of the fear system" (LeDoux, 1998: 1235): it is the location of the fear response in all mammals (Öhman, 2005). The amygdala is part of the limbic system, a prehistoric brain structure and as such it is clear that fear is a primitive reaction. Fear is a survival mechanism, allowing for assessment of the environment for potential dangers and drawing attention to these hazards. LeDoux (1998) conducts neuroscientific research and proposes that auditory stimuli have a direct link to the amygdala, which enhances the ability to respond to potentially threatening situations; this 'quick and dirty' route to the amygdala removes the need for evaluation in other areas of the brain, meaning that response time is lessened and the capacity for survival is heightened. Öhman (2000) also argues in the same vein as LeDoux stating that certain stimuli (e.g. snake and spider images, or the noise of approaching footsteps in the middle of the night) seem to be directly linked to a physiological response, i.e. that the reaction is automatic and requires no evaluation within higher cognitive centres; this has also been shown to be the case when a phobic image (e.g. snake or spider) is masked (Öhman, Carlsson, Lundqvist, & Ingmar, 2007). Thus it would

seem that the human brain is primed, through our evolutionary heritage, to recognise certain threats and dangers.

However, despite the acknowledgement above that fear is a deeply physical emotion and has an important evolutionary function for survival, human fear has moved beyond a purely evolutionary function and "to equate human fear with animal fear is akin to equating the English or Woleaian language with bird songs" (Lutz, 1988: 184).[13] Fear does not exist in a purely biological form, but is socialised within and because of a particular upbringing within a particular culture and we will now turn to the literature within developmental psychology to explore these processes.

2.2. DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC EMOTIONS

While the majority of basic emotion theorists have focused on the presence and expression of emotions in adult-hood (see sections 1.1.1. and 1.1.2. in previous chapter), there is one notable exception in Izard (1971; 1977) who has provided an account of the emergence of basic emotions. Following an observational study of mother-child dyads, Izard and colleagues (Izard, Fantauzzo, Castle, Haynes, Rayias, & Putnam, 1995) found that expressions of interest, joy, sadness and anger are present in infants by the age of two and a half months; however, it is once again important to note that there is a difference between emotional expression and emotional experience (see section 1.1.3. in previous chapter). Thus from these findings a number of discrete and inherent emotions are capable of being expressed from a very early age. In order to further understand the function and processes of the development of these expressions Izard has proposed the Differential Emotions Theory (DET) which maintains that emotions are inherent but that "different sets of emotions may become relatively more prominent in the different stages of life as they serve stage-related developmental processes" (Abe & Izard, 1999: 523). Thus, there are a set of basic emotions inherent in the biology of the child, but these

[13] Woleaian is the language of the Woleai island (and smaller surrounding islands) that are part of the Caroline Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

emerge according to the emotional and developmental demands of age, such as needing to form social bonds with caregivers.

In a 1999 paper with Abe, Izard sets out the milestones in development that emotions are involved in from the age of birth to adolescence. In the first stage of life the child's emotional development is intimately tied up with bonding with his/her caregiver. Expressions of joy and interest signal to the caregiver information about the level of stimulation and nature of interaction, for example a look of joy prompts the dyadic interaction to continue. This in turn acts to reinforce the bond between caregiver and child and reinforces attachment bond (see section 2.4.1.), for example "infants' fear elicits protective and comforting behaviours from the attachment figure" (ibid.: 529). Then, at around age two a sense of self begins to develop, as well as an accompanying sense of 'other' in which children are able to differentiate between their emotional state and that of others, as witnessed by the development of an increasingly sophisticated sense of empathy. This sense of self (and others) then develops into a notion of social comparison at around age six, as well as an awareness of personal trait-like characteristics. Finally in adolescence emotions are well-developed and aid abstract contemplation, such as complex emotional responses to events that may or may not occur (such as fear of rejection in romantic relationships). Izard and Abe (ibid.) argue that these developmental milestones are representative of social and cognitive functions that are dependent upon emotions and as such it is emotional development that drives others aspects of maturity. Fundamental to the DET argument however is the notion that these developments are not due to new emotions, but rather social transformations of pre-existing and pan-cultural basic emotions; for example the expression of anger becomes socialised through time with the additional signal of tightly pressed lips, which is not present in anger expressions by young infants.

We will now move on to explore theories as to how this socialisation takes place.

2.3. DEVELOPMENT OF FEAR: PATHWAYS

It has been suggested that children acquire fears through three different pathways: direct conditioning, vicarious learning, and fear inducing information (Rachman, 1990). Each of these will now be addressed in turn to better understand how fears might develop in childhood. The first pathway is 'direct conditioning' which arises when the child is exposed to an event that is associated with an adverse outcome (e.g. the pain and distress associated with vaccinations/injections) which leads to a 'conditioned fear.' In a study looking at the onset of spider phobia in children it was found that 41% of the sample reported a direct conditioning event which marked the onset of the fear (Merckelbach, Muris, & Schouten, 1996). However that still leaves 59% of the sample unable to cite or recall a single conditioning event which points to a young onset (before memory retrieval is possible) or a more complex process in the development of fear.

The second pathway proposed by Rachman (1990) occurs when a child witnesses the fear response of another and consequentially becomes fearful too. This is particularly the case when caregivers display fear which was demonstrated in a now classic psychological experiment when infants refused to crawl over a visual cliff[14] when their mothers displayed fearful facial expressions (Klinnert, Campos, Sorce, Emde, & Svedja, 1983; Sorce, Emde, Campos, & Klinnert, 1985): thus when the infants saw fear displayed by their mothers, they too exhibited a fearful response. This effect was also replicated in 2008 (Dubi, Rapee, Emerton, & Schniering) when the researchers looked at the effect of positive and negative maternal expressions on the fear response of an infant to a novel object. Furthermore the effect has also been witnessed in indirect communication (i.e. where the mother was not looking directly at the infant, but still had a fearful expression) demonstrating the strength of social referencing by the infant (de Rosnay, Cooper, Tsigaras, & Murray, 2006). Consequently this pathway points to children not only developing a fear following a traumatic event, but also by using the social world around them for clues to danger.

Finally there is a third proposed way that children develop fear which is through the verbal transmission of fear-inducing information (Rachman, 1990). The theory that children develop fears from information from care-givers has been considered in recent studies where children who were given negative details about an unknown animal were more likely to develop fear than those who were provided with neutral or positive information (Muris et al., 2009; Muris, van Zowl, Huijding, & Mayer, 2010). In a recent review of studies concerned with the development of fear that considered verbal information it was found that studies consistently found a strong association between fear-inducing facts and fear responses across a wide range of experiments and research procedures (Muris & Field, 2010). The majority of the experimental studies followed a simple paradigm whereby children were presented with negative, positive or neutral information regarding a novel object (for example a doll or unknown animal) and then the child's reaction to the item was assessed, either through self-reported fear ratings or the child's interaction with the item.[15] One source of fear inducing information featured in the review (ibid.) was the media and television and a correlation was found between the level of media exposure and the level of fear, while some of these fears attributed to television were also found to exist well into adulthood. Thus there is a wealth of documentary evidence supporting the notion that exposure to fear inducing information is a significant factor in the development of fear.

However, these three pathways do not occur discretely: often a child is subjected to multiple pathways during the formation of a fear. In an attempt to explore the sources of fears Thomas Ollendick and Neville King (1991) used a survey of 9-14 year olds to investigate their attributions of the cause of their fears. They asked over

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[14] The visual cliff is an experimental apparatus which features a transparent ledge to a table which has been covered by a checkerboard cloth; the floor is also covered in the same cloth. This gives the appearance, but not actuality, of a physical drop.

[15] One study described by the review, for example, involved giving the child information about two novel animals (one animal was associated with positive information, and the other negative). The child was then presented with a model of a nature reserve which had a photo of one animal at each end of the reserve. The child was then asked to place a toy figure (representing themselves) on the model reserve to mark where they would like to live. The children, somewhat unsurprisingly, placed the figure further away from the negative animals than the positive animals (Field & Storksen-Coulson, 2007).

1000 children about 10 fears[16] and whether they had acquired those fears from direct experience, from seeing family or friends showing fear, or from frightening information, or a combination of the three pathways. They found that most of the children credited multiple sources to their fear and that the more pathways there were, the greater level of fear the children expressed; however most of the children reported indirect pathways (i.e. vicarious learning and fearful information) rather than direct conditioning. Thus the notion of pathways is made more complex by the argument that children are subject to multiple sources in the development of a fear; it is argued, for example, that verbal information regarding a fear can act upon direct conditioning by enhancing the level of fear, such as a child who has suffered a dog bite might later be told that dogs are dangerous disease carriers (Muris & Field, 2010). Field (2006) argues that Rachman's (1990) pathways are all actually underpinned by the same process: associative learning. Verbal information therefore leads to a representation of a threat which is associated with a particular object/event. The pathways of verbal acquisition and modelling of fear are particularly relevant for this piece of work as it is highly unlikely that any of the fears discussed in the subsequent chapters (such as abduction and paedophilia) will have been directly experienced by the participants, but rather that the fears are associated with the fears and talk of others. Furthermore the strength of fear associated with multiple pathways (Ollendick & King, 1991) supports the notion of fear as co-constituted by numerous factors.

Having briefly looked at the psychological literature concerning the widely accepted notion of pathways to fear and anxiety, we will now turn to psychoanalysis which has a contribution to make to the understanding of anxiety.

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[16] The ten fears were: getting burned, getting an electric shock, being hit by a car, being victim of a bomb attack, nuclear war, snakes, falling from a high place, a burglar breaking in, earthquakes, and not being able to breathe.

2.4. DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF ANXIETY

Psychoanalysis is worth considering at this stage as it has much to add concerning the development, presence, and processes of anxiety and fear in childhood; one of the fundamental aspects of psychoanalysis is its concern with the management of anxiety. Sigmund Freud made this issue crucial to his Oedipus and Electra complexes (through castration anxiety) and anxiety has remained an issue for therapists over the last century. Further contributions on the psychoanalytic understanding of anxiety have also been made over the years; René Spitz, for example, added the notion of 'stranger anxiety' whereby infants show distress at the face and presence of a stranger. He reasoned that this anxiety was actually caused by the absence of a caregiver rather than the presence of an unknown individual (Spitz, 1965). One of the most notable analysts interested in childhood anxiety was Harry Stack Sullivan who saw anxiety as central to our experiences and interpersonal relationships (Mitchell & Black, 1995). He saw anxiety as external to infants and transferred by other people through an 'empathic linkage;' thus when an anxious caregiver (who may be worried about an event completely unrelated to the infant) picks up the baby, the anxiety is sensed and experienced by the child. He argues that this anxiety then makes it difficult for the baby to satisfy it's basic needs as an anxious infant is unable to feed or to sleep properly. This is in keeping with the notion of social referencing which is closely linked to the modelling pathway described earlier and so the conceptualisation of fear as an emotion that is communicated between individuals is further reinforced.

2.4.1. Attachment Theory

One classic theory regarding childhood and anxiety has roots in psychoanalysis as Bowlby began to develop his ideas of 'attachment' whilst completing his psychoanalytic training. He first proposed the notion of attachment to caregivers in the late 1950s and his theories underwent change until their publication in their most complete form in a three-part volume of books (1969; 1973; 1980). Bowlby's theories arose from his work with "maladjusted children" (Bretherton, 1992: 759) in

both schools and hospitals where he developed an understanding of the role of the family in the child's emotional problems.[17] He proposed that the infant engaged in behaviours (such as crying or smiling or clinging) which had the purpose of maintaining proximity to the caregivers. He contended that this attachment was successfully achieved through four phases: (1) the pre-attachment stage (newborn to two months) when the infant is unable to discriminate between individuals; (2) between the ages of two and seven months the infant is beginning to recognise caregivers; (3) the ages of seven months to two years witness the child forming clear attachments which often result in separation distress and wariness of strangers; (4) finally after two years of age the child is able to enter into a more independent relationship during which the child is able to recognise the needs of the caregiver. Thus a healthy attachment arises from consistent care[18] which is sensitive to the child's needs, whereas an insecure attachment can result in anxiety as evidenced by the work of Mary Ainsworth.

Ainsworth developed Bowlby's notion of attachment following observation studies in Baltimore which were also accompanied by laboratory experiments with the mothers and infants (Bretherton, 1992). These experiments took the form of the 'strange situation' which is now a classic experiment in developmental psychology. The 'strange situation' experiment takes place with the mother, the child and an additional female (a stranger to the child) and in a room which has been set up with two chairs and a selection of toys for the infant (who is normally aged between 1-2 years at the time by which (according to Bowlby) an attachment to the mother should be strong). The experiment follows a methodical eight steps which are: (1) mother and child enter the test room; (2) infant is free to explore the room; (3) stranger enters, converses with mother and then attempts to play with the infant; (4) mother leaves; (5) mother returns and stranger leaves; (6) mother leaves and so baby is alone; (7) stranger returns; (8) mother returns and stranger leaves. All of these steps (except the first) take approximately three minutes, although this can be

[17] This was in contrast to his supervisor, Melanie Klein, who believed that problems in childhood were caused by drive conflicts which were manifested though fantasy, therefore she felt it unnecessary to involve the families in the therapeutic process.

reduced if the baby shows excessive distress (Meins, 2003). This experiment allows researchers, observing from behind a two-way mirror, to witness the child's responses to the departure and return of the stranger and caregiver.

Following these laboratory observations Ainsworth and colleagues (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) identified three categories of attachment: secure-attachment, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-resistant. The insecure-avoidant infants are characterised by a lack of interest in the caregiver with a focus on the environment (i.e. they avoid physical contact (including gaze)) and do not exhibit proximity seeking behaviours. On the other hand the insecure-resistant infants demonstrated an excessive interest in the caregiver with extreme distress upon separation. These classifications are based on the infant's reaction to both the separation anxiety induced by the absence of the caregiver and the infant's response upon the caregivers return; a securely attached infant shows separation distress, but is quickly comforted upon reunion and returns attention to the novel toys. These laboratory located behaviours were associated with varying levels of maternal sensitivity in the observation tasks and so a mother who responded to her child's cries, expressions and movements was more likely to have a securely attached infant (Bretherton, 1992). Thus an infant provided with a sensitive environment was liable to form a healthy attachment and experience the care-giving relationship as a safe base from which to explore their environment. The work of attachment theorists' positions primary caregivers as central to the occurrence of fear and anxiety in a child's life which further emphasises the importance of the social in the development and presence of fear in childhood.

Ainsworth et al.'s (1978) findings regarding the sensitivity of mothers in formulating secure attachments are supported by Denham (1993). In a study using naturalistic observation the author looked at the emotional dialogue between mothers and their two year old infants by studying the behaviour of both mother and child in relation to body language, discourse, and emotional display. She found that

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[18] This is not to promote the prioritisation of one caregiver as children are able to form multiple attachments to regular caregivers.

"children whose mothers responded optimally to fear were also less fearful in other situations" (Denham, 1993: 725). Thus, not only does the mother's sensitive responses (argued by Ainsworth to be central in forming a secure attachment) pacify the immediate fearful response from the infant, but also minimises future fearful responses:

> "Securely attached children perceive their caregiver as caring, responsive, and available. In contrast, insecurely attached children cannot count on the availability and responsiveness of attachment figures. Uncertainty about the availability of attachment figures increases the probability to respond with fear when experiencing alarming situations and "the person concerned is often referred to as suffering from free-floating anxiety" (Bowlby, 1973, p. 196). When a child is confident that attachment figure is readily accessible, s/he will be less prone to develop feelings of fear and anxiety than a child who make negative predictions regarding the caregivers' availability (Bowlby, 1973)" (Brumariu & Kerns, 2008: 394)

Psychoanalytic and attachment theory based notions of fear place great emphasis on the role of the caregiver in the production, management and effect of fear upon the infant. However, there is a greater cultural environment that also has a significant effect on the development of fear and this shall be explored in the next section.

2.5. SOCIALISATION AND VYGOTSKY

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky provides a persuasive account of how thought and language are socialised in the classic text 'Thought and Language' (1986). Within it he argues that children learn about the world through interaction, in particular that conversations become socialised into the child's internal thought processes. This is not just limited to verbal activity, but through the reciprocity and conversational rhythms that exist in early infancy, for example when infants coo and gurgle, sensitive caregivers respond to these noises as if an actual conversation is occurring

and so patterns become embedded in interpersonal processes. These conversational practices then become 'self-talk' as the child continues to negotiate the complexities of language (such as the constant narrative speech of a toddler) and as these intricacies of speech are overcome the verbal nature of language is internalised and becomes thought. It is useful to consider this a model for how emotions also become socialised as demonstrated in a quote that appeared earlier (in section 1.2) which is worth repeating at this juncture:

> "One needs to know how to get emotional properly by expressing it in public before one ever gets to the stage of experiencing a private emotion and holding it back. Similarly, it is clear that people only learn how to talk to themselves on the basis of their experience of actual interpersonal conversation (cf. Vygotsky, 1986)" (Parkinson, 1995: 279).

Shame and pride, for example, have been shown to exist only in the presence of other individuals, before they develop within the child. Specifically, notions of shame and pride relied upon the shame and pride of others, and it is only later that children were able to feel shame and pride by themselves (Harter & Whitesell, 1989). This is in keeping with Vygotsky's (1986) account of how children first have to have an experience socially before it can be internalised. These processes of internalisation however are managed and mediated by environmental and material resources, such as the caregivers verbal ability and familial levels of emotional expression; thus if a child is raised in a house where a range of emotions are frequently talked about then the inter- and intra-psychological processes will be more sophisticated than in a house where emotion is not a topic of conversation. Dunn, Bretherton and Munn (1987), for example, found that female toddlers were exposed to more talk about emotions than male toddlers, and that those females then spoke more of emotions: the more a toddler was exposed to talk of emotion, the greater the level of internalisation and personalisation. This reinforces Vygotsky's statement that:

> "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, in the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)… All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals" (1978: 57)

Vygotsky's notion of *perezhivanie* (which translates as 'lived experience') illustrates how our social and personal histories become entwined with meaning and our everyday constructions and descriptions of the world. This 'lived experience' is brought with us when we approach language (one of our primary methods of co-constitution) and the importance of social and personal history in learning is used by Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) to demonstrate the importance of emotion in the learning of English as an additional language. They argue that the dictionary definitions of words are unable to provide students with a true sense of the language, which is provided by their own *perezhivanie*. This is because "the individual sense of an utterance includes attributes that are shaped by culture and appropriated through social interaction" (ibid.: 50). This evidences that the social and cultural is an integral part of experiences and that emotions are an also an essential part of the co-constitution of meaning making.

There is an issue with the theorising of Vygotsky however, which is that he splits the social from the biological; he makes a distinction between "direct, innate, natural forms" and "mediated, artificial mental functions that develop in the process of cultural development" (Vygotsky, 1998: 168). This undermines the biological and neurological aspects of emotion which, as described in the previous chapter, are an essential aspect in the co-constitution of fear. Vygotsky also fails to account for the sensorial co-constitution of thought, such as the feeling of anxiety when considering a forthcoming event (Cromby 2004). The "cultural development" Vygotsky (ibid.) refers to is enabled and mediated by biology and as Cromby writes: "The embodied gets constitutively enrolled within the social at the same time as it reflexively enables it" (2007: 109-110). Consequently it is essential that the social and the biological are not separated, but acknowledged and subsequently treated as intertwined.

One further aspect of the development of fear that should be discussed which further evidences the effect of the social context is gender. Since the early beginnings of fear research over a century ago it has been consistently found that girls appear to have more fears than boys. Girls have been found to be more afraid of the dark, being kidnapped or killed, animals and dirt, while boys have reported higher fears for bodily injury, school failure and nightmares; furthermore these fears have been reported to be more intense for girls than boys (Gullone, 2000). It is argued, and there is some empirical evidence supporting this (Pierce & Kirkpatrick, 1992),[19] that in self-report measures (which fear investigations tend to be) that men artificially deflate the number and severity of fears they experience. These results are in line with long-held notions of western masculinity and femininity, as men are socialised to maintain the stereotype of invincibility and female vulnerability is constructed as more socially acceptable with girls socialised to consider their bodies as fragile (Young, 1980). These consistent findings in gender differences indicate the central role of cultural influence in the development of fear. This demonstrates that fear is not a purely biological response, but occurs within a specific social setting: thus we can understand how fear is co-constituted by a number of influences.

2.5.1. Socialisation Of Emotions

The focus of emotional experience and expression is often tied up within interpersonal relationships (e.g. love for or anger at another) however, "their particular emotional significance is also defined by broader cultural value systems" (Parkinson, 1996: 665). Russell (1989) provides a detailed explanation of how this socialisation process might occur and this is briefly replicated below:

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[19] In a 1992 (Pierce & Kirkpatrick) study, researchers conducted a 72-list item fear questionnaire with male and female undergraduate students. One month later the students were shown a video showing scenes of objects on the questionnaire (such as mice and a rollercoaster ride) and their heart rate was monitored; the students were advised that heart rate is often used as part of lie detector tests. The students were then administered a second questionnaire and it was found that on the re-test the male students scored higher on their fear ratings, while the female scores did not significantly differ between test and re-test. This indicates that the males had artificially (whether consciously or otherwise) lowered their initial questionnaire responses.

Level 1: Infants are able to discriminate changes in facial expression

Level 2: Infants develop the ability to discriminate between different classes of facial expression, for example smiles.

Level 3: Infants begin to assign meaning to facial expressions in terms of degrees of pleasure and arousal.

Level 4: Connections are made between two meaningful elements, such as a tone of voice associated with an expression or an expression coupled with an event.

Level 5: Connections are made between multiple facets of emotions, for example terms, contexts, behaviours and expressions.

Level 6: Following meaningful, multiple associations, emotion scripts arise; for example "in the emerging script for fear, for instances, the collection of frightening situations is summarized by the concept of danger, the collections of ensuing behaviours by the concept of avoidance" (Russell, 1989: 309).

Russell (1989) has provided no age range for each level as some of these stages may overlap or may never be reached (even in adulthood). His description of the development of emotion provides a way of understanding precisely how emotions become socialised, so for example in Levels 4 and 5 children of different cultures learn to associate cultural specific characteristics of emotions. In the Inuit tribe of Utku, for example, children are told and shown the emotions of *iqhi* (fear of physical misfortune) and *ilira* (fear of being unkindly treated) (Briggs, 1970). Furthermore the social world the child inhabits is saturated in culturally specific emotions: "English-speaking children are told stories about *romantic love* and *jealousy*, *fear* and *courage*. Japanese children are told stories of *itoshi* and *ijirashi*. Utku children of *iqhi*, *ilira*, and *qiquq*" (Russell, 1989: 306). The more general cultural attitude towards emotion should not be overlooked either, for example the Kipsigis tribe of Kenya pay little attention to emotions in an attempt to prioritise the communal over the personal, which is in stark contrast to the attention paid by western parents to the development of their child's emotional states (Ratner, 2000). Rusell's (ibid.) description allows for an understanding of just how emotions become socialised and internalised in that they have to be mastered on an interpersonal and cultural level before they are understood on a personal and individual level.

All of the above processes and theories (from attachment theories to Rachman's (1990) pathways) contribute to our understanding of how emotions, and in this case fear, are socialised in daily activities and behaviours. We learn fear through the fears of those around us (e.g. a parent who is afraid of spiders is likely to raise children who are afraid of spiders too), we learn from verbal information (i.e. if children are repeatedly told an object or person is scary) and we learn from our own terrifying experiences (a negative experience with a poorly administered vaccination can lead to a life time fear of needles). As children and infants we can also pick up on anxious environments which can lead to internalised fear and anxiety, although these effects can be somewhat mediated by sensitive caregivers. Fear and a sense of danger is socialised through the mundane routines of everyday life: through the warning that is implicit when a child is told to 'be careful,' through the space in which the child's daily life is played out where public arenas (such as the street) are constructed as un-safe, through the structuring and supervision of play. All of these practices are carried out in the monotony of everyday life and so the socialisation becomes implicit and non-intentional: as children are routinely educated (by society and caregivers) about the world, they are also taught to fear it. Routine and everyday warnings and restrictions against walking home in the dark, not conversing with strangers or playing outside of the home are reinforced by the fear belonging to parents, such as the tightened grip when walking past a hooded teenager or the choice to stand on the bus rather than sit separately (and next to strangers) impose upon children a fear of the outside world and those unknown people operating within it. Crossing the road to avoid a large group of men congregating around a pub door or a hurrying away of offspring when they talk to unknown children or adults at the playground or the constant chaperone at the park strengthen this sense of fear which develops through a slow process of erosion of trust in others which is replaced by perpetual anxiety.

2.6. SUMMARY

In this chapter we have explored several theories of emotion development which all act to further our understanding of how fear becomes socialised, as well as

forwarding a description of fear as a deeply embodied emotion with a rich evolutionary heritage. However, while these theories do have much to offer the researcher there are also serious flaws with each theory which limit their usefulness. We began with a look at the development of basic emotions, the emergence of which Izard (1971; 1977) argues relies upon social and interpersonal demands. However both the theories of basic emotions and DET fail to adequately address the cultural nature of fear; the purely biological approach to basic emotions also fails to address the learned nature of fear. We moved onto Rachman's (1990) theory of pathways which suggests that there are three ways that fear can be socialised: through direct conditioning, vicarious learning or fear inducing information. There is strong empirial support for these pathways and the verbal acquisition route is particular relevant to the focus of this thesis. The proposal of pathways also takes into account the co-constitued nature of fear as it is suggested that fear can evolve through multiple routes.

We also turned to psychoanalysis and attachment theory which place great emphasis on the child's relationship with caregivers, who can both promote and ease anxiety and fear. While these central relationships are subject to close scrutiny by researchers and psychoanalysts and are undoubtedly very important in the development of emotions, this focus means that the wider cultural context and the biological basis of the fear experience is overlooked. Finally we looked to the work of Vygotksy (1978; 1986) and Russell (1989) for a more in-depth understanding of how socialisation occurs and how an individual's *perezhivanie* bring social and personal histories to meaning making. While this body of work certainly addresses the more cultural and social aspects of emotion and fear, they also fail to address the fundamentally bioligacal nature of emotional experience.

The diverse nature of these theories represents the multi-faceted nature of any emotional experience; no emotion is purely verbal, biological, personal or social but a combination. We can therefore witness again how an approach which recognises the co-consitution of emotion (and fear in particular given the subject under study) from biological, individual, linguistic, social and material factors. In the next chapter we will turn to the socio-historical and material context of fear with which this thesis is particularly concerned.

CHAPTER 3

CULTURE OF FEAR

This chapter seeks to explore the specific cultural environment which this thesis is concerned with. In recent decades the UK has undergone a wide range of changes in terms of demographics, technology, and the structure of the family. Once the natures of these aspects of contemporary society have been briefly explored, the notion of a culture of fear will then be introduced. Examination of this culture will take place at a broad level before focusing in on the effects on parenting and childhood in particular. This chapter will enable the reader to develop an understanding of the social phenomena that have resulted in a culture of fear in contemporary Britain and the particular effects of this culture on parenting and childhood. Through this exploration we can better understand the environment in which fear is socialised and which consequently contributes to the co-constitution of that emotion.

3.1. SOCIAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

In the first section of this chapter, the notion of change in society and the family over recent decades will be discussed in order to evidence the notion of an unstable and insecure world. Firstly wider social, technological and demographic shifts will be described, before looking at the family unit and the changing nature of parenting. These social, material and cultural changes are integral to understanding the circumstances that have led to the development and proliferation of a culture of fear in contemporary Britain.

3.1.1. A Changed World

The twentieth century witnessed something of an explosion in technology that has radically altered our personal lives, working lives and society. Our domestic lives have been changed dramatically by the wide-scale utilisation of technologies such as the washing machine, microwave and convenience products such as ready meals and disposable nappies. One development that has changed the face of modern Britain is the increase in car ownership[20] and this mass adoption of the car has meant that the spatial arena in which daily lives are carried out is greater than ever. Undoubtedly the greatest technological change in recent years has involved communication technology; in 2009 70% of households had access to the internet (Office for National Statistics, 2009a) and it is not uncommon for a household to have multiple computers and laptops. Mobile phone technology has also dramatically changed processes of communication. Nearly 80% of households owned a mobile phone in 2007 (Office for National Statistics, 2008) and many mobile phones also incorporate internet technology thus it is possible to connect to the internet on the move and from any location. These advances in communications technology mean that people can be in contact 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and from around the globe. This can lead to the adoption of the mobile phone as a safety device and a form of supervision, particularly in the case of children (Devitt & Roker, 2009). An advert for the Samsung 'tobi,' for example, a mobile phone marketed specifically towards pre-teen children features a young boy dressed in a multitude of safety equipment including ear protectors, goggles, whistle, elbow and knee guards, heavy duty gloves and a helmet with tagline 'There's nothing wrong with being a protective parent.' Thus the mass utilisation of mobile phone and internet technology goes further than changing the way we communicate, but also the way notions of safety and supervision operate.

A further effect of the explosion of communication technologies has been a transformation in the media. While news reporting was once limited to newspaper,

radio and restricted television broadcasts, it is now possible to access 24 hour news; updates to mobiles, online news channels and email updates meaning that keeping up with the news around the globe is incredibly easy for those with access to the technology. Additionally, the ubiquitous nature of contemporary news reporting means that rather than hearing the news once a day (for example by watching the nightly broadcast) the same news story can be encountered multiple times a day which acts to produce familiarity rather than novelty. Furthermore the nature of news reporting has also changed as Wardle writes in her study of high profile child murders in the twentieth century:

> "In the 1930s and 1960s, whilst these crimes were considered shocking, they were defined and described as isolated, motiveless murders… committed upon young girls who were unfortunately in the wrong place at the wrong time. By the 1990s, the sexual motives of the offenders had been widely acknowledged and fears increased about the perceived threat of 'predatory paedophiles' stalking communities. As a result, these rare tragic instances seemed to touch the wider public's imagination" (2007: 264)

Thus, not only is the reporting of tragedies and moral panics (Cohen, 1972) more intensive, but it is also more personal, particularly when child victims are involved.

While global communities are thriving due to the leaps and bounds in communications technology, geographically local communities are diminishing. A decline in local sites of mass employment has meant that communities often lack a uniting feature and increased mobility means that families do not live in the same location as they used to. In previous decades it was not uncommon for several generations of the same family to live in neighbouring streets and to work in the same place. Other places of communal activity, such as the church or the street itself (as children use the space to play for example) have also declined and so there

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[20] In 1951 just 13% owned one car and 1 % owned two, while by 2007 these figures had increased dramatically with 44% of the British population owning one car, 26% owning two and 6% owning three or more (Department for Transport, 2009).

are fewer meaningful interactions with neighbours leading to an increasingly insular way of life for many. It is now common for people to not know the name of their neighbours, let alone be friends with or related to them; there exists a situation for many where evenings are spent chatting to friends made online on the other side of the world, but they may also not know their next-door neighbours. While global communities are beneficial and provide guidance 24/7 they cannot replace the support of a local community and so this material change has important implications for our conceptualisations and sense of security.

However, while it feels that the degree of change in our lives is unprecedented, this is not necessarily the case. Throughout history our culture has been subject to periods of financial, political and social upheaval; in the twentieth century for example the UK witnessed World Wars I and II, the movement towards gender and racial equality, the widening of education, several political crisis and many technological developments. It is often forgotten that previous generations had significant short- and long-term changes to adapt to and did so successfully. There is therefore a misplaced sense of uncertainty and unparalleled change and risk (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). Giddens writes:

> "Preoccupation with risk in modern social life has nothing directly to do with the actual prevalence of life-threatening dangers. On the level of the individual lifespan, in terms of life expectation and degree of freedom from serious disease, people in the developed societies are in a much more secure position than most were in previous ages" (1991: 115)

However, whether the risk and change is unprecedented is something of a moot point, because there is still the perception that this world is dangerous and fast changing.

3.1.2. Changing Nature Of Family

We will now move on to look at changes to the family and cultural representations of childhood and parenting. In 2006 there were a total of 17.1 million families in the UK and of these 71% percent were comprised of families where the parents were married (Office for National Statistics, 2007), with an increasing number of lone parents families and parents who are not married (Office for National Statistics, 2009b). There are also fewer children per family as this figure fell over the course of the twentieth century from 3.5 to 1.7 per household (Hicks & Allen, 1999). An increase in re-marriages has meant that in 2008 37% of marriages were not the first marriages for either party, compared with 9% in 1940 (Office for National Statistics, 2010). These remarriages are also indicative of a growing number of step-families (or 'blended families' or 'reconstituted families') where children are growing up with step-parents and step-siblings. It is not just relationship status that has resulted in the shape of the family today, but also the increased employment of mothers. Since 1971 the employment rate for women has risen from 56.4% to 70.1% (Kent, 2009). The employment of mothers in the workplace has connections to the increasing financial demands of the twentieth and twenty first century when the dire financial years of the 1970s and 1980s (as well as the more recent 2007 recession which is still affecting many across the globe) meant mass unemployment and struggles to meet bills while consumer desire is greater than ever. While financial necessity means that in many contemporary families both parents have to work, for many women the decision to return to work after children is a personal one and could be seen as an attempt to maintain an identity which is not bound up with their status as mothers.

A changing family structure has also been accompanied by a general change in parent and child relations. Hardyment's 'Dream Babies' (2007) documents the changing nature of parenting advice over the course of centuries and notes that in recent years parenting has become less authoritative in nature; parents are now encouraged to give credence to their child's opinions and to allow them to play a role in decision making. A child-centred style of parenting arose in the twentieth century, based on Freud and Piaget, championed and popularised by the work of Dr. Benjamin Spock in particular which aimed to be more affectionate with children and

break free from Victorian rigidity and formality.[21] There are numerous parenting methodologies (such as the Ferber method[22] or attachment parenting[23]) and Hoffman (2010) argues that the adoption of these techniques is akin to being part of a tribe with parents gaining a sense of identity and control from affiliation with parenting styles. Parents are faced with a barrage of experts each advising them of a different technique and in an increasing geographically mobile world it is possible for parents not to have the local support of family members who would have traditionally passed on parenting skills. Not only are parents raising children in what may be a different social and family environment to the one they were raised in, they are also raising them in a different way.

Material changes (such as the loss of communities and increases in technologies), social changes (such as changed family structures) and cultural changes (such as changing representations parenthood and childhood) have acted to change society, the family and our daily lives in recent decades. While space here does not allow for a more thorough investigation of these changes, the above is sufficient enough to illustrate that contemporary society has been radically altered in recent decades. The rapidity of these changes has resulted in a sense of instability and insecurity which has manifested itself in an increasingly anxious age.

3.2. CULTURE OF FEAR

It is against this cultural backdrop that a 'culture of fear' has emerged in recent decades. It was sociologist Furedi who first theorised on the subject and his book 'Culture of Fear' introduced his observations about contemporary culture which he

[21] There does seem to be a backlash against this informality however with many parents following the methods of Gina Ford who recommends a strict routine for babies and toddlers.
[22] The Ferber method is based on the work of Dr. Richard Ferber and involves teaching babies to 'self soothe' by leaving the baby to cry without comfort for progressively longer intervals.
[23] Attachment parenting is based on the work of John Bowlby (as previously described in section 2.4.1.) and William Sears and encourages a secure attachment between infant and parent through extensive touch, co-sleeping and sensitive responsiveness to the child's needs.

describes as suffering a fearful and tentative way of life.[24] Given the social and material features that are described above it is easy to understand why such a state of fear has developed: individuals are living their daily lives without a sense of connection to their communities, which is compounded by a rapidly changing way of life in terms of technology while the current adult generation are still learning to deal with changing family structures and roles. These dramatic changes mean that a sense of permanence and security is lost and in its place has arisen a sense of anxiety and disengagement from society. However rather than lamenting a lack of local community or stability, focus is instead switched to a multitude of inconsequential risks which are ostensibly easier to act upon than wide-scale social issues.

These risks do not just concern health and activities, but also people and Furedi believes that western society now "feels uncomfortable with itself" (2002: viii). He argues there has been an emergence of a 'New Etiquette' which, in the absence of a governing and universal morality, is ostensibly non-judgemental and acts to further risk-aversion and safety: behaviours are no longer judged as 'good or bad,' but as 'safe or unsafe.' With regards to obesity, for example, it is undesirable for the government to make a moral judgement regarding weight, but it is acceptable for them to introduce a health campaign based on the risks associated with obesity; likewise it is not appropriate to make a judgement about promiscuity, but it is to promote a 'safe sex' campaign. Furedi (2002) also argues that the focus on smaller and improbable risks shifts the spotlight from larger and more severe problems in society. It is easier for the government (both in terms of public relations and finances) to focus on the problem of obese children (as demonstrated by the government's Change4Life campaign) than to confront and deal with the challenging fact that in 2006/2007 2.9 million children were living in poverty in the UK (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2009) with 4 in 10 children in London living in poverty (End Child Poverty London Project, 2009).

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[24] The book was originally published in 1997, but was re-published in 2002 following the 9/11 terrorist attack. The 2002 edition will be referred to in this work.

Part of this 'discomfort' society feels with itself is a distrust of people and their motives. A proliferation of news stories reporting on the destructive side of human nature coupled with a disconnection from society has resulted in a lack of connection to fellow human beings, which in turn breeds distrust and suspicion (Bailey, 2008). Strangers are treated with suspicion from the outset, for example when a young woman goes on a date she is advised to let friends know where she is, to call someone when she returns home and to accompany her date to the bar to ensure her drink is not tampered with; thus a date becomes a safety exercise and a potential partner becomes a potential rapist. In every avenue of life fellow humans are interacted with on the basis that they intend to commit harm. This issue has particular poignancy for parents as they view strangers as potential abductors, abusers and murderers. It is not just people who are viewed in terms of risk, but also aspects of daily life. Risks - whether in the form of moral panics, over-reporting in the media, or government directives - are omnipresent. However, and perhaps more concerning, it is not just actual risks that we are faced with, but also hypothetical risks. The NHS for example updated its advice to women who are trying to conceive or are pregnant from previously advising women not to get intoxicated and to limit alcohol to 1-2 units once or twice a week to currently recommending no alcohol at all. This change was not based on any scientific evidence, but on "current thinking" (NHS, 2010) and so it is the hypothetical and unproven risk that is being cautioned against. An unproven association between the MMR vaccine and autism has led to hundreds of thousands of children not being vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella on the basis of a hypothetical risk, which in turn has led to an increase in the incidence rate of the diseases.[25] Thus it is not just scientifically established risks to health and wellbeing that we are encouraged to be concerned about, but also hypothetical risks. It is not surprising that a focus on risk and threat has led to an increasingly oppressive health and safety culture.

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[25] A study by Wakefield et al. in 1998 was the subject of mass reporting as the authors reported to have made a link between the MMR vaccine and the onset of autism. The findings of the study did not support this claim and no subsequent scientific investigations have found a link. The NHS spent millions on campaigns to reinforce the safety of the vaccination and Wakefield's study was widely discredited. Wakefield's professional conduct was investigated by the General Medical Council and he was subsequently struck off in May 2010 (Meikle & Boseley, 2010).

A focus on risk and threat has led to a desire to minimise that perceived danger. In general terms this has meant a proliferation of health and safety in our daily lives: from the over-excessive use of health and safety signs to the enforcement of policies and directives which attempt to remove the threat of injury at any cost. We are all familiar with extreme procedures taken in the name of health and safety such as the removal of gravestones (Bunyan, 2010), the banning of swimming goggles ("Goggles kids' ban," 2010) and door mats in communal halls ("No welcome for our mats," 2010). On a more serious note there have been numerous stories which have appeared in the press of deaths as life-saving intervention would have breached health and safety directives which demonstrates just how restrictive these regulations can be ("Cops left mother to choke," 2010; Wright, 2009). Any arena involving potential injury to children is subject to even more stringent health and safety rules. A 2009 survey of teachers revealed some of the following regulations: no running in the playground, the banning of snowball fights and the use of goggles when using blu-tac. It is perhaps therefore not surprising that nearly half of teachers felt that health and safety regulations negatively affected both children's education and the personal development of the students (teachers.tv, 2009).

An orientation towards health and safety has not only been caused by an over-analysis of risk, but also a belief that there is a 'compensation culture' in the UK. Furedi (2002) reasons that this culture has developed as an attempt to assign meaning to unfortunate accidents: no longer can religion be used to explain 'God's work' (Bauman, 2008), rather an accident has occurred because somebody has failed to do their job. This is a belief that has been embraced by the legal profession, a thriving branch of which are the 'No Win, No Fee' solicitors who aim to ensure the victim receives the compensation they are entitled to. There are suggestions that there has not been an increase in litigation, that a compensation culture is a myth (Better Regulation Task Force, 2004), yet this is just as dangerous and has had an impact on the over-zealous implementation on health and safety policies. Related to Furedi's point regarding a desire to attach meaning to accidents is a praise of suffering and victimhood, which seeks to create a positive out of a horrific

experience.[26] Thus the high status of victimhood in our society can be witnessed in the tragic real life autobiographies that appear in the bestsellers list and is arguably related to the desire to attach meaning to negative experiences.

Mention must also be made at this stage of the influence of the media as Barry Glassner (1999) positions this as central to a culture of fear and draws particular attention to the use of 'poster cases.' The use of poster cases is a phenomenon whereby a particular case is focused on to bring a personal story to a campaign issue; for example drug campaigners in the UK, for instance, have used the case of Leah Betts[27] to highlight their cause. However more powerful than a poster case is the use of a 'poster child' which invokes a stereotypically vulnerable group to highlight a particular social evil (Glassner, 1999). These poster children have led to a number of laws which are emotively named after them, particularly in America; Megan's Law[28] is probably the most well known, which allows information to be made available to the public regarding the location of registered sex offenders. These tragic cases involving children have also given rise to a new type of fame: "a particularly influential category of person in the culture of fear: the grieving parent-cum-celebrity" (Glassner, 1999: 63).[29] Parents and siblings are often used as an emotional bargaining tool by the police and media, with moving appearances at press conferences and appeals. The aim of the 'grieving parent-cum-celebrity' is to

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[26] Dave Pelzer is the epitome of this notion. His autobiography, 'A Child Called 'It'' (Pelzer, 2001), was a New York Times Bestseller for over six years and he has gone on to write five more books, either about his abuse experiences or his ability to overcome them. He is a regular on talk shows such as Oprah Winfrey and Montel Williams, has a radio talk show, and attends book signings. It would also appear that the career is something of a family affair, with Pelzer's younger brother Richard also author of several books recounting his childhood abuse.

[27] Leah Betts collapsed and lapsed into a coma on the 11th November 1995 having taken an ecstasy tablet a few hours earlier; she did not recover and died on 16th November 1995. She was 18 at the time and came from a middle-class background. Her case was reported world wide in the press to highlight the dangers of ecstasy. It later emerged that her death was due to water intoxication, a fact that was often downplayed in the reporting of her death.

[28] The law is named after Megan Kanka, a seven-year-old who was kidnapped, sexually-assaulted and murdered in July 1994 by Jesse Timmendequas, a repeat sexual offender who lived opposite the Kanka family.

[29] The ultimate 'celebrity grieving parent' is John Walsh from America. His son Adam Walsh was six years old when he was kidnapped in July 1981 from a department store; some of his remains were later found on a beach. Infamous serial killer Ottis Toole was linked to his death, as was Jeffrey Dahmer more recently, but charges were never brought against either. John Walsh has since become a national celebrity, campaigning on behalf of parents with missing children and going on to present 'America's Most Wanted' and 'The John Walsh Show.' Adam Walsh also has a legal act named in remembrance of him which ensures that juvenile sex offenders are publicly registered.

shape policy and introduce legislation to ensure a similar tragedy is prevented and unfortunately "the determination of a grief-stricken relative makes a rational discussion of crime policy very difficult" (Wardle, 2006: 276). In the UK at the moment the epitome of 'grieving parent-cum-celebrities' are Gerry and Kate McCann who rose to fame following the disappearance of their daughter Madeleine and this case is discussed in further detail below.[30]

3.2.1. The Disappearance Of Madeleine McCann

The McCann family hit the headlines on the 3rd of May 2007 when their daughter Madeleine (or Maddie) was abducted from their holiday apartment in Praia da Luz on the Portuguese Algarve. At the time she disappeared Madeleine was three years old (b. 12th May 2003) and was alone in the family's rented apartment with her younger siblings (twins Sean and Amelia were two years old at the time of the abduction). On that fateful evening Kate and Gerry McCann left their sleeping children in their apartment while they dined with friends in a nearby restaurant. The McCanns were holidaying with three other families[31] and they too had left their children in a similar arrangement. Kate and Gerry arrived at the resort restaurant at just past 8.30pm and after that conducted regular checks on the children. When Kate checked on the children just after 10pm she noticed Madeleine had disappeared[32] and following the discovery the police were alerted and a search began for Madeleine and continued through the night. The subsequent investigation resulted in no significant leads and the police case was officially closed in July of

[30] Mention of the Madeleine case is being made here as the case frequently appears in the subsequent chapters of analysis, thus the disappearance is described in detail here to provide background for future references.

[31] The McCanns were holidaying with three other couples: David and Fiona Payne, Matthew and Rachel Oldfield, Russell O'Brien and Jane Tanner. Also with the group was Diane Webster (mother of Fiona Payne). These adult members of the group were nicknamed 'The Tapas 7' by the media. A total of eight young children (including the three McCann children) were taken on holiday.

[32] Gerry conducted a check just after 9pm and Matthew Oldfield checked on the McCann children around 9.30pm as he went to check on his own children. He later admitted that he had not entered the children's bedroom but had just listened outside the door. It later emerged that Jane Tanner witnessed a man carrying a small sleeping child near to the apartments at approximately 9.15pm. It has been suggested that this man and child could have been the abductor carrying Madeleine away from the scene.

2008 and at the time of writing there is still no clear idea of what happened to Madeleine.

Media involvement was rapid as Gerry and Kate sought to widen the search for their daughter to a global level. Photographs of Madeleine, including a focus on an imperfection in her right eye,[33] were circulated among media outlets with her parents hopeful that the high media coverage would lead to sightings of their small daughter. Media interest rumbles on but peaks at certain dates (such as the date of Madeleine's disappearance and her birthday). The McCanns have become the epitome of the celebrity grieving parent (Glassner, 1999) and images of Kate clutching Madeleine's favourite toy are as easy to recollect as images of Madeleine herself. The high level of interest in the case, as well as the way that interest has been maintained and orchestrated by the McCann's themselves makes this case an exceptional one.

In this section we can see how aspects of a culture of fear are related to each other and to wider social changes, most importantly the detachment of the individual from community and society. A generalised state of anxiety becomes attached to moral panics and media hypes which in turn lead to the over-zealous implementation of risk-avoidant practices. A focus on risk (both real and hypothetical) furthers this ubiquitous health and safety culture which is further reinforced by a belief in a compensation culture. If one is unlucky enough to become a victim of abuse or an accident then meaning can be acquired through blame or salvation can be attained through public catharsis. Thus we can see how in every arena of life notions of danger and suffering are promoted and connected to a sense of fear, vulnerability and isolation. This has implications for parenting and childhood which shall now be explored.

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[33] Madeleine has a birth defect in her right eye whereby the pupil is not round, but appears to run into the surrounding iris. This is a rare feature and has been much publicised as an identifying feature.

3.3. CULTURE OF FEAR: PARENTING AND CHILDHOOD

The issues that have been described above all have a particular impact upon parenting and childhood. The responsibility of raising a child is a great one, yet with a global sense of vulnerability, insecurity and a lack of community this responsibility is seemingly multiplied many more times. This section will explore the experience of parenting and childhood in contemporary culture. Initially we will look at the role of the parent and will look specifically at the process of 'paranoid parenting' as theorised by Furedi (2001). The first sub-section examines general changes that have occurred between adult and child interactions that are not solely related to parenting. We will then look at modern childhood and explore how it has been transformed in recent decades, focusing in on the changing nature of play as this taps into shifts within wider society which have already been explored.

3.3.1. Changing Nature Of Parenting

Given the changes described above it is unsurprising that parenting has also been subject to radical changes. The introduction of technology, for example, has changed the face of modern parenting. Internet access means that parents are able to communicate with one another across the globe and while this is a form of support, online advice can also provide a wealth of conflicting advice as to which baby product is the best, whether to let a child 'cry it out' or when to wean and what to feed. Technology also allows mothers and fathers to share their parenting journey with a global audience through blogs, social networks sites and forums.[34] Once the child is gaining independence parents also have to navigate them through a technological world which involves defining restrictions (or not) on how much time is spent in front of the television of computer screen, at what age the child is allowed internet access and to what site they are allowed access to. This technology can also be used to keep an eye on children and has led to the emergence of 'Big Mother'

[34] Parenting blogs are hugely popular with some of the most visited including www.amodernmother.com (UK site), www.alphamummy.com (UK site), and www.dooce.com (American site).

who constantly watches her children through a variety of technological equipment from GPS to nanny cams to 'child safety kits'[35] should the worst happen (Katz, 2008).

It is not only the tools and products used by parents that have changed, but a more general shift has occurred in the nature of parenting. Hardyment (2007) in her look back at parenting advice manuals between 1750 and 2007 observes a distinct change from authoritative parenting styles to a more informal relationship between parent and child. In today's parenting styles the child's voice is just as active and valid as parents and households are scheduled around term times, school hours, and extra-curricular classes. This informal manner of parenting has been accompanied by an increase in anxiety as the culture of fear described earlier becomes more intense where children are concerned:

> "Children are seen as symbolic of the social order and as anxieties are raised about contemporary society, these anxieties are projected onto children, and are most troubling to adults as they perceive their primary role to be as protectors of their children. The child has become a way of considering society itself - any threats facing children in turn become forces which threaten to rock the social base" (Wardle, 2006: 528).

The "free floating anxiety" (Furedi, 2007) in contemporary society becomes attached to childhood and so the phenomenon of 'paranoid parenting' (Furedi, 2001) arises.

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[35] The 'child safety kits' can arguably be considered to be at the extreme end of a 'just in case' mindset. More popular in the USA the kits contain documentation for a child's details in case of abduction; they often contain equipment for taking and storing DNA samples, fingerprints, noting any distinguishing features, dental records and up to date photographs.

3.3.1.1. Paranoid Parenting

One of the primary changes to parenting (and consequently childhood) that has arisen from a culture of fear is the development of 'paranoid parenting' (Furedi, 2001) where contemporary parenting is increasingly dominated by a sense of paranoia and anxiety. Furedi writes:

> "Traditionally, good parenting has been associated with nurturing, stimulating and the socialisation of children. Today, it is associated with monitoring their activities. Parents are continually advised to supervise their children. An inflated sense of risk prevails, which demands that children should never be left on their own and that they should preferably be within the sight of one of their parents. An army of professionals advises that children are never safe." (2001: xii)

It is in this environment that parenting has become a role that is surrounded by increasing anxiety. Furedi cites the main reason for paranoid parenting as "*the breakdown of adult solidarity*" (2001: 11, author's own emphasis) whereby parents are left with the sense of sole responsibility for their child's safety and upbringing and a sense of mistrust in other adults. This breakdown of adult solidarity is also enhanced and shaped by a culture of fear and the suspicion that is bred in such a culture, while it is also a consequence of the social and material transformations (such as the loss of local communities) in recent years.

This sense of sole responsibility combines with the endless litany of expert advice and an increasingly individualised existence to enforce the notion of parental determinism, as parents are considered the ultimate, if not only, significant factor in their children's safe development. Jackson and Scott indicate towards this parental determinism in the following: "Parents must not only guard against immediate threats to their children's well-being but must also plan for any event that might disrupt their development towards physically and psychologically healthy adulthood" (2000: 163). An absence of any kind of parental misjudgement or negative experience is an impossibility and subsequently "guilt is the hallmark of the age" (Hardyment, 2007: 283). This is then enhanced by parental peer pressure

(Valentine, 1997a) which contributes to a vicious cycle of guilt, responsibility and peer pressure. Thus in paranoid parenting we see the crystallisation of "free floating anxiety" (Furedi, 2007) which is directed at the safety and well-being of children, placing weighty responsibility on the shoulders of anxious parents leading to paranoid parenting (Furedi, 2001).

One important effect of parental paranoia has been the ever increasing amount of time parents spend supervising their children and the use of structured activities (such as football coaching or dance lessons) as a substitute for not allowing them to play freely (Jenkins, 2006; Valentine, 1997a; Valentine, 1999). This type of parenting has given rise to the term 'helicopter parenting' to describe those mothers and fathers who spend their time constantly hovering around their offspring. This change in parenting is both part of and due to wider shifts in adult and child interactions which will now be explored.

3.3.1.2. Adult And Child Interactions

The lack of confidence that is described above in relation to parenting is also connected with more general interactions between adults and children: adults are afraid to interact with children in a spontaneous and unguarded manner. A stranger offering a child a sweet or talking to them during a bus journey are innocent activities that are now shrouded in suspicion and discomfort which in turn further fuels the notion that adults cannot be trusted. It is not just positive interactions with the general public that children are missing out on, but also communal discipline. As children misbehave in public, whether being too noisy or crossing a road dangerously, it is not guaranteed in modern Britain that an adult will step in to correct the child; and it is even less certain that the child's parents will welcome such interference. In an interesting experiment that demonstrates adults' unwillingness to interact with and help children unknown to them the Tonight Programme (2008) employed two child actors (a seven year old girl and a nine year old girl) to act lost in a busy shopping centre; of the 1817 adults who walked past the children, just five members of the public stopped to help. The experiment demonstrates why parents may be uncomfortable relying on other adults to help their children in public should the need arise.

The issue of touch highlights this lack of trust and loss of community as physical interaction between adult and child is no longer something that is done naturally. People who work with children in a professional capacity, particularly teachers, are subject to a minefield of both written and unwritten rules which govern contact with their young charges. It is now common practice for schools to implement a 'no touch' policy and teachers are discouraged to touch their students, so the act of sitting a child on a lap or hugging a child in distress is now something that is often forbidden (Piper & Stronach, 2008). Touch is prohibited on the grounds that it could be misconstrued as improper and result in a complaint or litigious action, but also that it could lead to (directly or indirectly) paedophilic abuse. When touch is allowed it is done in accordance with certain rules: a hand on the shoulder, an open hand on the back or a hug from the side with the child's body demarcated into regions that are safe to touch (Piper & Stronach, 2008). Touch is also allowed if it is child led, i.e. if the child asks for a hug or initiates touch, however while this request may be carried out through non-verbal behaviour (e.g. a distressed child in need of a hug) permission is still encouraged to be sought verbally, but:

> "… the difference between giving a distressed child a hug and asking that child 'would you like a hug?' is that the former is given as an unprompted expression of human compassion, and the latter is a transaction that requires a child's formal consent." (Furedi & Bristow, 2008: 38)

Thus the innocent comforting of a child becomes formalised and an issue of permission and so an environment of mistrust, regulation and suspicion pervades activities and behaviours that should be routine in the responsible care of a child.

The Criminal Records Bureau (henceforth referred to as CRB) was initially set up in 2002 to provide background checks on those who spent considerable time alone with children in a professional or voluntary capacity (such as teachers or youth workers). Since its inception the CRB has been subject to increasingly tight legislation and there is now a stringent vetting procedure in this country which is confusing and potentially harmful; confusion which has been compounded by the introduction of the Vetting and Barring scheme in October 2009. While background checks for

those in responsible position are an essential part of working responsibly with children, the degree to which the checks pry into a person's past through rumour and unsubstantiated allegations is questionable. There is a deeper wound that has also been inflicted on those who work with in that an atmosphere of mistrust, suspicion and discomfort has been created. The assumption that people use employment and volunteering to gain access to children to abuse is a hideous one, yet it is from this assumption that the CRB acts. CRB checks fall within a spectrum of behaviours (as described above) in which adults are on their guard when working with children, which in turns further fuels the atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust. Despite the millions of pounds and hours that have gone into CRB checks there still remain two fatal flaws with the system. Firstly the system can only check for crimes that have been proven (or suspected as in the case of the enhanced disclosure) not crimes that have actually have been committed, thus if one has been successful in committing crimes and evading capture then this will not show up on a CRB check. Furthermore a CRB check captures an individual's police record at a specific time point and is not an indicator of future criminal/abusive behaviour, as witnessed in the case of the Plymouth nursery abuse case in 2009.[36]

There is also a paradox in contemporary constructions of childhood with children conceptualised as 'angels' who need protection and are increasingly vulnerable, but there is a conflicting view which holds children to be 'devils' (Valentine, 1996). This detrimental construction conceives of children as dangerous, wild and

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[36] Vanessa George made national headlines in June 2009 when it emerged that she had been abusing a number of children at her place of work: the Little Ted's nursery in Plymouth. The case came to light after photographs were found on the laptop of her online lover, Colin Blanchard (living in Greater Manchester at the time of his arrest) and the Little Ted's logo was found on some of the child abuse images. It later emerged that Blanchard was also in an online relationship with Angela Allen (of Nottingham) who had also sent him child sex abuse images. The crimes of George were particularly shocking as she abused the children and babies within her professional care, taking pictures on mobile phones when she was alone with the children (usually when changing nappies). George has remained mute on the subject of her victims and has refused to name them leaving the families who employed the nursery in purgatory (the photographs did not include faces). In December 2009 the women were jailed indefinitely with a minimum term of seven years for George and five for Allen. At the time of writing Blanchard is still awaiting sentencing as he is investigated for other crimes. Of reference to this particular section is the fact that as a nursery worker (her previous job was also in a school) George had received a clear enhanced disclosure.

untrustworthy: the stereotypical image of the hooded teenage gang on street corners intimidating passers-by sums up this conceptualisation, as 'teenager' has become synonymous with anti-social behaviour (Alexander, 2008; Loader, Girling, & Sparks, 1998). This 'othering' of children (Valentine, 1996; 1997a) can be witnessed in everyday life: it is not uncommon to see signs stating a limit on the number of school children allowed in a corner shop at any one time. This reflects a diminishment in adult authority and confidence with quotes like the following familiar: "I've seen children as young as 10 doing quite serious crimes and I've been unable to stop them because I've felt threatened. They would have thumped me if I had tried to stop them (father, metropolitan area, Greater Manchester)" (Valentine, 1996: 592). Thus not only are adults struggling to interact with children in a natural way that does not arouse mistrust, but are also dealing with children they are afraid of: it is unsurprising that contemporary adult and child interaction is marked by confusion, second-guessing and insecurity.

3.3.2. Changing Nature Of Childhood

Through the seminal work of Aries (1996) and others (such as Cunningham, 2006; Jenks, 2005) we can understand how the category of childhood is constructed and co-constituted with contemporary western youth peculiar to this time and place. There is confusion however around when childhood can be demarcated from adulthood which can be witnessed by the different ages of majority which is just ten for criminal responsibility, 16 for the right to get married, 17 to drive and 18 to vote (Jackson & Scott, 2000).[37] This is further confused in contemporary society by the prolonged period of time which children are financially dependent upon parents with an increased number of adults reliant upon parental support during the university years and a higher level of adult children still living at home.[38] Thus the boundaries of child and adulthood are blurred as society "looks upon adults as simply

[37] The age of criminal responsibility in the UK is particularly low at ten and is the lowest in Europe; other European countries have their age of criminal responsibility set at 12 and up.

[38] In 2008 24.5% of men and 12.8% of women aged 25-29 and 10.3% of men and 4.9% of women aged 30-34 lived at home with their parents; the reasons for this 'boomerang generation' are ostensibly financially with an increased level of student debt and high house prices meaning home

biologically mature children, and children as physically underdeveloped grown-ups" (Furedi, 2010); and so the co-constitution of childhood is variable according to the socio-historical environment.

A further contemporary conceptualisation is that children are worked up as vulnerable; the threat of abduction and paedophilia are particularly relevant to modern representations of the child as innocent, defenceless and at risk. A survey of 2406 children aged 9-16 found that the majority of children feared harm from strangers (either in the form of attack or kidnap) which is arguably a reflection of society's concerns for children (Deakin, 2006).[39] Child sexual abuse is viewed as the worst of all crimes as it not only constitutes an act of sexual violence against someone who is considered to be pre-sexual, but is constructed as taking away the innocence of the child (Meyer, 2007). However while these concerns are widespread they do not reflect the actual risk to children:

> "While there has been an increase in recorded crimes of violence in children, three-quarters of the perpetrators are parents and other relatives. The children most at risk of being murdered are infants under the age of one: hardly those most exposed to 'stranger danger;' children aged 5-15 are, of all members of society, the least likely to be victims of homicide" (Jackson & Scott, 2000: 163)

More children are harmed within the home (either by accident or at the hands of caregivers) than by strangers yet this is not reflected in social concerns around childhood. This fear for children is mirrored by the changing nature of play and the increasing level of supervision modern children are subjected to.

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ownership is increasingly difficult for young adults so graduates are returning to the family home post-university (Berrington, Stone, & Falkingham, 2009).

[39] The survey found that 59% of the children feared being forced into a car and 56% feared an attack by a stranger (Deakin, 2006).

3.3.2.1. Changing Nature Of Play

Exploration of play allows for examination of how certain aspects of a child's life (such as spatial freedom, level of supervision and utilisation of technologies) operate. The everyday use of technology is perhaps the greatest change that child's play has witnessed in recent years; it is now estimated that British children spend an average of five hours a day in front of a screen (be that computer or television) (Neale, 2008). Furthermore technology has also meant that actual games enjoyed by children for centuries are being replaced by artificial versions; the Wii, for example, has revolutionised family computer gaming with the player able to mimic playing tennis, bowling and a variety of sports. While this technology seems novel to many adults:

> "…it must also be recognized that for contemporary children, the range of online and offline textual and social practices in which they engage are not novel. Children who have no life history before the Internet and other digital technologies do not consider them alien or exceptional" (Carrington, 2007: 13)

Developments in television broadcasting have also meant that for today's child there are a multitude of entire channels devoted to children's programming all-day every-day, a far cry from the television of just twenty years ago which consisted of limited broadcasting after school and on Saturday mornings. As a consequence, for contemporary children technology is part of everyday life with computers forming an integral part of both their education and recreation.

Children's play is also increasingly supervised with an upsurge in the number of after school clubs and programmes available which is arguably in response to increased parental paranoia. As parents seek to engage their children in hobbies and interests more money and time is spent on lessons (whether music, sport or private tuition) which means that even less time is available for free play. Thus in practical terms children have little time to play unsupervised which does mean that parental paranoia (as described above) is satiated as children are constantly under a watchful eye. When children do have the opportunity to play it is very often in designated

areas: bedrooms, gardens, and playgrounds. The space in which children play is smaller and more limited than ever before: a 2008 episode of the 'Cutting Edge' series (Neale, 2008) reported that seven out of ten parents played in the street when they were young compared with two out of ten modern children, thus within a generation a dramatic drop has been seen in children enjoying the freedom to play outside within their community. Even the freedom to be independent and responsible on familiar journeys has been lessened as in 1990 just one in ten children aged seven or eight made their way to school on their own, compared with eight out of ten in 1971 (Gill, 2007). As the years have passed public spaces have become conceptualised as dangerous places, while the home and the private are considered safe (Valentine & McKendrick, 1997; Valentine, 1997a; 1997b; 1999).

When children do play it is hazard free as children are discouraged from taking risks. While some safety measures (such as the use of bicycle helmets) are to be encouraged, there are other safety measures which are arguably too restrictive (such as the removal of monkey bars and the banning of tree climbing). One such example of a costly yet ineffective risk-averse adaption is the resurfacing of playgrounds; it is estimated that the total cost to re-cover all the playground surfaces with a 'safer' material in the UK would cost £280 million (Ball, 2004). However the number of child fatalities in playgrounds due to equipment (as opposed to car accidents on playground land) between 1981 and 1999 is five or six, which is approximately 0.3 deaths per annum. Therefore the relatively small numbers of serious injuries that occur on playgrounds do not warrant such an expensive intervention (ibid.), particularly when such money would arguably be better spent on health and education provision. Furthermore such safety practices may inadvertently increase the risk of injury as children do not learn to adequately negotiate danger (Ball, 2004; Gill, 2007). While it is admirable and desirable to decrease the risk of injury to children when playing, this must be done within sensible parameters; learning from injury, accident and mistake is part of a healthy childhood and allows for the assessment of risk which will arguably lead to the development of sensible decision making.

What these changes mean overall is that children are playing in an increasing controlled environment. Several hours in front of the television or computer screens

combined with structured activities (be those karate lessons or afterschool clubs) means that there is now very little opportunity for children to engage with independent, imaginative and unsupervised play. This process of free play enables children to negotiate the world on their own terms, stretch their intellectual and creative limits, and to set their own boundaries for their capabilities. Thus not only are children playing in a different way to previous generations, but the effects of this change in play is likely to have negative long-term consequences such as delayed independence and a risk averse nature.

3.4. SUMMARY

In this chapter we have briefly explored how social, material and cultural changes have contributed towards a fearful and anxious culture that exists in contemporary Britain. In the first section of this chapter we looked at aspects of society that have contributed towards a culture of fear. The rapid development and mass utilization of technology, the changing nature of family, an increasingly individualised way of life and the ubiquitous and invasive nature of modern media all act to create a sense of disengagement from our local environment, a lack of permanence and a feeling of insecurity. When one takes these features into account the levels, character, texture and language of anxiety and fear in contemporary society can be better understood. We then turned to look at the effects of this culture upon parenting and childhood, particularly at the notion of paranoid parenting (Furedi, 2001) and general changes that have occurred in adult/child interactions. We then turned to contemporary play to evidence how parental fear might be impacting upon childhood and at some of the larger repercussions of this, such as a lack of engagement with risk. By using the work of Furedi we can gain a better understanding of the anxiety of contemporary society and explore how a culture of fear exists in every aspect of our daily lives which is an integral part of the co-constitution of fear.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD: PARENT AND CHILDREN FOCUS GROUPS

This chapter lays out the method behind the collection and analysis of the focus group data, as well as introducing the participants. The methodology (and the background to the selected approach) will first be described, which draws on tools and strategies from Discursive Psychology. Once the theoretical backdrop has been explained, we will then move on to explore the benefits of focus groups, before introducing the participants and providing local information regarding Loughborough and Nottingham. Finally the specific process of analysis will be described. This chapter is solely concerned with the focus group data, with the method for the content analysis of the newspaper review described in the next chapter (Chapter 5).

4.1. METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

This project is concerned with the shared construction and talk of contemporary anxieties around parenting and childhood and therefore it was appropriate that a qualitative approach should be adopted. Qualitative research (within psychology) has increased in popularity in recent years as an approach which offers the researcher the opportunity to explore, predominantly through language, the lived experiences of the participants (see Willig (2001; 2008) for a comprehensive and thoughtful overview of qualitative research in psychology). Therefore, as this research was not concerned with population level findings but was interested in exploring how fear and anxiety is formulated, managed and shared through discourse, it was appropriate to proceed with a qualitative approach.

This section seeks to address the methodology adopted for this study. This will be done through a process of channelling whereby the larger theoretical framework of social constructionism is described, before narrowing in on the approach of Discursive Psychology, then the methodology of Discourse Analysis, and finally the last level of refinement will be reached when the methodology adopted for this study is described.

4.1.1. Social Constructionism

A definition for social constructionism still remains elusive: it is used as an umbrella term to describe a multitude of researchers, methodologies and theories which can have nothing more in common than a mere family resemblance to each other (Cromby, 2004; Harré, 2002; Potter, 1996a; Stam, 2001) with Kenneth Gergen referring to this semblance as a "shared consciousness" (1973: 266). In essence the term reflects a general underpinning that human action, knowledge and behaviour is grounded in the social world. Gergen (1985), one of the founding proponents of social constructionism in psychology, cites four main foundations that are central: (1) a critical assessment of our knowledge, (2) the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge, (3) the acknowledgement that knowledge is developed, bound up with and created by social processes, and (4) that social action and knowledge are entangled. One of the implications of these tenets is that "there can be no such thing as an objective fact" (Burr, 2003: 6) and as such 'truth' is thrown sharply into question. As cultures change over time beliefs, attitudes and 'facts' are altered too, for example the American continent did not exist in European conceptions of the world until Columbus' voyages in the 1490s. Thus as our perceptions of the world change so do our realities and therefore it can be said that there is no objective reality (Gergen, 1973). On a similar theme the phenomena under investigation by social constructionists are positioned within a specific culture at a specific time and so it is impossible to make generalisations about their findings (ibid.).

One of the principles that does unite most constructionist research is that it offers a challenge to mainstream psychology because it refutes the notion that 'facts' can be arrived at by unbiased, independent and impartial investigation of the phenomena in

question (Burr, 2003; Cromby, 2004; Gergen, 1985; Harré, 2002; Potter, 1996a). Thus researchers are encouraged not to accept knowledge that is taken for granted, but to take a questioning and critical approach. Antaki (2004), for example, uses the intricacies of Conversation Analysis to raise objections to the widely accepted psychological notion of a theory of mind, as well as the notion of the mind as some objective and identifiable object. This is particularly significant as a theory of mind, or rather its deficit, is used as a primary indicator of certain conditions, such as autism and schizophrenia. Thus if a theory of mind does not exist it would be impossible to diagnose a condition based on its absence and so the questioning of taken for granted information has considerable implications. Social constructionist psychology also differs on the point of essentialism (which much of mainstream psychology sanctions) which states that there is "some pre-given 'content' to the person" (Burr, 2003: 6) while social constructionists argue that the person is defined by social processes and activities. As discussed above it has been argued that there are no identifiable and objective psychological objects which are often the subject of research (such as the mind (Antaki, 2004)); a racist attitude, for example, can be seen as constructed and worked up in discourse and occurs only within that particular interaction (Potter & Wetherall, 1988).

An ongoing dispute within social constructionism regards the realist/relativist continuum, a debate which was best laid out in a series of papers from the 'History of Human Sciences' journal in 1995 and 1999. The stance of relativism (within psychology) was put forward by Edwards, Ashmore and Potter (1995) in a paper entitled 'Death and Furniture: The rhetoric, politics and theology of bottom line arguments against relativism.' They argue that, in essence, reality does not exist beyond our representations of it and that these representations are generally discursive. Even those objects invoked in opposition to relativist arguments such as furniture (solid objects whose existence cannot surely be refuted) and death, especially events like the holocaust (whose existence should not be denied) are easily questioned. Death, for example, when exactly does it occur? At the time breathing stops, when there is no brain function, or when the heart stops beating? Whereas furniture can be represented at a practical level, an aesthetic or a molecular level. The authors position relativism as "the quintessentially academic position, where all truths are to-be-established" (Edwards et al., 1995: 37); truth that can only

be established by the examination of discourse. The truth as laid out in the 'Death and Furniture' paper however has been subject to criticism, particularly by those in the realist camp.

The other end of the continuum was laid out by Parker (1999) in response to Edwards et al. (1995) and in contrast to their standpoint he argues that there is a reality beyond our representations of it and indeed that such representations are constrained by that reality, in particular the social constraints (such as power) that shape society and the physicality of our bodies. Parker writes:

> "Edwards et al. (1995: 37) claim that theirs is the quintessentially academic position, they are actually quite right: they reproduce rather than challenge dominant bourgeois conceptions of academic knowledge as in principle separate from the world and as independent of moral-political activity… This rests on a Cartesian fantasy - the separation of the individual from the social and of facts from values - that critical realism helps us to understand and counter" (1999: 74, author's own emphasis)

Parker and academics writing in a similar vein (e.g. Nightingale & Cromby, 1999; Nightingale & Cromby, 2002; Riley, Sims-Shouten, & Willig, 2007; Sims-Shouten, Riley, & Willig, 2007; Willig, 1999) argue for a re-positioning of issues such as embodiment, materiality and power as vital to the analysis of discourse as it is these issues that bring into being our representations of reality.

Strict relativist theorists attempt to wipe out biology and the wider social world, but fail to realise that this is a naïve approach to knowledge. As humans we are limited by the very confines of our physical being and are just as limited by our social world, and as such our interpretations, perceptions and actions are limited (Harré, 2002; Liebrucks, 2001; Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). We are our corporeal bodies, located by them in a particular time and place and restricted by their limitations and they are the primary site of our society, relationships, emotional experiences and senses. It is futile to suggest that all we experience physically can be compacted to, substituted for and simplified to the discursive, after all talking about a physical

sensation is not at all the same as experiencing it (Cromby, 2004). There is also a more fundamental way in which our bodies and our talk are interconnected as Burkitt simply asks "… where does the structure of language, theory and knowledge emerge if not from humans and their sensuous experience?" (1991: 80). Thus while relativism may be the "quintessentially academic position" (Edwards et al., 1995: 37) it is realism that is arguably more reflective of everyday experiences. Despite attempts at resolution (e.g. McLennan, 2001; Hibberd, 2001) such discussions around the realism/relativism debate remains ongoing in social sciences (e.g. see debates between Sims-Shouten, Riley, & Willig, 2007 and Speer, 2007; Corcoran, 2009 and Potter, 2010) and look set to continue with fundamental issues still debatable.

4.1.2. Discursive Psychology

Discursive Psychology has been borne out of social constructionism and seeks to explore just how individuals represent their world through language. Rather than looking for emotions, attitudes or beliefs in brain structure or by attempting to create a cognitive model, many constructionists look at language to investigate how these common-sense notions are created, worked up and managed:

> "The focus of Discursive Psychology is the action orientation of talk and writing. For both participants and analysts, the primary issue is the social actions, or interactional work, being done in the discourse. But rather than focusing on the usual concerns of social interactional analyses, such as the way social and intergroup relationships are conducted (through forms of address, speech accommodation and so on), or how 'speech acts' might be identified, the major concern… is epistemological. We are concerned with how events are described and explained, how factual reports are constructed, how cognitive states are attributed" (Edwards & Potter, 1992: 2)

Discursive Psychology emerged in resistance to mainstream psychology by positioning discourses[40] and performances as more reflective of actual and everyday activity as opposed to the theorising of researchers based on observation, statistics or cognitive models. It rejects the mainstream notion that there are objective structures or entities that form psychological 'objects' such as beliefs, attitudes or theory of mind (e.g. Antaki, 2004) rather that these 'objects' are created, formed and located within interaction (i.e. discourse) and are non-referential. This means that Discursive Psychology is a strongly empirical approach in which psychology is not an abstract notion emerging from a seemingly sterile and neutral laboratory, but is based upon everyday talk and interactions.

Discursive Psychology refers to a wide range of subject matters, methodologies and approaches, although there are said to be three main strands which are:

> "(i) respecification and critique of psychological topics and explanations; (ii) investigations of how everyday psychological categories are used in discourse; (iii) studies of how psychological business (motives and intentions, prejudices, reliability of memory and perception, etc.) is handled and managed in talk and text without having to be overtly labelled as such" (Edwards, 2004: 259)

This is achieved through the study of discourse which is seen to be action-oriented as it seeks to achieve a particular function and as situated in a particular context; furthermore discourse is also viewed as constructed, formed by words, pauses and repertoires, and constructive through its representative nature (Potter & Hepburn, 2007). In Edwards' 1999 paper on emotion discourse, for example, he uses data from counselling sessions to investigate the use of emotion categories which enable us to understand how these categories are invoked and used to manage accountability and establish spousal temperaments. It is the use of Discursive Analysis which allows an in-depth understanding of how linguistic practices perform such feats.

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[40] Discourses refer to any spoken or written texts (Potter & Wetherall, 1987).

4.1.3. Discourse Analysis

While Discursive Psychology is a theoretical stance, Discourse Analysis is the method used for analysis (Edwards & Potter, 1992). The seminal text that introduced Discourse Analysis to social psychology is 'Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour' by Potter and Wetherell (1987) which the authors use to set out the basic premises of the method, as well as the accompanying theory and practice. The authors argue that language is action oriented and used to construct representations of reality that are variable according to personal experience, culture and historical specificity (Potter & Wetherall, 1987). They contend that there is not one central 'self,' a notion which is central to mainstream western psychology, but a number of representations of the 'self' which are all constructed through language practices and are located in a particular time, place and culture (ibid.). Discourse Analysis is, in essence, the study of these practices, the representations they construct and the action orientation of talk. Discourse Analysis arose out of work in philosophy, linguistics and ethnomethodology and although wide-ranging, the common theme across the influences is that they "privilege the 'ordinary' understanding people produce about the world over researchers' theories of what is going on" (Parker, 1994: 94). This privileging of discourse above theory allows for investigations into ordinary formulations of reality and psychology.

Study is conducted via the utilisation of discourses in order to understand how certain phenomena are constructed. Examination is achieved through careful transcription (if using talk data), coding and analysis which is concerned firstly with "pattern in the data" and secondly with the "function and consequence" of the text (Potter & Wetherall, 1987: 168). It is thus possible to gain access to the participants' constructions through examination of how discursive features and tools are utilized in the discourse, such as extreme case formulations (Edwards, 2000; Pomerantz, 1986), disclaimers (Potter & Wetherall, 1987) and three part lists (Jefferson, 1991). However, Discourse Analysis focuses solely on the linguistic and fails to acknowledge other aspects of experience (such as embodiment) which is not in line with the notion of fear as co-constituted which was forwarded in the initial

chapters, therefore the analysis in this work will use strategies and tools drawn from Discursive Psychology and Discourse Analysis, rather than adopting a strict relativist approach.

4.1.4. Methodology Adopted

As described above Discursive Psychology and Discourse Analysis offers the analyst an empirical approach that allows for exploration of how features of discourse are used to represent aspects of parenting and childhood in a culture of fear. However, there are two features of the approach in particular that are not compatible with studying a social phenomenon of this nature therefore this work will draw techniques and strategies from Discursive Psychology rather than following the approach rigidly. Firstly Discursive Psychology places importance upon naturalistic data, such as calls to help-lines (e.g. Edwards & Stokoe, 2007; Potter & Hepburn, In Press); yet no practical naturalistic data is available for study of the subject under investigation in this project. Consequently it was decided that the most appropriate method of data collection was focus groups (see later for a further description of the benefits of focus groups) and so throughout the analysis it must be borne in mind that the discourse has arisen within a very specific context while the role of the moderator must also be included, acknowledged and considered in the analysis (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Edwards and Stokoe warn that focus groups orient "towards the researcher's conceptual topic and agenda" (2004: 505). This issue is managed by the careful design of the focus group schedule: in the child groups the discussions were managed by the use of newspaper articles as a structuring device and in the adult groups the moderator had as little input as possible and initially asked about differences in parenting across generations; these structures had the effect of masking the research agenda. Furthermore when briefing the participants a culture of fear was not mentioned and so the participants were not primed to the specific research interest. Thus not only is the moderator's role and the focus group situation acknowledged in the analysis, but the design of the discussions goes some way to minimise the effect of the research agenda on the conversations.

Secondly, Discursive Psychology adopts a relativist stance arguing that representations of the world are grounded primarily in discourse and the actual nature of reality is irrelevant as it is the representations themselves that are important. This ontological assumption is dismissive of material and social circumstances, yet these conditions are inseparable from a culture of fear. This is not the adoption of a "realist, positivist metatheory" (Potter, 1998: 235) but an acknowledgement that:

> "The play of linguistic meaning and signification is shaped and constrained by embodiment, materiality, socio-cultural institutions, interpersonal practices and their historical trajectories (all of these structured by, and reproducing structures of, power) such that language does not independently and thoroughly constitute our world. But within such constraints, language, in its objective materiality, discursively co-constitutes the realities we experience" (Nightingale & Cromby, 2002: 706)

Thus the analysis is undertaken with the knowledge that language is just one of the factors that co-constitute experience, which is in line with the earlier discussion regarding a definition of fear which acknowledges it as co-constituted by numerous facets and practices. As of yet there is no method of investigation that would be able to adequately include all aspects of co-constitution and so it is with this acceptance that this study focuses on one aspect: language. This is done with the knowledge that "linguistic expressions mean anything or nothing at all unless they are activated by haptic, visual, tactile, gustatory, olfactory and other non-verbal signs" (Ruthrof, 1997: 7). Drawing on Ruthrof in this way allows us to understand the physical features of talk as laden with emotion and meaning, which is brought out by the Jeffersonian transcription (Jefferson, 2004) (see section 4.3.1). Furthermore, these signs are given meaning by, through and within culture and material circumstance. While the analysis will follow the approach of Discursive Psychology, the analysis will occasionally move beyond the text in order to incorporate extra-discursive elements (see Cromby, Brown, Gross, Locke & Patterson (2010) for an example of such an analysis). This will be done to

acknowledge extra-discursive and embodied elements which Ruthrof (1997) argues are an integral part of our meanings and experiences.

The rest of this chapter will now discuss focus groups, the demography of the two geographical areas and the participants, before the actual process of analysis is described.

4.2. FOCUS GROUPS AND PARTICIPANTS

It is worth noting at this juncture that a CRB check was completed by the researcher prior to beginning data collection in order to conduct the focus groups in the schools and full ethical clearance was granted by Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee (which can be seen in Appendix i).

4.2.1. Pilot Study

During the initial stages of research a small pilot study was conducted, which consisted of interviews with two 12 year olds. This was done for several reasons: to investigate whether interviews would be a feasible way of accessing information, to give the researcher experience of interviewing and transcription, and to allow some experimentation with enquiry formulation. The pilot study did fulfil these three requirements, although they did demonstrate that interviews were not an appropriate format for the research. The nature of the topic meant that the responses were somewhat limited and it was therefore decided that focus groups were the way to proceed. The use of focus groups over interviews also means that the shared construction of talk can be explored.

4.2.2. Focus Groups

Focus groups were first used in social sciences research in the 1920s and were used regularly until World War II, after which their use deteriorated (Morgan, 1997). Resurgence in the method was experienced in the 1980s when focus groups were

used regularly for market research and they were soon being employed by social researchers from the mid-1980s onwards. They have since increased in popularity (Morgan, 1997) with Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) citing a threefold increase in the number of academic articles employing the method. They are employed by researchers to investigate a wide range of phenomena including health promotion (Crossley, 2002), attitudes towards the risks of a nuclear power plant within a community (Waterton & Wynne, 1999), and the effect of AIDS messages in the media (Kitzinger, 1994). Focus groups essentially involve a group of participants who discuss a subject set out by the researcher or moderator. Morgan writes that "in essence it is the research's interest that provides the focus, whereas the data themselves come from the group interaction" (1997: 6). While participants generally have a common feature that have led to them being involved in the focus group, for instance the commonality was the participants status' as either parents or children in this study, Kitzinger (1994) argues that they can never be completely homogenous and in fact it is the differences among the participants' that lead to richer discussions.

The most important feature of focus groups is the interaction as they present the researcher with the opportunity to access shared norms and concepts and to develop some understanding of how these concepts are constructed and expressed within interaction (Hyde, Howlett, Brady, & Drennan, 2005; Kitzinger, 1994; Morgan, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Wilkinson, 1998). This access is unavailable to those working within the confines of structured interviews, questionnaires or diary studies for example. As Wilkinson writes:

> "Focus group interactions reveal not only shared ways of talking, but also shared experiences, and shared ways of making sense of these experiences. The researcher is offered an insight into the commonly held assumptions, concepts and meanings that constitute and inform participants' talk about their experiences" (1998: 189)

As the nature of this particular research topic is cultural, focus groups allow the researcher to investigate shared social structures, concepts and experiences in a way that other research methods do not allow.

It is also important to bear in mind throughout that the focus groups are not immune from the importance of social context. A further matter for consideration is the impact that the researcher has on the data; although this is an issue faced by social scientists whichever method they utilize, for example whether the participant and the interviewer find common ground or whether questions in a survey manage to access fully the area under investigation (Green & Hart, 1999; Morgan, 1997).

4.2.3. Participants

This next section will introduce the participants, beginning with demographic information concerning the location of the study. The schools and child participants will then be introduced before the parents.

4.2.3.1. Geographical Location: Loughborough And Nottingham

Loughborough is a market town in the East Midlands with good transport links to local cities, as well as to London. Loughborough has an approximate population of 57, 000 (Leicestershire County Council, 2006) and roughly 10% of the population of the local authority are made up of ethnic minority groups (Office for National Statistics, 2010); the town is also home to a university catering for nearly 20, 000 students and over 2000 staff. With regards to education, 19.43% of people aged 16-74 are educated to a degree level or above (ibid.). Approximately 61% of the population between 16-74 are in full- or part-time employment or self-employed (ibid.); the largest areas of employment are manufacturing (21.61% of those employed) and wholesale and retail (17.4%) (ibid.).

Nottingham is a large city in the East Midlands, again with good transport links to the rest of the country. The city centre has an approximate population of 290, 000 (Nottingham City Council, 2010) and the intake of the two local universities amounts to 40, 000 students. Approximately 20% of the population are comprised ethnic and minority groups, the largest being Pakistani (3.64%) and Caribbean (3.44%) (Office for National Statistics, 2010). Employment figures for those in full- or part-time work or those who are self-employed stand at approximately 49%, and again the largest areas of employment are wholesale and retail (18.24%) and

manufacturing (15.18%) (ibid.). Approximately 18% of the population (aged 16-74) are educated to degree level (ibid.).

Brief crime figures for both Loughborough and Nottingham can be found in the following table:

Table 3: Crime figures for England and Wales, Loughborough, and Nottingham (per 1000 population 2009/2010) (Home Office, 2010)

	ENGLAND & WALES	**LOUGHBOROUGH**	**NOTTINGHAM**
Violence against the person	16	16	26
Sexual offences	1	1	2
Robbery	1	1	4
Burglary	5	6	12
Theft of a vehicle	2	1	3

Thus we can see from the above that Loughborough and Nottingham represent very different environments. Loughborough is a predominantly white, middle-class small town with an average crime rate; Nottingham is a city with a much greater ethnic diversity and crime rate which is above the national average. This issue of difference between the locales will be returned to in the Discussion (Chapter 11).

Now that the general demography of the area has been described we will now move onto descriptions of the schools and the focus groups.

4.2.3.2. Schools & Children

It was decided that children from year 8 (which is the second year of secondary school) would be the best age range to interact with, as at 12-13 years it can be said that they are beginning to develop a degree of independence with a social life that is separate from their parents and family. Schools were identified from the relevant county council websites and mixed gender schools were selected, they were then

approached via letter which included a brief explanation of the project and a request for a meeting. In the letter it was also suggested that the researcher would be willing to exchange some time in return for participation, for example work as a classroom assistant or in any other way that would prove useful to the staff and pupils. In total three schools were able to take part in the research, two in Loughborough and one in Nottingham.

Two schools in Loughborough took part in the research, Forest Park High School and Ainsworth High School as well as Stephenson High School in Nottingham.[41] Details of all three schools can be found in the table below with data regarding free school meals included as a general indicator of socio-economic status as free school meals can be claimed by pupils if they or their parents claim benefits, including jobseekers allowance or income support, or if the family income is low.

Table 4: Details of schools involved[42]

	STEPHENSON	**AINSWORTH**	**FOREST PARK**
Ages catered for	11-19	11-14	11-14
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Total number of pupils	1628	452	491
Date of last Ofsted inspection and findings	2009: Satisfactory to good	2007: Good to outstanding	2007: Good to outstanding
Pupils on free school meals	33%	11%	12%
Pupils with English as an additional language	35%	7%	9%

[41] Pseudonyms have been used for the schools.
[42] Figures were provided by the schools and apply to the 2008-2009 academic year when the research was carried out. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole figure. Ofsted reports were retrieved from the schools' websites.

In total there were 65 child participants which resulted in 16 focus groups with between three and six children in each. Focus groups took place at school with five focus groups from Stephenson (19 children including seven boys), seven groups from Forest Park (28 children including six boys) and four at Ainsworth (18 children including 11 boys). A full list of all participants and focus groups, including the adults, can be found in Appendix ii.

The issue of informed consent with children is a general one of concern for researchers (Baker & Hinton, 1999; Green & Hart, 1999) and in this case written consent was gained from the parents. When the researcher introduced herself to the children in all schools she explained who she was, what a PhD was, and that she was interested in finding out what parenting and childhood was like in contemporary society. It was important that the children felt a sense of agency within the research and so the researcher also made it clear that the focus groups were a time when the children were able to give their opinions freely to an adult and to have an adult take note and listen to what they had to say, a notion to which the majority of children responded favourably. The researcher emphasised that participation in the sessions was voluntary and it was up to the children if they took part. Information sheets for the children and consent forms for the parents were given out after this; consent forms were gathered over the course of several weeks. Thus participation was on an 'opt in' basis and those children who did not want to take part simply did not return a signed consent form. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured throughout the data gathering process. An example of the consent forms and participant information can be found in Appendices iii and iv.

The forms were either collected by the member of teaching staff who was assisting with the research or returned directly to the researcher. Once the majority of consent forms were returned, the focus groups were then organised. Children from Stephenson were divided into groups by the researcher, whereas at the schools in Loughborough the teachers involved selected the groups. Focus groups took part in an empty classroom or, as at Ainsworth, an interview room and most of the groups were limited by lesson periods and so lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. All the focus groups were conducted between October 2008 and January 2009. One aspect of working with the children and schools that is worth pointing out is that it was not

researcher led to a great extent, particularly the organisation, occurrence and selection of the groups as the schools, and several teachers in particular, were helping with little reward. As such it was important to be as un-demanding as possible in case the research became too difficult to accommodate and support was removed; this general problem of working with schools has been noted elsewhere (Hyde et al., 2005).

Newspaper articles were used to direct attention and add structure to the child focus groups. Articles were selected from the newspaper review if they were short, due to constraints on time, and easy to read, due to a varying level of literacy among the children. Articles were also removed if they were felt to include potentially distressing content, for example if the article gave details of rape, paedophilia or child abuse. Once the longer and more complex articles had been eliminated there were few remaining and those articles selected were representative of the findings of the content analysis. There were three sets of articles with seven articles in each which allowed for rotation and a wider range of topics to discuss (an example of the articles used can be viewed in Appendix v). The children each selected an article at random and then spent a few minutes reading it through, they then each summarised the article to the group before each article was discussed in turn. Each focus group was audio recorded.

4.2.3.3. Parents

Parents were approached through a number of ways, some of which were more successful than others. The most successful were a series of emails that were sent using various university email lists and from this method all but one of the adult participants volunteered; 14 from the total of 15 (11 women and four men). Letters to parents were sent out with children who had taken part in the study from which one other (female) participant volunteered, while notices were also placed on several notice boards at various places of local employment from which no responses were received. The method and location of recruitment can be said to have an effect on the nature of the participants with most of them being drawn from around Loughborough and having been recruited through university email lists, which meant that all were professionals and were educated to a higher level (the one

participant who was not recruited via email was a professional before she gave up work to care for her disabled husband). Parents with children of any age were recruited, with some parents having adult children (i.e. aged 18 and up) and others having toddlers.

A total of four focus groups with parents were conducted with three groups containing four members and the final having three participants. Information sheets were offered and written informed consent was gained prior to the focus groups beginning and confidentially and anonymity assured. All focus groups took place at Loughborough University between January and March 2009 and lasted for approximately an hour. The nature of the focus groups was kept as informal as possible, with participants sat in a room specifically set up for focus groups and able to help themselves to drinks and nibbles throughout. The focus groups involving parents were much more unstructured than that of the children; once introductions had been made the parents were asked how they felt parenting had changed since they were children. This open ended question led to talk about numerous topics such as traffic, crime, technology, discipline and education. Although a list of topics was drawn up in order to cover the same subjects as the child discussions, the topics were mainly covered by the natural flow of conversation and for the large part the researcher's input was minimal.

4.2.3.4. Forum Data

As parents have more constraints on their time it was expected that there would be less adult focus groups than child sessions. Therefore information from parents was sought elsewhere and websites involving parent communities were an obvious choice. Worldwide there are over 1.5 billion internet users with 43.8 million in the UK alone (Internet World Stats: Usage and Population Statistics, 2009) allowing researchers an incredibly large group of potential participants and data can be collected quickly, often requiring minimal input from the researcher (Birnbaum, 2004; Hewson, 2003; Kraut et al., 2004). The internet is host to thousands of special interest communities and one of the largest online communities are parents and the

number of websites aimed at parents total millions (a search on Google for 'parent group' returns 38.5 million results and 'parent forum' results total 21 million).[43]

Parenting websites offer members a place to chat, to share jokes and above all they offer members support and knowledge (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005; Madge & O'Connor, 2006). Questions which may be too trivial to ask health professionals, friends or relatives are answered promptly and (usually) without judgement, such as in-depth discussions about toilet training, breast feeding, dealing with the ups and downs of puberty or the best pushchair on the market; they also offer a support network which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In a much more individualised world where new parents may not have a geographically local support network of relatives and friends on hand to help them with the parenting process these forums can offer a much needed cushion of support, which may be particularly true of single parents or parents with disabled children who may experience increased social isolation (Bakardjieva & Smith, 2001). Questions and doubts may be easier to vocalise in an environment which is solely dedicated to the trials and tribulations of parenthood, but also increase a sense of shared experience, knowledge and control which in turn lead to feelings of empowerment and confidence (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005; Madge & O'Connor, 2006).

A shortlist of UK-based websites dedicated to parenting children of all ages (as opposed to those directed at parents with babies for example) with active public forums was drawn up according to the frequency of visitors. The website hosts or moderators were then contacted explaining the aims of the research and five websites agreed to allow the research; others refused on the grounds that they did not knowingly allow any research to be conducted on the website. The participants' informed consent was gathered on an 'opt in' basis (an example can be seen in Appendix vi). The online participants were again assured of confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw.

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[43] Search engine accessed 3rd June 2009.

The websites that did agree to take part in the research were: www.dadtalk.co.uk, www.raisingkids.co.uk,[44] www.net-parents.co.uk, www.mumszone.co.uk and www.ukparentslounge.com. All of the websites, bar ukparentslounge, agreed to a post containing several questions being listed in the forum with website members then posting the response to the questions; with ukparentslounge the post was advertised in a features section, with members emailing their responses to the researcher. Forums are organised into 'boards' which focus on certain topics, for example 'parents of pre-teens' or 'trying to conceive,' and the researcher's post was placed on general discussion boards (the post and an example of the nature of the responses can be seen in Appendix vi). It was decided that this would be the best way of gathering responses as opposed to more structured forms of data collection (such as an online focus group) as posting in this way meant that parents could respond when able, for example responses were received at 9am, 10pm and 1am. In total there were 20 relevant responses from website members (i.e. excluding follow up posts and further posts from the researcher thanking respondents) with the majority being from women (17 out of 20). The names of the respondents' were changed, as were any other identifying details, but spelling and grammatical errors within responses were left in.

4.3. PROCESS OF ANALYSIS

Once the data (either in the form of audio recordings or forum replies) had been collected, the analysis began: this section describes this process.

4.3.1. Transcription

The first stage involved the transcription of the focus group recordings during which any personal information (including the names of the participants and their families) was changed in order to preserve anonymity. The first level of transcription was just

[44] Raisingkids closed their website on November 2nd 2009 due to re-organisation by the parent company Disney.

verbatim and then, after the initial stages of analysis, data sections that were of particular interest were then transcribed in further detail according to Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 2004) (please refer to Appendix vii for the conventions used). Full Jeffersonian transcription was not performed at the earlier stages due to time constraints as it is estimated that it can take 20 hours to transcribe one hour of data to this standard (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). In this particular study there were approximately 17 hours of recording with between four and seven contributors which would have equated to several months dedicated to detailed transcription alone; thus only the sections of particular analytic value and interest were transcribed to Jeffersonian level.

This fine detail of transcription is essential in being able to correctly ascertain tone of voice, additional, quieter speakers and other features which may add further richness to the analysis. This also allows for an exploration of the emotion laden aspects of talk and an understanding of language as embodied (Ruthrof, 1997). An example of how important transcription is can be seen below which uses data from a focus group with parents and features Sue, Marie, and Dave. In the first extract a verbatim transcription is presented and Extract 2 is to a finer degree of detail:

Extract 1: Verbatim Transcription

```
S:    i- i- i know the kids ish y'know i know what they look i know
      what the mothers look like but my worry is i don't know which
      what blokes are there that might be 10 paedophiles sitting
      around in their front room i mean it seems extreme but that is
      my thought process and i know for a f- i think for a fact that
      my mother wouldn't have known the kids the very well or
      certainly the parents of the kids i hung around with when i
      was little
```

Extract 2: Detailed Jeffersonian Transcription

```
S:    i i i know the kids: (0.6) ish >y'know i know what they look i
      know what the mothers look< like (0.8) but MY worry is i don't
      know which what blokes are there y'know [there  ]
D:                                            [°right°]
S:                                                      might      be
      (0.5) ten paedophiles=
M:                          =mm=
```

```
S:                                =sittin  rou(h)nd  in  their  front
      room i mean it seems extreme but that is=
D:                                          =yeah=
S:                                               =my       thought
      process (1.2) and i know for a f- (1.5) >i think for a fact<
      that (0.4) <my mother wouldn't have know:n (0.5) the k:ids
      very well> or certainly the parents of the kids i hung around
      with when i was little
```

The above extracts demonstrate the importance of revisiting recordings to double check the transcription quality. In the verbatim extract above for example agreements by Dave and Marie were missed as they were quiet, while emphasis by Sue adds a different dimension and more potency to her argument. Gail Jefferson (2004), whose work laid out the most widely used transcription conventions, compares the transcription styles and states that while verbatim transcription is certainly easier to read it may not be as fruitful as the finer transcription. Similarly Potter and Hepburn make the argument that full Jeffersonian transcription "makes most apparent the jointly constructed, socially engaged nature of what is going on" (2005: 289). Thus it is essential to a complete and worthwhile analysis that full and accurate transcription is achieved. A guide to the transcription conventions used can be seen in Appendix vii.

4.3.2. Coding

Following this stage the data (both the transcription from the focus group sessions and the forum data) was then read through and coded for themes, a stage which essentially reduces the vast amount of data gathered into smaller and more manageable sections (Potter & Wetherall, 1987). Examples of codes identified include talk of: technology, the media, lack of community, online safety and materialism. These codes were then organised into themes such as mentions of high profile crimes, a questioning of hypothetical danger, and talk of teenagers/children as dangerous. These sub-themes were then once again organised into over-riding themes which have formed the basis of the analysis chapters: Fear of the 'What If?,' 'Objects of Concern, Danger and Fear,' 'Aspects of Crime, Danger and Safety,'

'Change, Pressure and Nostalgia,' and 'Poster Cases and the Media.' Thus the chapters have emerged from the data.

The initial coding of the transcriptions was confirmed by a re-coding of two transcripts several months after the initial work. In order to assess the reliability of this re-coding, a Kappa test was performed; the results of which were K=0.865 (86.5%) for the first transcript and K=0.872 (87.2%) for the second. This level of agreement between ratings is considered to be "almost perfect" (Landis & Koch, 1977: 165) confirming the coding as reliable.

4.2.3. Analysis

The process of discursive analysis is difficult to describe as there is not a set method or regimented list of steps an analyst takes (Potter & Wetherall, 1987; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Data within themes is assessed, re-assessed and assessed again to recognise patterns and features which allow the analyst to identify what is being achieved by the speaker. Potter and Wetherall (ibid.) claim two main stages of analysis: the recognition of patterns in the data and identification of the functions of the discourse. By providing extracts of the transcription and acknowledging established and frequently used discursive features (such as extreme case formulations (Edwards, 2000; Pomerantz, 1986)) the empirical analysis becomes self-evidencing and validated (Wiggins & Potter, 2008). An explanation of each of these frequently used discursive features will be presented following the first mention, but for further reference please also see Appendix viii.

The analysis of the dominant themes will follow in the subsequent chapters.

4.4. SUMMARY

The participants, the demography of the local area, and the process of data collection has been described in this chapter, allowing for an introduction to the analysis which will follow. This chapter also lays out the methodological background and

processes which have resulted in the subsequent chapters of analysis. Using an analysis that is based upon Discursive Psychology will allow for a detailed examination of how features of parenting and childhood in a culture of fear are talked about, constructed and worked up by participants within the setting of a focus group. This is done with an understanding of fear as linguistically co-constituted and that language is embedded within a realm of embodied and socio-material practices and histories.

The discursive analysis will be complimented by a content analysis of newspaper articles which will provide something of a cultural background to the discourse analysis. The method and results regarding this content analysis will now follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

NEWSPAPER REVIEW

This chapter constitutes an attempt to ground the participants' talk in a wider social context while Chapters 6 to 10 will examine discourse data from both parents and children. With regards to the newspapers a content analysis of articles retrieved from Nexis® was conducted and the results were then categorised according to theme. Two of the articles were then quasi-randomly selected for a more thorough discursive analysis. While a content analysis and a discursive analysis are not compatible in a simplistic manner because they rely upon differing theories of meaning, arguably both can be used to illuminate aspects of the ways that the media contribute to the culture of fear. A content analysis is useful for surveying a substantial mass of literature and identifying prominent themes within it, whereas a discursive analysis makes it possible to identify some of the way in which material contained within these themes is organised, invoked, and associated with other topics and concerns. In these ways, both the content analysis and the discourse analysis may shed light on aspects of the manner in which social concerns and preoccupations were made available and rendered relevant to the participants in this study. This chapter will now cover the method of the analysis, followed by the results and a more discursive analysis of two articles.

5.1. METHOD

5.1.1. Newspapers Involved

A total of four newspapers were selected for the content analysis: The Sun, The Mirror, The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph. These were chosen in order to cover a spectrum of readership and opinion. The Guardian and Telegraph are

quality broadsheet papers, with The Guardian leaning towards the political Left and The Telegraph towards the Right. On the other end of the spectrum The Mirror and The Sun are popular tabloid issues and historically The Mirror is aligned with the Left wing of politics and The Sun is associated with the Right. The average net circulation for the four papers during the period 30th June-27th July 2008[45] is given below:

Table 5: Circulation of Newspapers selected for Content Analysis (ABC, 2008)

NEWSPAPER	AVERAGE NET CIRCULATION
The Daily Telegraph	802, 552
The Guardian	297, 427
The Mirror	1, 379, 248
The Sun	2, 998, 175

All four of the newspapers fall within the top ten ranked daily newspapers in the UK for the period of 30th June-27th July 2008:

Table 6: Ranking of UK Daily Newspapers (ABC, 2008)

RANKING	NEWSPAPER
1st	**The Sun**
2nd	The Daily Mail
3rd	**The Daily Mirror**
4th	**The Daily Telegraph**
5th	The Daily Star
6th	The Daily Express
7th	The Times
8th	**The Guardian**
9th	The Independent
10th	The Daily Sport

[45] This period covers the time the content analysis was conducted.

Thus the newspapers selected are popular, reach a wide readership, and cover a broad spectrum of political opinion. Sunday papers were excluded as The Sun and The Guardian do not have Sunday editions.

5.1.2. Nexis® Search

Nexis® is an academically accepted method of searching both national and local newspapers and provides the ability to search a wide range of publications over a significant time period (see Deacon 2007 for further description of Nexis® and a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using digital news archives). It was decided that a period of one calendar month would constitute a suitable sampling frame and July 2008 was selected.

A total of 19 search terms were used:
Terror, fear, McCann, paedo!,[46] pervert, sex beast, danger, knife crime, child safety, horror, surveillance/spying,[47] thugs/louts/hooligans, child! harm!, problem child!, warning, monster, CRB check, abuse, crime, and worry.

These terms were identified after reading newspaper articles and noting key terms from their headlines for a period of three months (May to July 2008). The articles sampled were related to aspects of a culture of fear, such as the endangerment of children and reported increases in random violent and unexplained crime. There is also the nature of the tabloid headline to consider which is usually aimed towards the more sensationalist aspect of journalism. Thus the search terms 'thugs/louts/hooligans' returned more results from the tabloids than the broadsheets, however, in order to combat this potential problem broader terms such as 'crime,' 'abuse,' and 'danger' were also included. The differences in headline composition can be witnessed in the following examples which report the same story on the same

[46] The exclamation mark enables Nexis® to find all variations of a root word, i.e. 'paedo!' would find paedo, paedophilia, and paedophile.
[47] Surveillance/spying were used as individual search terms, as were thug, lout and hooligan. The different terms were used in an interchangeable way in many of the sampled articles.

day: 'PCs beaten for asking girl to pick up litter' (The Daily Telegraph, July 19th) and '30 yobs beat 2PCs in row about litter' (The Sun, July 19th).

The Nexis® search option 'Major Mentions' was utilised as this searched not only the headline, but also the opening paragraph. Once the initial search had been carried out (using the above terms) a total of 1837 articles were retrieved. The articles were all read and several hundred articles were removed on the basis that they were in the sport or financial sections, appeared in the Irish or Scottish editions, featured in the Sunday editions, or were duplicated results. This left a total of 1271 articles for further analysis, with the majority coming from the tabloid papers (822) compared to the broadsheet (449). A breakdown of the articles according to paper can be seen in the table below:

Table 7: Articles per Newspaper

NEWSPAPER	NUMBER OF ARTICLES
The Daily Telegraph	234
The Guardian	215
The Mirror	366
The Sun	456

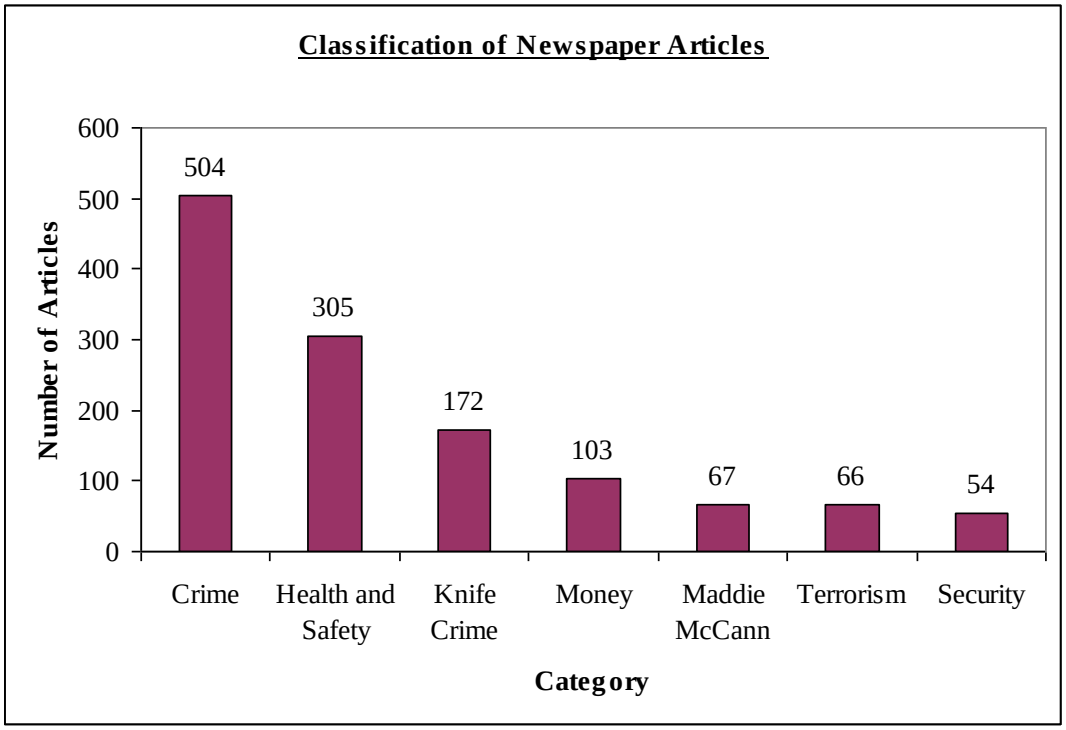
Nexis® does not input all of the features in a newspaper and regrettably it is not possible to discover the criteria of inclusion, which means that Nexis® is unable to advise how many total articles were published in the newspapers over the search period. Thus it is impossible to calculate what proportion of all the newspaper articles during the search period the results constitute. However, even if it had been available the meaning of this figure would be difficult to interpret because of the many newspapers and other news sources (websites, TV, radio) not included in the search.

Further analysis of these 1271 articles will now be presented.

5.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS: RESULTS

The articles were each read through several times and were categorised according to subject. The results of this categorisation are shown below:

Figure 1: Classification of Newspaper Articles



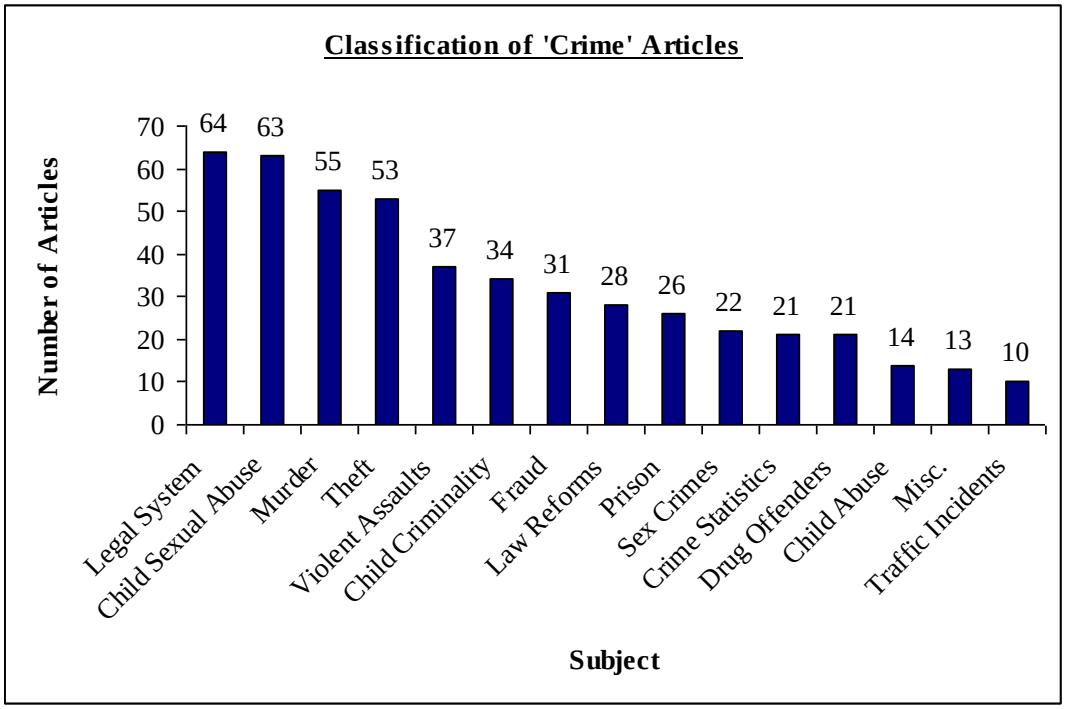
The initial classification of the articles was confirmed by a re-classification of the data several months after the initial work. In order to assess the reliability of this re-coding, a Kappa test was performed to determine consistency: K=0.978 (97.85%). This level of agreement between ratings is considered to be "almost perfect" (Landis & Koch, 1977: 165).

In the next two sub-sections the categories of 'crime' and 'Madeleine McCann' will be considered in further detail. These two categories have been selected for further exploration as the 'Madeleine McCann' articles relate significantly to the discourse of participants that are discussed in later chapters, while 'Crime' was the largest category. The remaining categories are discussed in Appendix ix.

5.2.1. 'Crime' Articles

These articles made up the bulk of the data set and were sub-divided into 15 further categories. Some of the categories covered associated aspects of crime and justice, such as the various criminal law reforms and the publication of crime statistics, while others were comprised of specific criminal acts, such as murder and theft. A complete breakdown of the categories can be seen in the graph below and a brief description of each of the categories in turn will then follow, presented in descending order of frequency.

Figure 2: Classification of 'Crime' Articles



5.2.1.1. Legal System

This category contained 64 articles that were about various aspects of the judicial process, including policing and sentencing. A total of eight articles were solely about CRB checks and drew attention to examples of the mistakes can are made, for example 'Hundreds wrongly branded criminals by CRB checks' (The Daily Telegraph, 5th July) and 'Criminal Blunder: Innocent mum branded a violent druggie alcoholic' (The Mirror, 9th July). The misconduct of police, both individual officers

and as a force was the subject of 12 articles, while the attempted prevention of crime was the subject of eight. There were also six articles which involved cases whereby a member of the public had made a citizen's arrest or had been defending property, either their own or public, and had later been charged, for example 'Charged with assault for stopping vandal; he carried out citizen's arrest on shop yob' (The Mirror, 7th July) and 'OAP who chased a yob gang is nicked' (The Sun, 9th July).

5.2.1.2. Child Sexual Abuse

A total of 63 articles were about the sexual abuse of children; 14 of which were regarding child pornography. A further two articles reported on cases where the abuse was committed by a family member and 15 reported institutional abuse. Of the 15, five covered the case of the Haut de la Garenne care home in Jersey.[48] This high proportion of articles regarding child abuse victims has been discussed previously by Altheide (1997; 1999; 2002) and Warr (1992) who have argued that children are used by the media as a social group which altruistic fear can be attached to. By invoking this stereotypically vulnerable group the media can both provide entertainment and draw attention to failings of various authorities, such as the failure of social services or other institutions to protect children who are abused while in care (Altheide, 1997).

5.2.1.3. Murder

In total 55 articles were about murder cases, and there were two particular incidents that were focused on. Catherine and Ben Mullany were honeymooning in an exclusive resort in Antigua when they were both shot during an attempted robbery on the 27th July 2008. Catherine died immediately from her injuries, but Ben initially survived and was flown home to Wales; Ben's life support was turned off on the 3rd August 2008. This story was a focus of 12 articles, while five articles focused on the violent murder of two French students in London. On the 29th of June two French postgraduate students, Laurent Bonomo and Gabriel Ferez, were murdered at Laurent's flat in South East London. The ferocity of the crime made

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[48] Early in 2008 an investigation (which had been ongoing for several years) into child abuse at the Haut de la Garenne care home began a physical search of the building. It was initially reported that

this a national story: the men were tied, gagged and tortured over the course of several hours, during the course of which they were stabbed a total of 243 times between them before the bodies were burnt and firefighters subsequently discovered the killings.

5.2.1.4. Theft

Fifty-three articles focused on property theft, ranging from an attempted mugging to a burglary worth £400, 000. Excessive violence was used in robberies which were covered by five articles, but six articles covered the bravery shown by theft victims. Significantly, all of the 'brave' victims were from groups traditionally conceptualised as vulnerable; all were elderly except for one pregnant woman.

5.2.1.5. Violent Assaults

This category included those 37 articles that covered physical non-sexual assaults. Of these articles, four were about assaults and outbursts on airplane flights and five assaults were deemed to have had a racist motive. Acts which were committed by a group of people accounted for six articles, and eight specified that the violence was alcohol-fuelled.

5.2.1.6. Child Criminality

These 34 articles were concerned with the criminal activity of children (under-16). Of these 35 there were seven that featured child gangs who had attacked members of the public and three covered a story about a group of more than 30 teenagers attacking two police officers after they asked a girl to pick up some dropped litter. Policies attempting to deal with child criminality and anti-social behaviour (such as police officers patrolling schools) were covered by 12 articles. Four articles covered the Cornish town of Redruth as the authorities implemented a curfew policy over the school holidays whereby 16 years olds were banned from the streets after 9pm.

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bone fragments were found at the site, but further testing proved this to be untrue. A former staff member and former student were each found guilty of multiple counts of abuse in 2009.

5.2.1.7. Fraud

Fraud was the focus of 31 articles, with benefit fraud the focus of nine. Thirteen articles were concerned with the Darwin case which attracted the attention of the national media in December 2007 when John Darwin, assumed dead after going missing while canoeing in 2002, appeared in a police station claiming to have extensive memory loss. Following newspaper and police investigations it emerged that he, with the knowledge of his wife, had faked his death in order to claim life insurance. Media attention was renewed in July 2008 with the trial and subsequent sentencing of the couple (both were sentenced to approximately six years).

5.2.1.8. Law Reforms

Twenty-eight articles were written about reforms, or suggested reforms, to criminal law. Ten articles focused on changes to the murder law which proposed that the legal defence of provocation is to be abolished and replaced with the defences of killing due to fear of serious injury or due to exceptional circumstances. Five articles regarded changes to The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 which would back 'have-a-go-heroes' allowing people to protect themselves or intervene in a crime using a degree of force that seemed reasonable in the heat of the moment.

5.2.1.9. Prison

There were 26 articles that commented on prison life, of which 11 complained about the 'liberties' afforded to prisoners and nine discussed potential reforms to prisons.

5.2.1.10. Sex Crimes

These 22 articles covered illegal sex acts where only adults were involved. The majority were concerned with more 'minor offences' (such as flashing or consensual sexual activity in a public place) but eight articles covered incidents of rape.

5.2.1.11. Crime Statistics

There were a total of 21 articles that concerned crime statistics.[49] Crime maps, a scheme by the Home Office that was launched during the summer of 2008 where crime statistics are plotted onto an interactive map, received the attention of seven articles.

5.2.1.12. Drug Offences

Drug offences were the focus of 21 articles, with seven focused on drug smuggling. Five of the articles covered drug raids or the capture of drug dealers.

5.2.1.13. Child Abuse

This category captures those 14 articles which concerned the physical abuse of children; of these 14 articles, eight covered abuse committed by family members and six involved non-family members, half of which were babysitters.

5.2.1.14. Miscellaneous

As the title suggests, these 13 articles relate to criminal activity that did not correspond with any of the other remaining subcategories. Of these miscellaneous crimes, there was only one crime that appeared several times; animal abuse featured in eight articles.

5.2.1.15. Traffic

Just 10 of the 505 articles regarding crime were about traffic incidents where a culpable party was identified. The incidents featured in the articles were particularly severe and involved multiple fatalities.

5.2.2. 'Madeleine McCann' Articles

The abduction of Madeleine McCann in May of 2007 has continued to be an enduring story in the media.[50] Developments in the case, campaigns by the

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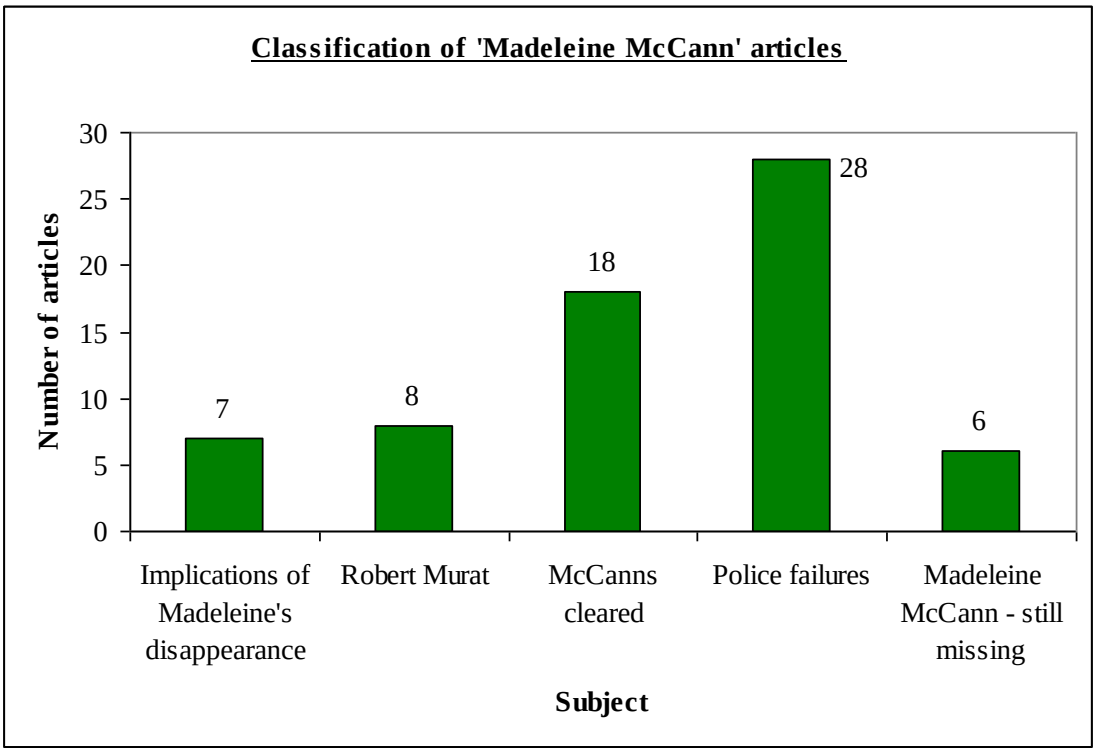
[49] Crime statistics that focused purely on knife crime were included in the 'knife crime' category (see Appendix ix).
[50] A description of the case can be found in section 3.2.1.

McCanns and significant dates are all marked with an increase in coverage. In July of 2008 the closure of the case by the Portuguese police and the court action of Robert Murat (see section 5.2.2.3) were developments that were followed by the media. The categorisation of the articles that featured Madeleine McCann can be seen below:

Figure 3: Classification of 'Madeleine McCann Articles'



5.2.2.1. Police Failures

There were numerous criticisms of the Portuguese police and their investigation from the very beginning of the case, with claims that the police delayed their initial hunt for the missing child and that Portuguese forensic practices were not as advanced as in the UK. This criticism continued into July 2008 when the investigation was officially closed. Following the closure of the case a multitude of police documents were released and these shed light on aspects of the police work and these failures were highlighted in 28 articles. Five of these articles regarded the publication of a book about the disappearance. A senior police officer involved in the investigation, Goncalo Amaral, was removed from the case after criticising the McCanns and British Police in October 2007 and in July 2008 he published a book

in Portugal about the investigation, *'Maddie - A Verdade da Mentira'* ('Maddie - The Truth of the Lie'), in which he claims that Madeleine is dead and implicates her parents in her death.[51]

5.2.2.2. McCanns Cleared Of Any Involvement

Three people were named *arguidos* (official suspects) by the Portuguese police and two of these were the McCanns themselves, who were named as such in early September 2007. In July 2008, when the investigation into Madeleine's disappearance was being closed, this status was officially dropped. Their clearance by the authorities was the feature of 18 articles.

5.2.2.3. Robert Murat

Robert Murat, a British man living in Praia da Luz, was the first to be named an *arguido* in the investigation into Madeleine's disappearance. Although Police found no evidence to charge him with any crime Murat, as well as two associates, were vilified in the British press. This led to legal action against several British newspapers which concluded with Murat's victory in July 2008 which was the subject of eight articles.

5.2.2.4. Implications Of Madeleine's Disappearance

There were seven articles dedicated to implications of Madeleine's disappearance and two of these featured the McCanns' fight for an alert system for missing children. Whilst individual countries have an alert system, there was no EU wide scheme which meant that abducted children could, theoretically, pass easily between nations. During the month of July the McCanns personally (and successfully) petitioned Members of the European Parliament to support such a system. Other articles referred to a fund being raised to take the McCanns to court for child neglect, the career progression of their spokesman and the long term implications of Madeleine's disappearance for the McCanns themselves.

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[51] The McCanns sought and won an injunction to prevent the publication and sale of the book in September 2009. This temporary court order was upheld in February 2010.

5.2.2.5. Articles Drawing Attention To The Fact That Madeleine Is Still Missing

While the majority of articles were about the issues discussed above, there were six articles that drew attention to the fact that despite the police and media campaign to find the child, Madeleine is still missing and there is still no clear idea as to what occurred during the night of May 3rd 2008.

The remaining categories for the classification of the articles can be examined in Appendix ix. The analysis will now focus in on two of the articles in order to examine how news stories are constructed within, reflect and contribute to a culture of fear.

5.3. DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

There is a research tradition in looking at newspaper articles as an indicator of culture (such as the work of the Glasgow Media Group which is described in Eldridge, 2000). This section will continue in that tradition and look to specific articles for a better understanding of how representations of contemporary society are constructed and reported. The entire data set of articles was sorted by publication and then by date and the median article from each newspaper was selected. This random selection resulted in four articles: one from each newspaper. Two of the articles were on subjects closely related to the topic of this thesis: the implementation of child-protection policies and the issue of youth crime and parental responsibility. The two remaining articles were a commentary and debate feature in The Guardian about rape and a report in The Sun on the death of Mullah Bishmullah, a Taliban leader.

The two articles featuring issues around parenting and childhood are reproduced and analysed below:

Article 1: The Daily Telegraph, 15th of July 2008

Parents of Tearaways will face eviction; Action on Youth Crime to Target 110, 000 families

PARENTS of troublesome teenagers will face intensive coaching courses and could be evicted from their council houses under plans to be announced by ministers today. Extending curfews and forcing young offenders to carry out community punishments on Friday and Saturday evenings will also be suggested by the Youth Crime Action Plan. The moves are the latest attempts by ministers to tackle a hard core of families who ministers say are responsible for a large amount of crime.

Gordon Brown said the Government would target 110,000 problem families in which children were either involved in anti-social behaviour or at risk of getting into trouble.

In as many as 20,000 cases, parents would be forced to attend "intensive courses to help them supervise their children," said Mr Brown.

Parents of offenders in council housing could also face eviction, he suggested. Speaking at a press conference in Downing Street, Mr Brown pledged "direct and compulsory intervention" in families where children have been excluded from school or been served with an anti-social behaviour order. "The first responsibility when a child is in trouble or at risk of getting into trouble rests with the parents," he said.

Where children are in trouble, he said, "the family has got to change its behaviour." He said early intervention would take place where "it's clear that the mother or father have lost control of their children and their whole life is actually in difficulty'."

Mr Brown identified a small minority of children, about one in 20, who were responsible for half of all youth crime.

"These are the families whose children are disrupting the classrooms and roaming the streets committing crime," he said. The action plan is also likely to propose that parents of teenage offenders should attend court with their children. Anyone who refuses will be fined or given a parenting order, which makes parents accountable for their children. Another idea is to extend a form of curfews in which teams would confront gangs of teenagers on the streets and persuade them to go home. There are also proposals for work programmes for teenage offenders that would run from 7pm to 9pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

It is estimated that youth re-offending costs the economy more than £400 million a year. Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Staff, which represents court and probation staff, said: "The money would be better spent on stopping children getting into trouble in the first place."

The Liberal Democrats called for a Youth Volunteer Force to involve young offenders in community projects.

In describing a government action plan on youth crime and a press conference given by the Prime Minister this article acts to construct youth offenders and their families in several ways. The article opens by describing the potential punishments that

could befall the parents of youth offenders, as opposed to the offenders themselves. When combined with the headline, which also focuses on the penalty facing parents, the attention capturing first few lines of the article concerns the consequences to the parent. Thus the issue of parental determinism with reference to offspring misbehaviour is placed at the fore of the reporting, which also negates other factors which may be associated with anti-social behaviour such as social and material deprivation. There is also an association made between socio-economic status and anti-social behaviour as the reporters use the connection between local authority housing and criminal youths in the headline and again in the first line of the article. Furthermore the notion that parenting is a teachable skill (and by implication that there are 'experts' in the subject) is reinforced by the proposition of "intensive coaching courses" (line 2). The article then goes on to report on suggested penalties for the offenders themselves: "Extending curfews and forcing young offenders to carry out community punishments on Friday and Saturday evenings" (lines 3-5). Curfews are locally enforced policies which are often served as part of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), although they can be extended by the authorities to include entire neighbourhoods and age groups.[52] The use of a curfew parallels Gill Valentine's research which describes adult "concerns about the ability of adults to control public space" (1996: 590). Thus by enforcing a curfew the streets are reclaimed as adult territory after a certain hour. This attempt at spatial and temporal control can also be seen in the specification of "community punishments" (line 4) and "work programmes" (line 27) during Friday and Saturday evenings.

The report formulates the proposed schemes as "the latest attempts" (line 5) by the government to decrease crime, and therefore the inherent implication is that previous attempts have failed. The journalists' then use a direct quotation to describe Gordon Brown's reported intention to "target 110,000 problem families in which children were either involved in anti-social behaviour or at risk of getting into trouble" (lines 8-9). The specified figure of "110,000" suggests that some research has been done

[52] Using the anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 several towns have used the curfew to enforce a town- or area-wide curfew. In 2004, during the Easter holidays, Wigton in Cumbria became the first to enforce a town-wide curfew and banned unaccompanied under-16's from the streets after 9pm. In

into the families positioning the government as knowledgeable while the label "problem families" infers families with a history of involvement with the authorities. One noteworthy feature of Gordon Brown's reported speech is the description of children who are "at risk of getting into trouble." Thus the children and families do not actually have to have committed any crime or behaved in an anti-social manner to be affected by the Youth Crime Action Plan: merely being 'at risk' (by unspecified means) is enough to warrant state intervention. The suggestions of teaching courses and possible eviction are again repeated and act to reinforce the notion of teachable parenting skills and the association of socio-economic status and youth criminality. A direct quote from Brown refers to "direct and compulsory intervention'" (line 13) which constructs the intervention as forceful and obligatory, which infers that the parents in question are unable to solve the problem of their child's behaviour on their own and without the intervention of the authorities; this intervention is represented as very authoritarian and so the government is portrayed as adopting a heavy handed approach (which may well be welcomed by the readers).

The article then uses more direct quotes from Brown to extend the commentary on parental responsibility:

> ""The first responsibility when a child is in trouble or at risk of getting into trouble rests with the parents," he said. Where children are in trouble, he said, "the family has got to change its behaviour." He said early intervention would take place where "it's clear that the mother or father have lost control of their children and their whole life is actually in difficulty"" (lines 15-19).

There is a paradox presented here with Brown stating that responsibility lies with the parents, yet arguing for "compulsory intervention" (line 13), again repeating the authoritarian nature of the approach suggested. Thus parental responsibility is constructed as insufficient in the case of "troublesome teenagers" (line 3) and

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2008, as mentioned in the content analysis, a small town in Cornwall, Redruth, implemented a similar scheme for the duration of the summer holidays.

requiring government involvement. The reference to changing family behaviour infers that the unchanged family behaviour is dysfunctional and the cause of the child's misbehaviour; it is not the child alone who has to change their behaviour, but also those who are not guilty of anti-social behaviour or crime. Furthermore Brown's remarks formulate "lost control" as endangering the child's "whole life," and this extreme case formulation[53] acts to represent the severity of the potential future problems while simultaneously constructing children as needing to be controlled. The use of the word "control" introduces the notion of children as wild and out-of-control beings which is reinforced a few lines later by the description of them "roaming the streets" (lines 22-23). In this context therefore the parents are formulated as failures for not controlling their wild and savage offspring. This formulation aligns with writing on the contemporary construction of children as either 'angels' or devils' (Valentine, 1996) and specifically with the construction of children as devils: feral, immoral and antisocial. This construction of children as animals once again negates the social and material environment that can contribute towards anti-social behaviour and positions bad behaviour as innate. This paradoxical construction is a subject of discussion throughout the thesis and will be explored more fully elsewhere (section 7.2).

The term "parenting order" arises on line 25 which is described as making "parents accountable for their children" (line 25).[54] Thus parental responsibility is constructed as enforceable by law and as the cause of misbehaviour on the part of the child. The issue of curfews is also brought up again with a more detailed

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[53] Extreme case formulations were first documented by Pomerantz (1986) and include statements such as "everyone," "forever," and "completely innocent". These formulations are used to make the strongest case possible: for example the phrase 'scared to death' is an extreme description of fear. Pomerantz argues that extreme case formulations act to legitimise claims in three main ways: "(1) to assert the strongest case in anticipation of non-sympathetic hearings, (2) to propose the cause of a phenomenon (3) to speak for the rightness (wrongness) of a practice" (ibid.: 227). Thus by positioning an event/action as something that 'everyone' does it is located as socially acceptable through its commonality. In 2000 Edwards furthered Pomerantz's investigations and argued that extreme case formulations can display an 'investment by the speaker (such as certainty) and can be used in nonliteral ways to joke and tease.

[54] A 'parent order' is described by the Youth Justice Board as: "A parent/carer who receives an order will normally be required to attend a counselling or guidance sessions for a period of up to three months. They may also have conditions imposed on them such as attending meetings with teachers at their child's school, ensuring their child does not visit a particular place unsupervised or ensuring

description: "Another idea is to extend a form of curfews in which teams would confront gangs of teenagers on the streets and persuade them to go home." (lines 25-27). The use of the word "confront" constructs a hostile situation in which some kind of bravery is required, again portraying teenagers as 'devils' (Valentine, 1996). The use "persuade" is also noteworthy as it infers some kind of choice, whereas it is arguably very likely that the "team" would have enforcement powers of some kind and so the teenagers would be forced to go home, rather than make that choice of their own accord. The article then moves to incorporate an expert view after noting the cost of youth re-offending and the expert is presented in the form of the "assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Staff" (line 25) which is an authoritative sounding title and adds weight to his words. His quote (lines 31-32) is interesting however as it does not comment directly on the policies suggested within the article, but is a generic remark about preventing children offending. While this quote is vague it does act to reinforce the policies suggested that target those children "at risk of getting into trouble" (lines 9 & 15).

Throughout the article children are constructed as out-of-control and parents (specifically a lack of parental responsibility) are formulated as the cause of that wildness. The policies suggested by the government are positioned as acting to increase parental responsibility and to regain adult control of the streets. Parental accountability is thus constructed as the main issue with parents described as potentially facing eviction, fines or legal orders for the crimes of their children. The article creates an authoritarian stance, while also paying attention to right wing politics by failing to mention the wider socio-material environment. This absence, coupled with the focus on the role of the parents, has echoes of the "there's no such thing as society, only individuals and their families" approach of the Thatcher years. We will now look at the second article which constructs issues around parenting and childhood in a very different manner.

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their child is at home at particular times. These conditions can last for a period of up to 12 months. A parent/carer can be prosecuted for failing to keep the requirements of the order." (YJB, 2010)

Article 2: The Mirror, 16th of July 2008

1 **I was branded a pervert for taking this snap of my kids; Dad's fury at slur**

2 DAD Gary Crutchley thought it would be nice to take pictures of his sons having fun on a
3 slide.

4 But his innocent snaps caused a furious row with staff and another parent - who called him a
5 pervert.

6 First, a woman running the fairground slide tried to stop him from taking photos of his two
7 youngest children Cory, seven, and Miles, five.

8 Then, other families waiting in the queue also demanded he stop.

9 Mr Crutchley, 39, who claimed he had only taken snaps of his own children, said: "A
10 woman said I could be taking pictures of any child to put on the internet and called me a pervert. It
11 was sheer madness."

12 "We left. Two police officers confirmed that I had been perfectly within my rights to take
13 photographs of my own children in the park."

14 The Walsall dad added: "What is the world coming to? This parental paranoia is getting out
15 of hand."

16 Mr Crutchley's wife Tracey, who was with him, said: " was annoyed, upset and
17 embarrassed."

18 Malcolm Gwinnett, whose daughter was running the attraction at the Wolverhampton City
19 Show, said: "Our policy is to ask people taking photos whether they have children on the slide. If
20 they do, then that is fine."

21 "But another customer took exception and an argument developed."

22 It's madness. This parental paranoia is now out of hand

This shorter article presents a different aspect to contemporary parenting and childhood; it reports that a father was prohibited from taking photographs of his own sons enjoying a ride on a slide, when a fellow parent accused him of being a pervert. The headline uses active voicing[55] to formulate the headline from the father's point of view with the by-line describing his emotional reaction: fury. The use of the term "slur" (line 1) places emphasis on the insulting nature of such an accusation. The article itself begins by setting the scene to the incident and reinforces the innocence and typical motives behind Crutchley deciding to photograph his sons. Crutchley is categorised definitively as a father by use of the term "DAD" (line 2): the word is presented in upper case which adds emphasis and the descriptor comes before his

name, so even before Crutchley is named his category entitlement[56] is established; furthermore the use of "DAD" as opposed to 'father' is a term that generates familiarity, positioning Crutchley as someone the readers can relate to. The photographic nature of the incidence is emphasised by the description of the boys "having fun on a slide" (lines 2-3): an ideal photo opportunity. The purity of his motives are unequivocally noted by the description of his photographs as "innocent snaps" (line 4). His right to take those "innocent snaps" was challenged not by one person but two: the operator of the slide and a parent. Thus the request for him to stop photographing is formulated as not just the result of an isolated opinion, but multiple. The structure of the following sentence is also noteworthy: "But his innocent snaps caused a furious row with staff and another parent - who called him a pervert" (lines 4-5). The detail that Crutchley was called a pervert by another parent is separated from the rest of the sentence by a dash which constructs that factor as significant enough to stand alone. The contrast between "innocent" and "furious" further act to represent the scene as emotionally charged and the ensuing "row" as a gross overreaction.

The story is then told in more detail and in chronological order. Initially the slide operator "tried to stop him" (line 6) which infers that she was not successful in her request. In this same sentence Crutchley's sons are referred to as his "youngest children" (line 7) which positions Crutchley as being a father to older children and therefore develops his status from father to that of an experienced father. The reader is then informed that "Then, other families waiting in the queue also demanded he stop" (line 8). There are several factors at play within these few words. Firstly the demand to stop is described as coming from several families and so the impression of a mass objection to his taking photographs is created. Secondly the description of the families as waiting "in the queue" infers that their children were not actually on the slide in question and so their children would not have been in danger of being

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[55] Active voicing is a common discursive tool whereby a speaker acts to report the talk of another, for example: "my husband said 'my God what is it' (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998: 226). Bringing another 'voice' to the account allows the speaker to increase veracity and add narrative detail.

[56] Speakers may work up their position or knowledge entitlement by invoking their membership to a particular category (such as a parent, a doctor, or a particular nationality) which acts to strengthen their account (Potter, 1996b).

captured within Crutchley's photos of his sons on the slide. Finally the term 'demand' constructs the request for him to stop as not optional; he is formulated as being forced.

The narrative then moves to include direct quotes from Crutchley, after reinforcing that he was only taking pictures of his own children. He adds further detail to the report and uses active voicing to describe the comments of one woman in particular: "A woman said I could be taking pictures of any child to put on the internet" (lines 9-10). The formulation of "any child" constructs the potential danger as random and as present to all children while her reference to the "internet" constructs the World Wide Web as a contemporary danger (see section 7.4). While the precise danger of the internet is not specified, the reference to the term "pervert" (lines 1 & 10) suggests that some paedophilic threat is present. This is done by a general reference to the internet which is often constructed in the media and within popular culture to be the lair of predators waiting to groom innocents and a method of exploiting child abuse images, and a coupling with the word "pervert." The situation is labelled by Crutchley as "sheer madness" (line 11) before he describes police confirmation that he was not breaking the law. It is not clear when and where the police contact arose, but the "sheer madness" of the situation is reinforced by the construction that Crutchley had to seek police verification he was allowed to "take photographs of my own children in the park" (lines 12-13). The use of the word "rights" (line 12) also formulates Crutchley's actions as a basic freedom, which had therefore been breached by the objections of the other parties.

The incident is placed within a wider social context by Crutchley's statement: "What is the world coming to? This parental paranoia is getting out of hand" (lines 14-15). The phrase "What is the world coming to?" indicates the occurrence of a change and is colloquially used to refer to a negative change. While the use of the term "parental paranoia" constructs the behaviour of the other parties as based on unfounded, extreme, and over-reactionary fear and this is formulated as being out of

control. The reader is then introduced to Mrs Crutchley who uses a three part list[57] to describe her emotional reaction to the incident. Malcolm Gwinnet is brought into the report at this stage to represent the other parties, specifically the slide operator. He describes the slide policy (although there is no reference as to whether this policy was adhered to during the incident with Crutchley) and constructs a member of the public as responsible for the disagreement. The article ends by reinforcing that "It's madness. This parental paranoia is now out of hand" (line 22). This last line, and arguably the take home message, is not attributed to any source so could be taken as editorialising on the part of the reporters.

In these two articles we see a version of the 'angels and devils' argument that Valentine (1996) sets out. In the articles from The Daily Telegraph children are constructed as out of control criminals and, paradoxically, yet in The Mirror article children are formulated as the victims of extreme parental paranoia. Parents are likewise constructed in two ways: in one article parents are seen as requiring legal and governmental intervention to take responsibility for their children. In the article from the Mirror parental paranoia is positioned as the overwhelming issue for readers to be aware of, with parents worked up as over-reacting to non-existent risks. This paranoia is also situated as negatively impacting childhood, with the innocent photographing of a child's enjoyment during a visit to the park prevented. Thus the 'angels' are formulated as extremely vulnerable and requiring adult protection from threats as mundane and arguably non-existent of photography within a public place where the children were all fully clothed, supervised and in the presence of parents. Alternatively the 'devils' are constructed as feral and criminal, due to poor parenting skills. Thus we can see how the media constructs, reinforces and reflects conceptualisations of contemporary childhood and parenting within a culture of fear. Both articles also fail to look at the wider social context of the reported events, but instead focus upon the family unit which reinforces the increasingly individualised

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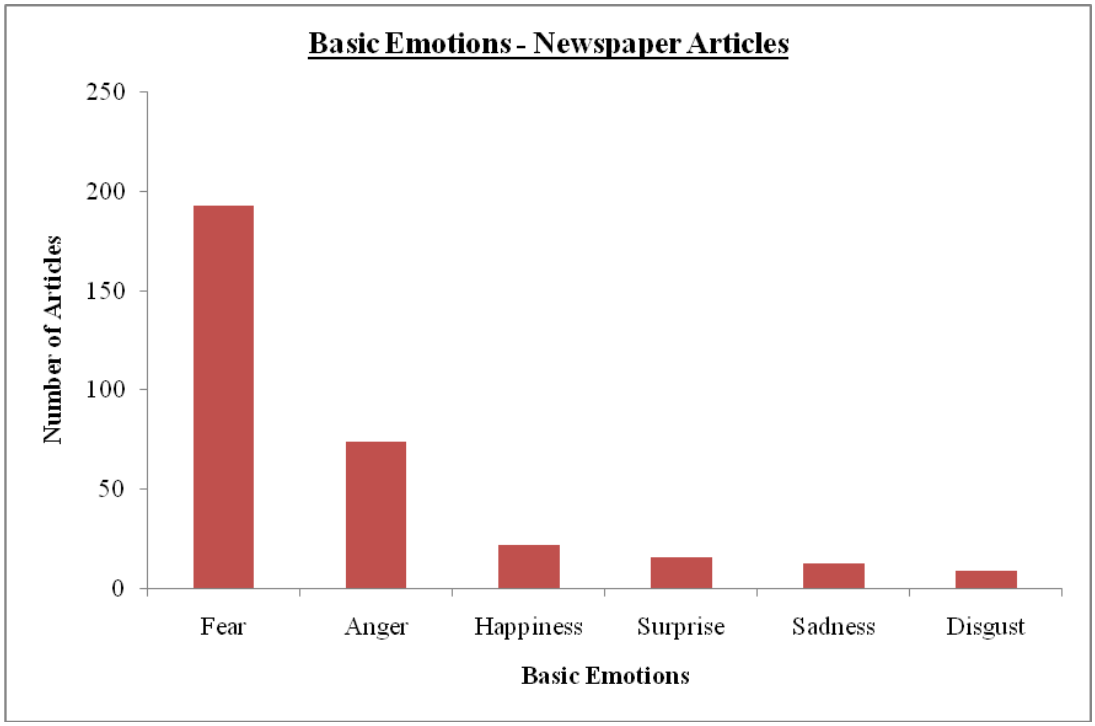
[57] Gail Jefferson (1991) demonstrated that speakers often orientate towards a list in three parts (e.g. "blah blah blah" and "They go on en on en on but…" (ibid.: 64)) and this is a "basic structural principle" (ibid.: 89). She also notes that when participants work to form a three part list, even when one is not present; for example when participants offer a concrete two-part list they often offer a third list item which is vague (for example "coke and popcorn and that type of thing" (Jefferson, 1991:

nature of modern society, but also falls into the realm of parental determinism (Furedi, 2001).

5.4. BASIC EMOTIONS IN THE MEDIA

An additional search was also carried out using the same time period (July 2008) and the same newspapers as above. The terms that Ekman uses for his basic emotions theory were searched for in Nexis® in the same way that the previous terms were. The 1971 (Ekman & Friesen) version of basic emotions was used: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. Articles were removed on the same grounds as the main search and were also removed if the terms were used in a sarcastic manner. The sarcasm clause was particularly relevant with 'surprise' as reporters expressed, for example, 'surprise' that government policies were failing. The results of this simple search are displayed in the graph below:

Figure 4: Basic Emotions in the Media



66)) which completes the three, or search for a third item (e.g. "adultery, and murder, and- and-thievery" (ibid.: 67).

The graph above is a simple representation of the emotion terms that are used within media reporting; thus one can see that the media utilises the word 'fear' much more often that any of the other terms. The term was also used in reference to a variety of stories: from financial concerns ('Fears of recession drive shares and oil prices down,' The Guardian (5th July)), to commenting on general social concerns ('Kid pic fear so perverted,' The Sun (23rd July)) to specific events ('Boy, 2, shut in metal box at nursery for 2 hours: Frantic mum's kidnap fear,' The Mirror (11th July)). This can be seen to be reflective of a wider culture of fear and the nature of news reporting which focuses on the negative. This focus on fear has been acknowledged previously (Altheide 1997; 1999; 2002) and it has been suggested that "today fear is embraced and constitutes a major public discourse through which numerous problems and issues are framed" (1999: 476). Thus fear is a primary route through which news, entertainment and public debate are channelled.

5.5. SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a brief glimpse into media coverage and the construction of parenting and childhood issues within newspaper reporting. The content analysis of the articles provides a reflection of the social and cultural conditions, norms and issues that were being discussed and presented by the media in July of 2008. A further analysis of two articles demonstrate just how those individual stories were constructed to portray two very different pictures of contemporary parenting and childhood, both of which reflect different aspects of a culture of fear. Finally a brief content analysis using Ekman's 1971 list of basic emotions indicates that fear is the most widely referred to emotion (from that short list) in the media. This brief analysis of newspaper reporting is intended to provide a glimpse into the cultural and media backdrop against which the participants talk is conducted and in later chapters relevant results from the content analysis will be presented in an accompanying text box. The results are presented in this way and not incorporated into the main text in order to maintain a recognition of the differing theories of meaning that are ascribed to the different methodological concepts.

CHAPTER 6

FEAR OF THE 'WHAT IF?'

A recurrent concern in the data was the fear of the 'what if?,' the hypothetical anxiety that leads to the questioning of risk and the potential worst case scenarios: for example 'what if my child gets hurt?,' 'what if my child gets taken?,' or 'what if my child dies?' While parental worry for children is normative it can be argued that this worry is exacerbated in a culture of fear to the point of paranoia (Furedi, 2001; 2002; Furedi & Bristow, 2008; Glassner, 1999). However, while there was a distinct sense of anxiety within the participants' discourse, there was also an awareness of needing children to be independent, responsible, and to gain a sense of self-reliance which will be discussed in the second section of the chapter.

6.1. WHAT IF?

The first section of this chapter looks at formulations of 'what if?': this conceptualisation of parental fear accounts for a heightened contemplation of hypothetical fears and a focus on worst case scenarios, while also taking into consideration the emotional response to the imagined situation. Various formulations of the 'what if?' will be examined in this section of this chapter.

6.1.1. What If? The Guilt

The disappearance of Madeleine McCann[58] in 2007 made global headlines, and continues to do so as her parents, Gerry and Kate, ensure that their daughter's case is never far from the public's mind. The McCanns reside in the East Midlands (their

home town of Rothley is just five miles from Loughborough) and it can be suggested that the local nature of the story means the case has even more resonance with the participants. It is therefore not surprising that the case was frequently spontaneously discussed, but what may be notable is the impact that the case is constructed to have had. The disappearance was mentioned in all of the parent focus groups, with the talk predominantly critical and either aimed at the McCanns culpability in their daughter's disappearance or using the case as an example of what happens when children are left alone (a further example of this can be seen in the Extract 28 - 'Bad Things Can Happen'). The extract from Sue, Dave, Peter and Marie (below) is of particular interest due to Marie's description of how she could possibly feel if she were the McCanns:

Extract 3: Sue, Dave, Peter & Marie (Parents) – 'Racked With Guilt'

```
D:  d-. do people here use those ba:by monitors? (0.4) for
    infants? in other words there's a (0.6) a microphone in the
    baby's room
S:  [i did when they (inaudible)                        ]
P:  [we bought but £we couldn't get it to work£ heh heh]
M:  [when they were babies when they were crying lots  ]
D:  yeah
M:  only when they were babies
D:  we:'ve. never used that not with my older children or or with
    the four year old uh
    (0.6)
M:  not after about two years of a:ge
    (0.6)
D:  right
M:  because i wasn't- >i didn't want< to eavesdrop on them it was
    just if they were cr:ying that was [all]
S:                                     [mm ]
D:  right (1.7)  a lot of n-=
M:                          =or if we went to a hotel you could
    have it in the room and then you could (.) be eating
    downstairs so you'd hear them
S:  °mm°
```

[58] Madeleine's disappearance is described in detail in Section 3.2.1.

D: well heh heh yes heh ever since uh (1.0)
M: the [McCanns yeah]
D: [little Maddie] i don't think people uh admit to that anymore do they?=
M: =>yeah but it was in the same building< i never.
D: =oh ok=
M: =ever. i- i'm shocked by the McCanns to be honest that they [never]
D: [yes]
M: actually seemed (.) at all ↑↑Guilty
S: yeah
M: i would be absolutely ↑↑racked with guilt
S: mm hmm
M: [i'm]
D: [yes yes]
M: i'd be [↑↑horizontal]
D: [yes yes]
M: i wouldn't be able to sortof ↓bre:ath [sort of thing]
D: [(inaudible)]
S: yeah
M: i know it sounds extre:me but if i (0.8) preferred eating a me:al down the road t- t- to being in the same building as my daughter i couldn't c↑ope
S: no
M: but they don't seem to take any? (0.6) obviously they didn't want it to happen et cetera but (0.8) i- i just never ever
S: they don't see it as almost anything to do with it do they?
M: ↑yes nothing to do with their fault i know it's not but it's (1.6) i just couldn't. empathise with that bit of them=
D: =right=
M: =i think (inaudible) much more. contrived

Dave's opening question is a subtle change from the previous topic of conversation which was discussing the intrusive nature of 'nanny cams'[59] and GPS (Global Positioning System) tracking; thus his question is set against a conversational backdrop that frames these monitoring technologies as invasive and negative. Following responses from the other focus group members describing their use of baby monitors, Dave then recounts how he has not used them with either his older children or his youngest child. By referencing his older children (aged 26 and 30) and also his four year old daughter he establishes himself as someone experiencing parenthood for the second time around, a category entitlement which legitimates his argument (see Appendix ii for details of the participants and the ages of their children). Given the context of his question and his own response, Dave's opening turn in this extract could be seen to function as an attempt to open a discussion about a product he does not agree with. Following Dave's dismissal of the technology, Marie justifies her use of the monitors on lines 15-16 in terms of caring for her children (i.e. responding to their cries) which contrasts with the morally loaded term "eavesdrop" (line 15). This is further clarified by her use of an age limit (line 12), beyond which presumably the children are verbally proficient enough to warrant an ethical concern around eavesdropping which is indicative of a wider debate around the line between security and intrusive practices. Products designed and employed for safety purposes, such as baby monitors, GPS tracking and CCTV, can and have been very easily used to encroach upon privacy: there is a fine line between vigilance and intrusion.

Following receipts from Sue and Dave (lines 17 & 18), Marie goes on to describe another situation in which baby monitors were useful, using the pronoun 'you' to generalise their utility. Dave's response (lines 23 & 25-26) to this example is noteworthy as he makes the link to the McCanns whilst laughing, which could be interpreted as an attempt to lighten what could potentially be perceived as a critical comparison, whereas Marie is clear to position herself as different to the McCanns (27-28 & 30-31). Returning to Dave's link to the McCann case on line 20, this can

[59]'Nanny cams' (a.k.a. Nanny cameras or spy cameras) refer to small video cameras which are hidden in household objects and used within the home. These cameras are used by parents to supervise those (such as nannies) caring for their children.

be seen as demonstrative of the high media profile of the case as he does not actually make the link himself, rather it is Marie who completes his sentence and mentions the McCanns by name (line 24). Dave's description of "little Maddie" (line 25) both further establishes this familiarity and constructs the girl as young and vulnerable. His comment "i don't think people uh admit to that anymore do they?" (lines 25-26) tellingly represents the issue as one that people admit/do not admit to, rather than one that is done/not done. Arguably this represents the use of baby monitors in this way as something to be ashamed of and to be kept hidden, while also indicating that parental behaviours are subject to peer pressure and public judgement.

We then move on to Marie's comments which predominantly constitute the rest of the extract as she distances herself from the McCanns (27-28 & 30-31), describes how she might feel if she were them (lines 30-47), and directly criticises them (lines 49-55). Her rapid interjection on line 27 (">yeah but it was in the same building<") acts to immediately distinguish her from the McCanns. The degree of spatial closeness is used by Marie to assert her difference from the McCanns; while she did leave her daughter, she remained in the same building whereas the McCanns did not. Thus leaving the building (as opposed to the child) is constructed as the important factor in the different levels of parental responsibility displayed by her and the McCanns. She reinforces this with the strong statement "i never. ever." (lines 27-28 & 30), with both the assonant repeat and double emphases serving to clearly establish her distance from the McCanns; a comment which is perhaps left unfinished given Dave's acceptance on line 26. Marie then describes her disbelief at the McCanns actions (30-33) which again serves to dissociate her, and this is affiliatively received by Dave on line 32. In this section of the discourse Marie works to position herself not only as unlike the McCanns, but also represents herself as a 'good parent' (by remaining in close spatial proximity to her children) and the McCanns as 'bad parents' (for leaving the building their children were in).

An intriguing section follows where Marie describes her potential response if she were to be in the same situation in the McCanns. This manages to indirectly criticise them through her extreme depictions of the guilt she might feel versus their apparent lack of response. Her comment that she is shocked because they never seemed "at all ↑↑Guilty" (line 33) is not just a description of a state of affairs, but

functions here as a forceful moral judgement – and moreover one which is agreed with by Sue and Dave (lines 32 & 34). She personalises the hypothetical reaction by stating that she would be "absolutely ↑↑racked with guilt" (line 35), "↑↑horizontal" (line 39), and that she "wouldn't be able to sortof ↓bre:ath [sort of thing]" (line 41-42). The enactive character of these comments, partnered by the pitch changes and emphases, do much to add force to her speech, establishing a position where the very thought of being in the same situation as the McCanns is enough to upset her. Her talk also invokes metaphors of death and torture: her corporeal body would react to such a situation and prevent her from breathing and standing upright - Marie would literally be stopped dead by her physical response. The phrase "racked with guilt" is a torture metaphor which implies prolonged pain and suffering. The expression is a cultural commonplace that works well here to construct the agony a parent might feel when a child disappears as torture, particularly if the parent is in someway liable for that disappearance. The reference to not being able to breathe can be further equated to death: in pure biological terms when one stops breathing, one dies, which is further emphasised by the comment of being horizontal (line 39) as the final resting position is, of course, horizontal. These remarks are responded to with agreement from Sue and Dave, demonstrating that despite their excessive character (also recognised by Marie herself on line 45 -"i know it sounds extre:me") they are not constructed as bizarre, surprising or alien by the rest of the group. Thus the focus group represents the disappearance of a child as akin to death.

This is followed by a description of her stance: "but if i (0.8) preferred eating a me:al down the road t- t- to being in the same building as my daughter i couldn't c↑ope" (lines 45-47). This is a reformulation of the McCanns' activities that fateful night which work to further Marie's criticism of them, which also acts to account for the extreme nature of Marie's earlier comments. The use of the word "preferred" creates an accusatory tone as she qualifies why the McCanns should feel guilty in that they made a willing, active, and considered choice to leave their children on that crucial night. It represents a deeper judgement of the McCanns and positions their decision to dine out whilst leaving their children sleeping as a character flaw, rather than an isolated mistake. Thus rather than locating Madeleine's disappearance as an unfortunate incident that could befall any family, Marie constructs the abduction as related to a moral failing on the part of her parents. Her reference to the "same

building" further acts to reinforce her earlier comments that she is distinct from the McCanns due to her remaining in the same building when using baby monitors. In these few lines the McCanns are positioned as failing in their parental responsibility through a weakness in their moral disposition.

Marie moves on to criticise the McCanns in a less indirect way by positioning them as accountable for their daughter's disappearance and their response as un-emotional. She acknowledges their grief with her comment in lines 49-50 - "obviously they didn't want it to happen et cetera" - but this recognition is diminished by the use of "et cetera." The "et cetera" can be seen to refer to a culturally shared script which acknowledges that the McCanns did not want harm to come to their eldest daughter, but also acts to construct this acknowledgment as something she does not wish to dwell on or remark on further. Sue's comment (line 51) then reinforces Marie's criticism, although the word "almost" does acknowledge that the McCanns were not fully culpable. Marie states: "↑yes nothing to do with their fault i know it's not but it's (1.6) i just couldn't. empathise with that bit of them" (lines 52-53). Thus she does again attempt to concede that the disappearance was not completely the McCanns fault with the statement "i know it's not but it's (1.6)" and as the phrase is incomplete it allows her fellow discussants to complete the disagreement which is unsaid. The "but" also reinforces the continuing positioning of the McCanns at fault. The empathy remark, particularly as the lack of compassion is limited to one "bit," constructs Marie as caring given that she can sympathise with all the other 'bits.' Unfortunately the last line of this extract is inaudible due to poor recording quality, but certainly the word "contrived" (line 55) further reinforces Marie's construction of the McCanns as unfeeling. Not only

Box 1: Guilt and the McCann Case

The issue of blame was confounded in the content analysis by the removal of the arguidos status from Kate and Gerry. However several articles made reference to the fact that they were guilty of leaving their children alone:

"*I refused to believe that they were guilty of anything but leaving their daughter alone while they dined nearby*" (Moore, 2008)

"Gerry and Kate will spend the rest of their lives feeling guilty about leaving their children unguarded that fateful night" ('End the Agony,' 2008)

therefore are the McCanns worked up as responsible for their daughter's disappearance, but their response is also seen to be lacking in feeling.

Thus in the above extract we see several issues at play. Firstly we see the delicate apportioning of blame to the McCanns: a balance between representing the McCanns as culpable ("they never actually seemed at all guilty" (lines 31 & 33) and the brusque acknowledgment that the disappearance was not their fault ("obviously they didn't want it to happen et cetera" - lines 49-50). This balance is (deliberately) not achieved however and the extract positions the McCanns as responsible. Thus we see a moral judgement of the McCanns as 'bad' worked up through their construction as cold, guilty and irresponsible; this representation is mainly Marie's but is also reinforced by affiliative responses from Sue and Dave. Through her situating of the McCann's as 'bad' parents and her self positioning as diametrically opposed from them, Marie formulates herself as a 'good' parent. Finally we also see Marie's passionate speculative reaction to a worst case scenario: the response to an imagined 'what if my child went missing?' constructs the loss of a child as torture, guilt-ridden and a metaphorical death, whilst again working to work Marie up as a deeply caring parent. The entire extract acts to depict notions of 'good' and 'bad' parents, with parental responsibility seen as a key characteristic within this debate. The description of extreme guilt ties into this argument as a result of lack of responsibility and parental supervision and this strong emotional response is an imagined response to wonderings of 'what if?'

6.1.2. What If We Aren't There?

Here is another extract that focuses on the McCann disappearance, but this time it demonstrates the possible impacts the case has had:

Extract 4: Savannah, Melanie & Jasmine (Parents) – 'Separate Bedrooms'

```
1  S:    >th- that's another thing as a child though< we'd go on
2        holiday in a hotel and me mum and dad >i mean they wouldn't<
3        just Clear off but they'd put you to bed and go down into the
4        ba:r=
5  M:        =that's [ri:ght (.) yeah  ]
```

```
6   S:                [for a couple? of] drinks i wouldn't <DR↑e::am> of
7         leaving my kids=
8   J:                    =yeah=
9   M:                         =no
10  S:    if we go away we sleep in the same- (0.6) we separate- go in
11        separate bedrooms so that >there's< one of us In with each of
12        the kids (.) in case anybody comes in in the night that's
13        perhaps taking it a bit fa:r=
14  M:                                =yea:h
15        (4.1)
```

The conversation leading up to this section focuses on high profile media cases, and in particular the McCann case and this extract sees Savannah discussing her family's sleeping arrangements while on holiday. She initially describes her own childhood experiences (lines 1-3) when her parents would enjoy a drink in the hotel bar in the evening after she had gone to bed. However she performs a self-repair[60] in line 2 (">i mean they wouldn't'<") which ensures that her parents are not formulated as neglectful as the phrase "just clear off" implies an abandonment of children without care or consideration. She then switches to general pronouns - "they" and "you" on line 3 - which frames her comments as general, meaning that her parents are not discussed (and therefore criticised) directly anymore and that the situation is phrased as a common one that the other participants can relate to; this generality is reinforced by Melanie's agreement on line 5. Savannah describes her own approach: "i wouldn't <DR↑e::am> of leaving my kids" (lines 6-7). The use of "dream" frames the idea of Savannah leaving her children as something she would never even consider doing, let alone do; in fact her formulation is even more extreme, constructing Savannah's mere contemplation of leaving her children as a fantasy, rather than a possibility. This is particularly clear when one bears in mind the alternative phrases Savannah could have employed, for example "I wouldn't dream of leaving my kids" versus 'I wouldn't think of leaving my kids' or 'I would never leave my kids.' Furthermore the emphasis on the word "<DR↑e::am>" (that is the slowing of speech, increased volume and emphasis, and the change in pitch)

[60] The term 'repair' or 'self-repair' refers to any self-correction in the speaker's talk (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998).

further situates Savannah even considering leaving her children as an impossibility. This comment is worked up as a joint stance following affiliative agreements by Jasmine and Melanie (lines 8 & 9). Thus in this section of talk we see an indication of a generational change in parenting behaviours as Savannah portrays the different approaches of both her and her parents, while she also represents her leaving her children as inconceivable.

We move on to Savannah's description of her family's sleeping arrangements on holiday when she states that her and her husband sleep in separate bedrooms so that their children are never alone. There are several self-repairs on line 10 which could be considered to be Savannah's attempts to make clear the arrangements. The reasons for these sleeping practices are given as "in case anybody comes in in the night" (line 12). This explanation is vague, yet given the conversational context (the discussion of the McCann case) "anybody" arguably refers to a child abductor or someone else intent on causing harm to her children. She accounts for the extremity of the arrangements by admitting that "that's perhaps taking it a bit far" (lines 12-13) which acts to construct her as reasonable as she acknowledges the radical behaviour of sleeping in the same room as her children. However her comments are not responded to affiliatively as Melanie gives a dispreferred response[61] which is emphasised by the lengthy pause at the end of this section of the conversation (4.1 seconds). Savannah's comment about "taking it a bit far" should arguably prompt a pacification from the other participants, for example 'no it's not,' or ' you have to do what you feel is right.' However Melanie provides a "yeah" on line 14 and it is not

Box 2: Reporting on the Madeleine case

The number of articles retrieved that featured Madeleine's disappearance (n=67) indicates that during the search period the case was a regular feature of news reporting. Thus readers and observers of news were regularly reminded of and confronted by details of the kidnapping. There were no other stories featuring children who had been abducted on holiday or by a stranger.

[61] A dispreferred response occurs when a speaker acts to disagree with the previous speaker. This can be achieved in several ways, through a pause, a request for clarification (a.k.a. repair initiator) (such

entirely clear whether this is in agreement with Savannah's sleeping arrangements or her statement that it is "taking it a bit far." This is then followed by a pause which contributes to the non-affiliative receipt, before Melanie changes the subject of conversation.

Thus in this extract the 'what if?' appears very simply as 'what if my child is taken during the night while we're on holiday?' The contrast Savannah makes between herself and her parents frames the risk, or the perception of the risk, as increased across the generations. Further the implicit comparison between Savannah and the McCanns is another formulation of the construction of 'good' parent and 'bad' parent we saw in the previous extract. In this extract the fear of the 'what if?' is represented as great enough to alter family interaction, and in particular to warrant the 24 hour guarding of children and again we see the notion of parental supervision forwarded as the method employed to prevent potential harm to children.

6.1.3. What If I Entrust My Child To Another?

The following extract is another section from the focus group seen in Extract 3 (Sue, Dave, Peter & Marie) we again see the 'what if?' but in a different guise. Here we see it as an over-assessment of potential risk:

Extract 5: Sue, Dave, & Marie (Parents) – 'Ten Paedophiles'

```
S:    <and i> (.) said to my husband that (0.4) come the day that
      lily gets invited round for tea i'm going as we↑ll [£>for the<
      first£]
D:                                                        [heh   heh
      heh   ]
S:          £time£
D:    yes
      (1.5)
```

as 'hmm?') or the delay of a disagreement through initial agreement (e.g. 'Yes, but') (Pomerantz, 1984).

```
9   S:    i i i know the kids: (0.6) ish >y'know i know what they look i
10        know what the mothers look< like (0.8) but MY worry is i don't
11        know which what blokes are there y'know [there  ]
12  D:                                            [°right°]
13  S:                                                      might      be
14        (0.5) ten paedophiles=
15  M:                        =mm=
16  S:                             =sittin rou(h)nd in their front room
17        i mean it seems extreme but that is=
18  D:                                       =yeah=
19  S:                                             =my thought process
```

Discussing her young daughter and her fears about letting her go to a friend's house for tea, Sue constructs the potential danger as a paedophile ring. Introducing her comments using active voicing ("I said to my husband" – line 1) Sue's concern is formulated as one that has occurred previously and not just a comment that has spontaneously arisen within the focus group discussion and this acts to give more authenticity to her remarks. Her comment that she will be accompanying her daughter to the friend's house is lightened by her laughter, which is echoed by Dave (lines 2-5) and is received by Dave with an affiliative and simple "yes" (line 7). Sue goes on to explain that she can visually identify the children and their mothers, but her personal concern is the men associated with the family. Her use of "bloke" (line 11), as opposed to fathers or dads, infers a moral judgement, particularly given that 'bloke' is a somewhat casual term and that it is mentioned separately from the mothers and children (lines 9-10) and so constructs the men as a having a casual connection to the families in question. The later link from 'bloke' to paedophile consequentially represents paedophilia as a gendered crime. Her comment is acknowledged by Dave (line 12) which constructs the concern as a shared one. We therefore see that Sue represents the threat as not coming from the mothers, but the men associated with them which simultaneously positions the mothers as untrustworthy.

We move on to Sue's remark that: "there might be (0.5) ten paedophiles sittin rou(h)nd in their front room" (lines 11-16). This comment is significant in several respects. Firstly, the use of the word "ten" (line 14) (as opposed to 'one' or 'two') constructs a faceless mass of predators, rather than a lone abuser. Secondly, the

notion of a paedophile ring waiting in a front room (line 16) positions it as a common threat, one that is present in ordinary living rooms belonging to ordinary families. Thirdly, the phrase "sittin round" (line 16) represents the risk as an unexceptional one, with the paedophiles just sitting casually waiting for their prey. This, presumably, is just the kind of thing these modern monsters do - much as a venus fly trap plant might 'sit around' waiting to catch insects. All these formulations inevitably act to represent her daughter - a small child potentially confronted by a paedophile ring - as an innocent victim. Furthermore the agreements by Marie and Dave (lines 15 & 18) act to reinforce Sue's fear as a shared one and her use of an extreme case formulation ("there might be ten paedophiles sitting round in their front room") is managed by her admission of it's extreme nature on lines 17-19. Additionally the small laugh during pronouncement of the word "rou(h)nd" can be seen as not only an attempt to lighten what is a serious statement, but also an acknowledgement of the extreme nature of her fear.

In Sue's comments we can witness her constructing a world where it is a conceivable possibility that there could be "ten paedophiles sitting round" in an acquaintance's home. Simultaneously she situates herself as someone who believes, considers, and actually verbalises this as a possibility worthy of deliberation. Moreover the agreements by Marie and Dave are complicit in this dreadful depiction of the world and position them as people who also believe that this is a likely scenario. Thus we can arguably see the culture of fear (Furedi, 2002) and paranoid parenting (Furedi, 2001) as the contemplation of a virtually impossible and horrendous scenario is worked up by multiple participants as common. In this extract we see the 'what if?' arise in the forms of 'what if my daughter's socialising places her in danger?,' 'what if I place my daughter in the care of another and she is exposed to danger?' and the more extreme 'what if there are paedophiles waiting to prey on my daughter?' These 'what ifs?' are contextualised against an account of the world where horrific dangers routinely await young children. Through these constructions the world is represented as a dangerous place with parental supervision the only precautionary measure as fellow parents cannot be trusted to look after other children.

6.1.4. Even The Children Are Asking 'What If?'

While the previous extracts come from the parents, the following extract comes from the child cohort. It demonstrates the effects that fear of the 'what if?' and over-protection may have on the children themselves.

Extract 6: Laura, Beth, Dana & Tyler (Children) – 'Strange People'

```
R:   ok so:? this fina:l article it um basically says that british
     Mums: are the world's most protective °and over: supervise
     their children° (.) what do you? think have you got
     O:verprotective mums and dads?
D:   yeah
B:   (spose in a way) [yeah]=
L:                    [yeah]=
T:                          =yeah
     (.)
B:   i just think they're like afrai::d
L:   >yeah<=
B:         =of what will happen if [they don't because   ]
L:                                 [yeah which makes me:] afraid?
     because if my mam says that i can't- no you can't go out >°and
     i say why? °< she says because there's strange people about
     (0.1) then >one night one time< we've finally ag-=
D:   =°°sorry°°=
L:             =agreed that i can go out then >i'll be like< Do i
     actually want to?=
D:                  =°yeah::°=
L:                            =when actually nothing ↑will happen
     to me
B:   °yeah°=
D:         =yeah. and you start doubting:=
L:                                       =°yeah°=
D:                                              =like?  should  i:
     should i not? but it- [but it shouldn't- but it shou:ldn't]
L:                         [when (inaudible)                   ]
D:                                                              be
     that ha:rd it should be THat simple like you can go or you
     ca:n't=
L:         =>i know<.
```

The researcher begins this extract by asking for the children's opinions about whether they think their parents are over-protective and this illustrates how the newspaper articles were used in the focus groups with children to guide the discussions. The question is responded to by four of the five focus groups members,[62] although Beth does minimise her response by limiting it to "in a way" (line 6). After a short pause, she attempts to explain why parents might be like that: "i just think they're like afrai::d" (line 10). This phrase hints at hesitancy (with the inclusion of the words "just" and "like"), while the elongation of "afraid" may also represent some tentativeness. However her comment is agreed with by Laura (line 11), which implies that, although tentative, Beth's remarks do ring true for her fellow focus group members. There is a vagueness in Beth's continuation - "what will happen" (line 12) - which constructs the threat as general, ubiquitous and unbounded. The prospect of something happening (and presumably this would be something bad) is also taken as a definite with use of "will," rather than a possibility which would be marked by 'could': thus the assumption is created that something bad will definitely happen to the children if their parents do not act in an overprotective manner.

Laura picks up the narrative on line 13 by positioning the parental fear as contagious, before illustrating with a specific, yet simultaneously general example from her own life (lines 13-19). She uses active voicing, giving her account more authenticity, but also keeps the example familiar by using "you" and "we": hence the conversation with her mum appears as one that has recurred many times, as well as one that others might have with their parents. Again we can see a vagueness at work with "strange people" (line 15) which implies those who could potentially cause harm, yet the damage is not specified and so the threat is worked up as boundless, pervasive, and difficult to quantify. Laura describes the decision to allow her to go out: the emphasis and rhythm on ">one night one time<" (line 16) represents the judgment as a rare one, as does the word "finally" (line 16). The decision is constructed as a joint one however by use of the plural pronoun "we" (line 16), and these features of the delivery work to convey how difficult it was to

[62] The fifth member of the focus group, Mason, was extremely quiet throughout the session.

achieve as well as to demonstrate its exceptional character. In this extract therefore, the decision for an adolescent to go out is presented as a rare one, while the conversation that precedes this decision is not only a universal one, but one that is wrapped up with representations of the general public as potentially harmful.

Following a small interruption by Dana,[63] Laura continues to describe that when she has been given permission to go out she doubts whether she wants to: ">i'll be like< Do i actually want to?" (lines 18-19). She constructs this concern as not reflective of the actual risk through her comment: "when actually nothing ↑will happen to me" (lines 21-22). Dana and Beth both agree with Laura's remarks (lines 20 & 23) which positions her doubt as a shared experience. Dana then picks up the narrative at line 24 and over the next few lines (24-31) switches between the general "you" and the specific "I" which allows her to formulate the problem as one that is understood by her fellow focus group members. She expresses the hesitation as a "should I? should I not?" (lines 26-27) which infers a personal choice for the children with regards to whether to go out, as opposed to one that is based solely on parental permission. Dana's comments also parallel Laura's description of the doubt she experiences and it could be suggested that the girls' are depicting an internalisation of their parents' concerns and comments (Vygotsky, 1986).

Following an overlap with Laura, Dana then states: "it shouldn't be that ha:rd it should be THat simple like you can go or you ca:n't" (27-31) and Laura quickly agrees with this comment (line 32). This final sequence constructs the children's situation as unfair: that they have to weigh up far more weighty issues than simply asking for parental consent. Once they have permission they have to further analyse their own doubt and the risk before they utilise that sanction. This extract constructs this doubt as a result of parental fear with Laura stating that it "makes me: afraid (line 13) and employment of "makes" infers that Laura has no choice in the development of her fear. Thus we can see the effect of the 'what if?' at work: not only does it make parents more fearful, but it makes children unconvinced as to

[63] From the researcher's recollection of the group, the "sorry" on line 17 refers to an small incident independent of the conversation, i.e. Dana accidentally touching or kicking another student.

whether they should enjoy and make use of their independence. Furthermore this doubting can be seen as eroding their confidence to interact with the world and their social environment in an assured manner. Arguably if children are in an environment where 'what if?' is a routine consideration it can only be expected that children internalise, adopt and use 'what if?' themselves as theorised by Vygotsky (1986).

6.1.5. 'What If?' As Love

We have seen above (Extract 6) that one described effect of parental fear is the transference of that anxiety to children, however the following extract constructs parental worry as an indication of love and concern:

Extract 7: George, Kate & Amelia (Children) – 'Never Forgive Themselves'

G: i think it was just theM Maybe worrying about? (0.5) things that Could happen. and even if the- (0.3) might not=
R: =mm hmm=
A: =mm
(2.4)
R: so do you think they're worrying? unnecessarily or is it something you guys think about as well:
(1.4)
K: well you don't really hear abou:t? knife crime in loughborough. (1.2) much=
A: =heh mm °heh° mmm=
G: =i think it worri:es? the parents more becaus:e (1.3) they don't know where we are every minute of the day and they: (1.1) uh like? ° i dunno° they try to. i think they worry because it's:. their kids that- are going ou:t and if:?=
R: =mm hmm=
G: =they. let something happen to you they will never forgive themselves so? they tryna? crack down on where you are and stuff=
A: =mm

Following on from a discussion of knife crime and how this might be connected to the participants' parents being more overprotective George gives a tentative explanation as to why parents might worry about such things. His opening comment is littered with hesitant phrases and questioning tones: "maybe," "about?," "could," and "might not" (lines 1-2). On the one hand this may be because he is attempting to give reasons for another's mental processes, which is generally an uncertain business, while on the other it may be because he is also trying to account for a fear of the hypothetical. It can be suggested that it is perhaps easier to explain why someone else is afraid of spiders or snakes for example, than why they are afraid of something that in all statistical likelihood will not happen. His explanation is accepted by Amelia (line 4), while the researcher attempts to probe further by asking a follow-up question to clarify whether the issue is something the children worry about as well. Kate responds by avoiding a definitive claim: her use of the word "you" (line 9) generalises her opinion, while the addition of the word "much" on line 10 constructs knife crime as something that does occasionally occur in Loughborough and so formulates the parental worry as excessive. Amelia responds to this comment with a small laugh (line 11) which frames Loughborough as a comically quiet location. The first half of this extract acts to situate parental concern as a fear of the 'what if?' despite this being in opposition to the argument of statistical likelihood.

George answers the researcher's question directly (lines 12-20) and describes parents as worrying about these issues more than children do. He uses an extreme case formulation to describe this parental fear: "they don't know where we are every minute of the day" (lines 13-14). This also allows George to represent knife crime as something which can happen in just a minute, effectively legitimating 24 hour parental supervision. This is followed by an emotionalised description of the possible causes of parental fear (lines 15-20): parents will not forgive themselves if anything bad happens, and their fear or awareness of this possibility leads to over-protectiveness. There is an interesting construction of parental responsibility here in that if anything (bad) happens to the child then it is because the parents have let it; as opposed to it simply being an accident, an act of fate or luck, or even due to the child itself. The question 'what if?' is worked up in this extract as 'what if my child

was harmed? I'd never forgive myself.' Thus we can consider this formation as a representation of parental love, i.e. 'my parents love me so much they do not want anything bad to happen to me' which acts to justify close parental supervision.

6.2. CATCH 22

The second and final section of this chapter explores a different aspect of fear, which acknowledges that children do need to experience independence, freedom and self-responsibility. There is also a balance to be achieved between recognising danger and potential risks, but not encouraging children to be afraid of everything and everyone.

6.2.1. Balancing Threat And Fear

In this extract we see a representation of the latter: between acknowledgement of threat and a fear of everything. This balance in constructed in terms of educating children in terms of 'stranger danger:'

Extract 8: Sue, Dave & Marie (Parent) – 'Stranger Danger'

```
1  S:    yeah [see i   ]
2  D:         [°y'know°]
3  S:                   haven't really done stranger danger i mean i
4        spose the kids might- uh the school might have (1.2) but i
5        don't want them (1.7) to think- the world's >hor[rible £yet£<
6        heh heh heh              ]
7  M:                                                    [everyone-
8        yeah everybody's a threat]
```

This extract follows on from Sue's earlier comments about her daughter going to a friend's house for tea (Extract 5) which prompt Dave to recount a tale from his childhood where he was offered a lift by a friend's mother and was hesitant to take up the offer as it contradicted the 'stranger danger' message he had been taught. Sue then makes the remarks (above) where she constructs 'stranger danger' as something that is actively "done" (line 3) and she performs a self-repair (line 4) which positions

responsibility for 'doing' 'stranger danger' with the school, rather than with the children themselves. After a pause Sue accounts for why she has not taught 'stranger danger' to her children: because she does not "want them the think the world's horrible yet" (line 5). It can be suggested that the use of the word "yet" is fatalistic, implying that her children will eventually discover that the world is "horrible" and it is just a matter of time. It can also be suggested that her laughter after this comment is an attempt to lighten what could otherwise be considered a very depressing statement. Marie's speech overlaps with Sue's but also constructs a similar notion, that Sue may not have done 'stranger danger' as she does not want her children to think "everybody's a threat" (line 8). They both represent threat and danger as omnipresent with the terms "world," "everyone," and "everybody" (lines 5-8). Hence we can see a contradictory notion here: that on the one hand the world is dangerous, but that on the other Sue does not want her children to realise that yet, which would arguably result in a loss of innocence. We can also see 'stranger danger' described as an awareness that must be taught, rather than something which is normative. Thus there is a notion that at some point in their child's early years parents have to actively inform their children that there are bad and dangerous people in the world and that danger is ubiquitous and inescapable.

In this extract we see parents discussing the difficult and delicate balance between wanting their children to be aware that everybody can be a threat, but not wanting them to be afraid of everyone. While a low level of fear can act to heighten one's attentiveness to the environment and potential dangers, too much fear can inhibit freedom, increase a sense of vulnerability and decrease confidence. It is a difficult, if not impossible task for parents to successfully achieve this balance between awareness and apprehension.

6.2.2. Independence Through Exposure

The second issue of balance which arose concerned allowing children to be autonomous, self-reliant and responsible through exploration of their independence:

Extract 9: Lizzie, Isabelle, Nila & Jacob (Children) – 'Cooped Up In The House'

```
R:   what about? after school (.) are you allowed to go out after school
L:   no
N:   yeah
I:   no i have [to? ]
J:             [urm?]
I:                   go home [and meet my brother        ]
L:                           [cooped up in the house] it's so boring.
R:   so what reasons does your? dad give then (.) >for not letting you go out<
L:   i'm not- he just says the same thing like (0.4) oh you might get hurt i don't want you to get hurt blah blah (.) but [he's ]
R:                                                                                [mm hmm]
L:   he's like not accepted that i'm not? (.) four any more=
R:                                                                                =mm hmm=
L:   =and i do actually want to go places and do stuff
J:   yeah i know [because like i said       ]
L:               [because i've got- i've got]
J:                                           parents are always going to be: like that=
L:                        =i know they are [but-   ]
J:                                         [they're] never going to [kinda see you as growing up                    ]
L:      [but they've got to kind of learn to let you go] or else you're going to be like (.) when you're older you're going to be a nervous wreck oh i can't [go-]
J:                                 [no ] my brother's like twenty three: or something [and he's just]
I:                        [you dunno how] old your brother is
N:   °that's weird° heh heh
```

The researcher's question opens the extract by asking whether they are allowed to go out after school (lines 1-2) to which Lizzie is quick to reply that she is not (line 3). Isabelle states that she is not allowed out either, invoking the responsibility of meeting her brother to account for this (it is not clear whether her brother is younger

or older but if he is younger then is would suggest that Isabelle is trusted with the care of her sibling). Nila responds affirmatively (line 4) and she is the only one in the group to state that she is allowed out after school as Jacob responds with an unclear "urm?" (line 6). Lizzie represents herself as "cooped up in the house" which is a metaphor for her described lack of freedom. This is further probed by the researcher who attempts to establish why her father[64] is reluctant to allow her out. Lizzie replies to this initially with "i'm not-" (line 12), but she self repairs to use active voicing to account for her father's decision which acts to better answer the form of the researcher's question and add veracity to her response. She uses the phrase "same thing" (line 12) and "blah blah" (line 13) which constructs her dad's reported comments as ones that have been said repeatedly. Thus her lack of freedom is further strengthened and is framed as a well-rehearsed argument between her and her father, so the issue of freedom and parental sanctions are positioned as a persistent issue.

Lizzie goes further in her description and attempts to analyse why her dad refuses her permission to go out: "he's like not accepted that i'm not? (.) four any more and i do actually want to go places and do stuff" (lines 16-19); which formulates four as an age at which a child is fully dependent on parents, not possessing a separate social life and wanting to out with friends. At the time of the focus groups Lizzie was on the cusp of child/teenage-hood and so it can be suggested that a degree of this balance is normative when any child is in this process of transition. Furthermore by locating her dad as not being able to accept that she is growing up, she situates herself, by implication, as a holder of knowledge and acceptance that her father is not and so paradoxically represents herself as more mature than her parent.

It is at this point that Jacob makes reference to their earlier discussion ("because like i said" (line 20) before constructing parental worry as a constant using the words "always" (line 22) and "never" (line 25). Lizzie responds using a general terms ('you' and 'they') arguing that unless parents "let you go" (line 27) the end result

[64] Lizzie makes a comment earlier on in the focus group about her dad being over-protective which is why the question focuses on her father, rather than both parents.

will be a "nervous wreck" (line 29). She then begins to use active voicing on line 29 ("oh i can't go") to add narrative detail and weight to her extreme case formulation of a "nervous wreck" (line 29). Again we see Jacob endeavouring to argue from the parental point of view in this extract as he contends that parents will never "kinda see you as growing up" (line 26). Thus parents are situated as normatively being unable to accept the increasing age, independence and competence of their offspring with Lizzie reinforcing this representation by stating that parents have "got to kind of learn to let you go" (line 29) and so this process is described as something that is taught and acquired rather than something that comes naturally to parents. Jacob attempts to use a specific example from his own family before he is berated for not knowing his brother's age and the conversation changes direction. Thus, we see a balance constructed within the children's talk; the battle between independence and parental desire to protect, coupled with the acknowledgement that independence is a crucial and essential part of growing up. At the same time, parents are described as reluctant to concede their child's increasing competence, and are similarly averse to accept their desire to explore and test the bounds of their increasing autonomy.

6.3. SUMMARY

The extracts in this chapter demonstrate that there are several aspects to fear of the 'what if?': the fear of hypothetical dangers, the imagined guilt and responsibility in the event of a tragedy, and the relation of the participants' own lives and situations to a single highly publicised media case. This fear is described as manifesting itself in a variety of ways: anxiety around letting children go to friends' houses, sleeping in the same bedroom as the children when on holiday, and constant parental supervision. However fear is also formulated as a demonstration of parental love, with parents being over-protective because they love their children so much that they do not want to place them in a situation which involves risk. Parents also constructed a delicate balance to be achieved between wanting children to be aware that everyone can pose a threat, but at the same time not wanting their children to be afraid of the world and everyone in it… yet. There was a minority opinion that risk is a good thing however; it is represented as a positive part of growing up, an

essential part of developing, and a formative experience for secure and confident young adults. The concern with hypothetical fears and the ‘What If?’ was a common theme throughout the data set and will therefore be commented upon throughout the subsequent analysis chapters.

CHAPTER 7

OBJECTS OF CONCERN, DANGER AND FEAR

In this chapter we will explore the various subjects and objects of fear, threat and danger that were constructed in the participants' talk. Some of the threats are associated with the specific age of the child, such as alcohol with older children. The chapter will explore the following fears and dangers (given in alphabetical order) as identified by the participants: alcohol, children, drugs, internet, multiple entwined dangers, paedophilia, traffic and violence. Thus while in the previous chapter we witnessed how fear is constructed, in this chapter we will see how that fear is attached to particular objects which were repeatedly identified by the participants as presenting danger to their children.

7.1. ALCOHOL

Alcohol has been part of British culture for centuries however it is only in recent years that a culture of binge drinking has been identified in the UK, particularly among younger members of society. Furthermore the health concerns around the heavy and prolonged use of alcohol are more publicised than ever and so it is not surprising that this issue was raised by parents of older children. In the following extract we see Nina describing her fear around her son's upcoming 18th birthday:

Box 3: Alcohol

Within the newspaper results a total of 22 articles referred to concerns around alcohol with the majority (n=16) reporting on policies, suggestions and calls to decrease and prevent binge drinking.

EXTRACT 10: Nina, Arifa, John & Fleur (Parents) - '18th Birthday'

```
N:    i am worried about um (0.3) he's coming up to eighteen and he
      said his friends are going to take him out into to:wn and- (.)
```

```
3        and- (.) Get him ↑drunk that's what he said s- and that
4        R:Ea:lly WO:rries me=
5   A:                        =mm=
6   N:                            =that frightens [me  ]
7   J:                                            [yeah]
8   N:                                                 to dea:th and i-
9        i keep saying (.) that R:EAlly isn't funny >y'know< (.)
10       because y- they could Kill you- you could- Di:e [could]
11  F:                                                   [mm   ]
12  N:                                                         n't you=
13  A:       =mm=
14  N:          =if:?=
15  F:                =d-=
16  N:                   =oooh that FR:ightens me (.) °to death°
```

Nina uses reported speech[65] to describe how her son's friends are planning to celebrate his 18th birthday: "he said his friends are going to take him out into tow:n and- and- get him ↑drunk" (lines 1-3). This phrasing removes the agency from her son and places responsibility with his friends: he is cast as a passive actor who is taken out and plied with alcohol. We also see a positioning of "tow:n" as a dangerous place which illustrates the conceptualisation of public spaces as dangerous as seen elsewhere (see Extracts 18 - 'Frightened To Walk Around' and 27 - 'It's Quiet But…'). She describes her reaction to this, saying it "R:Ea:lly WO:rries" (lines 4) her before upgrading her worry to an extreme level: "that frightens me to dea:th" (lines 6 & 8). This level of worry is reinforced by the repetition of her statement on line 16: "oooh that FR:ightens me °to death°" (line 17). This intense fear as formulated by Nina is certainly an extreme case formulation and portrays a response beyond normative levels of concern; to be 'frightened to death' is the greatest level of fear imaginable and, even given it's status as an extreme case formulation, appears out of proportion when discussing her son going on a night out. Nina attempts to justify this fear to an extent by constructing being drunk as a threat to life by stating that her son "could Di:e" (line 10). We also see a representation of Nina's fear in terms of 'what if?' (as explored in Chapter 6) in the unfinished "if:?" (line 15) which manages to account for an

infinite number of fatal dangers. She again manages the issue of responsibility by using active voicing to describe how his friends could "kill" him (line 10) and so her son is worked up as innocent as his friends as potential murderers. However while Nina locates her fear as extreme, her son and his friends' reactions are framed as much more relaxed by her comment: "i keep saying (.) that R:EAlly isn't funny >y'know<" (line 9). This remark implies that the teenagers do find going out and getting drunk a light-hearted matter. In this extract alcohol is constructed as a threat to her son's life (with her son's friends seen as potential killers) and so a night out with friends to celebrate an 18th birthday is formulated as a source of extreme danger and fear.

7.2. CHILDREN

The majority of this chapter focuses on dangers that are constructed as potentially harmful to children, however there was also a degree to which children themselves, and teenagers in particular, were presented as a threat. We will examine a representation of teenagers as dangerous, before exploring an extract which positions children as both 'angels and devils' (Valentine, 1996).

The first extract formulates teenagers as potentially dangerous and as anxiety inducing (despite the described event having no actual negative outcome). The extract is from Sue who describes her reaction to teenagers loitering outside her neighbour's house:

Extract 11: Sue (Parent) - 'Youths'

```
1  S:   there must be something going on? cuz. i've got? (1.1) °a
2       slightly dodgy neighbour° >£gets visits from the police every
3       now and then£< (0.9) and just the other night there were
4       three? >youths< outside the house and one was being rea:lly
5       loud and there never- >anybody hangin about on our street<
6       it's not that kind of street and i heard this? these girls
```

[65] Reported speech is the passive version of active voicing.

```
7          (1.5) shouting and i just looked out and my stomach was
8          chu:rning i just thought Oh my god. what's going on here.
9          what's gunna happen.
10   R:    mm
11   S:    i went to >blow my nose< or something came back and they'd
12         go:ne. y'know it was abso:lutely no:thing
```

This extract follows on from a discussion of anti-social behaviour amongst teenagers and Sue manages to position the above as representative of an external change rather than something she has personally created through the use of the phrase "there must be something going on?" (line 1). Sue begins her illustration of the specific situation by explaining the context of the event, primarily by portraying her neighbour as "slightly dodgy" (line 2) which is qualified by the reference to police visits (lines 2-3). Thus immediately Sue formulates the space as unsavoury, the location of illegal activity and, consequentially, as potentially dangerous. She also identifies the temporal aspect of the event by describing it as recent and at night; and as the focus group took place in winter the condition of night automatically infers that it was dark (see section 8.3.1.) whereby the darkness of winter is associated with increased danger and vulnerability). Sue has therefore set the scene as dark and potentially dangerous.

Box 4: Angels and Devils

This paradoxical construction of children and teenagers as 'angels and devils' (Valentine, 1996) was witnessed in the content analysis of the newspaper articles. Thirty-five articles reported on criminality and anti-social behaviour in under-18s. Thirty-seven articles reported on concerns in childhood, such as health concerns or safety warnings. The similarity in numbers (n=35 & n=37) is striking and reinforces the dual construction of 'angels and devils.'

Sue goes on describes the specific situation: "there were three? >youths< outside the house" (lines 3-4). She illustrates how one of the girls was making a lot of noise and also qualifies the occurrence as unusual by explaining how people rarely hang around on her street. She depicts her reaction to the event as a very physical reaction: "my stomach was chu:rning" (line 7-8) and also reports her thought processes using a variation of active voicing (line 8-9). The story ends well with the teenagers disappearing when Sue left the room (thus she was not too afraid to leave the room, disengage from the scene, and perform a trivial task) and she reinforces

the mundane nature of the episode by stating "it was abso:lutely no:thing" (line 12). The noteworthy aspect of this brief narrative is the representation of an anticipation of trouble from teenagers. Sue portrays the scene as one that is potentially dangerous before describing her own reaction which has a sense of impending doom with her embodied anxiety as illustrated by her 'churning stomach.' Thus while she states that nothing did happen, there is a distinct impression of potential danger.

The following extract from a child focus group perfectly illustrates how children are subject to a dual conceptualisation of 'angels and devils' (Valentine, 1996) with the previous extract demonstrating the 'devil' view. Valentine (ibid.) describes how children have been historically demonised as the possessor of the original sin (i.e. a devil) and how in the 19th century a prevailing notion of the child as innocent, pure and sin-free (i.e. an angel) emerged. This notion of the child as angelic has remained to the present day and within the culture of fear a child's vulnerability and defencelessness is enhanced even further. However in the last 17 years the 'child as devil' conception has increased in strength with Valentine drawing attention to the James Bulger murder as a catalyst for the reinforcement of this notion. The two concepts are often engaged simultaneously with parents viewing their own children as angels and the children of others as devils (ibid.). This is a conceptualisation that authorities also engage with as the government and authorities, such as the police, seek to protect children from the threats of the internet, abduction and bullying; yet the same authorities also clamp down on the activities of children that may be deemed anti-social or criminal (even acts that may be deemed associative with such behaviour such as the banning of hoodies in certain public places or the commonplace limitations placed on the numbers of school children allowed in a shop) (see Article 1). Hence the battle between angel and devil continues to be played out with reference to childhood. In the following extract this is exemplified:

Extract 12: Kate, George & Amelia (Children) - 'Angels And Devils'

```
1  K:   my mum Hates it when i go HallOweening >like trick or
2       treating< £not [halloweening£]
3  G:                  [heh          ]
4  R:                  [heh          ]
5  K:                                 with- with my FRiends cuz its
6       like? you don't go:? knocking on peop- strangers doors you've
7       have to go to people? i've already told [(used]
```

```
8   A:                                          [yeah ]
9   K:                                                 to go to)
10  R:     mm hmm=
11  A:          =and then. like we've been told about that at s:choo:l
12         to only go to people you know cuz. you never know what could
13         be behind the door it could be like=
14  K:                                     =mm=
15  A:                                        =a drug dealer or like a
16         £little old Granny£ that could get scared but that's what °he
17         said anyway°
```

In this extract the children are discussing trick-or-treating at Halloween which Kate describes as her mother 'hating' (line 1) due to her possible approaching of strangers in their homes. This anxiety is constructed as manageable however through Kate being limited to trick-or-treating people who have advance knowledge of her visit. Notably there is a self-repair on line 6 from 'people' to "strangers" and it could be suggested that "strangers" is a term more evocative of danger and risk. Amelia then picks up the narrative by describing a talk that was given at the school where the children were told only to trick or treat people that they know, which acts to reinforce Kate's account of her safety measures. This advice is framed within the 'angel and devil' conceptualisations with the children warned that they could inadvertently approach a drug dealer: thus the children are constructed as vulnerable to potential danger which is in line with the 'angel' discourse. Alternatively the children could scare a "£little old Granny£" (line 16) and in this comment children are framed as a source of fear and anxiety: this is a take on the 'devil' discourse in which children are a source of threat to older generations. Thus in just a few lines Amelia encapsulates a paradoxical conceptualisation of contemporary childhood. The majority of this research and the participants' discourse focuses on the 'angel' discourse with children constructed as vulnerable, innocent and in need of protection from many dangers. However, there is a dual discourse as witnessed in this section which constructs children, particularly those of secondary school age, as dangerous. This issue of 'angels and devils' is returned to for further consideration in the Discussion (section 11.1.1.).

7.3. DRUGS

Illegal drug use was discussed as a potential danger by parents as the following extract will demonstrate. The extract constructs a difference between 'soft' (e.g. cannabis) and 'hard' drugs (e.g. heroin) and also describes an increased availability:

EXTRACT 13: JOHN, NINA & FLEUR (PARENTS) - 'A BIT OF DOPE'

```
1  J:   y'know if you've got a chi:ld who's (1.1) °y'know alri:ght° if
2       it's smoking a bit of Dope of something or other >as as<
3       y'know later °>we'd probably encourage<° th:at but y'know if
4       its Wo:rs:e if its harder: drugs y'know that sort of thing is=
5  N:   =mm=
6  F:      =i think DRugs are a lot. more? available [though]
7  N:                                                [mm    ]
8  J:                                                [yeah  ]
9       definitely=
10 N:            =mm=
11 F:               =i th:inK:? my sort of generation and probably a.
12      bit. befo::re and after drugs have becom: very much part of?
13      younger society=
14 J:                  =mm=
15 F:                      =and i think? i think to be honest no:w
16      you are going to do well if they just have a few drinks and a
17      bit of a smo:ke
18 J:   ye:ah
```

John frames his arguments using "y'know" and "you" throughout the first four lines and in this way his comments are located as a general opinion, rather than one that is unique to him. He formulates the smoking of cannabis as "alri:ght" (line 1) before going on to say "°we'd probably encourage<° th:at" (line 3); so the consumption of marijuana is seen as something that is not only tolerable, but something to be promoted. He also makes a distinction between cannabis and hard drugs, with hard drugs constructed as a bad thing which further promotes marijuana as acceptable. As a consequence there is not a blanket disapproval of illegal drugs, but a condemnation of hard drugs only with soft drugs positioned as socially acceptable. This is a striking rejection of the legal classification of drugs with parents not relying on government guidelines, but on social definitions of acceptability. This

fits into a much wider debate around the use and classification of cannabis which is accompanied by repeated calls for it to be made legal and the wide spread confession of cannabis use by those in the public eye (which is countered by scare stories in the media repeating the unproven link between cannabis use and mental illness).

Fleur picks up the narrative (on line 7) by referring to the availability of drugs as having increased, with Nina and John in agreement (lines 8, 9 & 10) with John's concord very strong. Fleur makes reference to her "sort of generation" (line 12) (Fleur is younger than the other focus group members which is also mentioned in Extract 37 - 'Rapid Change') and how there is more of a drug culture among younger people. This is located as a hesitant statement though by "sort of" and "probably a. bit. befo::re and after" (lines 12-13); the reason for this tentativeness is not clear, although debatably this could be due to two reasons. Firstly, Fleur has to manage locating herself as a young person and therefore by implication the other focus group members as older which is a delicate task. Additionally, it is arguable that there is some doubt in what Fleur is trying to assert: drug use has long been a part of younger society and certainly this has been the case prior to the last two decades. Therefore the hesitant terms in the phrase could be seen as attempts to manage these two issues. We then see another positioning of drug use as normative with Fleur describing drug use as "very much part of? younger society" (line 13-14). It can be suggested that cannabis is represented as a rite of passage and is normalised by its association with alcohol (lines 17-18). However there is a limit placed on the amount of cannabis use that is deemed acceptable with both John and Fleur referring to "a bit" of use (John: line 2 & Fleur: line 18) thus excessive use is implicitly condemned. We also see a locating of parental responsibility in the drug use of offspring by Fleur's comment that "you are going to do well if they just have a few drinks and a bit of a smo:ke" (lines 17-18). Therefore alcohol and drug

Box 5: Drugs in the Media

Reports featuring illegal drugs fell into two categories in the newspaper analysis. Eleven articles fell within the 'Health and Safety' category as they focused on the health implication of drug use, for example 'Skunk smokers more at rick of psychosis than hash users' (Boseley, 2008). The illegal nature of drug use was featured in 21 articles. These articles reported on drug raids, imprisonment of drug dealers and drug smuggling.

consumption is seen as a reflection upon the parents, with the construction of parents as performing poorly if the children consume more that "a bit" of marijuana. The extract demonstrates a social definition of acceptable drug consumption (as opposed to a legal one) and also the role of the parents' within the decision of their children to use drugs.

7.4. INTERNET

Given the extent and rapidity of technological advances that have been made in recent decades (see section 9.2.1. for a fuller exploration) it is not surprising that some form of anxiety has been attached to these developments. It could be argued that fear is exacerbated as parents struggle to come to terms with a technology that their children take for granted as demonstrated by the fact that computers are common place in primary schools, even nurseries. The development of the internet has also given rise to the online predator which is the subject of the following extract:

Extract 14: Devongirl (Parent) - 'Child Knows More'

1 *Do you think you have more or different issues to deal with than*
2 *your parents did?*
3 I think they are different to a degree. In a world with easy access
4 to the internet, its far easier for innocence to be targeted and has
5 added a tool to undesirables belts. And unless you are a parent with
6 knowledge of computers and the internet, it can be very difficult to
7 keep an eye, especially when the child tends to know more than the
8 parent.

In response to the researcher's question Devongirl focuses her response on the wide-spread use of the internet which has occurred since she was a child and so this is a new issue that she has to contemplate and deal with which her parents did not. Devongirl constructs the privilege of the internet as something that is available to all ("In a world with easy access to the internet" - lines 3-4) and it is connected with the fear of grooming by paedophiles, rather than the benefits that are associated with the online world. She locates the internet as a dangerous place with young 'innocents'

falling victim to "undesirables" (line 5). This is in line with the general construction of children and teenagers on the internet falling prey to grooming, online solicitation, and deceit as older deviants seek vulnerable victims. It further draws on the image of children as 'angels' (see section 7.2 for a further explanation of this term) as she refers to children as "innocence" (line 4): children are positioned as pure, vulnerable and naïve. On the other hand those who groom children online are described as "undesirables" (line 5) which is striking as a rather quaint term. The process of grooming is represented as a controlled task with the phrases "targeted" (line 4) and "added a tool to… belts" (line 5); something that is performed with cold calculation and advance planning. Thus in the first half of this extract children are framed as innocent sitting ducks vulnerable to the focused attentions of a paedophile with the internet worked up as the gateway between child and abuser.

In the second half of the extract (lines 5-8) Devongirl changes the subject slightly and moves onto the knowledge required to navigate the internet safely. It is seen as a necessity for parents to be familiar with the internet if the child is to be protected and properly supervised: it is worked up as essential for parents to build up a familiarity of the internet. We also see a change in the possessor of knowledge with regards to the internet as children are described as tending "to know more than the parent" (lines 7-8). A significant part of the parenting role being to teach, yet children today are born into a digital world therefore awareness of the internet and associated technologies (such as mobile phones) is developed from infancy. Many adults, on the other hand, still consider the internet to be something of a novelty, thus the ownership of knowledge has shifted from parent to child in this particular arena over the course of a generation. The anxiety around online predation and grooming is framed as exacerbated by parental lack of knowledge. Consequently not only is the internet located as a dangerous object but parents are worked up as potentially placing their children in danger through lack of skill, while children are paradoxically constructed as the possessor of technological capability but vulnerable to grooming.

The issue of grooming is discussed further by children in the extract below:

EXTRACT 15: GEORGE, AMELIA & KATE (CHILDREN) - 'PRETENDING TO BE 13'

```
1  G:   there's lots of things on the internet with [people]
2  A:                                               [yeah  ]
3  G:                                                      like     on
4       be:bo facebook m s n. people li:ke just randomly saying? (1.1)
5       ooh i'm:? thirteen and they could be thirty six meet me down
6       the [pa:rk]
7  A:       [yeah ]
8  G:             and=
9  K:                     =yeah  there's-  but  there's  all:  tho::se
10      like? [things]
11 A:        [video ]
12 K:                you click on and? repor:t them=
13 A:                                               =yeah=
14 K:                                                    =if you think
15      they're?    [°°anything°°]
16 G:               [yeah but    ] it takes: they've got to- y- it's
17      got to be sent over the internet to them to actually? (1.2)
18      follow it u:p and trace down the person and before that could
19      happen you could be down the pa:rk and in their: (.) car
20      really
```

George's opening line positions grooming as a widespread problem through the use of the terms "lots of things" (line 1) and "people" (line 1), a formulation which is enhanced by Amelia's agreement (line 2): from the outset of this extract the internet is worked up as a dangerous place. George goes on to give a generic example of the deception that could take place on social networking sites using a hypothetical and specific example of someone lying about their age. The use of "randomly" (line 4) further acts to situate grooming as widespread and undetectable. He constructs a scenario of meeting with the older person with "the park" (line 6) located as the type of place a child might suggest with the age of "thirty six" (line 5) as representative of older adult. Again Amelia's agreement (line 7) acts to reinforce George's comments as shared knowledge. In the first few lines then we see a construction of the internet as littered with adults intent on grooming children.

Kate enters the narrative by describing the protection methods that are available on social networking sites with most having a 'report button' which can be activated

when suspicious behaviour occurs. George frames the ability to "repor:t them" (line 12) as redundant due to the response time. A response from a website is likely to take a number of hours, if not days, and George portrays the hypothetical meeting in the park as over quickly. However there is a significant formulation of children at work in George's last comment (lines 16-20): children are positioned as being competent enough to report suspicious activity, but incompetent in that the child would still go to meet the deceitful adult. Further the act of meeting an adult and being abducted are linked together which again points to a degree of ineptitude and defencelessness on the part of the child. Unknowingly meeting an adult and then ending up in a car are very different matters: hence this construction denies the ability of the child to recognise a dangerous situation and act in their own best interests. Consequently not only do we see an inconsistent representation of children but the extract is successful in constructing the older predator and the innocent victim and also effectively refers to the lack of monitoring and policing on the internet.

The internet is located in both extracts as a tool paedophiles use to gain access to young and defenceless victims. There is a paradoxical construction of childhood at work in both extracts with children represented as vulnerable to grooming, yet proficient with regards to the technology in use. Parents are also framed (in Extract 14) as lacking knowledge with children positioned as far more capable. It is arguable that this insecurity around expertise acts to heighten insecurities around internet safety and grooming in particular.

7.5. MULTIPLE DANGERS

While the other dangers, threats, and risks discussed in the rest of this chapter are presented alone, there were sections of the data set that referred to multiple dangers bound up with the same object or space. This is arguably a more accurate representation of danger and worry as very rarely is a single issue cause for concern in everyday life, but multiple issues in every arena of life can be considered to pose

danger and hazards. The extract in this section is from a parent focus group in which Jasmine describes multiple dangers associated with her former residence:

Extract 16: Jasmine & Melanie (Parents) - 'Traffic, Strangers, Drugs & Robberies'

```
1  J:   um but as we lived in the other hou↑se we couldn't let them
2       ou:t because a: the taxis just used to come screaming: do:wn
3       because it was next to a (0.3) urm? train station? and
4       obviously the peo:ple because it- when we were young we knew:
5       all our neighbou:rs and nowadays there's chopping and
6       chang:ing and we don't [know]
7  R:                          [mm  ]
8  J:                                 who's on the stree:t and of
9       course the Drug:s=
10 M:                    =yeah=
11 J:                         =you [know]
12 M:                              [yeah]
13 J:                                   it's in:? deprived areas the
14      drug. rate. is quite high=
15 M:                            =mm hmm=
16 J:                                   =>robberies and things like
17      that< and we're quite awa:↑re so we- I had my: children back
18      but no:w they've got the free:dom so that's the good side
19      where we: live
```

In this extract we can see how multiple dangers are present with reference to the same object. Jasmine is discussing her previous residence and constructs the area as having a high prevalence of drug use, a high robbery rate, and fast passing traffic. The outside of her house is worked up as a place of danger through the phrase "we couldn't let them ou:t" (lines 1-2) (referring to her children) and this is directly linked to the traffic. The vehicles are accounted for using an extreme case formulation ("screaming: do:wn" - line 2) and by referencing only taxis Jasmine also manages to situate her former residence as on a busy by-way that is used as a through road (as opposed to a quite cul-de-sac for example). She goes on to describe a lack of community, but positions this within a generational change by comparing it to the neighbourhoods of her childhood; this is done in general terms it allows her to make reference to a wider social shift rather than one that is specific to

her personal childhood. She constructs a complete lack of community with the phrase "we don't [know] who's on the stree:t" (lines 6 & 8) and this absence is heightened by the description of her neighbours as "chopping and chang:ing" (lines 5-6) which locates the local population as in constant flux. Thus again the street (see also Extract 27 - 'It's Quiet But…') is represented as a dangerous place due to the unknown people who occupy it and it's status as a busy road.

Jasmine identifies drugs as another danger associated with her former house: "and of course the Drug:s" (lines 8-9). This leap from spatial concerns (the lack of community and the fast traffic) to drugs is a striking one which is enhanced by "of course" which acts to position drugs as an obvious concern and also by the emphasis on "Drug:s." However the response from Melanie (lines 10 & 12) frames Jasmine's comment as a shared and understood concern which does more to add to the remarkable nature of the seemingly sudden jump. Jasmine locates her old house as being in a "deprived" (line 13) area and so the material deprivation serves to act as an explanation for the concern around drugs. The introduction of ">robberies and things like that<" (lines 16-17) is also framed in terms of the deprivation and the vague reference to unspecified problems ("things like that") acts to construct a limitless number of other dangers and concerns. The extract ends as Jasmine describes how her family have since moved from the area and portrays their new residence as providing her children with a lot more freedom. In summary we can see from her comments that multiple dangers can be attached to the same space and that these multiple dangers add rhetorical power and strengthen the point being made (Atkinson, 1984). We can also see how fear is used as a "prevailing framework" (Altheide, 1999: 476).

7.6. PAEDOPHILES

One of the most highly publicised dangers to children in recent years is the threat of the paedophile. While actual prevalence rates are not thought to have increased, efforts at prevention, support for victims, and encouraged disclosure certainly have. As explored in the next chapter (section 8.2.1), for example, an over-precautionary

approach to adult/child physical contact has resulted in the decrease of spontaneous touch between adults and children in schools and other professional settings. However, despite increased awareness and attempts to minimise the danger, the threat posed by paedophiles was constructed as a major one by participants. In the following extract Kyle describes the potential danger as one that is not taken seriously enough:

Extract 17: Kyle & Charlie (Children) - '30 Out Of 200'

```
1  K:   >but i don't i don't think< i don't think peo:ple: (1.5) take
2       it seriously enough? like th- they thiNk. it's like °>no we
3       don't i know it won't happen to me<° but it mi:ght?
4  C:   i know [because  ]
5  K:          [like any]time like .hhh if you're walking in the
6       str:ee:t? think of how many people you see? (0.6) there's
7       >probably< (0.9) out of a hundred there's a- I think. there's
8       like a. statistic? on the ne:ws out of two hundred people at
9       least thirty of them are paedophiles or somethin (0.7) if you
10      see two hundred random people at least thirty of them are
11      paedophiles °>or summat like that<°
```

In the first few lines of Kyle's narrative we see another re-working of the fear of the 'what if?' (as explored in Chapter 6) as he states: "they thiNk. it's like °>no we don't i know it won't happen to me<° but it mi:ght?" (lines 2-3). This is preceded by his comment that the issue is not taken "seriously enough?" (line 2). Subsequently in this first section of narrative the danger is positioned as one that is not viewed with an appropriate level of caution and as a risk that is posed to everyone. Following a brief interjection of agreement by Charlie (line 4), Kyle goes on to qualify his formulation that the risk posed by paedophiles is significant. His narrative on lines 5-6 encourages the rest of the focus group to form a mental image of a random population as represented by people on the street. He follows this with the beginning of a statistic before he self-

Box 6: Paedophilia in the Press

Paedophilia was discussed in the media in two ways. Firstly paedophiles within the legal system were reported in 63 articles, for example 'Paedophile posing as pupil admits abduction' (Topping, 2008). There were also five articles which directly mentioned or alluded to the threat of paedophilia in terms of child protection, for example 'Boris has a swipe at paedo law' (Roberts, 2008).

repairs in order to legitimise the data as an official one that was quoted on the "ne:ws" (line 8). Once this qualification has been achieved Kyle quotes the figure: at least 30 out of 200 people are paedophiles. He describes that it is "at least" (lines 8-9 & 10) 30 out of 200 which suggests that it is most likely more than this minimal figure. Kyle's remark regarding "random people" (line 10) does much to construct the potential paedophile as anyone - male or female, young or old, black or white - and so the danger is anywhere and everywhere. The last phrase - "°>or summat like that<°" (line 11) - suggests that it is not important whether Kyle's statistics are correct, but rather that the gist of the statistics is enough: there are a lot of paedophiles out there and they could be anybody. Thus we see the paedophile worked up in this extract as an omnipresent threat that cannot be easily identified and singled out from the general public.

7.7. VIOLENCE

The threat and danger of physical violence was a subject that was repeatedly discussed by participants and the articles shown here have a more personal sense to them. The following extract from an online participant is one that constructs the threat of violence as constant:

Extract 18: Notimetonap (Parent) - 'Frightened To Walk Around'

Do you think that being a child and a parent is more difficult and dangerous today than it was when you were young?

The area i grew up in as a child, whilst not very savoury was much safer then than it is now. People had greater respect for adults and children alike. Now we have gangs of arrogant abusive teens and drug users on every corner. You feel frightened to walk around during the day let alone at night. I live in a socially deprived area and unfortunately it isn't the place it was when i was younger. Children are cocky and too quick to shout abuse for no reason. Adults are too quick to pick fights with anyone they choose. It frightens me and in some ways i feel selfish for bringing a child into a world like that.

In the opening line Notimetonap describes herself as living in the same area she grew up in and as having witnessed a change in the character of the neighbourhood during that period which is framed in reference to a declining level of respect. She also positions the area as having problems in the past through her portrayal of it being "not very savoury" (line 3) which could be linked to it being "a socially deprived area" (lines 7-8). The rest of her response is taken up with relating the concerns she has with the area with "gangs of arrogant abusive teens and drug users on every corner" (lines 5-6). This depiction represents an ever-present threat with every street occupied by danger, while "gangs" positions the problem as widespread and not just limited to a few individuals. The label of "abusive" constructs the "gangs" as actively abusing those who pass, as opposed to standing idly on the street corner engaged in their own business and we see another example of the children as 'devils' (Valentine, 1996) conception as "teens" (line 5) are categorised alongside "drug users" (line 6). Notimetonap employs a general terminology ("You feel frightened" - line 6) which locates the feeling of being frightened as not just specific to her, but as a wider problem, and the fear is further represented as omnipresent with her comments about being afraid both during the day and night. Once again the street is worked up as a dangerous place with a sense of fear attached to simply walking down the road.

Notimetonap adds further description to the pervasive sense of fear and violence: "Children are cocky and too quick to shout abuse for no reason. Adults are too quick to pick fights with anyone they choose" (lines 9-11). In these two sentences the danger is constructed as motiveless and quick to break out which creates a sense of volatility. The final sentence is the most striking as Notimetonap relates the violence to her decision to become a parent. It is possible to suggest that the "it" (line 11) that she is frightened of is her community and the pervasive sense of disrespect, violence and abuse that she describes. Stating that she feels "selfish" (line 11) in some ways for bringing her child into that environment implies that it is not in the child's best interests to be part of that world which is incredibly poignant. In this extract we can see that the described sense of ever-present and invasive sense of violence and abuse is great enough for this mother to doubt whether giving her child life was in their best interests which is a very moving statement for a mother to make.

One of the potential causes of violence that was discussed, particularly among the children, was the availability of violent computer games, films, and television programmes. However, in the following extract Caden makes a clear distinction between fictional and real violence. It is worth stating at this point that "Cah" acts as a colloquial term for 'because' and 'y'know.' This term occurs throughout the focus group and is not questioned by his fellow focus group members: thus it is treated as a habitual speech act. This individuality in speech demonstrates the importance of spending time with and getting to know participants before the focus groups take place.

Extract 19: Caden & Blake (Children) - 'Wrestling & The Street'

```
C:   you might as well stay at home all day and every single day
     just stay at home cah if you go out the:re it's the ↑same. its
     even wo:rse than the thing that you see on t v (0.7) cah i'm
     saying yeah when i'm in the streets? i see more violence i see
     more bad stuff then when i'm at home watching tv
R:   okay?
C:   if i'm watching wrestling i see someone slap someone
R:   mm hmm=
C:         =i see someone pick up a chair and dash at someone i go
     out in the street i see someone stabbing someone. which one's
     better?
R:   okay and wh=
C:             =you'd rather stay at ho:me and watch someone hit
     someone with a chai:r i know it's bad but like at least i'm
     not getting the spirit of i can hi- [ru:nning on the ]
B:                                       [wrestling's fake]
C:                                                          street
     that's what i'm sayin=
B:                       =°wrestling's fake°=
C:                                           =i'm saying yeah even
     though? as we see it- we see it as being real right cah it's
     something that we're sitting there we're watching and we're
     enjoying it someone hitting some £other man yeah£ heh but yeah
     out there in the streets it's not fake. what happens in the
     streets is real and that's what people don't understand
```

Caden is from the Nottingham cohort and elsewhere in the focus group he revealed that he had (peripheral) involvement with gangs and was familiar with people who carried weapons (see Extract 21): he lives, in essence, within a violent world. With this contextual information his construction of the 'real world' as a violent place carries more weight. He compares the "street" (lines 4, 11, 25 & 26) to fictionalised forms of violence, such as that on the television, and in particular to wrestling. He begins his comparison at a general level by saying: "i'm saying yeah when i'm in the streets? i see more violence i see more bad stuff then when i'm at home watching tv" (lines 4-6). After a prompt by the researcher Caden then gives a more specific example: "if i'm watching wrestling i see someone slap someone i see someone pick up a chair and dash at someone i go out in the street i see someone stabbing someone. which one's better?" (lines 8-12). While the example is specific it is not clear how specific it actually is, i.e. whether Caden is hypothetically referring the witnessing of a stabbing or if this is something he has indeed seen. This question is even more substantial when one considers Caden's association with gang violence (see Extract 21) and in his talk we see how the violence on television is constructed as incomparable to the violence he witnesses in real life. These comments by Caden also acts to achieve legitimate identity work whereby Caden is self-constructed as tough, streetwise and as familiar with a dangerous world. Blake's interjection and repetition of "wrestling's fake" (lines 17 & 20) act to reinforce the difference between fictional and real violence. We can also see a portrayal of fictional violence as an optional and preferable ("you'd rather stay at ho:me and watch someone hit someone" - lines 14-15) to actual aggression which is enforced ("i go out in the street i see someone stabbing someone" -lines 10-11). Further Caden's repetitive use of "someone" formulates the violence as random and ubiquitous. Thus in this extract we see a differentiation between the fictional and the actual, with real violence worked up as ever-present, indiscriminate and part of every day life.

Box 7: Violence in the Media

Multiple acts of violence were featured in the newspaper results. Fifty five articles reported on acts of murder, 37 on violent assaults and 22 on sex crimes involving adult victims. Violence to children was the focus of 14 articles and 63 articles featured acts of sexual abuse against child victims. Several (9 in total) articles also drew attention to statistics that 'Murders 'on rise' amid knife violence' (Hope & Tibbetts, 2008) and 'Girl violence has doubled in just 4 yrs' ('Girl violence has doubled in just 4 yrs,' 2008).

Violence is constructed as an integral part of real life and the streets as for both of these participants aggression is a component of their everyday lives and relationships. In both extracts we see yet another representation of the street as a dangerous and violent place. In their talk their worlds are positioned as volatile and with hostility and brutality on the cusp of breaking out. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that Notimetonap (through her own description) and Caden (who lives in a disadvantaged inner city area) both live within socially deprived neighbourhoods and so we see how the material lives of the participants are reflected in their talk.

7.8. SUMMARY

In this chapter we have explored the main areas of danger and risk for children that were identified by participants. The vast majority of dangers were predictable, such as drugs and violence, and there is a historical specificity to the dangers that are worth mentioning as all of the dangers are reflective of the concerns and dangers of this specific time and location. The threat of online predation has only become widely recognized since the widespread use of the internet in the home; this threat did not exist in the early 1990s for example. While the dangers discussed are constructed as important to the participants, both young and old, they are located within a specific culture at a specific time. We can also see how a pervasive sense of fear (as explored in Chapters 3, 5 and 6) are made concrete with regards to particular objects, people or events. While the dangers discussed in the rest of the chapter maybe regarded as expected, the identification of children themselves as a danger may not be immediately obvious as they are ostensibly treated as vulnerable within a culture of fear. This dual conception is one that has to be managed by children as they are subject to protection by parents, school and the authorities yet are often seen as an object of anxiety, threat and 'othering.' This particular issue is worthy of further debate and is considered in Chapter 11 (Discussion). In the next chapter we will examine some of management strategies for minimising these dangers and risks that were described by participants.

CHAPTER 8

ASPECTS OF CRIME, DANGER AND SAFETY

In this chapter we will examine several aspects of crime, danger and safety. In the first section we will look at some of the participants' accounts of crime, before looking at features of safety and risk, such as the strategies participants describe for making themselves feel safer or behaviours that are implemented for safety purposes. The temporal and spatial aspects of danger are then explored as locations and times of day are constructed by participants as affecting the level of danger present, such as a sense of increased vulnerability during dark winter evenings. Finally we will explore how concepts of danger are flexible and are relative to certain factors, such as nationality and material circumstance. This chapter, therefore, seeks to explore how fear, threat and danger are constructed as managed, conceptualised and realised by participants in their everyday lives.

8.1. ACCOUNTS OF CRIME

In this section we will examine the participants' accounts of crime which ranged from incidences involving guns to 'flashing;' for the purposes of this section the researcher has used criminal acts to be those that have been described to be in breach of the law, for example the carrying of knives and attempted abduction. A noteworthy matter to draw attention to is that most of the personal accounts of crime came from the children in Nottingham which is not surprising however given that the location of the school is in a deprived area which has a history of gangs, violence, and guns. These reports of crime will now be introduced.

8.1.1. Attempted Abductions

The child participants recounted several accounts of children nearly being snatched by strangers; the following extract is typical of such an account:

Extract 20: Eva & Ameera (Children) - 'Showed Us Sweets'

```
1  E:   we was coming back from the library no one- (1.0) umm?
2       (inaudible) where? the- li- library is=
3  R:                                          =[okay]
4  A:                                          =[yeah]
5  E:   i'd been- i'd been that and >then i come back< and then this
6       man kept <stopping> (0.8) and te- and telling us to get in-
7       come over and get sweets but it was like no:. and he was like
8       come on come on and then he showed us sweets and then we ran
9       off into tesco
```

In this short extract Eva relates how she was approached by a stranger in her local area, and while she does not overtly say that he is in a car, she does describe him stopping and asking her to get in and so it can be assumed that the stranger was driving. She also does not explicitly state that she was with a friend, but uses the plural 'us' and 'we' so the listener could infer that she was with a companion. After seeking clarification from her fellow focus groups members and the researcher that they are familiar with the geographic location in question she illustrates the specific event using active voicing (lines 5-9) which adds veracity to her portrayal. This story is a typical example of the attempted abduction reports from the data set in that it involves a stranger approaching, offering an enticement, before the prospective victim ran away. Other situations described by child participants' include strangers offering lifts and, in one case, requesting help looking for a lost puppy. While there is obviously no way to verify the intentions of the stranger in these stories (and so they could have been innocent encounters as opposed to abduction attempts) the typical features do mirror those featured in 'stranger danger' campaigns where children are warned to be wary of strangers offering sweets for example. More importantly, the incidents are constructed by the participants as attempted abductions and 'near misses.' We can also see how fear is performed and presented to others trhough Eva's re-enactment of her near-abduction (Massumi, 1991).

8.1.2. Violence: Knife Crime, Guns And Gangs

There were several sections of data during which the child participants gave an account of a violent environment; either through the actions of friends or relatives, or through violent acts committed against them personally. The following extract is from Caden who was the only child who divulged personal involvement with gangs, although he does not describe himself as a full gang member:

Extract 21: Caden (Child) - 'I'm Known'

```
1  R:   mm hmm? okay. and do you know anybody who carries a knife or
2       has carried a gun or anything=
3  C:                                =i know N:uff man that carries
4       knives. (1.3) i know like a whole £bag of people£ that. i know
5       that yeah?
6  R:   and why=
7  C:          =the- they cah? (1.1) thing is >if they don't<- they
8       know that? (1.2) they're not doing it cah they just want to do
9       it. it's just like some s- kinda stuff that you have to do.
10      cah? (1.5) let's say yeah? (.) i probably shouldn't say this
11      but it- (1.4) like me? i don't carry a ga- gun or a knife or
12      anyting but i hang around with people that do.
13 R:   mm hmm?=
14 C:           =it's cah? (0.6) i'm kno:wn. i'm known in like most of
15      the areas as being a? (1.5) let's say like? (.) a part of a
16      gang yeah? i'm not but i'm known as being [like]
17 R:                                             [mm  ]
18 C:                                                  that      cah
19      (1.2) where i live is yarwick and byford people don't like
20      yarwick people (then there's people who) like yarwick people=
21 R:   =mm hmm?=
22 C:           =so? my i d cah (1.2) i can rap and i can do all the
23      stuff? and all them stuff so they jus take me as? being a
24      member of y'know yarwick gang. i can't? go in byford on my one
25      cah i'm riskin of getting killed
```

Following a general discussion of knife crime the researcher asks about personal experiences and Caden is quick to respond. He describes how he knows "a whole £bag of people£" (line 4) who carry knives which indicates a great number of people

who carry knives: too many people to identify rather than just a few. After a follow-up question Caden goes into more detail framing carrying a knife as a necessity, rather than a choice; he states: "they're not doing it cah they just want to do it. it's just like some s- kinda stuff that you have to do." (lines 8-9). The disclosure is imbued with a sense of confidentiality after Caden states "i probably shouldn't say this but" (lines 10-11) which furthers the portrayal of the illicit nature of gang membership and weapon ownership. He then moves on to position himself as on the periphery of gang activity in that while he is not a member of a gang, he is perceived to be by others. Caden describes the territoriality of gangs: as an associate of the Yarwick gang he is "riskin of getting killed" (line 25) should he stray into another gang's terrain, thus the spatiality of Caden's everyday life is limited by his connection. He portrays his "i d" (line 23) as allied with gangs, as a young black man who raps and so he is just associated with the Yarwick gang through his characteristics rather than actively being a member. In this extract Caden's friendships with gang members mean that he is in regular contact with people who carry knives and guns for their own protection and his personal geography is constrained by gang territories. Thus Caden represents himself as living a life that is restricted by the violent, dangerous and territorial world of gangs.

Box 8: Knife Crime

A total of 172 articles reported on aspects of knife crime in the newspaper review. This relatively high figure is accounted for by the fact there was something of a moral panic regarding knife crime during the summer of 2008. Over the few weeks of the summer were multiple victims including Shakilus Townsend, Jimmy Mizen, and Freddie Moody. Ben Kinsella was one victim who was particularly reported on due in part to his race (he was white) and due to his celebrity connections; the case therefore stood out from crimes easily dismissed as black gang activity. Other articles reported on policies of prevention, statistics and victim/case details. A more detailed analysis of knife crime articles can be seen in Appendix ix.

In extracts from Caden (see also Extract 19 - 'Wrestling & The Street') we see a depiction of a violent world where the carrying of weapons is a necessity for survival; it is arguably relevant that he comes from the Nottingham cohort and resides in a deprived and much maligned area of the city. These extracts position the children as experiencing violence and the threat of violence as an integral part of their lives.

8.1.3. Non-Contact Sexual Exposure

There were a small number of accounts that described low-level and non-contact sexual offences. The following extract has been included as it places the crime within a larger context of changing attitudes to childhood experiences:

Extract 22: Melanie, Savannah & Jasmine (Parents) - 'Dodgy Experience'

```
1  M:   i mean i'm not so su:re i mean i- i've sort of? had a:? really
2       >sort of dodgy £experience£< when i: was young and i remember
3       telling my mum about it? and my mum just said >well y'know<
4       basically as children we used to just ↑go: we used to roam for
5       m:iles i mean i'm look- going back to when i was nine and ten?
6       and um? we lived in ger:many at the time. and there used to
7       be: um? in this particular ↑woods:: and (0.3) sort of this
8       quarry area >we used to go< and there used to be the:se? these
9       men that used to hang about and basically >they used to expose
10      themselves< to us: and masturbate in front of us .hhh >and um<
11      and it was a Ma:ssive game for u:s? we used to go down there
12      deliberately to Loo:k [for them so it was [uh so we  ]
13 S:                                             [heh heh
14      heh        ]
15 J:   [heh heh   ]
16 M:                could r:un [away from them sCRe:am]
17 S:                           [heh heh heh           ]
18 M:                                                   and go °°oh my
19      go:d°° look he's over there and i remember telling my mum
20      about i:t and she was like? well just don't go there again
21      [then.]
22 R:   [mm   ]
23 M:         i me:an? if my daughters came to me=
24 S:                                            =yeah=
25 M:                                                =and        said
26      tha:t?=
27 J:         =o:h you'd be on the pho:ne=
28 M:                                   =Ab↑solutely
```

Melanie begins by referring to a "really >sort of dodgy £experience£<" (line 2) before going on to disclose in more detail the incident she is referring to (the start of

detailed disclosure is marked by "basically" on line 4 and later on line 9). She sets out the background by identifying her age, the location, and that she and her friends enjoyed a high level of geographical freedom: "we used to just ↑go: we used to roam for m:iles" (lines 4-5). Melanie describes how she and her childhood friends used to actively seek out a particular area that men frequented to engage in public masturbation. She portrays it not only as a game but a "Ma:ssive game" (line 11) whereby they would deliberately find these men in order to run away screaming. The light-hearted nature of Melanie's description is reinforced by Savannah and Jasmine's laughter response (lines 14-16). Thus while Melanie was subject to acts of non-contact sexual exposure as a child this was not treated as a crime, but as a mischievous game which demonstrates the resilience of children and their enjoyment in the illicit engagement of prohibited behaviour.

Melanie then describes telling her mother about the game and uses active voicing to recount her mother's response: "she was like? well just don't go there again then." (lines 21-22). The response is constructed as placing the agency on Melanie, rather than on her mother: if Melanie did not like seeing the men then she should have stopped seeking them out. This is strongly contrasted with the next few lines where not only Melanie, but also Savannah and Jasmine co-construct Melanie's hypothetical response should a similar situation arise with her daughters. Melanie's supposed reaction is represented as much more pro-active than her mother's and places the agency firmly on her and the authorities. However there is little reference to how the impact on children may have changed, only the parental response.

In this extract we see how a shift has occurred regarding perceptions of child competency, resilience and vulnerability. The difference in described reactions between the mothers is striking: Melanie's mother gives agency and responsibility to her child, whereas Melanie would take a much more interventionist approach and be more dependent upon authorities to help protect her children. A recounting of a very personal childhood experience in this extract also manages to demonstrate wider changes in notions of parenting and childhood. We shall now move on the next section which will explore descriptions of behaviours associated with safety and risk.

8.2. SAFETY AND RISK

This section explores aspects of safety and risk within the data set and will first look at the risk that was discussed in terms of adult and child relationships. We will then examine the practices and behaviours that the participants describe themselves adopting in order to keep themselves safe.

8.2.1. Over-Regulation Of Adult And Child Interactions

As explored in Chapter 3 (section 3.3.1.2) there has been a change in recent decades in adult and child relationships which will now be explored through the participants' talk. The data in this section focuses on two types of over-regulation: the wide scale implementation of the CRB check (see section 3.3.1.2.) which describes CRB checks) and the regulation of physical interactions between adults and the young within a professional setting.

8.2.1.1. CRB Checks

Given the number of adults in the UK who have familiarity with the CRB process, either through work or volunteer activities, it is not surprising that some of the parents will have had direct contact with the procedure. In the following extract Peter describes his experiences with CRB checks, both as a parent and as someone who has undergone these checks:

Extract 23: Peter (Parent) - Football & Youth Club

```
P:   >to be quite honest< i don't i as a parent i've been c r b
     checked °in the past° but as a parent i don't think i hm coul-
     failure with me but i i don't think i've ever a:sked (1.2)
     with any of the youth clubs or various things the boys have
     gone to?=
R:          =mm
P:   are all the people checked (1.1) and certainly i i ran a
     football team? for a while and no- n- not one parent asked me
R:   mm
P:   and as it happens i hadn't been c r b checked for the
     football? i'd been c r b checked elsewhere? >but it's< not
```

```
12        Valid and i'd actually said to the head of the football club i
13        said (0.4) y'know you need to get this sorted and he said >oh
14        yeah i'll get a form to give to you< and °he never did°
```

The extract begins with Peter making a confessional type statement: ">to be quite honest<" (line 1) and this sense of declaration is reinforced by his later reference to his "failure" (line 3). The admission that Peter makes is that he has never asked whether the staff or volunteers involved in his son's activity groups and clubs have been subject to CRB checks. However while Peter constructs this as a failure on his part, he also frames this as a wider issue by describing how he was never asked by parents about his own CRB status when he ran a football team (lines 7-8). A sense of "failure" is therefore associated with having faith in the youth groups and organisations to follow procedure and protect children. As demonstrated throughout the data we see a representation of parental responsibility as never-ending: not only is it enough that parents take their children to youth clubs to develop an active social life, but they also have to ensure that the required paperwork has been completed by staff and volunteers.

Box 9: CRB

There were eight articles that focused solely on CRB checks. Of these all were negative and reported either mistakes that were made, for example 'CRB wrongly brands mother a criminal' (Bunyan, 2008) or reported on over-zealous application of the checking, for example 'Taxi for the PC Brigade; Mum needs Cop Check to go to School with her son' (Smith, 2008).

Peter describes that he had not actually been CRB checked for his activities with the football team, but had been checked for previous activities which locates him as an active member of the community. He constructs himself as actively seeking a new CRB check, with him approaching the head of the football club and uses active voicing to demonstrate his asking for the check, which acts to position Peter as a responsible volunteer. The head of the club is described as never having given him the form, which frames him as at fault for Peter not having a valid CRB check, not Peter himself. However throughout the extract Peter displays a relatively relaxed attitude towards the failures to comply, which reinforces a representation of CRB checks as redundant. Parents are represented as not being concerned with them and

volunteer organisations as not strict about enforcement: thus while it is a legal requirement the checks are reduced to mere paperwork.

8.2.1.2. Physical Interactions Between Adults And Children

Another area in which the over-regulation of adult and child relationships has had an impact is the physical interaction between professional adults and children in their care (see section 3.3.1.2). The following extract is from Poppy who constructs her comments as a professional and then as a mother:

Extract 24: Poppy (Parent) - 'Cuddles'

```
1  P:    teachers aren't allow:ed to cuddle like i do? a youth club at.
2        the? schoo:l (0.4) and there's a group of fourteen year old
3        La:ds (0.3) who i get on Rea:lly well with. and they'll come
4        and sit with me and they'll put their arm round me: and go
5        ↑hiya ↑pop: and i- i sit and i literal:ly i have to be rigiD
6        or i- i can feel myself going rigid cuz i CAnnot respond. and
7        you go to school and your daughters in tears >this is when she
8        was little< (0.9) she was at schoo:l and she fell over: and
9        they said w- i re:ally wanted to give her a cuddle but we're
10       not allo:wed (0.4) and i said to them then (.) £if my daughter
11       falls over. and needs a cuddle£ you have my full permission to
12       give her a cuddle
```

In the first part of this extract (lines 1-7) Poppy sets the scene by explaining that she works with teenage boys at a youth club before describing the awkwardness of physical interaction between them. She constructs herself as friendly with the boys through her statement that they get "on Rea:lly well" (line 3) which acts to normalise and explain her description of them coming up to her and putting their arm round her. This action is also worked up as a greeting – with the active voicing of "↑hiya ↑pop:" (line 5) – which also presents a function for the physical contact; thus the touch is positioned as a normative interaction between people who get on with each other. She then describes her reaction to the greeting. Poppy locates her response as not one she has a choice over, but as something she is compelled to do: "i literal:ly i have to be rigiD" (lines 5-6) and "i CAnnot respond." (lines 6-7) and the use of "have" and "cannot" act to create the notion that she is forced to react in

this way. Further the repetition of "rigid" (line 6) within a single line acts to underline how extreme Poppy's physical response has to be. In this part of the extract Poppy positions herself as a professional and subject to guidelines which limit physical touch between worker and child.

In the next section however Poppy moves from a description of a professional situation to a personal one, relating an incident when her daughter had fallen over at school and teachers were not allowed to give her a reassuring cuddle. The teachers are positioned as going against their natural instinct, with Poppy using reported speech to describe how they "re:ally wanted" (line 9) to give her small daughter a cuddle, but were not allowed. Cuddles themselves are represented as a necessity for young children when Poppy states "£if my daughter falls over. and needs a cuddle£" (lines 10-11). So while having described the professional limitations on touch just a few lines earlier, having moved to a parent stance she laments the same guidelines. Thus in the short extract and through Poppy's use of category entitlements as both a professional and a parent we can see how cuddles are seen as a source of discomfort as adults react with rigidity to a child's touch and are prevented from cuddling a distressed child. A natural and spontaneous action, specifically a hug given to or from a child, becomes mired in restrictions which seek to reduce the risky business of touch. We will now move on from behaviours and guidelines associated with risk to those associated with safety.

8.2.2. Keeping Safe

In this sub-section we will examine an extract which contains an account of a safety behaviour as Tanya describes what she and her friend, told their children to do if they ever got lost:

Extract 25: Tanya, Catalina & Gordon (Parents) - 'Lady With Children'

```
1  T:    mmm a friend of mine had a really good idea: and i must admit.
2        i passed it on to my children eventually (.) um she said that
3        if ever you get lo:st >this is what she said to her boys< if
4        you ever get lo:st (0.6) go to a la:dy who's got children with
5        her? [heh heh]
```

6 **C:** [mm hmm]
7 **R:** [mmm]

In the above extract Tanya is clear to construct the idea as her friend's and even uses reported speech to describe her friend telling her children what to do. However in the context of this research what is important is the message itself which is: "if you ever get lo:st go to a la:dy who's got children with her?" (lines 4-5). Thus the potential threat of the stranger is gendered and so it is women who are safe, not men, and specifically mothers are seen as objects of safety and trust: strangers who are not seen with children are positioned as untrustworthy. The message given to their children by Tanya and her friend is in line with 'stranger danger' teaching which advises lost children to approach a teacher, police officer, woman with a pushchair, or a uniformed shop worker. Thus while there are multiple sources of danger for children (see Chapter 7), there are few locations and people which are identified as 'safe.'

8.3. TIME AND SPACE OF DANGER

This section will examine times and places that are identified as particularly dangerous by the participants. First we will look at the seasonality of fear and how winter darkness is constructed as a limiter of freedom and will then look at locations, from alleyways to holidays, which are associated with danger and fear.

8.3.1. Afraid Of The Dark

Here we will examine a representation of how children's freedom to play and the following extract is typical of those where children described their seasonal patterns of freedom:

Extract 26: Lizzie, Jacob & Nila (Children) - Summer Versus Winter

1 **L:** i wa:lk in the [summer but not in the winter]
2 **J:** [like i don't know what time] to le:ave cuz
3 i'm? (0.4)
4 **L:** and you wake up late because it's like dark heh so?

```
5   J:    [yeah  ]
6   R:    [mm hmm]
7         (0.7)
8   L:            [it is- it's really bad in the winter as well]
9   J:            [i don't know what time to leave because?    ]
10  L:                                                          cuz  you
11        can't go out?- like your parents let you out if it's like
12        summer? and it's light?
13  R:    mm hmm=
14  L:          =cuz it's like wa:rm and? [and ]
15  J:                                    [yeah]
16  L:                                          people don't come out in
17        the dark but in winter [you just get bored (0.2) from being
18        inside ]
19  J:                           [but  like?  espec-  especially  when
20        they're] like? when you come? (.) to and from school. [both]
21  ?:                                                          [mm  ]
22  J:    [ways  ]
23  R:    [mm hmm]
24  J:            cuz like? (0.5) in the summer you can like stop at a
25        shop or something
26  N:    mmm
27  J:    [get a drink and get something to eat     ]
28  L:    [an- and in the winter your parents get] angry cuz [you're
29        stopping]
30  J:                                                         [but
31        in- in  ] the winte:r like you stop for five minutes and then
32        you go outside it's da:rk
33  L:    mmm.
34        (0.7)
35  J:    cuz it gets dark at Four o'clock now
```

This extract follows a question about how the children travel to school and Lizzie states that it depends on the season; in summer she walks, but not in winter. She goes on to say: "it is- it's really bad in the winter as well cuz you can't go out?- like your parents let you out if it's like summer? and it's light? cuz it's like wa:rm and? and people don't come out in the dark but in winter you just get bored (0.2) from being inside" (lines 8-18). In these few lines we can see several issues at work concerned with play and the seasons: firstly there is the temperature aspect as in

summer it is warmer and so people are generally more likely to spend time outdoors. She also mentions the darkness of winter and, again, people are more likely to spend time outdoors during hours of light. Thirdly there is her reference to being "bored from being inside" which constructs play and socialising as limited when confined to indoors and clearly recreation options are greatly expanded when the outdoors is accessible. Finally, we also see the issue of parental control when she comments that "like your parents let you out if it's like summer?," consequently constructing parental permission to play outside as dependent upon season. In the first half of the extract we therefore see a positioning of summer as a more enjoyable and sociable season.

Jacob and Lizzie go on to jointly construct a sense of constrained informal freedom; that is the autonomy to spend longer walking home from school. Jacob describes (with Nila's agreement on line 26) an extended version of the walk home from school which includes stopping at local shops for snacks and drinks. Lizzie picks up the narrative by locating parents as angry over these casual delays, but this anger is represented as seasonal as it occurs only in winter (line 28). Jacob makes reference on line 35 to the early hour of darkness and given that this focus group took place mid-December, it was indeed dark at approximately 4pm, and so it is fair to assume that during winter the children do walk home during increasing darkness. In this extract we can witness how winter and darkness are seen as limiting factors of freedom; both in more formal ways where parents refuse to give explicit permission to play outdoors and in more informal ways, when an unhurried and relaxed walk home results in parental anger.

8.3.2. Dangerous Places

It was not only temporal components to fear and freedom that were referred to by participants, but also spatial aspects. Parents and children alike identified environments which were associated with danger, safety, or risk. In the extract below the children describe where they are allowed play and go in the town centre:

Extract 27: Molly, Esha, Jamini & Lisa (Children) – 'It's Quiet But…'

```
1  R:   mm hmm. okay. so how? do you get to town then
2  J:   u:m? my mum normally drops me off
3  R:   mm hmm (1.5) okay (2.1) >and what about the rest of you<
4       (1.2)
5  L:   i'm not allowed to go out on the Stree:ts
6       (0.4)
7  R:   mm hmm
8  L:   cuz i don't go out- because you don't know what people might
9       be arou:nd=
10 E:          =mm i'm not allowed to take short cuts? even through
11      like. (0.9) you know the bit where somerfield is? [to get]
12 R:                                                     [mm hmm]
13 E:                                                              to
14      the car park? we're n- i'm not allowed to do °that° cuz my mum
15      said it was too °dangerous°
16 R:   °okay°
17 J:   or? go in alleyways=
18 E:                      =yeah=
19 M:                           =yeah
20 R:   mm hmm? (1.3) okay? >so you're saying you're not allowed to
21      play on the streets< is that like- (1.2) what about if you
22      wanted to play outside in your street with a friend
23 L:   um? (0.5) i wouldn't no: cuz like? (2.7) >its normally just
24      me< and my sister and we're never really allowed out on. to.
25      the:? front l- like? the ro:ad because its [like? ]
26 R:                                              [mm hmm]
27 L:   i know it's a quiet area, but you do get the odd ca:r coming?
28      and you might not see it or there might be people around (0.5)
29      with kni:ves whatever
30 R:   mm hmm=
31 L:         =things like that
```

The extract opens with a question about how the children travel to town with Jamini responding first (line 2). After this the researcher attempts to engage the rest of the group with the question; Lisa does not answer the question directly, but describes how she is "not allowed to go out on the stree:ts" (line 5). It is unclear whether it is in relation to her travelling to town (as per the original question) or being allowed

out at all, however given her later remarks in the extract it could be argued that Lisa is not allowed to go to town with her friends, unlike the other girls in the focus group. She justifies her lack of freedom with: “because you don't know what people might be arou:nd” (line 8-9). This expansion constructs “the streets” as a dangerous place and presumably the sort of people Lisa makes reference to are ‘bad’ people and they are represented as omnipresent; in her words we see echoes of a fear of the ‘what if?’ which is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Esha then picks up the narrative and describes how she is not allowed in a particular alleyway in the town centre as her mother has judged it “too °dangerous°” (line 15). Jamini also adds that she is not allowed in alleys (which Molly and Esha agree with) and so between the participants, alleyways, shortcuts and the streets are worked up as places of potential danger. Therefore we see how danger and risk are attached to public spaces and how the geographical mobility of the children is limited.

The researcher asks a follow up question of Lisa which is framed in terms of a hypothetical situation (playing outside her house with a friend) (lines 20-22). Lisa responds with a tentative “um?” (line 23) before stating: “i wouldn't no:” (line 23). She describes how she usually only plays with her sister and how they are “never really allowed out on. to. the:? front” (line 24-25). Again we see a formulation of the fear of the ‘what if?’ as she illustrates the potential dangers - traffic and knives - despite categorising the area she lives in as “quiet” (line 27). The sense of risk is heightened by the addition of “things like that” (line 31) whereby the threat is positioned as ubiquitous and as therefore not needing further explanation. The general public is also framed as dangerous with the term “people” on line 28 and so everybody is worked up as a potential killer or assailant. Lisa’s narrative positions the public area of the street as potentially dangerous, with cars and potential knife attacks and therefore we once again see how the ‘street’ is worked up as a dangerous place (also see Extracts 16 - ‘Traffic, Strangers, Drugs & Robberies & 18 - ‘Frightened To Walk Around’). The extract demonstrates that for the children the world is not their playground, but is a dangerous place with the front door constructed as the boundary between safety and danger.

8.3.3. Risky Holidays

One aspect of discourse that emerged from the parents' talk was the positioning of holidays as an activity accompanied by enhanced risk. Often in line with talk around the McCann case, being on holiday was formulated as placing children at increased risk of being abducted. This can be witnessed in the following example when Gordon likens children to a valuable item vulnerable to theft:

Extract 28: Poppy, Gordon, Catalina & Tanya (Parents) – 'Bad Things Happen'

```
C:  so: i mean that's >anyway< but just by leaving it? alo:ne even
    for five minutes=
P:                  =°mm°
C:  y'know my: little one in two minutes that i was in the kitchen
    and she was in the living roo:m bad things happen in? thirty
    seconds=
P:          =mm=
C:             =and she's not a very rambunctious girl she's jus?
    y'know but things happen=
T:                          =mm=
C:                             =in two seconds like (0.5) you're
    just. goi↑ng y'know to the loo? [or]
G:                                  [mm]
C:                                      something. how can you
    leave them for hours:
G:  also when you go on holiday you don't leave your passport on
    your bed do you and leave the roo:m?=
R:                                      =[heh heh]
P:                                      =[heh heh] [no: no:]
G:                                                 [do ya: ] [y-
    y- you don't you don't leave (.) you don't leave fif-]
T:                                                           [£so
    why would you leave something as precious as a     ] ↑child?£
    heh [heh   ]
G:      [y'know] if you see fifty pound on the side you think i
    better mo:ve th↓at:=
P:                      =yeah
R:  mm=
G:    =i'll hide it=
```

30 **P:** =yeah i know that's true: that is Very true

In reference to the McCann abduction Catalina is critical of their decision to leave their three young children alone and constructs her argument in terms of "bad things happen" (line 5). She does this in reference to her own daughter and how an unfortunate incident could happen while her daughter is in the living room and Catalina pops into the kitchen or to the bathroom. The time frame in which these incidents could happen is reduced as Catalina refers to "five minutes" (line 2) then "thirty seconds" (lines 5-6) then "two seconds" (line 11). This increasingly small window of opportunity for "bad things" is indirectly compared to the McCanns who she constructs as leaving their children for "hours:" (line 15) and so they are positioned as actively inviting a 'bad thing' to happen. Gordon then makes direct reference to being on holiday by commenting that people do not leave passports or money lying around; this is done over several lines and incorporates general pronouns ("you") which acts to position the situation as one that is familiar to his fellow focus group members. He also uses active voicing ("you think i better mo:ve th↓at:... i'll hide it" - lines 25-29) which adds veracity to his statement and enhances the portrayal of the situation as a shared one. Tanya responds to this comment by stating, in a light hearted tone: "£so why would you leave something as precious as a ↑child?£ heh heh" (lines 22-24). We see a representation of children as valuable objects with Gordon likening them to passports and cash and Tanya referring to them as "precious." Consequently we see an indirect condemnation of the McCanns who did "leave something as precious as a ↑child?" and therefore the McCanns are criticised not only for leaving their child, but are framed as placing greater value on money and passports than their children. We therefore see (as in Extract 3 - 'Racked With Guilt') a positioning of the McCanns as having a deep moral failing as opposed to being victims of fate.

Children are also constructed as having material value and worth stealing which could be linked to parental fears of abduction. However, it is noteworthy that these formulations occur with particular reference to being on holiday and there was a sense of parents identifying being on holiday as making their children more vulnerable to abduction (see also Extract 4 for example - 'Separate Bedrooms'). This could be related to the susceptibility felt when in a new place and foreign

culture, but could also be arguably related to the McCann case. While millions of British children go abroad on holiday with friends and family every year and come to no harm, the tragic and unique case of Madeleine McCann is related to, not in terms of its extraordinary nature, but in terms of the 'what if?' (see Chapter 6). Thus in this section we can see how a sense of danger and risk fluctuates according to season, levels of light, and the location.

8.4 DANGER?

In the final section of this chapter we will explore comments that relate to the questioning of danger and risk, such as participants inquiring whether the world is indeed more dangerous than it used to be, as there was a small section of discourse which probed the perception of ubiquitous threat.

8.4.2. Community

The following extract is sadly unique in the data cohort as the participant describes being part of a community and this is positioned as having a minimising effect on the perception of danger:

Extract 29: Musiclover99 (Parent) – 'Community'

Do you think that being a child and a parent is more difficult and dangerous today than it was when you were young?

No, its no different to any other time in human existence. The dangers just change as other dissappear.

I would say however that the danger element is dependant on where you live. My sister lives in Hastings for example. My niece is only 5mths older than my eldest son and she is only just starting to go around on her estate unaccompanied. My sister knows very few people there despite having lived in the area for 9 years. Where as here in Scotland, I know just about everyone on our estate. The children here are allowed to play freely and we operate as a community. My kids play much the same as I did as a child.

Musiclover99 begins her response by representing the issues as different and not quantitatively greater and goes on to expand her response with particular reference to geographical community. She describes her sister's situation, the freedom her niece is allowed and how her sister does not have much of a relationship with her neighbours, before she recounts her own situation and constructs a sense of a strong community. She positions herself as an active member through her comment that she knows "just about everyone on our estate" (line 10) and how the children are free to play: thus it is the community that is positioned as keeping her children safe. She reinforces the strong sense of a close neighbourhood by explicitly stating: "we operate as a community" (line 11). Musiclover99 ends her answer by explaining that her children's play and that of her own childhood are on a par. This is a different situation to that portrayed by all of the other participants who describe contemporary children's play and freedom as different to that of previous generations. We can suggest that is it this sense of community which is important in creating a safe and trusted environment which lowers the perception of danger and enables children play freely. Unfortunately MusicLiver99 was the only participant who described being part of a community.

8.4.3. Media Influence

As discussed in more detail in the Chapter 10 the media are constructed as having an impact on the perception of threat, danger and risk. This is succinctly demonstrated in the extract below:

Extract 30: Mumtogirls (Parent) - 'Doom And Gloom'

1 *Do you think that being a child and a parent is more difficult and*
2 *dangerous today than it was when you were young?*
3 No, but it sometimes feels that way with all the media doom and
4 gloom.

Mumtogirls dismisses contemporary parenting and childhood as no more dangerous than her childhood, but admits that it sometimes "feels that way" (line 3). She constructs this 'feeling' as arising from "media doom and gloom" (lines 3-4). Thus we are left with the brief, but powerful impression that the world is not increasingly dangerous, but that the sense of danger is magnified by the media. Mumtogirls

refers to a mismatch between the actual level of crime and the much higher level of reporting. We can see here how knowledge and perceptions of the wider social world are represented as being shaped by the mass media

8.4.4. Cultural Relativity

As discussed in Chapter 9 (section 9.1.3) some of the participants are not from the UK, but have moved here from other countries. In the following extract we can witness how Dave, an American, presents a different perspective on knife crime due to his nationality:

Extract 31: Marie, Dave, Sue & Peter (Parents) - America & Knife Crime

```
M:   do you think? i i wondered are there more knife crime now or
     do you just hear it m↑ore?
D:   heh
M:   °i don't know° certainly i think you hear about
D:   you have to come to philadelphia and detroit [if you wanna see
     knife crime  ]
M:                                                [well that's the
     thing they say] we're getting? more like the Americans that's=
D:   =you're not. you're not even clo:se
R:   [heh heh]
S:   [heh heh]
D:   you're <not. even. close.> there were four hundred murders in
     philadelphia. (0.9) in the first four months we were (0.5)
     living in the  u k >we've been here two years< (1.0) and there
     were FOUR (.) y'know knife. murders. in london in that same
     period so you're not even close that's just ones y'know just
     comparing two [cities]
M:                 [mm hmm]
S:                 [mm    ]
P:                 [mm    ]
```

As part of a discussion about knife crime Marie asks her fellow focus group members whether they think knife crime has actually increased, or whether it is just the media reporting on the issue that is amplified. Dave responds with a small laugh

(line 3), before Marie expresses uncertainty in answering her own question (through "°i don't know°" and "i think" - line 4) which invites responses from her fellow focus group members. Dave locates his knowledge as greater by referencing Philadelphia (where he was raised) and Detroit and constructs the knife crime in these cities as a different level of knife crime. Marie uses this reference to America to infer that British violence is on the rise and will be on a par with crime in the USA and she frames this in terms of "they say " (line 8) and there is no indication as to who "they" are: it could be the media, the government or another authority and so the prediction is framed as universal and consensual. Dave makes a dismissive comment by stating: "you're not. you're not even clo:se" (line 9) and the stopping intonation after "not." indicates a final statement with which there is little argument. This is affiliatively received by Sue and the researcher by light laughter (lines 10 & 11) and this response acts to situate Dave as the more knowledgeable speaker and also works to alleviate Dave's direct disagreement with Marie. He reinforces his disagreement by his repetition and punctuated delivery of "you're <not. even. close.>" (line 12). Up to this point in the extract we therefore see Dave, through his category entitlement of an American, positioned as possessing greater knowledge with regards to knife crime rates.

The remainder of the extract is then predominantly taken up by Dave evidencing his knowledge. He gives further detail to substantiate his claims describing how, during a four month period when he and his wife initially moved to the UK, there were 400 murders in Philadelphia and just four in London. These figures act to position knife crime in London as negligible and in Philadelphia as an everyday occurrence. He qualifies his statistical comparison by adding that that it is just a comparison between two cities; the largest in the UK and the sixth biggest in the USA and so the difference is constructed as great enough without bringing into consideration larger cities such as New York and Los Angeles. Thus what we see in this extract is that Dave's status as an American has resulted in a different standpoint on knife crime to the other participants in the focus group: comparatively speaking his perception of the threat of knife crime in this country is minimal because of his background. Accordingly we see that crime is worked up as relative and particularly crime in the UK is framed as minimal compared to the USA.

In the extract below we see a similar notion as the threat of terrorism is not a consideration for Caden due to his material circumstance:

Extract 32: Caden & Blake (Children) - 'Terrorism's For Posh People'

```
1  R:   °okay?° so shall we move on to the next ↑one (1.1) which um
2       basically says that (1.3) ov- well over the summer there were
3       a series of knife crimes in london do you remember hearing
4       about them it involved under eighteens quite a lot um? and so
5       that during this Ti:me became more afraid of knife crime than
6       they were of terrorism or terrorist attacks? (2.7) so are you
7       guys scared of either? knife crime terrorism?=
8  C:                                                =like  terrorism.
9       that's for posh people
10 B:   heh
11 R:   [okay  ]
12 C:   [that's] for posh people °who go on holiday°
```

After the researcher has summarised the article to next be discussed Caden gives a concise response in which terrorism is constructed as a concern for the affluent. Caden implies that holidaying is an activity of the "posh" (lines 9 & 12) and so it can be assumed that he does not enjoy the privilege of recreational travel. Elsewhere in the focus group (see Extract 21 - 'I'm Known') Caden describes his (potentially fatal) association with gangs and so the dangers that are immediate in his daily life are of a different nature to the very distant threat posed by terrorism. Blake's response of brief laughter (line 10) also reinforces Caden's dismissal of terrorism and "posh people." Thus we can see how socio-economic circumstances are constructed as an influencing factor for threat appraisal: for those unable to afford leisure travel and who live in a deprived area the threat of terrorism is not a consideration.

In this section we therefore see that the threat of danger is not a straightforward matter, but is closely related to the participants' social and material worlds. Their backgrounds, communities, socio-economic status and nationality all have a bearing on how risk and danger is constructed. Furthermore there is even doubt as to whether, despite an increasing sense of anxiety and vulnerability, there is an increased level of danger in contemporary society.

8.5. SUMMARY

In this chapter we looked closely at the features of danger and risk: how it is managed, how participants attempt to ensure their safety, the geographical and temporal aspects of danger and the consideration of risk levels. It is too simplistic to say that the participants were afraid, but rather that their constructed fear is related to and managed by time, location, season, their own behaviours, safety strategies, their socio-economic status, and a debate of risk. It is also influenced by factors that will be discussed in the subsequent chapters such as the wider social context and the media. Through the participants' talk therefore we can better understand how fear is co-constituted through multiple factors, behaviours and practices.

CHAPTER 9

CHANGE, PRESSURE AND NOSTALGIA*

This chapter explores participants' talk of change: both wider social changes and more personal and nostalgic recollections of their own childhoods. Throughout these extracts the past is positioned as simpler and safer with modern life beset by intensified pressure, technological and social changes, and transformations in familial relationships. In the first section of this chapter social transformations will be explored, such as the phenomenon of working mothers and immigration. We will then look at changes in technology, particularly communications technology and accompanying increases in consumerism. In the third section of the chapter we will explore participants' representations of escalated pressure in their daily lives, before finally examining extracts from both parents and children which nostalgically construct childhoods of the past.

9.1. CULTURAL CHANGES

The social structure of the UK has undergone great changes in recent decades; divorce rates have increased, as has the number of lone parent families and family sizes are smaller (see section 3.1 for a more thorough description). Clearly, the UK has changed dramatically in recent decades, meaning that parents are bringing their children up in a world that is very different to the one they grew up in. In this first part of the chapter we will explore participants' talk of the changing nature of parenting, working mothers and cross-cultural comparisons.

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* A condensed version of this chapter was presented at the 'Changing Families in a Changing World' conference which was hosted by the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) in June 2010, University of Edinburgh, UK.

9.1.1. Change In Parent And Child Relations

As discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.3.1) there has been an alteration in adult and child relations with a more relaxed and informal attitude to parenting prevailing in contemporary culture. This change can be witnessed in the following extract as Fleur constructs the parent and child boundary as increasingly blurred:

Extract 33: Fleur & Nina (Parents) – 'Swings And Roundabouts'

```
1  F:   i i think a lOt of parents now as well w- we tend to ta:lk a
2       lot more To them. on a similar sort of level? and i think in
3       someways in goo:d. because they they seem to- be a lot more
4       willing to talk baCK to you but i think as well that it's
5       quite hard to keep the sort of? parent. child. relationship?
6       in that as well where they uh? sometimes think they're a
7       little but um bigger or older than they actually ar:e but you-
8       you don't want t- you wa:nt them to keep talking to you cuz
9       you want to know what's going on as well. .hh and i i think
10      that's quite difficult thing cuz °>i th-<° with my mum and dad
11      when they have my? little bo:y it's a: a lot different sort of
12      relationship than he has with me: it's a it's very much he's a
13      lot better behaved £to start of with£ [heh heh]
14 N:                                         [heh heh]
15 F:                                                 £but um£ it's a
16      lot more adult. child. relationship than he is with me and my
17      pa:rtner i spo:se and that i do. i do. worry that i've got
18      that wrong:=
19 N:              =°mm°=
20 F:                   =but then i know that when i was younger i
21      kept a lot from my mum and dad? heh so it's swi:ngs and
22      roundabouts °and° its whether you get it right or not and i
23      think that's something i worry a LO:t about
```

Here Fleur describes the differences in the relationships between her and her son, and her parents and her son. Fleur represents hers as less hierarchical: "we tend to ta:lk a lot more To them. on a similar sort of level?" (lines 1-2). This is situated as beneficial as it keeps the lines of communication open: "you wa:nt them to keep talking to you cuz you want to know what's going on" (lines 8-9). This is worked up as a preventive action against her child keeping secrets, such as bullying, and is

germane because at the time of the focus group Fleur's son was only four years old. She makes a later reference to keeping things from her parents when she was young (line 21) and one could argue that this was when Fleur was older than her son currently is (probably when she was a teenager). Consequently she portrays her relationship with her son as deliberately informal and friendly as a precautionary measure against a problem that is unlikely to arise for several years; at age four it is doubtful he has any secrets. However this style of communication is not free of problems as the issue of authority is constructed as a complicated one: "they they seem to- be a lot more willing to talk back to you but i think as well that it's quite hard to keep the sort of? parent. child. relationship?" (lines 3-4). The mention of 'talking back' as beneficial is a marker of the changing norms of acceptable childhood behaviour: previously the idea of a child 'talking back' to an adult carried negative connotations of being cheeky and 'back chat' yet here it is positioned as positive, presumably because it is seen as an indicator of free communication between parent and child. Thus not only is the nature of parenting style represented as having changed, but also what is considered satisfactory behaviour from a young child.

Fleur associates behaviour lapses with this style of communication through her comments that her parents have a different "more adult. child." (line 16) relationship with him and he is "a lot better behaved £to start of with£" (lines 12-13). Fleur frames her style of parenting as different to her parents with her parenting style being more open and not as hierarchical, however this is seen as coming with the cost of poorer behaviour: as she herself states "it's swi:ngs and roundabouts" (line 22). While Fleur constructs her decision to have an informal relationship with her son as a deliberate and personal choice she describes doubt over this decision: "i do. worry that i've got that wrong:" (lines 17-18) and "its whether you get it right or not and i think that's something i worry a LO:t about"(lines 22-24). In the phrase "get it right or not" we see a formulation of parenting as an absolute task: a process that either gets it right or wrong when a more realistic and achievable representation of parenting might include the admission that mistakes will be made. In this extract we see how parenting styles and the standard of acceptable behaviour from children has changed across a generation, but also some suggestion of the level of (unattainable) perfectionism that is attached to contemporary parenting (see section 3.3).

9.1.2. Working Parents

Recent decades have witnessed a transformation in employment patterns which have direct consequences for parenting and childhood as demonstrated in Chapter 3 (section 3.180). These changes affect childcare arrangements, family income and time spent with children and so it is not surprising that the employment of mothers was spontaneously discussed by participants:

Extract 34: Poppy, Tanya & Catalina – 'Working Mums'

```
P:    i had a year at home when i had ally=
C:                                        =you did=
P:                                                =um?  and?  (0.6)
      talking to mums about the consistence of poop and how many
      times they were sick and i- (0.8) i couldn't handle it.=
C:    =°°no°°=
P:          =and- i said i've- i've got to do something i >i- i- i-
      <  it's not i was quite? (0.2) LO:W i- y'know=
T:                                                    =mmm=
P:                                                        =and it got
      quite depressing and that's why i started studying=
T:                                                       =mm=
P:                                                           =um?
      (0.9)
T:    and it's [good]
P:             [it's]
T:                  to teach kids to have a work ethic of some
      [£sort [isn't it? tha- tha- that's that's]
P:    [well i think yeah y'know                ]
T:                                              learning as well as?
      (0.2) [anything]
P:          [i said  ]
T:                  else you [can do with them]
C:                           [domestic      do]mestic   work   is
      totally? (0.5) not valued (.) by anybody from the family
      including husbands
```

This extract frames returning to work (or study) as a positive for both mothers and children. Poppy explains how she spent a year as a stay-at-home-mum when her daughter was an infant and her description is morally loaded, referencing

conversations about the "consistence of poop and how many times they were sick" (lines 4- 5). This positions stay-at-home-mums as overly concerned with the minutiae of their child's bodily functions and as only able to converse on a limited basis. This negative representation is furthered when she describes her need to "do something" (line 7) which consequently situates stay-at-home-mums as not doing anything. Poppy goes on to work up her decision to return to study as a need rather than a choice for the benefit of her mental health by stating: "i couldn't handle it." (line 5), "i've got to do something" (line 7), "i was quite? (0.2) LO:W" (line 8) and describing the situation as "quite depressing" (line 11). Poppy works to account for her decision to return to education as a intellectual and mental necessity while simultaneously positioning stay-at-home-mums as tedious.

Tanya contributes by constructing mothers who work or study as instilling children with a "work ethic" (line 17) which subsequently positions stay-at-home-mums as not inspiring this. Thus Tanya acts to locate Poppy's return to education as benefitting her daughter, while the reference to "anything else you can do with them" (lines 21 & 23) arguably refers to the activities Poppy could have been doing with her daughter had she not been studying. Catalina furthers the negative representation of stay-at-home-mums by describing "domestic work" (line 24) as "totally? (0.5) not valued" (line 25) by the family. She makes particular reference to "husbands" (line 26) which highlights the often thankless nature of domestic labour: while children may not understand the time and effort that has gone into housework, a partner not recognising this indicates ingratitude rather than a lack of comprehension. The return to work or study is formulated by these mothers as an emotional and intellectual (rather than financial) necessity. It is also notable that in this extract Gordon, the lone male in the focus group, remains silent and does not contribute to the discussion which is perhaps un-surprising given the highly gendered topic of discussion. Thus the construction of stay-at-home-mums is negative with their focus on the minute body functions of children and the un-valued domestic work.

9.1.3. Cross-Cultural Comparisons

The UK population has been subject to much change since WWII (again as discussed in Chapter 3) and this was particularly relevant to the focus groups that occurred at Stephenson in Nottingham. Many of the children and their parents were not born in the UK, creating an environment that was full of the trials, tribulations, and joys of immigration (see Chapter 4 for a full discussion of the area and school's demographic). The following extracts are from two children who describe their country of birth:

Extract 35: Nihal (Child) – 'Real Guns'

1 **N:** y'know in my country:? (0.3) y'know my country (sniffs) um
2 there's like um y'know this uh little kid (.) these little
3 kids:? have REAL Guns you know (0.4) when i was a little kid i
4 used to have a knife

Extract 36: Deema (Child) – 'Colouring Book'

1 **D:** na: you should be in my: country (0.3) i get whacked (.) i get
2 some like these big fat sticks yea:h and they beat you on your
3 book yeah and they hit you on your hands and back they hit you
4 everywhere they slap your face yeah and listen (0.4) when
5 you've finished your colouring book yeah they slap ya if you
6 don't buy a new one (0.3) ah my god it was Terrible.

What is common to both is that they describe their native countries as "my country" which is indicative of a very strong link with their home country and heightened by Deema's particular emphasis on "my" (Extract 36, line 1). They also both represent violence as an integral part of those countries. Nihal portrays small children owning weapons and the age of the children is emphasised with his repetition of "little kid" three times (lines 2 & 3), while the weaponry is described as "REAL" (line 3) versus pretend play guns and he states that he personally "used to have a knife" (line 4) and so the violence in his home country is formulated as sufficiently widespread that small children own lethal weapons, while on the other hand the violence constructed in Deema's extract is directed towards children. There is no indication of who "they" (line 2) - that is the perpetrator of violence - are but given the later comment about colouring books it could be suggested that "they" are teachers or classroom

workers and locates the abuse as general by use of the plural "you" throughout the extract. Her statement on the last line - "ah my god it was Terrible." - further stresses the heinousness of beating children with "big fat sticks" (line 2). These extracts demonstrate that the UK has a vast cultural richness with many contemporary parents and children having to build a life in the UK with the memories, customs, and cultures of their previous home. While many of these experiences and traditions are positive and actively kept alive, many are also negative and speak of a history of violence, hate, and warfare, thus by comparison the UK is a safe and stable nation.

In this section we have sampled some of the social and global difficulties and changes that the participants made reference to which demonstrates that family life does not operate in a vacuum. The next section of this chapter will explore participants' talk of changes in consumer attitudes and technological advances.

9.2. TECHNOLOGY AND CONSUMERISM

Aside from social transformations, great technological changes have also occurred. While the child participants were born into a digital world with the internet a taken for granted part of life, this is something that the adults have had to come to terms with, both with regards to how life has changed and the technological knowledge that has to be developed. This expansion in product range and capability has been accompanied by an increase in consumerism as a way of life. In this section talk of such developments, with a particular focus on communications technology, will be explored before an examination of references to consumerism.

Box 10: Money

Articles which were retrieved in the newspaper search that focused on money and finance totalled 103. The search period fell at a time of great economic uncertainty and what later developed into a global recession. This credit crunch was mentioned in 46 articles. Rising consumer and energy prices, increasing house prices, financial hardships and rising unemployment were the subject of the remainder.

9.2.1. Technological Change

There is no questioning that the average home has changed remarkably in the last few decades with the mass ownership of washing machines, fridge-freezers, phones and the television, to mention just a few changes, transforming both work and play (a more detailed description of this change can be found in section 3.1.1). These technological developments are explored in the following extract:

Extract 37: John, Fleur & Nina (Parents) – 'Rapid Change'

N: do you think our world i mean our wor:ld has maybe not °>quite so much for you<° but since i was a girl the wo:rld's changed so:: mu:ch (0.8) like? it would've been. unima↑ginable to have (0.5) a mobile pho:ne or (0.7) a television that was on £a:ll day£ heh or even a telephone in the hou:se we y'know we [ver:y]

R: [mm]

N: i think there was one person in our ro:ad that had a? had a (°bed°) and our wo:rld has changed so: much and we're sort of like stru:ggling to- keep up with it? and like you saying? which which way is right whereas ↑i don't know was it? i spose they had (1.4) oh my mum was born was a chi:ld in the war so i spose they had quite a lot but i don't think there's that much Cha:nge not as not as RAPid change=

J: =no:=

N: =that we've had (1.7)

F: i think my worry [as well its Changing that much?]

N: [i mean we've a:ll said that we] feel guilty haven't we=

F: =that i think there's a- like a sort of big gap from sort of your- like my mum:'s generation to Me. and um (1.2) but i think no:w those- that Gap it's: still the same amount between me and my little bo:y [ev]

N: ` [mm]

F: en though there's not such a big a:ge gap because it's. just? increa:sing and its just getting >faster and faster:<=

N: =mmm=

```
30  F:                                    =and i i think we're a:ll
31        gunna get left behind by our children? because they they the-
32        the wo:rld that they have and what they have in it to do and?
33        it's ama:zing really we didn't have computers til we got to
34        ↑secondary school and they've got em in the n↑ursery heh
```

Nina's description of technology when she was young and the subsequent change is positioned as shared knowledge through her repeated use of "our" and "we" in her talk; however this sharing is limited to John and Arifa, with Nina having clearly excluded Fleur (line 2) due to her age (also see Extract 13 - 'A Bit Of Dope'). Nina refers to the "world" (lines 1, 2 & 9) which demarcates a global modification as opposed to a change in her specific circumstances, and describes the technology present when she young: "it would've been. unima↑ginable to have (0.5) a mobile pho:ne or (0.7) a television that was on £a:ll day£ heh or even a telephone in the hou:se" (lines 3-5). She formulates an unrecognisable world (with the use of "unima↑ginable") to illustrate some aspects of technology using a three part list (mobile phone, television and telephone) that are now taken for granted, such as a telephone in the house. Unfortunately it is not possible to clarify what she describes on line 9 ((°bed?°)) but what is significant is the preceding phrase "there was one person in our ro:ad" (lines 8-9). This remark points to the presence of a community from the fact that neighbours were privy to who owned what technology. Nina frames the transformations as difficult to adapt to ("stru:ggling to- keep up with it?" - line 10) before referring to her mother who she describes as having been "a chi:ld in the war" (line 13) and she concedes that her mother would have experienced some change, but emphasises the difference: "not as RAPid change" (line 15). Consequentially in this section of the extract we see a depiction of a time when technology was rare and shared with the local community which is positioned as a time prior to swift and immense change.

Fleur takes up the narrative on line 9 adding the perspective of a younger mother. She differentiates between the parent/child age gap and knowledge gap; stating that there is the same chronological "amount" (line 25) between her son and her, and her and her mother. However, despite the gap in years being similar she argues that the knowledge gap is "just? increa:sing and its just getting >faster and faster:< and i i

think we're a:ll gunna get left behind by our children?" (lines 28-32). Thus the age gap is described as the same and consequently the gap in knowledge is formulated as not proportional. The phrase ">faster and faster:<," spoken with a quicker speed, infers a loss of control and the extreme case formulation that parents are 'all gunna be left behind' also points towards a loss of parental control. Fleur illustrates the difference with a specific example regarding when computers are introduced to children with her son's generation positioned as being familiar with computers much earlier than she was. On a side note it is interesting to draw attention to the focus group dynamics which can be identified in this extract. Nina and Fleur had not met each other prior to the focus group, yet there is an antagonism that exists in their interaction. When describing her childhood Nina clearly marks out Fleur as the 'other': "maybe not °>quite so much for you<°" (lines 1-2). This differentiation is presumably due to the age difference with Fleur being a young mother to a pre-schooler at the time and Nina as older with two teenage sons. This differentiation is returned by Fleur later on the extract with her grouping of Nina and her mother: "from sort of your- like my mum:'s generation to Me." (line 23). Thus in the extract two mothers, who construct themselves as belonging to different generations, describe the mass change in technology and the adaption to these changes which hint at a sense of insecurity and lack of confidence.

9.2.1.1. Communications Technology

One area of supreme change in our daily lives is the development of communications technology. The following extract follows on from a discussion of when the children got their first mobile phone and the reasons given for being allowed to own a phone. During this section of the talk three of the children describe their phones as a safety device, for example in case they were walking home from school and something 'happened.' The researcher returned to this subject a little later to explore the safety link:

Extract 38: Molly & Esha (Children) – 'Emergency'

```
1  R:    °oka:y° (.) so have you ever had- cuz we've kind of got this
2        idea of h:aving. phones like >just in case< for when you're
```

```
3          walking home has anybody used? (1.0) >your< phone for like an
4          emergency?
5          (2.0)
6   E:     y:es=
7   R:         =mm [hmm]
8   E:             [um ] i was meant to go ho:me with my friend's um my
9          >friend?<=
10  R:             =mm [hmm]
11  E:                 [and] then um (0.9) i forgo:t? and then i was
12         waiting for my mum to come up? and i was left at school °so i
13         had to ring her up °to come get me°°
14  R:     oka:y
15  M:     and like i was in town with some of my friends and we finished
16         earlier than we thought so i had to call my mum °to come
17         earlier°
```

In the above extract it can be argued that there is a mismatch constructed between the children being given mobiles on the basis of an emergency and the actual usage, with Esha and Molly describing 'emergency' situations as those requiring a lift from their parents. Both construct the call as a necessity through the use of the word 'had:' "°so i had to ring her up °to come get me°°" (lines 12-13) and "i had to call my mum °to come earlier°" (lines 16-17). There is a positioning here of the children as passive actors in their own lives, for example Esha forgot she was meant to be going home with a friend and so was "left at school" (line 12). Neither of the girls make reference to alternative plans to get home of their own accord - either by walking or getting a bus - which contributes to them being portrayed as not yet independent. There is also a representation here of the parents being at their children's beck and call: in both cases the girls make no reference to their parents' plans, rather they are firmly cast in the role of personal chauffeur. The issue of the children being given phones for their own safety can be seen as an example of the fear of the 'what if' as discussed in Chapter 6. We see how mobile phones are worked up as a security apparatus, but also how they act as a substitute umbilical cord, strengthening the interdependence of children and parents.

9.2.2. Consumerism

A phenomenon related to the increasing reliance upon technology is the increase in consumer spending and transformation of shopping from a chore to a hobby. The following extract explores the connection between parents' employment and consumer spending:

Extract 39: Savannah, Melanie & Jasmine (Parents) – 'Gadgetry'

```
1  S:   i think in part with the technology: we wouldn't have
2       aff:orded things as kids [because?]
3  J:                            [no::    ]
4  S:                                      °>i don't know<° most of my
5       friends mums didn't wo:rk and >your dad worked and paid the
6       bills you had One car< but now because- (0.6) like everybody
7       £seems to be at£ work?=
8  J:                         =mmm=
9  S:                             =most of my fr- frie:nds and my kids
10      friends mums Do: wo:rk (0.5) so they can afford?=
11 M:                                                  =yea:h  that's
12      [right]
13 S:   [mo:re] £excited gadgetry£=
14 M:                             =mmm
```

Savannah opens the extract by stating that contemporary technology would not have been within their means when they were children and this situation is formulated as a common one by her use of "we" (line 1) and Jasmine's agreement on line 3. Savannah describes how, when she was a child, fathers worked and mothers stayed at home, again using general terms such as the reference to her friends' mums (line 5) which works up the arrangement as a common one. The limited income is suggested by the description of "One car" (line 6) which is situated as a measure of expendable income. She contrasts that with the present when she returns to the singular pronouns and states that "most of my fr- frie:nds and my kids friends mums Do: wo:rk" (lines 9-10), thus it is not only people Savannah knows, but also indirectly knows and so her description is applied to many more people. The reason for mothers now working is portrayed as concerned with being able to "afford? mo:re £excited gadgetry£" (lines 10 & 13). Thus the female income is worked up as

used for technological luxury and this is given authenticity by Melanie's agreement (line 14) which is a negative formulation of working mothers as it positions them as earning in order to afford the latest mobile phone or a bigger television. In summary the increase of working mothers is formulated as fuelled by consumer desire which is in contrast to an earlier extract (Extract 34 - 'Working Mums') which constructs mothers' return to work as an intellectual necessity. This is framed by reference to two generations which acts to further the notion of a changed world where parents are raising children in a world they did not grow up in.

9.3. PRESSURE UPON PARENTS

Throughout the data set there was a sense that parents felt they were living in a more pressurised environment to the one they grew up in. This is connected to the social changes discussed previously, such as more mothers working full-time, while technological changes have meant that one can be contacted 24/7 by mobile or email, shopping can be done around the clock, and there is a constantly changing technological frontier to keep up to date with. These factors are constructed as combining to create an increased pressure to achieve more and perform better.

9.3.1. Pressure To Do It All

In this extract Savannah, Melanie and Jasmine are more concerned with issues that affect their day-to-day lives. Contrasting her own experiences as a mother with what she perceives her mother's experience to have been Savannah portrays herself as under more pressure:

Extract 40: Savannah, Melanie & Jasmine (Parents) – 'Pressure To Do More'

```
1  S:   it was more relaxed in a wa↑y: because? i: i have a Ca::r: and
2       i've got to [take]
3  R:               [mm  ]
4  S:                    a:ll the children to do the food shopping
5       because my husband's always at wo:rk=
6  R:                                       =mmm=
```

```
7   S:                                          =but. (.) like in the
8         £old Days.£ when we were little:=
9   R:                                  =mm=
10  S:                                      =we'd all go on a friday
11        night cuz me dad was the only one that dro:ve=
12  M:                                              =yeah.=
13  S:                                                   =i    think
14        there's mo:re Pressure >↑i don't know from me husband's point
15        of view< but:? i feel there's a lot more pressure on me to do
16        Mo:re (.) because i'm e- expected to have a job and do the
17        food shopping a:nd look after the kids=
18  M:                                          =Yeah.=
19  S:                                                =whereas my mum?
20        (0.5) °>didn't<°- °>i mean it<° was per?haps it was bo:ring
21        and isolating not having a ca:r but she did ↑baking and we
22        went to- like ou:t for picnics and? i think there's more
23        £Pressure on you to do mo:re£ with the technology and
24        everything being twenty four hou:r?=
25  R:                                      =hmmm=
26  J:                                          =yea:h
```

Initially framing her comparison in terms of car ownership Savannah positions parenting a generation ago as “more relaxed” (line 1) which consequentially implies that contemporary society is less relaxed. She explains that because she has a car it means she has to do the shopping, describing how she has to take all of the children with her (as opposed to one or even none) and so her role as stay-at-home-mother is worked up as more extensive in tasks than Savannah’s mother’s used to be and in the first three lines the word “more” is repeated three times which adds to a sense of increased demand. Her portrayal of her workload, i.e. having to do the shopping while looking after the children, is further heightened by her use of an extreme case formulation in line 5 - “my husband’s always at work” - which constructs her as the sole carer for their three young sons. Similarly the pressure of her labour is given additional weight by her use of a three part list on lines 15-16, which is furthered by her emphasis on ‘and’ which separates the list items. Savannah compares her domestic demands to her mother’s and admits that her mother’s life may have been “boring and isolating” (line 19) and these negatives are accounted for in terms of car ownership. She contrasts these disadvantages with baking and going out for picnics

(line 20) and so not only are the drawbacks of not owning a car counterbalanced, they are consequentially minimised. The examples of baking and picnics are significant, not only because they nostalgically hark back to a simpler time but also because there is no actual reason given as to why Savannah does not do these activities herself: car ownership does not prohibit baking or picnicking (arguably, it is likely to make both activities more accessible). The repetition of the word "more" on line 21 further reinforces the notion that the amount of pressure to do more has greatly increased. While Jasmine and Melanie's agreements (lines 12, 18 & 25) indicate that Savannah's construction is one shared by the other mothers in the group. Thus Savannah formulates a changing notion of what chores, activities and responsibilities a mother is expected to undertake in contemporary society and so modern mothers are positioned as victims of an increased pressure to do more as a direct result of increased affluence.

9.3.2. Pressure To Keep Up

Not only do parents have to balance work with the demands of managing a household and raising children, there are also increasing demands to keep up to date with the latest parenting techniques. Hardyment (2007) makes the point that while parents have had access to parenting manuals and advice since the 16th century there is a new anxiety-inducing aspect to advice available today. It can be argued that this anxiety is further heightened by the sheer volume of guidance that is available, either in books, online, or on television, and the fact that this counsel is often contradictory. A specific example is shown below where we see Fleur referring to recommendations for parents with regards to alcohol:

Extract 41: Fleur (Parent) – 'Driving Them To Be Alcoholics'

```
1  F:   cuz yeah there was a thing ou:t not a fe:w weeks ago cuz
2       they've always said haven't they? that um? you should k-
3       introduce it to them to it at ho:me and now they're saying
4       that it's the wrong thing to do and that we're driving them
5       all t- become alcoholics
```

Referred to vaguely as "a thing" Fleur describes one of the latest bits of advice regarding introducing alcohol to children. Using "they" (lines 2 & 3) frames the

recent information as coming from an all-encompassing higher authority; it could be the government, medical experts, research councils, parenting experts or advisory committees. She also uses an extreme case formulation - "they've always said haven't they?" (line 2) - to frame previous recommendations as consistent and adds a tag question[66] which seeks agreement from her listeners. This previously dependable stance is then compared with the advice they are giving "now" (line 3) which states previous guidance was "wrong" (line 4). The extract then ends with another extreme case formulation which emphasises the risk of wrong advice, as it 'drives' (a particularly forceful word) all (not just some) children to become alcoholics (as opposed to just enjoying the odd glass of wine). Thus for those parents who are not up to date with the latest advice the consequences are constructed as dire, further increasing the pressure to keep up to date.

9.4. NOSTALGIA

The parents involved in this research are old enough to have experienced a pre-digital childhood. Computer games and television channels dedicated to children's programming were years away and children's play remained based on toys and activities that are centuries old: dolls, ball games, skipping ropes, exploration and imagination. Freedom for children to roam had not yet been severely curtailed and children were at liberty to discover and interact with the world on their own terms. In the extracts that follow the adult participants display nostalgia for the days of play that have passed. What is surprising however is that some of the child participants also demonstrated a sense of nostalgia for days gone by which will be explored in the second part of this section.

[66] A tag question occurs when a declarative statement becomes a question by the addition of a short question. It is most often done to seek agreement from fellow listeners and can be considered a display of a lack of confidence.

9.4.1. Nostalgia: Parents

One of the most changed aspects of children's play is the level of freedom children are allowed to enjoy. Contemporary play is mostly indoor where parents are able to keep a watchful eye on their young ones and even exercise can be done indoors (such as with the development of the Wii computer console), while play of previous generations involved playing outside (Gill, 2007) (see section 3.3.2.1). The following extract discusses this changing freedom and begins with Sue describing her childhood play:

Extract 42: Sue, Peter & Marie (Parents) – 'Over The Hills And Far Away'

```
1  S:   i know one thing that certainly i had a lot of freedom as a
2       child and used to go off with my brother off over the hills
3       and [far away]
4  P:       [mmm     ]
5  S:                and wouldn't be back for hours: and my brother
6       did ask her once (0.8) were >y'know< did £ya care£ heh heh
7       y'know did you just uh send us off and she. said. she. was.
8       (0.4) Terrified ev:ery time until we came back (0.8) and yet.
9       as a kid °>i never picked that up<° AT all
10 M:   but she thought it was the right thing to do. for you?=
11 S:                                                         =i guess
12      she must ↑of
13 M:   we h- i had much more freedom °than my children did ° °°yeah°°
14      cuz you just went off:: (0.4) [after ]
15 S:                                 [>yeah<]
16 M:                                        breakfast and we [were]
17 S:                                                         [mm  ]
18 M:   back [for]
19 P:        [mm ]
20 M:             your meals and then ↑out again
```

In this extract Sue opens with a description of the freedom she and her brother enjoyed as a child. The phrase "over the hills and far away" (lines2-3-) is

enchanting and calls to mind a rural idyll; it is also reminiscent of a nursery rhyme[67] which draws on a childlike innocence, simplicity, and purity. She depicts how she and her brother enjoyed liberty, play and the countryside for hours on end. She uses reported speech to relate that her brother asked her mother about this childhood independence and her mother's response that "she. was. Terrified ev:ery time" (lines 7-8). Sue positions herself as not having noticed that fear when she was a child and emphasises this with "AT all" (line 9). This representation of her mother's fear is in contrast to Sue's own formulation of her maternal fear which appears in Extract 5 ('Ten paedophiles'). In this earlier extract Sue's fear is self-described as great enough to impinge on her daughter's social activities (by Sue accompanying her to a friend's house) whereas in the above extract Sue's mother is positioned as stoically keeping her fear to herself and shielding her children from her maternal worry. This construction of Sue's mother as protecting her children is strengthened by Marie's comments which frames Sue's mother as doing the best for her children (line 10). Marie then relates her own level of freedom and contrasts it as much greater than that experienced by her daughters and her description (lines 13-21) is positioned as both general and personal through her use of the personal pronoun "we" (line 16) and the more generic "you" (lines 14 & 20). Her portrayal is reinforced as commonly shared by the agreements by Sue (lines 15 & 17) and Peter (line 19); Peter had also previously agreed with Sue (line 4) which bolsters the descriptions collectively recognised. As a consequence the above extract paints a nostalgic view of childhood as simple, rural and protected from parental fears with nostalgic recollections of playful and liberated childhoods.

The next extract also describes childhood play but comes from one of the online participants, Ruralmum:

Extract 43: Ruralmum (Parent) – 'Jam Sarny'

1 *Do you think that being a child and a parent is more difficult and*
2 *dangerous today than it was when you were young*? Yes, where i live
3 a small village, we could walk the fields with a bottle of water and

[67] The phrase actually appears in the popular children's rhyme 'Five Little Ducks' in which the first verse begins: "Five little ducks went out one day, Over the hills and far away."

4 jam sarny and we were out until it started to get dark. Now i
5 think alot of parents are too frightened to le their children do
6 this, to let them out for long periods of time without worrying. I
7 don't know that anything has changed around here in that sense, its
8 just the dangers are more publisized nationwide.
9
10 *Do you think you have more or different issues to deal with than*
11 *your parents did?* Yes we have drug and alcohol issues where we live
12 with older children and teenagers. Growing up in a small village
13 everyone knows everyone, so you wouldn't dared even play knocky nine
14 doors, never mind stand on the street corner drinkning a can of
15 lager. But even then it was something that wouldn't have crossed
16 out minds to do! we were too busy riding our bikes, fishing down the
17 beck etc Kids don't play like they used to

In response to the first question in the extract Ruralmum describes walking the fields with a simple snack of jam sandwiches and water. The invocation of the "jam sarny" (line 4) is emotive as it is arguably an old-fashioned food which is mainly consumed by young children. This formulation is reinforced by her use of an emoticon which is described by the website as 'cheesy' which infers a clichéd and fun yet traditional element. Ruralmum then makes reference to contemporary childhood and depicts a sense of anxiety and fear that accompanies modern play. She makes a second mention of the "small village" she grew up in on line 12 where "everyone knows everyone" (line 13) and this creates a very strong sense of community. The mention of "knocky nine doors" (lines 13-14) alludes to a game much enjoyed by children which involves knocking on a front door then running away before the occupier opens the door. The game is considered to be anti-social by many and so her invocation and then comparison to standing on a street corner drinking lager contrasts two different types of behaviour considered anti-social. One is a game enjoyed by children across generations and the other involves under-age drinking in a public place that is often considered intimidating to passer-bys; thus even the anti-social behaviour of her childhood is constructed with a sense of nostalgia. She also constructs modern childhood as boring, framing her childhood as packed with innocent and harmless activities such as fishing and bike-riding. This is accompanied by an emoticon which is titled 'hysterical' and so it could be

assumed that the emoticon reinforces the fondness and fun Ruralmum associates with her accounts. She finishes her response with the statement that "Kids don't play like they used to" (line 17). This final line does much to further the difference between her childhood and modern childhoods which in turn heightens the sense of nostalgia in this extract. Modern childhood is negatively represented in this extract with it described with reference to fear, boredom, and worry. This contrasts markedly with the nostalgic image Ruralmum paints of her childhood: filled with jam sandwiches, fishing, exploration and a safe community.

In the two extracts above we see participants constructing a sense of nostalgia for their childhood: for the freedom enjoyed, the games played and the lack of pervasive fear. Contemporary childhood is conversely formulated as lacking in freedom, accompanied by fear and a lack of play. In the next section we shall examine extracts from the child participants which describe contemporary and past childhoods in a similar way.

9.4.2. Nostalgia: Children

While it can be considered normative for parents to exhibit a nostalgia for times and childhoods past, it is somewhat surprising that the child participants also displayed a nostalgia. Having been told of their parents' childhood the children formulate the play of previous generations as enjoying a freedom they have never had. This is demonstrated in the following extract:

Extract 44: George, Kate, Amelia & Fran (Children) – 'Roam The Streets'

```
R:    do you think young people now are more violent than? (1.1)
      thirty years ago? for example?=
A:                                =yeah cause [like]
F:                                            [yeah]
A:                                                  before my dad
      was telling me we could just? roam the streets and play
      £wherever we want£=
K:                    =yeah you got to [like? walk (.) miles
      through woods]
```

```
10  G:                                          [leave  doors  open  and
11        window       ] [and no one would steal anything]
12  A:                   [yeah and nothing was           ] happening but
13        like Now it's got a bit more violent like they've got guns and
14        knives and everything=
15  F:                                =yeah my: mum said that when she
16        was little (0.3) she used to like just go out and she didn't
17        have to tell anyone where she was cuz there's just like a park
18        down the road and she just went there .hh and like? her
19        parents didn't mind because? there wasn't that much crime.
20        (0.2) then.
21  K:    yeah you'd just be able to stay out with your friends after
22        school [without having to tell your parents]
23  A:           [i think it's cause like the hip  ]pies were in that
24        time as well
```

This section of talk follows on from a discussion about youth violence and knife crime in particular. In this extract an increased level of violence is constructed as a reason for decreasing freedom among young people and all four of the children contribute with their own description of what previous childhoods were like. Amelia begins with the reported speech of her father who was able to "roam the streets" (line 6), with 'roam' constructing a particular type of easy liberty and freedom to wander. Kate then contributes with a generic description of walking in the woods which conjures an image of a more rural childhood. George adds to the general picture with his comment about leaving doors and windows open which further frames the past as crime-free and, conversely, the contemporary world as dangerous. Amelia furthers George's representation by describing the present world as a violent one and uses a three part list to portray the weapons 'they' carry; with 'they' arguably referring to the "young people" (line 1) the researcher asks about. If this is the case the use of 'they' as a pronoun is interesting as it locates "young people" as the 'other,' i.e. different from Amelia and her peers, while the generality of 'they' further formulates the violence as random. Fran is the last of the group to contribute her representation of childhoods past and, as Amelia did, uses reported speech to describe the freedom with which her mother used to play. Both she and Kate make reference to parents not having to be told of the child's whereabouts (lines 16-17 & 22) which is in direct contrast to their construction of their own

parents as being over-protective (see Extract 7 - 'Never Forgive Themselves). In the last line Amelia mentions the presence "hippies" (line 23) as related to the level of freedom enjoyed by the previous generation. However 'hippies' are mainly associated with the 1960s and as the average age of childbirth for women has remained in the late-20s over recent decades (Office for National Statistics, 2009c) it is more likely her parents' generation grew up in the 1970s and 1980s and this could be seen as the children over-estimating the age of their parents. This could tentatively be considered to be an indicator of the nostalgic way the past is viewed: peace loving hippies (versus punks for example) as opposed to the construction of contemporary society where "they've got guns and knives and everything" (lines 13-14). In summary all the children construct a freedom in the childhoods of previous generations that is absent from their own. They also work up the society of the past as safer, more rural and more peace-loving, further adding to the sense of nostalgia for a world never personally experienced.

In the following extract we can see another account of the freedom enjoyed by the participants' parents:

Extract 45: Laura (Child) – 'Alaska'

```
1  L:    my mum went (.) on:? went to ALas:ka (0.6) on. her. ow:n. with
2        >her little sister< when she was Fourtee:n. (0.9) you just
3        wouldn't Do that and to some- s- to a strangers hou:↑se who
4        only your mum had like? met on the Pho:ne (0.9) you wouldn't
5        Do that anymo:re (.) but ev:eryone: did that. (.) the:n. (1.1)
6        so surely it's what ma:de the change that °you have to try
7        and? (1.3) stop°
```

Laura recounts an example from her mother's childhood when she went on a trip to Alaska and not only was this trip made without adult supervision, but was accompanied by her younger sister and so presumably was responsible for her sibling. Laura frames the visit as somewhat random and unplanned by describing her mother as staying at "some- s- to a strangers hou:↑se" (line 3) which implies that her mother (and by association her grand-parents) were unacquainted with the person they were staying with. This construction of her mother's host as unknown is furthered by Laura's statement that her grandmother had not met the personally

physically, but only spoken to them on the phone (line 4). Laura makes reference to a general social change as she explains that a trip similar to her mother's would not be permitted now and uses an extreme case formulation to state her opinion "ev:eryone: did that. (.) the:n." (line 5). She also attempts to do this by switching to general pronouns after she has recounted the specific example of her mother's visit to Alaska and implies she is referring to a general social change witnessed and experienced by all. While Laura has never experienced freedom as her mother did, she is aware that such liberation did exist and so the world of her mother's childhood is positioned as safer than the present.

In this section we see how the past is nostalgically constructed as a safer and simpler time, which contrasts strikingly with representations of contemporary society throughout this work as dangerous, unstable, and vulnerable. It is not surprising that the adult participants fondly recall their own childhoods, but it is unexpected that the children would also recall their parent's upbringing with affection and this furthers the representation of an unpleasant modernity.

9.5. SUMMARY

This chapter provides to give a brief overview of some of the social and material changes that participants evoked. Daily life has changed dramatically in the UK in recent decades and it is not surprising that these changes were discussed by participants, both young and old. Wider social movements (such as an increased number of working mums, increased materialism and a boom in technology) have had a direct impact upon contemporary parenting and childhood. A high pressure environment is portrayed, with the adult participants under pressure to keep up to date with the latest advice regarding their child's development, to perform an increased number of tasks, and to achieve the impossible by parenting in a mistake free way. These changes are also linked to a sense of nostalgia for times past and, surprisingly, this is demonstrated by the young participants, who display nostalgia for a world and freedom they have never experienced. Thus we can witness how the participants are attempting to make sense of their described uncertainty through

nostalgia and by associating the past with safety and the present (and future) with uncertainty and danger (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). No cultural phenomenon can be seen in isolation from wider social movements and the historical location and a culture of fear has emerged within and because of a time of perceived great and rapid change. The extracts explored in this chapter point to just a few areas of change that affect the participants' daily lives and have contributed to the impression of an unsafe, vulnerable and unstable society.

CHAPTER 10

POSTER CASES AND THE MEDIA

The media is an intrinsic part of the culture of fear. As discussed in Chapter 3 intense news reporting exacerbates an already anxious perception of the world, with the over-exposure of poster cases (Glassner, 1999) making the very rare seem common. Through moral panics the media presents a cacophony of tragic events and risks to the general public, creating a sense of anxiety around everyday activities. The nature of media reporting has also changed with the news reported in a more personal manner meaning that isolated tragedies are not conceptualised as that, but as events that could happen in any home at any time (Wardle, 2006). These features can be seen in the following chapter which explores participants' invocation and discursive use of such poster cases and then looks at the construction of the potential effects of the media.

10.1 'POSTER CASES'

In this section we shall explore discussions of high profile media cases that occurred within the focus group discussions. The focus groups were carried out between October 2008-March 2009 and there were several news stories in this period that were discussed by the participants, such as Shannon Matthews and Baby P; talk of these cases feature in the second half of this section (section 10.6). However, some of the crimes (such as the Moors Murders and the Soham killings) had not received significant news coverage during this period and the cases of Madeleine McCann, James Bulger, Rachel Nickell, the Soham killings and the Moors murders will now be discussed in turn.

10.1.1. Madeleine McCann

The disappearance of Madeleine McCann (see section 3.2.1. for a detailed description of the case) is referred to throughout the participants' talk (see Chapter 11 for further discussion of this) and this alone suggests that this incident has been positioned as an enduring and significant crime. The following extract indicates how this case is utilised when anxiety around children is present:

Extract 46: Kate, Fran & Amelia (Children) - 'Taken Like Maddie Was'

```
1  K:   there was someone that asked before we went to France .h about
2       the security on the [h:otel]
3  F:                       [£yeah£]
4  K:                               place °where we went°
5  F:   [Yea:h  ]
6  A:   [heh heh]
7  F:          there was a Me:eting and the woman goes:? um? (1.4)
8       is:? ther:e? are the doo:rs gunna be locked because i don't
9       wa:nt (1.1) um? i don't want my d↓AUghter to be taken li:ke
10      maddie McCann was: and then they were like? >yeah yeah it's
11      alright it's alright all the doors will be locked and
12      everybody-< and one person stays up all the ti:me
```

Kate begins to recount an incident before it is promptly recognised by Fran (line 3) and by Amelia (line 6) and this frames the narrative as drawing on a knowledge that is shared by the participants (i.e. there is no attempt to explain the school trip or the preceding meeting). Fran picks up the account on line 7 and provides more detail, using active voicing to describe both the question and the school's response which adds veracity and power to her narrative. It is noteworthy that in both Kate and Fran's comments the person who asked the question is referred to in general terms ("someone" - line 1 and "woman" - line 7) and it is only made explicit that she is a mother of a child on line 9 when a reference to a daughter is made. The school's response is constructed as dismissive with the repetition of "yeah yeah it's alright it's alright" (lines 10-11) spoken using a faster pace before a description of the night-time security at the accommodation is given. In features of the extract therefore we see how the context is described as an information meeting prior to a school trip abroad, so the invocation of Madeleine is striking as there is little

connection (if any) between a school trip for 11 to 12 year olds to France and the kidnap of a small girl whilst on a family holiday in Portugal. It can be suggested that a more fitting crime to attach to the school trip might have been the murder of Caroline Dickinson. Caroline was 13 when she went on a school trip to France in July 1996. While asleep in her dormitory (which was shared with four other girls) she was raped and then asphyxiated by Francesco Arce Montes who was subsequently found guilty of her murder. In such ways, the invocation of poster cases, and in this instance talk of Madeleine McCann, serves to metaphorically represent anxieties and concerns in everyday lives, in this case the security of the accommodation.

10.1.2. James Bulger

Two year old James Bulger disappeared on the 12th February 1993 and his body was found on railway lines two days later. He had been with his mother in a shopping centre in Liverpool when the toddler wandered off and was kidnapped by Jon Venables and Robert Thompson; both aged ten at the time. They led the toddler to a local railway line where he was killed by a blow to the head, although it is unclear which blow was the fatal one as there were multiple injuries. The older boys were arrested later that month and were found guilty at their trial and sent to a youth offenders' institution. In 2001 Venables and Thompson were released having served the minimum term and were given new identities for their own protection. The case was subject to intense media reporting and public speculation due, in part, to the young age of the offenders.[68] [69] In March 2010 Jon Venables was returned to prison

[68] In a similar yet virtually unknown case two year old Sharona Joseph was abducted from her older sister's birthday party in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, in February 1988. She was kidnapped by Ciaran Collins who was 12 years old at the time. He led her through the high street of the small town and took her to a railway embankment and killed the small girl by suffocating her and then sexually assaulted the infant's body. In November of 1988 the boy's identity was revealed after a court case found him guilty of abduction and murder and sentenced him to life imprisonment. The contrast between the Joseph and Bulger case is uncanny: both abductions occurred in an instant, both victims were two years old, both murders occurred close to railway lines and even occurred in the same month. However the Sharona Joseph murder remains relatively unknown. This is arguably due to several reasons: firstly by the time James was murdered five years later there had been an increased concern over the level of crime. Secondly, the murder of Sharona occurred in a small middle class village while the Bulger murder occurred in Liverpool, a large city known at the time for social problems and high unemployment. Sharona's parents shunned publicity in the period after her death,

following a breach of his license agreement and in July 2010 he pled guilty to charges of downloading and distributing child sex abuse images; he was sentenced to two years imprisonment and will be placed on the sex offender register.

The murder was mentioned by Tanya in the following extract:

Extract 47: Tanya & Gordon (Parents) – 'Jamie Bulger'

```
1  T:   i think it's just? perhaps it's just that we- we- we hear
2       mo:re horror stories >i mean i was think-< i was trying to
3       sort of think about this last night well wh- what has:? made
4       us a:ll sort of tur:n in the >different way< and i was
5       thinking there were things like the jamie bu:lger: case and
6       things like that and i think my: children were young THen i
7       believe and tha- ↑i ↑don't kno:w just- just little th-=
8  G:                                                          =mm=
9  T:   =not little £things£ they're Hu:ge things bu- bu- but >that
10      sort of probably< °went in to your mi:nd° and thought ↑ooh
11      g↑osh that's another danger to think abou:t=
```

This extract occurs in a part of the conversation when the participants are discussing whether contemporary society is more dangerous or whether this is a false perception. Tanya opens the extract by forwarding the argument that there is an increased awareness of "mo:re horror stories" (line 2) which is a reference to the increased level of media reporting that is present in modern society. The phrase 'horror story' is noteworthy, not only because of the use of 'story' which implies a

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while the Bulger case was surrounded by intense reporting immediately after the abduction (initially in attempts to find James and then to find his killers) and Denise Fergus (née Bulger) has campaigned since then in her son's name. Finally the slight differences in the murderers must also be noted; in the Bulger case the boys were just ten years old, whereas Collins was two years older and the fact that there were two killers in the case of James meant that a child killer could not be explained in unique terms. However despite the important differences there is enough similarity to question why the Sharona Joseph case is so unknown in comparison to the Bulger case, particularly when the Bulger case is referred to as a watershed moment for the conceptualisation of children as devils (Valentine, 1996).

[69] The Bulger case is not the only known case of children killing (see also previous footnote). In 1968, for example Mary Bell was convicted of two cases of manslaughter (due to diminished responsibility); one murder was committed at the age of 10 and the other at 11. Prior to her arrest Bell was an inhabitant of an impoverished area of Newcastle and lived with her mother, a prostitute who subjected her daughter to horrendous sexual abuse (Sereny, 1995; 1998). Since Bell's release in 1980 she has been living with a new identity; she has a daughter and a grand-daughter and all three have been granted anonymity for life.

fictional or unbelievable facet, but of the preceding 'horror' which further indicates a fearful aspect (versus other possible descriptors such as horrible or awful for example), while also invoking a genre of film and fiction. Tanya works her comment up as one that is pre-formed and that she has given thought to by her statement that "i was trying to sort of think about this last night" (lines 2-3). She identifies the Bulger case as a turning point in the increased perception of the world as a more dangerous place. The invocation of the case is coupled with vagueness with Tanya stating "there were things like the jamie bu:lger: case and things like that" (line 5-6). However, there is no reference to what these other "things" might be which manages to frame the Bulger case as one of an endless litany of horrendous crimes, rather than an incredibly rare and tragic incident.

Tanya makes an attempt to refer to the impact of the case by mentioning that her own children were young at the time of the murder which implies that the story had particular personal resonance for her. Following Gordon's agreement on line 8 Tanya corrects herself (line 9) following her incomplete description of the case as a 'little thing' (line 7) which again works to minimise the status of the case as an isolated incident and positions it as significant. She states: ">that sort of probably< °went in to your mi:nd° and thought ↑ooh g↑osh that's another danger to think abou:t" (lines 9-11) which formulates the case as presenting "another danger." This increased awareness is constructed as passive though with the remark "went in to your mind and thought" and so parents are framed as reactive, just soaking up potential sources of peril. The danger is further portrayed as multitudinous with the use of the word "another," which can be considered to refer to a endless list. In this extract we see a formulation of the Bulger murder as a cause for parental concern: rather than it being treated as a highly publicised and exceptional crime, the case is represented as yet "another danger" to be aware of. Tanya's reference to her own children also demonstrates how poster cases are personalised and adopted as a generalised threat by parents.

10.1.3. Rachel Nickell

Rachel Nickell was 23 years old when she was brutally murdered on the 15th of July 1992 on Wimbledon common in broad daylight and in front of her two year old son. Police initiated a massive manhunt and in the course of the investigation they conducted over 500 interviews and arrested 32 men (all subsequently released), yet the hunt soon focused on one man in particular: Colin Stagg. Despite no evidence linking him to the murder the police (in consultancy with forensic psychologist Paul Britton) launched an operation in which a female police constable feigned romantic interest in Stagg and encouraged him to confess (Stagg never did). He was arrested, but the case was thrown out when it reached court with the judge heavily critical of the 'honey trap' operation.[70] A serial rapist, Robert Napper, already serving time in Broadmoor Hospital was eventually identified as Rachel's murderer in December 2008. The case was notorious for several reasons: firstly due to the sheer brutality of the murder as Rachel was stabbed nearly 50 times and sexually assaulted. The police investigation was also riddled with mistakes, including the focus on Stagg (in spite of a lack of evidence) and the dismissal of Napper as a suspect (despite his involvement with several other serious cases). The police missed opportunities to further investigate Napper; mistakes that cost lives as Napper went on to commit two more brutal murders in 1993.[71] Sue discusses the case below and we can again see how poster cases become personalised:

Extract 48: Sue & Dave (Parents) – 'Rachel Nickell'

```
S:   mm (0.6) i mean i certainly sorta see a (.) a sto:ry (1.2) and
     try to project it into my own life and think do i ever get
     myself in that situation
     (0.4)
R:   mmm
     (1.2)
```

[70] Colin Stagg was awarded £706, 000 in compensation in August 2008 and in December of that year the police issued a formal apology to him.

[71] Napper violently murdered Samantha Bisset in front of her four year old daughter Jasmine in November 1993. Napper then raped and suffocated Jasmine before committing further violence to Samantha's body. Several of Napper's early crimes involved violent and sexual attacks against mothers in front of their young children and it is thought that he committed in excess of 80 rapes as the 'Green Chain Rapist.'

```
7   D:    mm.
8   S:    and no:rmally the answer is no. (1.3) but then: there's things
9         like that rachel nicke↑ll mu:rder? she was just waltzing
10        across the fields .h on a sunday morning and i wal- quite
11        happily waltz across fields on a sunday morning
```

Sue begins by describing how she tries to project her own life into the circumstances of the crime, presumably as an attempt at risk assessment, and this is followed by affiliative receipts from the researcher and Dave (lines 5 & 7). She explains that her personal situation is not usually comparable but that there are exceptions. Thus, we see a personalisation of the case with the participant positioning herself within the role of the victim, as in the last extract when Tanya relates the Bulger murder to her own young children. We also see a representation of high profile crimes as an act that can be prevented (rather than an act of fate) in Sue's questioning of "do i ever get myself in that situation" (lines 2-3). She then specifically invokes the Nickell murder with a questioning tone to the word "mu:rder?" (line 9) which could be considered a query to her fellow listeners to establish their knowledge. The portrayal of the conditions prior to the case is significant with Sue's recitation of a carefree scene with Rachel Nickell "just waltzing across the fields .h on a sunday morning" (lines 9-10). The use of "just" implies a simplicity in the activity while "across the fields" conjures up an image of the countryside, and "waltzing" obviously refers to dancing; so the image of a young woman dancing across fields is one that contrasts dramatically with her vicious murder.

The details that Sue gives are striking and it can be said to demonstrate that the details of the case have remained with Sue some 17 years after the murder took place. She compares the circumstances directly to her own life, asserting that "i wal- quite happily waltz across fields on a sunday morning" (lines 10-11). The repair from "i wal-" to "i quite happily waltz" adds a carefree tone to Sue's description while the repetition of the phrase acts to further reinforce the similarities between Sue's activities and those of the murder victim. Thus we can see in this extract that the invocation of Rachel Nickell is used by Sue to construct her reaction to high profile media stories. However it is note-worthy that she selected a case from nearly 20 years ago in order to make a direct comparison between her

circumstances and that of a high-profile victim which does much to highlight the rarity of these atrocious crimes.

10.1.4. Soham Murders: Holly Wells And Jessica Chapman

Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman were attending a family barbeque in their home village of Soham (Cambridgeshire) on the 4th of August 2002 when they left to get some sweets from the local shop; they never returned and police began a highly publicised hunt for them. The first image released of them together featured them wearing matching Manchester United football shirts and this image has been enduring. Their badly decomposed bodies were found nearly two weeks later near RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. Shortly afterwards articles of their clothing were found in the grounds of the village school and the school caretaker, Ian Huntley, was arrested. The method of and motive for the murders has never been made clear, but Huntley claimed that he killed them accidentally: Holly by accidentally knocking her into the bath and Jessica by suffocation as he attempted to stifle her cries. Huntley was subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 40 years and his girlfriend Maxine Carr served nearly two years in prison after she provided Huntley with a false alibi (she was released in 2004 and was given a new identity for her own protection). The murders are discussed by child participants in the following extract:

Extract 49: Amelia & Fran (Children) – 'Jessica And Holly'

```
A:   and: also my mum told me about a story about (.) two girls
     know their janitor Really well. and he took them home for some
     biscuits >°and everything° one day and then they were never
     seen again< i think one of the girls names was jessica. which
     is a co↑incidence heh=
F:                          =yeah wasn't the other one: holly and
     [then one of them drowned]
A:   [yeah something like     ]
F:                            in a b↑A:th
```

Amelia immediately frames her comments as having originated from her mother and uses active voicing, which adds corroboration and veracity to her remarks. Stating

'her mum told her a story' (line 1) is a pertinent way of relating the murders of two young girls and creates the impression of fiction, rather than fact. The emphasis in diction on how the girls knew Huntley "Really well." (line 2) can be seen as an orientation to the fact that truly no-one can be trusted (Furedi, 2002; Furedi & Bristow, 2008). The reference to him taking "them home for some biscuits" (lines 2-3) is an echo of bribes that often appear in 'stranger danger' teachings with the stranger offering sweets to tempt the child away (see also Extract 20 - 'Showed Us Sweets'). Furthermore because it has been clarified that the girls knew Huntley "really well" the girls are framed as not complicit in their fate by not being too trusting (i.e. they went with someone they knew "Really well." as opposed to a stranger). The vague reference to "they were never seen again" (lines 3-4) alludes to the fate of the girls. Fran adds information to the narrative to create a joint construction and, in particular, furnishes the description with details. Once again though the murders are only indirectly addressed: "then one of them drowned in a b↑A:th" (lines 7 & 9). The two children provide a brief sketch of the crime between them, which has sufficient detail for it to be suggested that the case has remained a high profile crime. This is particularly true given that the children would have been just five or six years old at the time of the crime and unlikely to have recalled those particulars from initial reporting of the crime. Amelia cites the source of her knowledge about the case as her mother yet Fran is also able to add narrative points and so both girls have developed independent and comprehensive knowledge of the case from separate sources which positions the case as one that is well known. This extract demonstrates how these high profile cases are assimilated into society and become part of the stock of culturally shared knowledge.

10.1.5. The Moors Murders: Ian Brady And Myra Hindley

This was the only case pre-1993 (i.e. pre Bulger murder) that was mentioned by the participants. One of the UK's most infamous murder cases the shocking crimes of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley continue to make the press,[72] are the subject of true

[72] More recent press coverage, for example, includes in July of 2009 following the release of several photographs of Hindley and Brady which coincided with the official end of the hunt for Keith

crime writings (e.g. Staff, 2008) and are still positioned in popular press as an example of evil (such as Bendoris, 2009; Borland, 2009). Brady and Hindley were convicted of the murder of John Kilbride, Edward Evans, and Lesley Ann Downey in 1966 and sentenced to multiple life sentences, but in the late 1980s the couple confessed that they were also responsible for the killings of Keith Bennett and Pauline Reade. The murders of the five children involved Hindley luring the children into the car, creating a false sense of security as she was a woman, and Brady committing the actual sexual assaults and murders with Hindley's knowledge and sometimes in her presence. The bodies were buried on Saddleworth Moor in the South Pennines and the couple only came to police attention when they tried to involve Myra's brother-in-law in the murder of Edward Evans, their last victim. Hindley's role in the murders has been particularly vilified as she was seen to deliberately ensnare their victims, one of whom was a friend of her younger sister, and her police mug shot has become an iconic image of evil. Brady remains in prison at the time of writing, despite a continuing desire to take his own life, and Hindley died in 2002 following heart problems.

The extract below is used to illustrate the point that tragic cases involving children did occur prior to the James Bulger case and that the nature of reporting is perceived to have changed:

Extract 50: Poppy, Gordon, Tanya & Catalina (Parents) - 'Just Not Reported'

```
P:    but there must've been. cases. like that?=
G:                                            =well  myra  hindley
      and ian brady=
P:                =[exactly. they were     ]
C:                =[they were- they were   ] just not reported=
P:    =[yeah cuz we had ]
T:    =[i think might be] something in tha:t
```

Bennett's remains (Carter, 2009; Nathan & Patrick, 2009) and more recent articles concerning Ian Brady's incarceration (Mahoney, 2009).

Following directly on from Tanya's comments in the earlier extract about the Bulger case (see Extract 47 - 'Jamie Bulger') Poppy suggests that "there must've been. cases. like that?" (line 1) and presumably the unspoken part of this question refers to a time aspect (i.e. cases prior to the 1993 Bulger murder). This is immediately countered by Gordon with the example of the Moors Murders which acts to signify that acts of atrocity and murder occurred prior to the Bulger case; it is representative of the longevity of the reaction to the Moors Murders that it is instantly presented as the pre-1993 murder. Numerous other acts of murder, both serial and involving children, have been committed in the UK during the course of the twentieth century, but it was just this case that was quoted. This invocation is responded to by both Poppy and Catalina simultaneously, with Poppy reinforcing the notion that child murders and similar crimes did occur prior to 1993 with "exactly" (line 4). Catalina takes the discussion in a slightly different direction however by commenting on the media reporting of older cases as she states: "they were just not reported" (line 5). This is a blanket comment in the form of an extreme case formulation which represents the case as receiving no media coverage at all. In fact the Moors Murders received an unprecedented level of interest at the time and the case continues to receive media attention occasionally, so it can be suggested that the salient point demonstrated by this extract is not the level of reporting, but the way that this is perceived. As seen elsewhere in this work (such as Extract 52 - 'This Horrible Thing') the media is conceptualised as increasingly invasive and the last three lines in this extract are arguably another example of this. Hence we see the Brady and Hindley case invoked as an example of pre-Bulger child murder and to demonstrate the perception of increased media reporting on such cases.

10.1.6. Contemporary News Stories

10.1.6.1. Baby P

The case of Baby P (later identified as Peter Connelly) made headlines in autumn of 2008 as his abusers appeared in court charged with involvement in his death (the names of Peter and his abusers were not revealed until August 2009 as the accused also faced separate charges of raping a two year old girl). His mother Tracey Connelly, his stepfather Steven Barker, and their lodger Jason Owen had been

witness to or perpetrators of horrendous violence to the small boy. Peter was born on March 1st 2006 and a few months after his mother's boyfriend began a campaign of abuse that would culminate in his death on the 3rd of August 2007. Connelly and her children (she gave birth to her fifth child after Peter's death) had been known to social services for some time, yet no serious long term action was taken and several opportunities were missed to identify the abuse; such as a social worker visiting when Peter had bruises on his face which had been deliberately covered with melted chocolate and a hospital doctor failing to notice that Peter had a broken back. Connelly was eventually sentenced to a minimum term of five years, Owen to three years and Barker to 22 years for causing or allowing the death of a child (which was also inclusive of a 10 year minimum sentence for the rape of a toddler). The case was shocking not only due to the extent of the abuse, but also due to the failure of authorities to intervene particularly as Haringey social services were also heavily criticised following the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000; the eight year old had been subjected to prolonged and horrifying levels of violent abuse at the hands of her guardians.

The following extract discusses not the victim but the reaction towards the perpetrators:

Extract 51: Savannah, Melanie & Jasmine (Parents) - 'Facebook Campaign'

```
S:    i was thinking on facebook there was this campaign? like- out
      to get baby p:'s [mother]
J:                     [tch mm]
S:                             [bu-]
R:                             [mmm]
S:                                  >sort of< in the o:ld days there
      wouldn't have been that?
M:    that's it [yea:h]
R:              [mmm  ]
M:                     they do sort of whip up this Frenzy: don't
      [they]
S:    [yeah]
```

The above describes how new technologies have impacted on the reporting and consequences of such crimes. The "campaign" (line 1) refers to an attempt on the social networking site Facebook to name Baby P's mother during a period of court ordered anonymity (see above). Social networking sites have revolutionised public campaigning and at the time of writing[73] there are approximately 5, 000 groups on Facebook concerned with the Baby P case, with group sizes ranging from over 260, 000 to just a few as the site, and others like it, provide the public with a quick and easy way of aligning itself to opinions, movements, or campaigns. There is a suggestion of the impact such sites have on post-crime events when offender's details can be widely circulated in minutes, with some of the facebook groups calling for vigilante action against the offenders. Savannah makes a contrast with the "o:ld days" (line 6) and certainly information could not possibly have been shared so quickly before the advent of the internet and so again we see a construction of the changing nature of the media. Melanie picks up the narrative and accuses 'them' of 'whipping up a frenzy' and although it is not specified who "they" are the above extract follows closely from a discussion about the media. In this comment the general public are positioned as passive recipients of the news and susceptible to the influence of the media who have the ability to 'whip up a frenzy.' As a result we see how the specific example of the Peter Connelly case is invoked to describe how technological innovations are an integral part of the public response to such crimes; we can also see how attempts at retribution and social justice are enabled by these new technologies.

10.1.6.2. Belgian Nursery Murders

Kim de Gelder was 20 years old when he entered the Fabeltjesland nursery in the small Belgian village of Sint-Gillis-bij-Dendermonde on the 23rd of January 2009. Once in the building he began attacking staff and children with a knife injuring 12 (ten children and two adults), killing two infants and one nursery worker; he was also later connected to the murder of an elderly woman. The attacks were mentioned in two of the four focus groups with parents and it is important to note

[73] A search for facebook groups using the names of the victim and abusers was conducted on the 8th

that these groups took place on the 28th and 29th of January 2009, so just days after the stabbings which goes someway to explaining why they were mentioned. It is also worth noting that the parents who brought up the subject of the attacks did have children who attended nursery at the time and it can be suggested that they may have been more affected by the story than a parent to teenagers for example.

Extract 52: Catalina & Poppy (Parents) - 'This Horrible Thing'

```
1  C:    but? >y'know< its tru:e that we are much more bombarded with?
2        h:orrible sto:ries about kidnapping and y'know? (1.3)
3        madeleine mcc↑a:nn and now this horrible thing in- in that
4        crèche in belgium that- that crazy guy just went and?=
5  P:                                                        =yeah.
```

In this short extract we see a description by Catalina of the numerous "h:orrible sto:ries" (line 2) that parents are informed of and it is interesting that she uses "bombarded" (line 1) and so we see the notion that parents are under attack from the media. She uses a three part list to describe the "horrible stories" which begins with a vague reference to "kidnapping" (line 2) before invoking the Madeleine McCann case and the Belgian nursery murders. Using "now" (line 3) locates the nursery story as a new one, while also suggesting it is the latest in a long list of "h:orrible sto:ries." The description of de Gelder as a "crazy guy" (line 4) is a device which automatically defines him as different, unhinged and the 'other.' Thus in this instance the crèche attacks are constructed as the latest example of a 'horrible story,' despite having occurred in another country and being an exceptional case.

10.1.6.3. Shannon Matthews

A nationwide hunt for nine year old Shannon Matthews began on the 19th of February 2008 after she was reported missing by her mother having last been seen outside her school. A highly publicised search for the small girl came to an end 24 days later when Shannon was discovered hiding in the flat of her step-father's uncle. It later emerged that Shannon Matthews' mother, Karen Matthews, and her

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of December 2009.

boyfriend's uncle, Michael Donovan, had hatched the plan to kidnap Shannon in an attempt to claim the reward money (The Sun newspaper had offered a £50,000 reward for her return). Their trial took place during November-December 2008 and they were found guilty of perverting the course of justice, kidnapping, and false imprisonment. In January 2009 they were both sentenced to eight years, while Shannon remains in local authority care. The majority of the focus groups ran at approximately the same time as the trial and sentencing period so it is unsurprising that the case was mentioned on several occasions. In the following extract we see a connection made between the McCann and Matthews case, a link that was made during press coverage of the disappearance and trial.

Extract 53: Lizzie, Jacob, Isabella & Nila (Children) - 'Kidnapped Her Own Daughter'

```
1  J:   like i think- i think that they might have? (.) like you know
2       there was a story recently about a woman who:? (.) like
3       kidnapped her own daughter
4  I:   [oh yeah shannon matthews]
5  ?:   [(                      )]
6  J:   yeah
7  N:   what's her name- shannon?
8  I:   [shannon matthews  ]
9  J:   [i think- i think] that's what happened in the madeline story=
10 L:        =yeah she- she- i think she looked at [like  ]
11 R:                                              [mm hmm]
12 L:                                                      the
13      madeleine story and=
14 J:                     =yeah=
15 L:                          =thought oh my god [they got]
16 J:                                             [she did ]
17 L:                                                        so   much
18      money from it.
```

Jacob introduces the case as a recent one and the familial link between Karen and Shannon Matthews is emphasised: "kidnapped her own daughter" (line 3). There is a prompt naming of Shannon by Isabella (line 4) which indicates that the details of the kidnapping were generally known, although Nina asks for clarification of Shannon's surname (line 7). Thus in these few lines we see a representation of the

Matthews' case as one that is known to all which is furthered by the lack of detailed description: an explanation is simply not needed. We then move on to see how the McCann case is described by Jacob and Lizzie as the inspiration for Shannon Matthews' kidnapping.[74] Jacob begins the discussion regarding Matthews' motives by making the link to the McCann case on line 9 and it is noteworthy that Jacob is able to invoke the disappearance by use of Madeleine's first name only which demonstrates shared knowledge. Lizzie picks up the argument and makes direct reference to the financial motivation which is done using a form of active voicing on lines 16 and 18-19 which adds veracity to her speech. Jacob agrees on line 15 and then makes a definite declaration of accord on line 17 - "she did" - which acts to strengthen Lizzie's statements. The Matthews' case is presented here as a piece of shared knowledge, with the familiarity so great that the participants are able to competently argue the motivations behind the crime.

We shall now move on to general discussions of the media, as opposed to discussion of specific crimes.

10.2. NEWS AS NEGATIVE

The overwhelming construction of the media was negative with it worked up as an invasive and negative force in the participants' lives. In section 10.2.1. we will explore general formulations of the news as frightening and as focusing on the destructive side of human nature. The final section of this chapter looks at discussions of the media representation of children which, unsurprisingly, was a common subject of debate among the child participants.

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[74] The search for Madeleine resulted in the set up of a not-for-profit company - Madeleine's Fund: 'Leaving No Stone Unturned' - which continues to manage public donations for the search. Immediately following her disappearance there were large rewards offered for her safe return from high-profile figures such as JK Rowling and Richard Branson, with the rewards offered totalling several million pounds. It was argued at Matthews' trial that these substantial donations were the motivation behind her actions.

10.2.1. News As Negative

The following extract begins by referring to increased news reporting, before going on to discuss the off-putting nature of the media:

Extract 54: Sue, Dave, Marie & Peter (Parents) - 'News Is Quite Frightening'

```
1  S:   [i think one of the good things about the olde:n days is you
2       didn't] get that much ne:ws did you?
3  D:   £no£
4  S:   you wouldn't hear about [all these things?]
5  M:                           [no you wouldn't ] because really the
6       news is quite frightening like you say [jamie]
7  P:                                          [mm   ]
8  M:                                                   was   wo:rried?
9       cuz. the news can be quite sca:ry i think for children=
10 S:                                                          =°mm°=
11 P:   =and i think i think it's beco:me (0.5) mo:re like that. in
12      recent years? i mean to the point where now i i i will often
13      s-whereas i used to >happily watch the news< now i i think-
14      y'know i watch the whats whats coming up?=
15 S:                                            =mm=
16 R:                                               =mm=
17 P:                                                   =i  think.  °i
18      don't wanna watch that°
19 S:   yeah
20 D:   mm
21 P:   i don't really don't want to
22 S:   n↑o
23 P:   it's not gunna enhance my life
```

Sue begins the extract with a nostalgic allusion to the "olde:n days" (line 1) and constructs the past as a less media dominated age, which she describes as a positive; a remark which Dave agrees with (line 3). She makes a vague reference to "these things" (line 4) which could refer to tragic and atrocious crimes given the preceding references to the Rachel Nickell (see Extract 48 - 'Rachel Nickell') murder. Her comments have a sense of the adage 'ignorance is bliss' with the suggestion of a seemingly pleasanter world if these crimes were not as heavily reported. Marie then

picks up the narrative and repeats Peter's earlier description (not shown) of the news as "quite frightening" (line 6) before making an indication to a previous segment of the discussion when Peter described how his youngest son (aged 11 at the time of the focus group) was upset by Shannon Matthews' disappearance. Marie makes a modified repeat[75] of the description of the news as "quite frightening" by stating that the news can be "quite sca:ry" (line 9), although this time her remark is qualified to children only. Thus in this section of the extract the news is situated as having an adverse effect on the perception of the world, and on children particularly, through the description of it as "quite frightening" and "quite scary."

In a continuation of Marie's remarks (through the use of the word "and" on line 11) Peter describes how he often chooses not to watch the news as it will 'not enhance his life' (line 23). Peter represents this as a change of circumstances stating that he "used to >happily watch the news<" (line 13) suggesting that the nature of the news has changed in "recent years" (line 12). His comments are affiliatively received by all his fellow focus group members which formulates his statement as a shared concern. This situates the consumption of news as a choice: after sampling the news in the introduction to the programme, Peter describes himself as then making a choice whether to carry on watching based on the level of personal gain offered. This is in contrast to other discussions of the news which represent the news as invasive (see Extracts 52 - 'This Horrible Thing' where Catalina describes being 'bombarded' by news). The extract constructs the news as superfluous, frightening and as having increased in recent years in terms of intensity and negativity.

In a similar vein the next extract discusses how the media focuses on the negative:

Extract 55: Tanya, Gordon & Catalina (Parents) - 'Focus On The Negative'

```
1  T:    it seems that we've kind of focu:sed always on the B:a:d >i
2        mean< it's kind of like this? adage (.) if you look for the
3        bad in people you'll find it. if you look or the good you-
```

[75] A modified repeat is a speech act whereby a speaker amends a phrase previously used by another. This acts to reinforce the argument, but also to switch ownership of the phrase; thus the second speaker also takes ownership of the statement (Stivers, 2005).

```
4          you'll find that and for s:ome re:ason? (0.4) we seem to have-
5          well i don't whether. it's all? of us but the Media. and
6          everything seems to focus on just. bad thi:ngs and yet? for
7          probably every oNe bad thing there's probably a hundred? (.)
8          [good]
9   G:     [mm  ]
10  T:           thin↑gs and ↑positive things=
11  C:                                      =of cour↑se but that's wh-
12         what you are assumed to do.=
13  T:                                =yeah=
14  C:                                     =so it doesn't come on the
15         °n°ews=
16  T:           =yeah (0.5) but it's just- and i think some ho:w we've
17         been? (0.6) tainted by that haven't we
```

Tanya opens this extract by stating that there is a focusing on "the B:a:d" (line 2) but this is initially not related to the media but to the general "we" and "you" and it is only on line 5 that she connects it directly to the media. Furthermore this focus on the negative is formulated as constant through the inclusion of "always" (line 1). The generality of her comments is reinforced by her allusion to an "adage" (line 2) which positions her argument as a culturally acknowledged proverb which adds power and veracity to her point that "if you look for the bad in people you'll find it." (lines 2-3). Tanya differentiates between the media and the general public: "i don't whether. it's all? of us but the Media. and everything" (lines 5-6). The addition of "and everything" acts to frame the news as an all-consuming and ever-present institution. She constructs 'bad things' as comparatively rare stating that "for probably every oNe bad thing

Box 11: Crime Statistics

Twenty-one articles focused solely on the reporting of crime statistics, with a third of those featuring the introduction of 'crime maps.' This scheme by the Home Office plots crime statistics according to postcode and was introduced in July of 2008 (see www.maps.police.uk). A further 14 articles featured statistics that were exclusively concerned with knife crime which is in keeping with the media interest in knife crime during the summer of 2008 (see Box 9 and Appendix ix). All of these articles featured statistics which portrayed a high level of crime: 'By the time you've read this page another person will be a knife victim' (Wooding, 2008), or an increasing level of crime, 'Is it an epidemic?' (Travis, 2008).

there's probably a hundred? (.) good thin↑gs and ↑positive things" (lines 7-10), a comment which receives an affiliative murmur of agreement from Gordon (line 9). Catalina counters this by arguing that the 'good' is expected and so is not newsworthy: locating human nature as inherently 'good.' In both Catalina's and Tanya's comments we see a re-working of the idiom that 'no news is good news.' Tanya initially agrees with Catalina (line 13) but tentatively restates a modified version of her argument by contending that "we've been? (0.6) tainted" (line 17) and she finishes with a tag question ("haven't we?" - line 17) which invites agreement from her fellow focus group members. The media is consequently positioned as having a polluting influence through it's focus on the negative, while also portrayed as not reflecting the actual nature of human behaviour.

In these two extracts we can witness how the participants discussed the media in negative terms. It is described as "quite frightening" (Extract 54, line 6), as not enhancing life (Extract 54, line 23), as focusing on the negative (Extract 55), and it is framed as a contaminating influence (Extract 55, line 17). We shall now move on to the next section which focuses on one aspect of the media in particular: the adverse representation of children.

10.2.2. Negative Media Representation Of Children

The media formulation of young people was a significant topic of discussion amongst the children with the dialogue focusing on the pessimistic nature of these constructions. The talk all concentrated on how young people (especially teenagers) were negatively portrayed in the news, accompanied by a desire for a more positive image. The following extract is demonstrative of the conversations that considered the young and the media:

Extract 56: Laura & Beth (Children) - 'Too Negative'

```
1  L:  i don't think they show? good things on the news: >cuz it<
2      kinda [makes]
3  B:        [yeah ]
4  L:              it like all like ev- Adults they look on and
5      think like what are children coming to? n- they all think? oh
6      it's a child: they must be? killing people and carrying
```

```
1        kni:ves (0.9) but i don't think that's the cas:e i think they
2        should show more Positive thi:ngs? for children cuz Then:
3        anyone who watches the news doesn't just see kni:ves and
4        stuff: and think that it's cool but they then actually see
5        like? <things that other children> and. you:ths. have. done.
6   R:   mm hmm
7   L:   so i think it's a bit too negative what you see on the ne:ws
8        and °everything°
```

In the opening lines of this extract we see Laura describing, in an echo of the previous section, how the media focuses on the negative which is agreed with by Beth (line 3). She moves on to discuss the poor portrayal of the young in particular and does this by marking a boundary between adults and children. Laura uses various devices to construct a clear distinction between adults and children: a self-repair on line 4 ("ev- Adults"), with "ev-" arguably an unfinished 'everyone' or 'everybody', can be seen as an attempt to clearly demarcate adults, particularly given the emphasis on "Adults." She uses active voicing to add narrative detail to her formulation of the opinion of 'adults' and this hypothetical opinion - "what are children coming to? n- they all think? oh it's a child: they must be? killing people and carrying kni:ves" (lines 5-7) - includes several devices to emphasis her point. Laura firstly uses the terms "children" and "child" as opposed to teenager or youth to work up an image that is more conflicting with "killing people and carrying kni:ves." The use of the rhetorical questioning adds further detail to her account and also seeks agreement from her fellow focus group members, while the use of extreme case formulations also strengthens her narrative. She argues that the news should "show more Positive thi:ngs?" (line 8) with the it currently being "too negative" (line 13). Again the media is presented as ubiquitous by the addition of the term "°everything°" (line 14). Thus this extract constructs the news and, as a result of the reports, adults viewing children in a negative light which Laura suggests could be managed by showing more positive stories concerning children. This representation is another example of how children are viewed within the 'angel'/'devil' (Valentine, 1996) paradox which is discussed elsewhere (see sections 7.2 and 11.1.1.).

10.3. SUMMARY

In this chapter we explored references to several high profile crimes, such as the Moors Murders and the murders of James Bulger and Rachel Nickell. These were used in particular ways; to show how media reporting have changed in terms of the proliferation of contemporary reporting and to act as a personal warning. The citation of these cases indicates that certain murders and kidnappings receive sufficient media coverage or are shocking enough to become cultural reference points. When invoking these cases none of the participants needed to explain the reference to their fellow focus group members, consequently suggesting the cases are well known and need no further clarification which is in line with Glassner's (1999) writing on 'poster cases.' The media in general is also briefly explored in this chapter with the participants constructing the media as pervasive, omnipresent, and negative. The media is seen as damaging to children, focusing on the destructive side of human nature, and this representation of the media as negative was without exception.

CHAPTER 11

DISCUSSION

This final chapter seeks to locate the participants' talk (Chapter 6-10) within a culture of fear (see Chapter 3); this shall be achieved by examining common themes throughout the data set and relating them to the wider literature. This will allow for a deeper understanding of how the participants' talk reflects aspects of an anxious society and how this could impact upon parenting and childhood. We will then look at the Madeleine McCann disappearance in particular as it has been prominent throughout the data and can be seen as crystallising several features of a culture of fear. Finally the chapter will draw to a close with an examination of several points specific to this project.

11.1. COMMON THEMES THROUGHOUT THE DATA

This first section will look at several themes which were prevalent throughout the data in order to understand how constructions of parenting and childhood are increasingly dominated by a culture of fear. We shall first explore representations of children as 'angels' and 'devils' (Valentine, 1996) which has already been discussed throughout the analysis. We will then focus in on descriptions of fear, before looking at the danger that was frequently associated with public spaces and ending with a discussion of the nostalgic references to the past as favourably compared to the present.

11.1.1. Angels And Devils

One of the most dominant constructions that was present in the data was the paradoxical representation of children as both 'angels' and 'devils' (Valentine,

1996). This occurred within both the parent and child data, rather than just being limited to the 'other' generation of adulthood; this indicates a shared cultural construction, rather than a discourse resulting from a generation gap. The paradox means that current conceptualisations of childhood lack depth and are simplistic divided into formulations of 'good' and 'bad.' Rare (perhaps even non-existent) is the child who is wholly 'good' or 'bad,' just as there is no simplistic partition amongst adults, yet this black and white presentation of childhood was consistent throughout the data. This paradox will now be examined in more detail.

11.1.1.1. Children As Angels

The vulnerability of children was a feature that occurred throughout the data set, in the talk of both children and adults. This can be seen in particular in Chapters 6 (Fear of the 'What If?') and 7 (Objects of Concern, Danger and Fear). Throughout these chapters numerous dangers are constructed as confronting children in their routine activities, whether travelling to school (for example in Extract 38 – 'Emergency') or visiting friends (as in Extract 5 – 'Ten Paedophiles'). This formulation of omnipresent dangers thus positions children as vulnerable to harm and, due to the lack of discussion about the resilience, strength and resourcefulness of children, they are worked up as defenceless. This described helplessness of youth also acts to justify parental fears; the coupling of ubiquitous danger and children's susceptibility to harm allows parents to normalise fears which may otherwise be considered excessive. The overwhelming fear for children within this contemporary society is both justified with and caused by the construction of children as vulnerable and lacking in confidence and competence.

11.1.1.2. Children As Devils

This conceptualisation of other children as a potential source of danger is witnessed throughout the data (for example Extract 11 – 'Youths' and Extract 18 – 'Frightened to Walk Around'). In Extract 10 ('18th Birthday') for example we can see how Nina's son is positioned as an 'angel' and his friends formulated as 'devils' for wanting to get him drunk on his 18th birthday. Parents positioned their own children as 'angels' which was in stark contrast to the general portrayal of children as

‘devils.’ In order to maintain this paradox, it becomes apparent that ‘angels’ are portrayed as the exception to the rule, thus leaving the construction of children in general as ‘devils’ in tact. Nowhere is this paradoxical concept clearer than in Extract 12 (‘Angels And Devils’) where the children describe warnings not to go to unknown houses to trick-or-treat as they could either frighten the elderly (a stereotypically vulnerable group) or could be confronted by a drug dealer (a quintessentially ‘evil’ character); thus not only are children made to be aware that they could come to harm, but also that they could cause harm. Thus this conflicting representation of childhood is something that is imposed upon (and subsequently replicated by) the children as they are aware they could be perceived as a threat or be threatened. It also raises the question of confusion in the identity of children – are they supposed to be scared or scary?

This paradox remains set to persist as we continue to cosset children and wrap them in cotton wool which socialises them into identifying themselves as weak, defenceless and vulnerable. If we continue to ‘other’ children in this way we will also carry on treating them as a species apart from adults and so the ‘othering’ will carry on resulting in fear.

11.1.2. Fear

Fear was, predictably, a prominent topic amongst both the parent and child data, both in terms of objects of fear and the potential effects of fear, such as the supervision of children’s activities. One source of danger that was repeatedly mentioned, for example, was that of paedophiles which is unsurprising given the status of the paedophile as a modern monster (Franklin & Cromby, 2010). This was also reflected in the content analysis of the newspapers whereby child sexual abuse was frequently mentioned (see Box 6 – ‘Paedophilia in the Press’). Throughout the focus groups the risk of paedophiles was constructed as omnipresent (e.g. Extract 17 - ’30 Out Of 200’ and Extract 5 - ‘Ten Paedophiles’) which is in line with “a morbid expectation that just about every home contains a potential abuser. The belief that predatory molesters routinely prey upon their victims has imprinted itself on everyday routines” (Furedi, 2001: 74). These expectations and beliefs are reinforced

by changes to our material lives whereby we are failing to connect to our local community which in turn leads to suspicion and mistrust and so everyday objects and activities become saturated with a sense of deathly peril.

The fear of the 'What If?' was perhaps the most telling indictment of the propagation of and the potential effects of a culture of fear. This formulation is significant in that it demonstrates how normative events, such as a child visiting a friend, becomes co-constituted with a great sense of danger and risk within a culture of fear. This tied in with talk of the media as high-profile cases were used by the participants as a example of a worst-case scenario, with the parents discussing the case in relation to their own circumstances: in relation to the McCann case, for example, we see Marie describing how she might feel if her daughter were to go missing (Extract 3 – 'Racked With Guilt'), and then we see Savannah describing how she and her husband sleep in separate bedrooms when they go on holiday (Extract 4 – 'Separate Bedrooms'). Talk of this nature demonstrates how high profile cases are personalised and become cultural touchstones with participants previously unknown to each other able to find common reference points for illustrating their fears.

One way parents and children described dealing with an omnipresent threat of danger was constant parental supervision (this was best demonstrated in Extract 5 - 'Ten Paedophiles'); this relates to a general lack of trust for others as parents are seen as not being able to entrust the care of their children to other adults (Furedi, 2001; 2002). The disconnection from those around us means that parents now see potential abusers, rather than sources of support, in strangers. This fear and dislike of humanity is unfortunately passed onto children which can be seen in Extract 8 ('Stranger Danger') when Sue and Marie describe 'stranger danger' teachings as prompting an inevitable realisation for children that the 'world is horrible' (line 5) and that 'everybody is a threat' (line 8). In this climate the only 'safe' option considered by the participants is parental supervision and in Extracts 3 ('Racked With Guilt'), 4 ('Separate Bedrooms') and 5 ('Ten Paedophiles') we see the parents representing themselves as 'good' parents through their described constant physical closeness to their children. In these descriptions we can witness an echo of Furedi's writings where he states that "there is now a well-established consensus that children

should not be left on their own" (2002: 115). Unfortunately this consensus has arisen out of a fear and mistrust of others.

11.1.3. Danger Of Public Spaces

Throughout the data we witnessed how danger is co-constituted as variable according to time, place and variations in material conditions which has been commented on elsewhere:

> "Thus definitions of [child] competence were also shaped by parental perceptions of their own locality - both in terms of the social make-up of their own neighbourhood (in relation to 'class' and 'race' tensions, drugs, crime, vandalism, gang violence and so on) and the physical characteristics of the environment (such as proximity to parks, alleys or places where their children may get into 'social' trouble as well as physical dangers). These evaluations in turn are influenced by the time of day (night-time is considered more dangerous because the people who dominate public space changes and therefore so too does the nature of space (Valentine, 1989)) and the time of year (children have more freedom in the summer when daylight hours are longer; and in the vacation when their parents may be at work most of the day)" (Valentine, 1999: 141)

One of the most prominent sources of danger concerned public arenas, such as the street, town centres and parks, with private spaces, such as the home, framed in terms of safeness and as offering protection which is intimately connected the comments above regarding lack of trust in strangers and separation from local communities. This was also related to material and social conditions which were formulated as having a great impact on notions of safety and danger. Musiclover99, for example, talked of how her close community created a sense of safety (Extract 29 - 'Community') and sadly she was the only participant who spoke with positivity in terms of her neighbours which is an indictment of the decline in local relationships. Alternatively, in Extract 18 ('Frightened To Walk Around') the

deprivation in Notimetonap's neighbourhood is positioned as associated with the danger she feels in her local area. Thus the materiality which operates in the lives of participants was constructed as exacerbated or (in the sadly unique case of Musiclover99) as eradicating the fear associated with public spaces.

11.1.4. 'Old World' Versus 'New World'

Nostalgia was a common feature and acted to reinforce a differentiation between the contemporary world and days gone by; in fact such were the references to the 'good old days' that the participants constructed the past and the present as two completely different worlds. The 'old world' was portrayed as safe, stable and, as a consequence, a haven for children who were gifted with the freedom to play wherever and whenever they wanted: the 'old world' was their oyster. The 'new world,' on the other hand, was formulated as dangerous, unstable and untrustworthy. There was also little middle-ground between the worlds described by participants which is reminiscent of the paradoxical construction regarding childhood (described above): in either case there are no shades of grey.

This notion of a changed world was enhanced by repeated reference to the speed of technological change; in Extract 37 ('Rapid Change') for example, Fleur formulates children as the possessors of technological knowledge as opposed to the parents while Nina draws attention to the rapid changes that have transformed lives over the course of a generation. Thus the parents are constructed as being less informed of technology and this creates a sense of insecurity on the part of the parents as their current lives are disconnected from their past. It also creates a sense of detachment from previous generations of parents and families as the participants describe themselves as having to deal with different issues (and often using a different approach to child-rearing) than their own parents did a generation ago. This too adds to the sense of insecurity and separation that was represented in relation to modern parenting.

We shall now move on to focus on the utilisation of the McCann case in the data set.

11.2. MADELEINE MCCANN

This section will focus solely on talk of the McCann disappearance and its relation to a culture of fear. The disappearance of Madeleine was frequently mentioned throughout the data and combined with the proliferation of articles about the case (see Chapter 5) there is sufficient evidence to claim that the case is one of the highest profile 'poster cases' in recent years with Kate and Gerry well known examples of the "grieving parent-cum-celebrity" (Glassner, 1999: 63). The McCann case is unique as there are no other recent[76] high-profile cases of children being snatched while on holiday by a stranger: in fact the number of children who go missing while on holiday is minute and the vast majority of those who do are taken by parents who are involved in custody disagreements.[77] The exceptional nature of the McCann disappearance perhaps contributed to the storm of news reporting that followed the case in the first few days, which was further exacerbated by the media engagement of Kate and Gerry McCann as they sought to create as large a profile as possible in the hopes of increasing the chances of their daughter's return: subsequently the McCann disappearance has become one of the most well-known crimes in the UK in recent years. The uses of this case in the participants talk acts to crystallise many of the themes that appeared throughout the data. The use of technology and media in the McCann case meant that the disappearance received global attention within a matter of hours and has been used since to maintain interest in the case, for example through the website run by the McCanns,[78] while the media have consistently been involved in this case and created (and maintained) a high profile. The case also crystallises fears around child safety as, while the case was exceptional in circumstance, it was used by the participants to justify constant parental supervision.

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[76] The last recent high profile case of a child disappearing while abroad was Ben Needham, who was 21 months when he disappeared in 1991 whilst holidaying at his grandparents who lived on the Greek island of Kos. Initially believing that Ben was with another member of the family, he was not noticed as missing for several hours. While the case is still open and so it is impossible to ascertain that he was taken by a stranger, it is sufficient to say that it was not a case of parental abduction.

[77] It is unfeasible to provide figures for these crimes for several reasons: firstly it is impossible to identify the relationship (i.e. stranger, acquaintance or parent) until the case is closed and an offender identified and found guilty. Secondly the crimes are classified in order of severity so if a child is kidnapped and later murdered, the case would be classed as a murder and included in those statistics.

[78] www.findmadeleine.com

11.2.1. Good Parents Versus Bad Parents

One of the predominant ways the McCann case was utilised was to draw a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' parents, with Kate and Gerry being firmly positioned by the participants as 'bad' parents. This can be seen repeatedly in the data but particularly in Extract 3 ('Racked With Guilt') where Marie constructs their daughter's disappearance as the result of a moral failing, rather than an unfortunate incident. As mentioned above constant parental supervision is formulated as the best way to protect children from possible harm (see Extracts 4 - 'Separate Bedrooms,' 5 - 'Ten Paedophiles' and 28 - 'Bad Things Happen' for example) and so the McCanns are automatically worked up as 'bad' parents due to the fact that they left their children unattended. This issue also hints at parental determinism whereby the McCanns are positioned as implicitly guilty in their daughter's disappearance with their actions (rather than those of the kidnapper) resulting in Madeleine's disappearance. Consequently the McCann case is used to illustrate notions of 'good' and 'bad' parenting with constant parental supervision worked up as the epitome of 'good' parenting.

11.2.2. 'What If?

Furthermore the case is brought up to illustrate the worst case scenario in 'bad' parenting. We see this in Extract 3 ('Racked With Guilt') in particular as Marie describes the imagined response of a 'good' parent to the disappearance of a child which is conversely contrasted with the McCanns' reactions. The threat of the 'What If?' is worked up by Savannah (Extract 4 - 'Separate Bedrooms') as great enough for her and her husband to alter their sleeping arrangements whilst on holiday. Similarly the threat of the 'What If?' is constructed by Catalina, Gordon, Poppy and Tanya (Extract 28 - 'Bad Things Happen') as omnipresent and deserving of constant parental supervision. Thus the disappearance of Madeleine is used within the 'What If?' assessment of hypothetical fears and dangers and to justify continuous supervision of children.

11.2.3. Class

One aspect of the McCann case that is worth further discussion is the socio-economic status of the McCanns. Kate and Gerry were both working as doctors at the time of Madeleine's disappearance[79] and the family live in an affluent village, Rothley. A contrast can be made between the McCann case and that of Shannon Matthews[80] as while the McCanns are clearly middle-class, Shannon and her family are not. While the McCann disappearance was notably for its media savvy nature, the kidnapping of Shannon quickly fell from the front pages: within two weeks of Shannon's disappearance there were comments regarding the differing levels of coverage (Norfolk, 2008; O'Grady, 2008). Greenslade writes:

> "Shannon comes from a council house in a deprived working class area of Dewsbury Moor, West Yorkshire. Her mother, Karen, has what one might call an unsympathetic domestic profile with seven children from five different fathers. In "respectable" working class eyes, she would be regarded as a member of the underclass and, by implication, the author of her own misfortunes. Unlike the supposedly middle class McCann family, with their "respectable" careers in medicine, Karen lacks eloquence" (2008)

While donations to the McCann fund for the search topped millions of pounds following celebrity donations and endorsements, the hunt for Shannon relied heavily on local support and raised just thousands: the McCann search involved famous footballers making video pleas and the Matthews' search involved neighbours handing out posters they had paid for themselves. The circumstances go some way to explaining the differences in reporting[81] but the overwhelming difference is the

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[79] At the time of the disappearance Gerry was working as a Consultant Cardiologist at Glenfield Hospital in Leicester, while Kate was working as a GP at a local surgery. Kate has since resigned from her position in order to focus full time on the search for Madeleine.

[80] A description of the Matthews' case is described in section 10.1.6.3.

[81] Greenslade (2008) makes the point that the McCann disappearance "raised deep-seated xenophobic fears among the millions of Britons who take foreign holidays" which was obviously not an issue in the Matthews' case. One must also note that some of the media reporting around the McCann case was occupied with laying the blame for their daughter's disappearance with Kate and Gerry for leaving their children alone (see Box 1), which was not initially the case with the Matthews' kidnap.

gulf between the socio-economic statuses of the families involved. Thus the McCann disappearance is a middle-class phenomenon and its frequent presence in the discourse is perhaps reflective of the demography of the participants (which is discussed later in this chapter).

11.2.4. Conclusions From The McCann Case

At this juncture, given the importance and prevalence of talk of the McCann disappearance, it is worth spending some time briefly synthesising the salient features of this case.

The McCann case is significant in this research into parenting and childhood in a culture of fear as not only does it represent the effects of the media, but also highlights issues around class and notions of appropriate parenting. Given the comparisons made previously with the Shannon Matthews case it is arguably the case that the McCann disappearance reached the level of media coverage it did because of the material resources (such money, power or eloquence) that are available to Kate and Gerry. The media itself is a crucial aspect of both the case and the participants' representations of the disappearance. Obviously without the media interest and Kate and Gerry's prolonged engagement with publicity the case would not be a global phenomenon; but beyond this the role of the media in this case represents the division between the old world and the new (as described by participants). Not only are Kate and Gerry heartbroken parents, but they are also now public figures and their lives are offered up for the public to judge. Almost every participant in this project voiced an opinion on the McCann case, a demonstration of how the case and the family have been assimilated into contemporary British consciousness.

Furthermore it featured prominently in the construction of hypothetical dangers by participants and can be used to justify constant parental supervision which is a predominant feature of contemporary childhood (Furedi, 2001). Madeleine McCann is used as a reason why children should be monitored 24/7 by parents. Consequently the McCanns are also repeatedly positioned as 'bad' parents for not

engaging in this perpetual supervision, but also worked up as villains for choosing to dine out and spend an enjoyable meal with friends, rather than watching over their children. This is enhanced by the image of Madeleine who will remain in the public consciousness as a four year old girl and is immortalised as the quintessential angel: innocent, female, and forever a child. Her purity is also heightened by continued speculation that the kidnapper was a paedophile. Additionally the case works to reinforce the notion that the external and public world is unsafe and dangerous for children and it is only in the home, under their parents' ever watchful eye, that children are safe.

We will now move on to explore the nature of the present research (specifically the demography of the participants and the issue of reflexivity) before going on to explore the implications of and future directions for this research.

11.3. PRESENT RESEARCH

This section will now explore aspects of the research that are specific to this project. Firstly the demographic of the participants will be discussed before drawing to a close with a reflection on the role of the researcher in this project.

11.3.1. Participant Demographic

The issue of class was present in the data as the participants were predominantly middle-class, particularly the parents who took part in the focus groups who were all from Loughborough. Most of these participants (in fact all but one) were recruited through university email lists which meant that the parents were involved in higher education either as lecturers or mature students. Unfortunately the recruitment rate for parents via letters sent home from schools was minimal, with just one parent (from Loughborough) taking part. This resulted in the parental focus group data coming solely from what is arguably a middle-class cohort. The online data therefore provided a possible way of gaining a greater demographic spread of participants. Of significance is difference between the discussions in the child focus

groups. Accounts of crime (see section 8.1) were much more apparent in the Nottingham data set, arguably a manifestation of the higher crime rate in the city, while the identification of potential risks was a greater feature of the Loughborough cohort, a more middle-class location. It is suggestible that fears regarding bullying or alcohol become minimised when there is a very real chance of children being involved in gun crime and gangs: while the Loughborough cohort talked of hypothetical risks, the Nottingham children described serious dangers. This is not to dismiss the fears of the Loughborough children and parents, but to acknowledge a difference in the material worlds of the participants.

11.3.2. Limitations of Research

As mentioned above the strong middle-class bias of the data is a potential issue and particularly as class emerged as an issue in the participants' data it would have been interesting to carry out focus groups with parents of a lower socio-economic status to see if and how experiences varied across the social spectrum. This was attempted as participant requests were sent home with the children from Nottingham, but no parents replied. This does represent a possible future direction of research however. This aspect of the research could also have been further explored had socio-economic data regarding the participants been collected, however at that time class had not yet emerged as a potential area of investigation.

There is also an absence of the corporeal body within the data; however it is difficult to understand how this could have been adequately achieved. At the moment there is not a methodology available which adequately combines the corporeal and the linguistic although there have been some recent attempts (Ellis, 2007; Lyons & Cromby, 2010). These methodologies (which involve taking galvanic skin responses from participants while interviewing them) are still in their infancy and are, at the moment, less well suited to focus group use. These methods, while incorporating the body, would also have meant the loss of the socially constructed aspect of focus group discussions which was crucial to the project.

11.3.3. Reflexivity: 'The Space Between'

The issue of reflexivity with regards to this particular project needs to be mentioned: this thesis is written by a young white female who has no children and it may have been approached in a different way had it been written by a mother. It is important that this is recognised, as well as that the age of the researcher may have had an impact, particularly when researching what is a relatively recent cultural phenomenon. The researcher experienced the beginnings of a digital childhood which results in her having a different view upon internet risks than the child participants do or than some of the parents who, unlike the researcher, may not engage with social networking sites in any way. It is also important to acknowledge that the information divulged by the participants may have been affected by the researcher; in some cases the participants and the researchers were different genders, from different economic backgrounds, different nationalities, different ages, spoke different first languages, and were different races (in particularly relevant in Nottingham). Hopefully this effect was lessened as the researcher was known to the children; this is particularly true at Stephenson where the differences between researcher and participant were greater, but where the researcher spent the most time so was better known to the children. Accordingly the contact and attempts to build some kind of relationship with the children before the interviews meant that the researcher was not a complete outsider. In the same way, although not a parent, the researcher is not a complete stranger to the experiences of parenting, childhood and being part of a family and so occupies the space between (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

This project also inspired greater reflection by the researcher on her own childhood. While not friendly with all the households in the immediate neighbourhood, the local children all knew each other and enjoyed the freedom to play out after school and in the holidays. Walking alone to the shops on errands and to school with friends was the norm and this was prior to the advent of mobile communications technology. There was also an expectation of participation with household chores, conscientiousness for school and responsibility for a younger sibling: a sense of independence was actively cultivated. This experience has resulted in the researcher approaching the project from a particular direction; one that welcomes

independence, responsibility and freedom in childhood. After completing this research this approach to childhood is one that the researcher still adheres to and encourages, but unfortunately such an experience is becoming rarer for the modern child. A re-assertion of parental confidence, adult solidarity and the resilience of childhood may go someway to support a childhood full of freedom, play and adventure, rather than one of isolation, confinement and fear.

11.4. IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

11.4.1. Implications

This research sought to discover how contemporary childhood and parenting is linguistically co-constituted within a culture of fear from a social psychological perspective. Therefore the primary aim was an exploratory one, yet this understanding of how fear is talked about and shared can contribute greatly to our current conceptualisations of parenting and childhood.

It has been demonstrated through the work of Gill Valentine and colleagues that public geographies are frequently conceptualised as dangerous, particularly for children (Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997; Valentine, 1999). This in turn, combined with an explosion in technologies and indoor gaming, has led to an increasingly sedentary life for children. This has particular health concerns as it has been found that there is a correlation between childhood obesity and parental perception regarding the safety of the neighbourhood (Bacha et al., 2010; Weir, Etelson, & Brand, 2006); therefore as the UK faces an increasingly obese child population, it is essential to understand the relationship between community and physical health. The safer a community feels, the more likely children are to have an active lifestyle as they play outside which in turn leads to the development of friendships as they play with other children. By increasing our understanding of how risk associated with public spaces is linguistically co-constituted we can better understand how to combat such perceptions and encourage community, free play among children and a reclaiming of the streets.

This research has also proved useful as a further investigation of how notions of parenting and childhood operate within contemporary culture, for example we have witnessed how an acceptance of parental determinism and constant supervision are associated with 'good' parenting. We have also seen throughout the data how constructions of childhood are currently polarised into 'angels' and 'devils' (Valentine, 1996). By analysing how these notions are linguistically co-constituted we can better understand how conceptualisations are culturally shared and reinforced. We can then better understand how to achieve a more nuanced view which accepts not only the strengths and weaknesses, but also the competence and resilience of childhood.

The work can also be used to evidence a growing body of commentators who are calling for an end to "overparenting" (Driscoll, 2010; Gibbs, 2009; Skenazy, 2009). By looking at fears around parenting and childhood from a psychological perspective (as opposed to a geographical one or a sociological one) we can better address these concerns on an individual level and seek to redress the balance between fear for children and confidence in parenting ability. Understanding is key to change, and this thesis offers a much needed detailed analysis of how fear and anxiety operates and is perpetuated.

11.4.2. Future Directions

As this study is the first to investigate this phenomenon within the discipline of social psychology, there are many avenues along which this work can be continued. As this study was conducted at a particular point in time, one obvious future direction would be a longitudinal study to better understand how notions of parenting and childhood in a culture of fear might change over time and what the long-term implications of such a culture might be. Research might also involve study of specific family units to investigate how these notions of fear, safety and childhood operate within the family environment. It is primarily within these surroundings that children and their conceptualisations of fear are socialised and so a study of this nature would allow for further understanding of this process.

Naturalistic data would also be a potential future area of investigation which would provide an exploration of how these fears and anxieties are co-constituted and shared in real life scenarios, rather than an artificially created discussion group. Online data could provide such a source of naturally occurring data; as discovered in the course of this research project there are a vast number of community websites (whether chat rooms or forums) which are used by parents to voice their concerns. Many of these websites are also public, meaning that the content is available for anyone to access and so it does provide a wealth of naturally occurring talk which conveniently requires little preparation for analysis (such as transcription). Furthermore these websites often have members totalling thousands which means that there is a large participant group involved in the data production and so one might expect a wider range of backgrounds, education levels and socioeconomic groupings than could be expected through traditional participant recruitment techniques. Thus there is a readily available source of naturalistic data which provides a potential base for future research. However this would have to be balanced with issues regarding the disembodied nature of internet communication where the tone and character of discourse is dictated by punctuation and the use of emoticons, but also the lack of specificity in discussion topic and so it may be that hours worth of chat around car-seats, weaning techniques and pregnancy symptoms have to be trawled through in order to find a section of chat that is relevant to the research interest. Given these two significant disadvantages, it must be pointed out that the value of internet research has been glimpsed during this project as the online data provided a rich source of discourse from parents and so this is certainly an arena which the researcher will engage with in the future. Further naturalistic data could be obtained from additional work with schools where fears around childhood could be considered to be brought to the fore as parents are forced to allow another adult to care for, protect and teach their child. The role of educators in this climate of fear is increasingly fraught with fear of litigation, physical touch and parental over-involvement (Piper & Stronach, 2008) and so this would provide an environment where discourses (such as policy updates or written communication to and from parents) are produced naturally which could be a fruitful endeavour which would also be of interest to those concerned with education.

Furthermore while attempts have been made to understand language as a constitutive aspect of experience, there is still some way to go to bring other elements into the analysis. One predominant reason for the recent 'turn to affect' in social sciences is to move on from the 'linguistic turn' of the 1980s in order to reclaim the body and other extra-discursive aspects of experience. Thus one potential avenue for further research into the fear around parenting and childhood would be to concentrate on the embodied nature of the emotion which would be of particular interest given the deeply physical nature of fear as an emotion. This could be done by using side-by-side comparison of physiological measures and (re)connecting them to the language of the participants (as in the footsteps of Ellis (2007) and Lyons & Cromby (2010)). There is also an appealing move to visual methodologies which could be adopted for the purposes of this research area (see Reavey & Johnson (2008) for discussion of this method). Asking parents and children to photograph areas or objects that promote or dispel fear would provide a valuable contribution to the understanding of anxiety that is encountered and produced in the course of their daily lives. Methods such as these would make a valuable contribution in furthering the understanding of the co-constitution of parenting and childhood in a culture of fear which has been initiated with this project and do much to deepen the level of understanding achieved by qualitative research (Cromby, in press).

11.5. SUMMARY

The thesis has provided a much needed look at contemporary anxieties around childhood and parenting from a social psychological perspective which is lacking within the current literature. It has sought to explore how emotions are socialised within a culture of fear through analysis of focus group talk and these discussions allow for an understanding of how fear is linguistically co-constituted within a particular culture. Each of the analysis chapters introduced a different aspect of how fear is co-constituted in modern Britain, with a distinct sense of an over-riding sense of anxiety. This research has also opened up avenues for future areas of research that are worthy of further exploration. In essence this thesis has provided a

worthwhile starting point for understanding how fear and emotions are co-constituted within the culture of fear that currently exists in contemporary society.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Ref No: R08-P92

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

ETHICAL ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Title: *Parenting and childhoods in a culture of fear*

Applicant: *L Franklin, Dr J Cromby*

Department: *Human Science*

Date of clearance: *22 August 2008*

Comments of the Sub-Committee:

The Sub-Committee agreed to issue clearance to proceed.

APPENDIX II: PARTICPANT DETAILS

The following gives details of the participants and of the focus groups. All the child participants are listed according to school and are then grouped according to discussion groups. The adult focus groups are also listed according to groups, with further details of their children. Finally the online participants are listed, again with details (where available) of children. The ages of the children are given as at the time of the focus group. All names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

II.I. CHILDREN: FOCUS GROUPS

ii.i.i. Stephenson, Nottingham

Mina, Omar & Nabeelah

Ameera, Laqueta & Eva

Jade, Caden, Sean & Blake

Fahima, Haleema, Christopher, Mia & Bryony

Deema, Nihal, Kamila & Malik

ii.i.ii. Ainsworth, Loughborough

Sadie, Will, Eloise & Preston

Kate, Amelia, Fran & George

Lizzie, Isabelle, Nila & Jacob

Kyle, Ethan, Sam & Charlie

ii.i.iii. Forest Park, Loughborough

Samantha, Joy & Caleb

Tommy, Alyssa & Grace

Laura, Beth, Dana, Mason & Tyler

Tahir, Liam, Hannah, Kayleigh & Abbie

Molly, Esha, Jamini & Lisa

Emma, Marie, Sara, Jade & Anna

II.II. PARENTS: FOCUS GROUPS

Savannah	Three sons aged 4, 2 and 6 months
Melanie	Daughter aged 9 and 5
Jasmine	Daughter aged 13 and son aged 10
Dave	Son aged 30 and daughters and 26 and 4
Peter	Sons aged 11 and 13
Sue	Daughter aged 5 and son aged 3
Marie	Daughters aged 20 and 23
Poppy	Daughter aged 13
Gordon	Son aged 22 and daughters aged 11 and 12
Tanya	Daughter aged 23 and son aged 21
Catalina	Daughter aged 4
Arifa	Five children – Aged 7, 6, 4, 2, and 10 months
Fleur	Son aged 3
Nina	Sons aged 17 and 14
John	Daughter aged 3 and his wife was pregnant with their second child at the time of the focus group

II.III. PARENTS: ONLINE DATA

Dina	Four children aged 20, 18, 10 and 4
bikingdad	Sons aged 3 and 4
Bladerunner	Three children under the age of 7
Charles	Daughters aged 51, 48, 21 and sons aged 9, 7 and 5
chocolate mad	No information given
City mummy	No information given
Devongirl	Sons aged 15, 6, 3 and 15 months
dogmad	Son aged 9
ellen*	Son aged 9
Madmummy	Daughter aged 10
mumoflots	Six children aged 9, 8 year old twins, 5, 3, and 1
Mumtoboys	No information given
mumtogirls	Daughters aged 5 and 7
musiclover	Children aged 10, 7, 2 and 2 months
notimetonap	One child aged 3
ruralmum	Daughter aged 17 and sons aged 15 and 6
Spiderman	Daughter aged 1 and son aged 4
treenabop	Daughter aged 2 and son aged 7 months
Wifetojames	Stepson aged 17, son aged 13 and daughter aged 19
Zara	Daughters aged 12 and 10 and son aged 8

APPENDIX III: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD FOCUS GROUPS

The following appendix includes the information sheet and consent form that was sent home to the parents, as well as the participant sheet that was handed out to the children.

Participant Information (For Parents)

I am a PhD student at Loughborough University. The purpose of my study is to investigate how children perceive and interact with the world around them, in particular any dangers they may encounter in their everyday life. I would like to know why these dangers are perceived and how they are prevented, e.g. 'stranger danger.'

As part of this research I would like to tape record a group of children having a discussion and I would like your child to take part in this discussion. After the interview I would like to transcribe everything that was said. When I do this, I will remove any identifying details and a code will be used to refer to your child, instead of name, to preserve their anonymity.

The original tapes and typed records of the meetings will be kept securely, and will only be available to those involved in the research. After the research is completed they will be destroyed.

The results of the research will form part of my thesis and may be published at academic conferences, in journals or in books. If you agree for your child to take

part in the research but change your mind at any time later, you can contact me. If you do this, I will immediately destroy the recording, the typed record, and any analysis your child's data was part of.

If you would like your child to take part in the research, you need to agree by signing the consent form. If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Thank you for your time.

Leanne Franklin

Department of Human Sciences
Loughborough University
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3TU
01509 228165
L.V.Franklin@lboro.ac.uk

Consent Form

I agree for my child to take part in the research.

I have read and understood the information sheet about the research into your child's perception of the world

Name of Child

_____

Name of Parent/Guardian

_____

Signature

_____

Date

_____

Participant Sheet (For Children)

Participants Needed!

A lot of crime is reported in the newspapers, like the kidnapping of Madeleine McCann. This creates the impression that a lot of bad things happen in the world. There is also a lot of talk about obesity, financial problems and global warming. This makes it sometimes seem that the world can be scary or dangerous. I would like to know how this is affecting your daily life and views of the world.

I am a PhD student at Loughborough University and I want to find out what you think about these issues as I think it is important that young people have their opinions heard.

I want to conduct focus groups - small discussions among 5 or so students - and see what you have to say. These debates will be recorded and I will then write up what is said and analyse it. I would really appreciate your help.

If you want to take part a letter will have to be sent home for your parents to sign. Anything you say in the focus group will be confidential (that means I cannot tell anyone what you have said) and anonymous (which means no-one will know it was you). You can also drop out at any time you want to.

If you want to contact me about the research then please do. My contact details are:
Leanne Franklin, Human Sciences,
Loughborough University, LE11 3TU.
L.V.Franklin@lboro.ac.uk

APPENDIX IV: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT FOCUS GROUPS

The following appendix includes the information sheet and consent form that was used for the adult focus groups.

Participant Information

I am a PhD student at Loughborough University. The purpose of my study is to investigate how parents and children perceive and interact with the world around them, in particular any dangers they may encounter in their everyday life. I would like to know why these dangers are perceived and how they are prevented, e.g. 'stranger danger' and internet security.

As a part of this research, I would like to record (audio only) a group of parents having a discussion and after the focus group I would like to transcribe what was said. When I do this, I will remove any identifying details and a codename will be used to refer to you to preserve your anonymity. The discussion and your details will also remain confidential.

The original tapes and the typed records of the meetings will be kept securely, and will only be available to those involved in the research. After the research is completed they will be destroyed.

The results of the research will form part of my thesis and may be published at academic conferences, in journals or in books. If you agree to take part in the

research but change your mind at a later date you can contact me. If you do this, I will immediately destroy the recording, the typed record, and any analysis your data was part of.

If you would like to take part in the research, you need to agree by signing the consent form. If you have any questions about the research following the session, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Thank you for your time

Leanne

Leanne Franklin
Department of Human Sciences
Loughborough University
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3TU
01509 228165
L.V.Franklin@lboro.ac.uk

Consent Form

I agree to take part in the research and for my data to be used.

I have read and understood the information sheet about the research.

Name

_____

Signature

_____

Date

_____

APPENDIX V: EXAMPLES OF NEWSPAPER PROMPTS USED IN CHILD FOCUS GROUPS

Bus OAP critical

The Sun, 3rd July 2008

A FORMER soldier who told yobs to stop swearing was fighting for life last night after they pushed him off a bus.

Stan Dixon, 60, hit his head on the pavement and fell unconscious. He was put on a life support machine at Newcastle General Hospital. Mechanic Stan, of Horden, Durham, had been returning from a night in Hartlepool on Saturday with girlfriend Anne Fisher, 41.

Two men and a woman hurled abuse after he told them to stop arguing. As he got off the men rushed forward and he fell. A man aged 23 was arrested.

Guard mums

The Sun, 18th July 2008

BRITISH mums are the world's most protective, with a fifth supervising kids' activities, research showed.

That was more than mums in nine other countries studied, including the US, France and South Africa.

Less than half of British mums thought happy well-developed children need to be free from strict schedules - compared to three-quarters in India. Eighty five per cent think kids grow up too quickly and 64 per cent say they are deprived of childhood.

Not allowing children "free play" could harm their social skills and imagination, said the study by Persil.

Docs want movie cig warnings

The Mirror, 7th July 2008

DOCTORS want films and TV programmes which contain images of cigarettes to carry health warnings.

The proposal, by the British Medical Association, is one of a number of measures to try to stop kids from smoking.

The BMA says youngsters are massively influenced by images they see in films, magazines and on the internet.

But far more needs to be done to protect them from images that glamorise smoking.

In a new report - entitled Forever Cool - the BMA calls on the government to introduce tougher measures to reduce the number of younger smokers.

The BMA wants the UK to be tobacco-free by 2035.

APPENDIX VI: EXAMPLE OF WEBSITE DATA

The following example is a section of the website data which includes the researcher's original post and two responses. All spelling errors have been left uncorrected.

*****

Posted: 15 Jan 2009 at 2:21pm by LeanneLboro

Hi,

My name is Leanne and I am a PhD student at Loughborough University. I am currently gathering data for my thesis and am interested to find out what parenting and childhood is like in 2009. I think it is crucial that we understand if and how parenting and childhood is changing so I have been working with children to find out a bit more about childhood in modern society, i.e. how they cope with issues such as 'stranger danger', crime and online security and if these issues have any impact on their everyday life. I am now interested to hear from parents. This website is clearly very popular and I would love to hear from you about the issues you face (or don't face) as parents.

Do you feel that childhood and parenting has changed?
Do you think that being a child and a parent is more difficult and dangerous today than it was when you were young?
Do you think you have more or different issues to deal with than your parents did?
Do you feel you worry about your children in a different way in today's society?

As I said I would love to hear from you all so please post on this thread your thoughts, opinions and experiences.

If you have any questions about the research please feel free to contact me at: L.V.Franklin@lboro.ac.uk

Kind regards,
Leanne

Please note: *All information given will be confidential and will be anonymous so any identifying details will be changed. Please note that by taking part in the discussion you are providing consent for your replies to be used. The research will form part of my thesis and may be published at academic conferences, in journals or in books. If you would like to withdraw your contribution at any time please let me know and I will remove and destroy your data. Please note you must also be over the age of 18 to post.*

[Post approved by Admin]

*****

Posted: 15 Jan 2009 at 9:54pm by Mumtoboys

Do you feel that childhood and parenting has changed?
I do feel that childhood and parenting has changed, a lot of things have changed since I was a kid, and the way my mum brought me up is different to the way I bring my boys up.

Do you think that being a child and a parent is more difficult and dangerous today than it was when you were young?
I do think that being a child and a parent is difficult, but wouldn't really say it was anymore dangerous than when I was growing up.

Do you think you have more or different issues to deal with than your parents did?
I think modern day society has thrown more issues at us to deal with, and yes it is differen to a certain extent from our parents generation, but that is because times change and life moves on, so decisions and issues become different.

Do you feel you worry about your children in a different way in today's society?
Not really, as my boys are too young to be out in todays society, but in some ways modern day society has changed for the better regarding childrens welfare.

*****

Posted: 15 Jan 2009 at 11:07pm by Mumoflots

Do you feel that childhood and parenting has changed?
Yes, I mean the basics are the same. As a parent you expect to teach your children to behave in a manner that is acceptable with todays society. I feel that todays society allows children to get away with alot more than they would have gotten away with 20-40 years ago. We do have alot more postive Parenting techniques available to us now and yet many children are failed by their parents. Should we smack/not smack? I want to be my childs best friend/I want my child to respect parents and adults and other authoritive figures!
Children dont go to school to recieve all their education anymore. The school is a support to us as parents to teach our children.
Teaching right from wrong and teaching morality and yet conforming to Political Correctness, is there a balance?

Do you think that being a child or a parent today is more difficult and dangerous today than when you were young?
I think that is is as difficult and as dangerous. I think we face the same pressures and the same dangers but I feel we are more able to deal with them now as there are more options and more chance of talking about things. Nothing is taboo now and I think that makes for assessing dangers alot easier in my opinion.

Do you think you have more or different issues to deal with than your parents did?

I imagine them to be the same or very similar. Sure there is more technology around nowadays but that makes me wonder if more children spend more time in the home due to the entertainment available at home and also being able to stay in touch with their friends from the comfort of home. Compared with before when there would only be one TV in the house that your parents were the boss of and lucky if there was a telephone and it was certainly 'paws off' for that.

So issues of what friends should they be allowed to see/interact with? is still the same issue.

tidying bedrooms etc... still the same.

Schooling issues... still the same.

So my answer is the same or similar for the most part.

Do you feel you worry about your children in a different way in todays society?

I think we worry about them more! or maybe I just didn't realise how much my parents worried about me?

I think we over analyse the psychological affects that we or situations have on our children. (which sometimes is a really GOOD thing!) but often not!

I think we worry about external dangers, meaning - our children are less likely to be allowed out to play away from our homes/street ect. Not allowed to be out in the dark or walk to school. Or make themselves food without supervision.

Hope that helps,

Mumoflots (Mum of 6, eldest is 9, twins are 8, 5 year old, 3 year old and 1 year old. I have no experience of teenagers yet!)

APPENDIX VII: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

(Taken from Jefferson, 2004)

.	Stopping intonation.
wor-	A dash denotes a sharp cut-off.
[word]	Square brackets indicate overlapping speech.
=	Speech with no gap or break.
(.)	A pause which is too short to be measured.
(0.2)	A lengthier pause, measured in tenths of a second.
word	Underlining of sounds indicates emphasis, either by pitch or volume.
:	The sound prior to the colon has been elongated. Several colons indicate a longer elongation.
?	Denotes a questioning tone.
↑	The sounds after the arrow are made using a higher pitch.
↓	The sounds after the downwards arrow are of a lower pitch.
°word°	The words or sounds enclosed in the degree signs are quieter than the rest of the talk.
°°word°°	Double degree signs indicate whispering.
> <	Talk that is of a faster speed than the surrounding talk.
< >	Slowed down talk.
£	Talk enclosed by pound signs indicate a tone to the voice which indicates suppressed laughter or talk said with a smile.
(word)	Talk within brackets indicate that the transcriber was unsure of what they heard.
.hhh	In breath.
heh	Laughter.
(h)	Laughter during speech.

APPENDIX VIII: DISCURSIVE FEATURES

Active Voicing

Active voicing is a common discursive tool whereby a speaker actively reports the talk of another, for example: "my husband said 'my God what is it' (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998: 226). Bringing another 'voice' to the account allows the speaker to increase veracity and add narrative detail.

Category Entitlement

Speakers may work up their position or knowledge entitlement by invoking their membership to a particular category (such as a parent, a doctor, or a particular nationality) which acts to strengthen their account (Potter, 1996b).

Dispreferred Response

A dispreferred response occurs when a speaker acts to disagree with the previous speaker. This can be achieved in several ways, through a pause, a request for clarification (also known as a repair initiator) (such as 'hmm?') or the delay of a disagreement through initial agreement (e.g. 'Yes, but...') (Pomerantz, 1984).

Extreme Case Formulation

Extreme case formulations were first documented by Pomerantz (1986) and include statements such as "everyone," "forever," and "completely innocent". These formulations are used to make the strongest case possible: for example the phrase 'scared to death' is an extreme description of fear. Pomerantz argues that extreme case formulations act to legitimise claims in three main ways: "(1) to assert the strongest case in anticipation of non-sympathetic hearings, (2) to propose the cause of a phenomenon (3) to speak for the rightness (wrongness) of a practice" (ibid.:

227). Thus by positioning an event/action as something that 'everyone' does it is located as socially acceptable through its commonality. In 2000 Edwards furthered Pomerantz's investigations and argued that extreme case formulations can display an 'investment by the speaker (such as certainty) and can be used in nonliteral ways to joke and tease.

Modified Repeat

A modified repeat is a speech act whereby a speaker amends a phrase previously used by another. This acts to reinforce the argument, but also to switch ownership of the phrase; thus the second speaker also takes ownership of the statement (Stivers, 2005).

Repair

The term 'repair' or 'self-repair' refers to any self-correction in the speaker's talk (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998), e.g. "we sleep in the same– (0.6) we separate- go in separate bedrooms" (Extract 4, Lines 10-11).

Reported Speech

Reported speech is the passive version of active voicing.

Tag Question

A tag question occurs when a declarative statement becomes a question by the addition of a short question. It is most often done to seek agreement from fellow listeners and can be considered a display of a lack of confidence.

Three Part List

Gail Jefferson (1991) demonstrated that speakers often orientate towards a list in three parts (e.g. "blah blah blah" and "They go on en on en on but…" (ibid.: 64)) and this is a "basic structural principle" (ibid.: 89). She also notes that when

participants work to form a three part list, even when one is not present; for example when participants offer a concrete two-part list they often offer a third list item which is vague (for example “coke and popcorn and that type of thing” (Jefferson, 1991: 66)) which completes the three, or search for a third item (e.g. “adultery, and murder, and- and- thievery” (ibid.: 67).

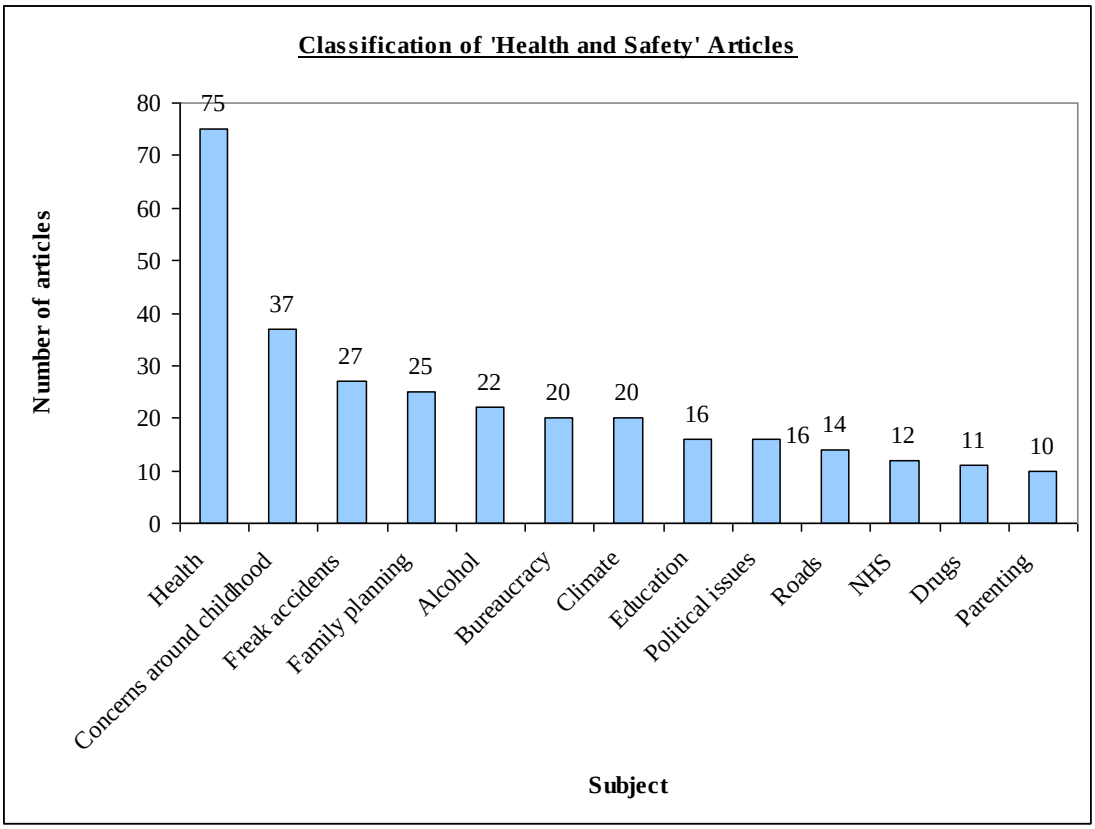
APPENDIX IX: ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

This section is an extension of Chapter 5 and will go into some detail regarding five of the seven categories which arose from the analysis of newspaper articles. Two of the categories ('Crime' and 'Madeleine McCann') are analysed in greater detail in the main text.

IX.I. 'HEALTH AND SAFETY' ARTICLES

This category contained 305 articles that were connected with the subjects of health and safety, hence the sub-categories that were formed are very far reaching. The sub-categories (in alphabetical order) are: Alcohol, Bureaucracy, Climate, Concerns around childhood, Drugs, Education, Freak Accidents, Family Planning, Health, NHS, Parenting, Political issues and Roads.

Figure 5: Classification of 'Health and Safety' Articles



ix.i.i. Health

There were 75 articles regarding health specifically and the vast majority of these articles were reporting the findings of isolated studies, such as 'Green tea linked to healthier hearts' (The Daily Telegraph, 3rd July) or 'Warning: killing time can kill you' (The Sun, 24th July). There were several health problems that were repeatedly mention and these were: cancers (mentioned in 12 articles), dementia (mentioned in five articles), diabetes (mentioned in four articles), obesity (mentioned in three articles) and the sun (mentioned in three articles).

ix.i.ii. Concerns Around Childhood

There were 37 articles that were focused on childhood. There were seven articles that considered underage drinking, while three were focused on underage sex. Eleven reported on children's health and risks to it, while another eight articles were concerned with the failure to correctly develop social skills. The protection of

children was the focus of seven articles and three of those were about the overprotection of children due to the fear of paedophilia.

ix.i.iii. Freak Accidents

There were 27 stories about isolated accidents, such as falls and drownings, and 11 of those involved children.

ix.i.iv. Family Planning

A total of 25 articles were on the subject of family planning and pregnancy. There were ten articles about pregnancy, namely about risks to the mother or baby, and three about childbirth, specifically about the poor level of obstetrics care provided by the NHS. Of the remaining articles four were about IVF and all but one of those were about the risks involved, while there were eight about general fertility (both male and female).

ix.i.v. Alcohol

There were 22 articles regarding alcohol and it's effects and the majority (16 out of the 22) were focused on schemes and policies attempting to curb binge-drinking

ix.i.vi. Bureaucracy

This category contained 20 articles that focused on the bureaucracy involved in everyday life, in particular over-zealous enforcement of protection policies. Most relevant to the subject of this thesis there were four stories that involved taking photos of children and the fear of paedophilia.

ix.i.vii. Climate

Twenty articles from the data set were focused on climate change fears with eight of those specifically focused on flood risk in the UK; this is arguably connected to the mass flooding that occurred in the UK in the summer of 2007.

ix.i.viii. Education

There were 16 articles that focused on education, including both compulsory and further education. Five articles focused on the problems around the SATs results,

which were delayed for millions of children in summer of 2008 following administrative problems with the company organising the tests. Two articles covered new rights given the teachers to search pupils for drugs and alcohol (previous search rights were limited to weapons).

ix.i.ix. Political Issues

There were 16 articles that considered political issues; from a homophobic comment made by a MP to poverty and immigration. A total of seven articles centred around David Cameron's calls for parental and personal responsibility. Cameron, the Conservative party leader who was later elected Prime Minister of a coalition government in 2010, delivered a speech on July 7th which was picked up by the press and either lauded or condemned. He argued for 'moral neutrality' in the UK to end and for people to take responsibility for themselves, namely for those who are poor or overweight. Cameron also made news later in the month as well when he agreed with the then American presidential candidate (and later President) Barack Obama who commented that black fathers were abandoning their children.

ix.i.x. Roads

There were 14 articles about road incidents where a responsible party was not identified and other road issues, such as satellite navigation systems and mobile phone use while driving.

ix.i.xi. NHS

There were 12 articles which were about the services provided by the NHS, but seven of those considered failures of the NHS.

ix.i.xii. Drugs

There were 11 articles that gave their attention to drugs. These were not articles concerned about criminal aspects (which were included in the 'crime' category) but other aspects, specifically the costs of addiction and health risks.

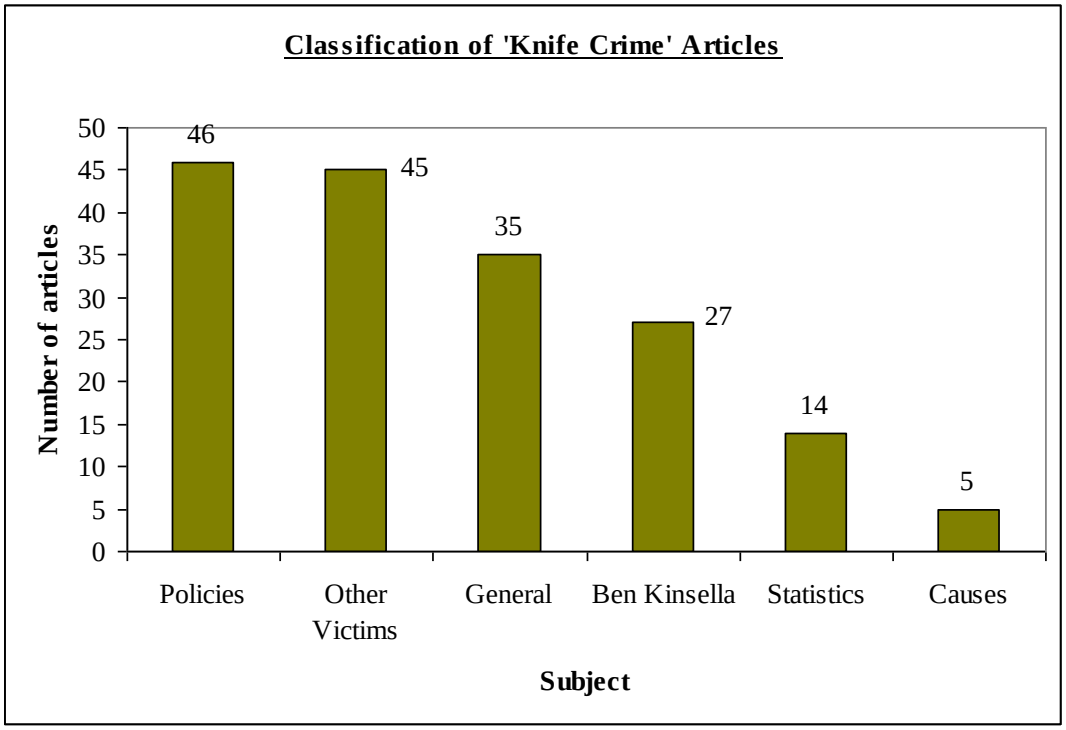
ix.i.xiii. Parenting

There were ten articles that focused on parenting, for example maternity law and parents' behaviour at their children's football matches.

IX.II. 'KNIFE CRIME' ARTICLES

In the summer of 2007 there was a series of high profile fatal stabbings in London which predominantly involved young black men. It was an ongoing subject that grabbed headlines throughout the summer and the number of articles in this category totalled 172 and they were classified in the following way:

Figure 6: Classification of 'Knife Crime' Articles



ix.ii.i. Policies

In the biggest sub-category there were 46 articles written about polices that were produced as a response to the public panic about knife crimes. It was suggested that doctors and nurses should be legally required to report knife wounds as they are

shootings for example. A special metropolitan police squad with 75 officers was set up in an attempt to combat the crime which received coverage, as well as failed policy suggestions, specifically the condemned suggestion by the then Home Office Minister Jacqui Smith that knife carriers be made to visit victims of knife crime in hospital.

ix.ii.ii. Other Victims

There were 45 articles that reported the deaths, and subsequent investigations, into victims of knife crime. These victims included Shakilus Townsend who was 16 when he was stabbed to death after being lured to an ambush. Other victims included 14 year old David Idowu, 16 year old Jimmy Mizen and 18 year old Freddie Moody.

ix.ii.iii. Ben Kinsella

One victim in particular received a significant amount of press coverage during July 2008: 16 year old Ben Kinsella. In the early hours of the 29th of June Ben was stabbed to death. His story seemed to be particularly newsworthy for several reasons. Firstly he was white and lived and died in a middle-class London suburb, he was a good student who was popular among his peers and, most importantly, he had celebrity connections. His eldest sister, Brooke Kinsella, played a long-term character in Eastenders and a family friend is actress Linda Robson. These celebrity connections meant that his death was reported in a way that other knife crime deaths were not with Ben arguably becoming the poster case (Glassner, 1999) for knife crime victims. Marches and mass-tributes were arranged in his name and media campaigns, such as The Mirror's 'Stop Knives Save Lives' and as part of this unique reporting there were 27 articles reporting solely about Ben. This difference in reporting style is clear when reports of Ben Kinsella are directly contrasted to another knife crime victim. Shakilus Townsend, also 16, was chased, beaten and fatally stabbed in broad daylight in South London on the 3rd July 2008. He was black, had been involved in gangs and lived in Deptford. In total his death was reported or mentioned in 10 articles, while in stark contrast Ben Kinsella was briefly referred to in 43 (including the 27 articles classed separately as they focused solely on Ben which fall within this category).

ix.ii.iv. Causes Of Knife Crime

There were just five articles that reported on possible causes of crime; with two pointing to the influence of violent films and three reported the words of the government advisor Sir Alan Steer who commented that the greed of adults was setting a bad example for children and they were consequently turning to violent crime.

ix.ii.v. General Articles About Knife Crime

These articles discussed the state of the nation's youth and the danger on the streets, offered opinions on how knife carriers should be dealt with, and claimed that the knife crime pandemic was not being taken seriously by authorities.

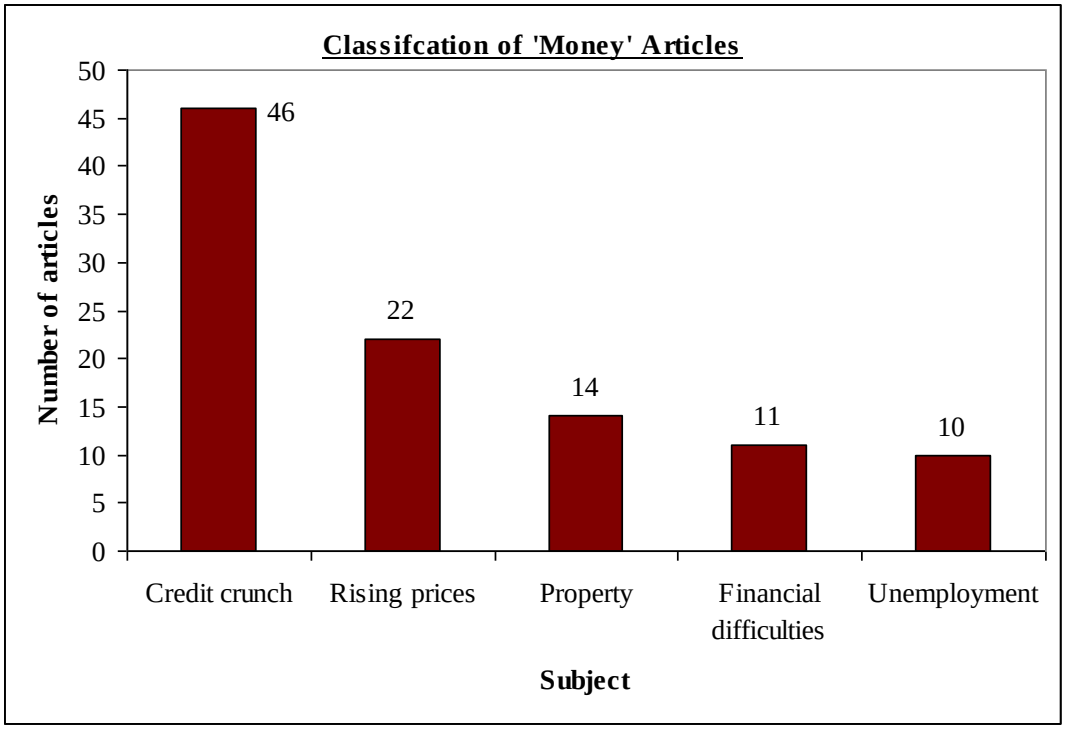
ix.ii.vi. Statistics

There were 14 articles that attempted to evidence the panic over knife crime by producing statistics to demonstrate what a great scourge on society the epidemic was. Readers were informed that By the time you've read this page another person will be a knife victim (The Sun, 18th July), Five killed every week in epidemic of knife crime (The Daily Telegraph, 17th July) and 1 in 10 feel 'safer' carrying blade (The Mirror, 9th July).

IX.III. 'MONEY' ARTICLES

The summer of 2008 was witness to a worsening financial situation which was part of a larger global recession. At this point the situation was termed a 'credit crunch' referring to a lessening of credit as the banks sought to control debts following a long period of over-lending and over-spending. One hundred and three articles made reference to finance and money and are sub-divided as follows:

Figure 7: Classification of 'Money' Articles



ix.iii.i. Credit Crunch

The Credit Crunch, of which 46 articles were concerned with, began in August 2007 following the mortgage crisis in America which arose from banks over-stretching themselves with 'sub-prime' mortgages, i.e. lending to those that are likely to default on payments. This spread to a liquidity crisis across the Atlantic and several large lending firms, both banking and mortgage companies, either entered into financial difficulties or administration. By the summer of 2008 this position was worsening with fears of a looming recession hitting the headlines.

ix.iii.ii. Rising Prices

Oil and gas prices rose sharply in 2008 as demand outstripped supply and these rising prices affected the global economy, as well as individual businesses and the general public. Higher fuel prices increased consumer costs, particularly in the case of food and domestic fuel; increased costs featured in 22 articles.

ix.iii.iii. Property

Property prices, the focus of 14 articles, began to fall in 2008 after a long-term boom and supplemented looming fears of a deep recession.

ix.iii.iv. Financial Difficulties

These 11 articles do not mention the credit crunch and refer to more general difficulties, such as the lack of leadership in the global economy and households living below the poverty line.

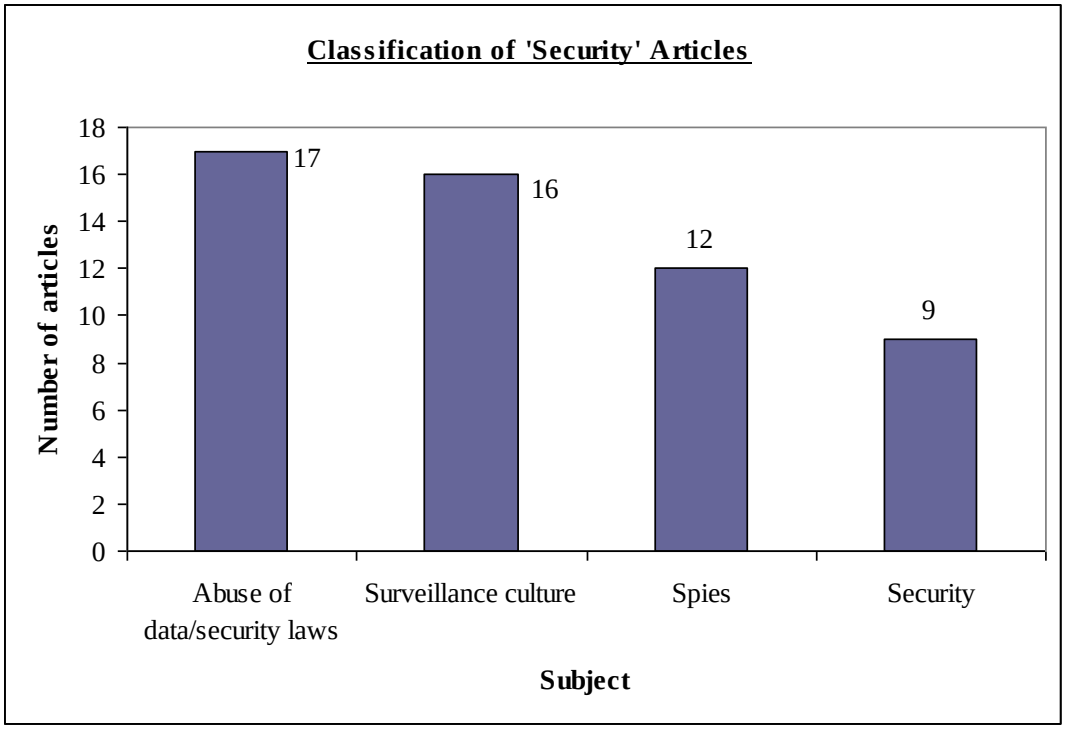
ix.iii.v. Unemployment

Rising unemployment is an unfortunate aspect of periods of national financial difficulty and during July of 2008 this was the subject of 11 articles. The construction industry was particularly hard hit by unemployment as the housing market ground slowly to a halt due to a decrease in home-buying and bank lending.

IX.IV. 'SECURITY' ARTICLES

This was the smallest category of the 7 and contained 54 articles in total and contained articles about security and surveillance issues. The articles cover a wide range of matters from national security to councils abusing anti-terrorist laws to check on school catchment areas. They are sub-categorised as follows:

Figure 8: Classification of 'Security' Articles



ix.iv.i. Abuse Of Data Or Security Laws

There were 17 articles that reported authorities abusing those laws set up to prevent terrorism and monitor crime. These articles included those that covered data lost or misplaced by the authorities, but the majority were about councils mis-using terror (or other) laws to gain access to personal information and homes.

ix.iv.ii. Surveillance Culture

The monitoring of our everyday lives by councils and authorities and the financial cost of that monitoring, particularly the expenditure on CCTV, were the subject of 16 articles.

ix.iv.iii. Spies

There were 12 articles in this category that featured three main topics. Firstly the work of MI5, followed by the worsening political mistrust of the Russians and thirdly the suspected poisoning of Alex Allan, chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee. At the beginning of July 2008 it was reported that Allan was seriously

ill and in hospital and it was initially suggests that he had been poisoned by a terrorist organisation: these reports were later denied.

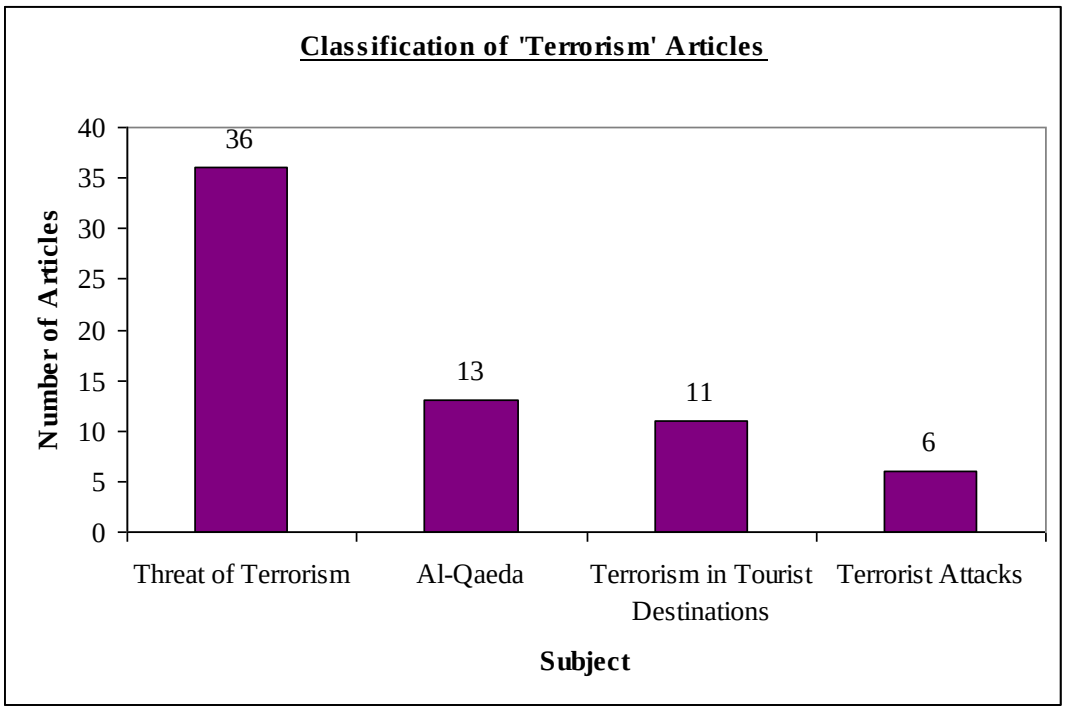
ix.iv.iv. Security - General

These were just nine articles that were more concerned with general security, such as the proposal that cabinet ministers have body guards for public appearances and concerns about internet security.

IX.V. 'TERRORISM' ARTICLES

A total of 66 articles were contained in this section and there were four aspects to terrorist articles; previous terrorist attacks, reporting about Al-Qaeda, the threat of terrorism and terrorist activities in holiday destinations:

Figure 9: Classification of 'Terrorism' Articles



ix.v.i. Threat Of Terrorism

The threat of terrorism was covered in 36 articles. Airport security, the funding of anti-terrorist projects and discussions around the proposed 42-day detention scheme were reported.

ix.v.ii. Al-Qaeda

The threat and influence of Al-Qaeda is arguably still present and this is demonstrated by it's being central to 13 articles.

ix.v.iii. Terrorism In Holiday Destinations

Several holiday destinations suffered terrorist attacks during the summer of 2008 and this was the focus of 11 articles; the majority of these were focused on the Spanish resorts subjected to the acts of ETA terrorists

ix.v.iv. Terrorist Attacks

On the 7th July 2005 four suicide bombers detonated their weapons on London's transport system; one bus and three underground trains were targeted. Over 700 people were injured and there were 52 deaths. As the newspaper search was carried out during the anniversary month it was un-surprising that there be some reference to the terrorist attack and this attack was the subject of five articles. Only one article featured 9/11 prominently and this was in reference to Sneha Anne Philip who was the last person to be officially named as a victim of the terrorist act: she became the last and 2, 751st victim.

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