Social Policy & Society (2017) 16:1, 143–153
© Cambridge University Press 2016 doi:10.1017/S1474746416000464

Struggles and Silences: Young People and the 'Troubled Families Programme'

Aniela Wenham

Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of York
E-mail: Aniela.wenham@york.ac.uk

Despite 'troubled lives' increasingly coming under the gaze of (powerful) others, our understanding of the issues at hand seems somewhat detached from the experiences of those subject to policy intervention. Due to the deficit model that presents 'problem families' as pathological, the voices of those that experience multiple disadvantages and severe material hardship are rarely heard, or, at worst, silenced. Within the context of hardening public attitudes that increasingly vilify the poor, understanding the connection between the personal and public is both timely and valuable. Drawing upon qualitative research, this paper seeks to listen to the voices of young people who currently reside within a 'troubled family'. Through an exploration of how young people perceive their biographies, their status as 'troubled' or troublesome', their relationships with significant others and their thoughts and feelings towards the future, we are able to recapture and reclaim contemporary depictions of 'troubled lives'. Uncovering such lived experiences can also act as a springboard through which to explore how young lives (are likely to) unfold when interpreted against the background of restricted opportunities and social censure.

Keywords: Family support, child welfare, youth policy, family intervention.

Background and context

The Troubled Families Programme (TFP) was announced in December 2011 (DCLG, 2011a; see introduction, Lambert and Crossley, 2016). The objectives of the scheme were embedded in strict criteria measured on the basis of getting children back into school, reducing criminal and anti-social behaviour, getting parents back into work and, significantly, reducing costs to the tax payer and local authorities. More specifically, a family would be considered 'turned around' on the basis that:

- each child in the family had fewer than three exclusions, and less than 15 per cent unauthorised absences for three terms;
- there had been a 60 per cent reduction in anti-social behaviour across the family over the last six months;
- the offending rate by all minors in the family had been reduced by at least 33 per cent over the previous six months;

or

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

- at least one adult in the family had moved from out-of-work benefits to continuous employment in the previous six months.

In June 2013, the government announced plans to expand the programme for a further five years, with the aim of 'turning around' an additional 400,000 families in five years (DCLG, 2013). The programme will continue to focus on poor school attendance, youth crime, anti-social behaviour and unemployment, but also aims to reach out to families with 'a broader' set of problems, including domestic violence and abuse, younger children, and a range of physical and mental health problems. As such, the criteria have been expanded, to contain six nationally defined criteria so that inclusion is based on what has been defined as a 'cluster of six headline problems' (DCLG, 2014). Underneath these six 'headlines' will be a basket of indicators as guidance for inclusion. The new headline criteria are:

1. Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly.
3. Children who need help.
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young at risk of worklessness.
5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse.
6. Parents and children with a range of health problems. (DCLG, 2014)

Connecting the past, present and future

Contemporary configurations of family troubles foreground the individual, with 'poor' outcomes presented as a product of distinct cultural norms that underpin the intergenerational transmission of poor parenting and deprivation. A biographical approach that considers the relationship between history and biography is particularly significant when exploring the intergenerational features of 'problem families'.

When placed within the context of the TFP, Mills's (1959) analysis of the relationship between public issues and private troubles is particularly pertinent. Understanding the past in order to make sense of present-day public issues and personal troubles are a means through which we can connect the macro and micro, explore the relationship between structure and agency in the causation of family troubles and illuminate the intricate details of individual biographies and societies over time. The discourses surrounding family troubles are inherently political and historical situated. Exploring how socially constructed problems are aligned to particular periods of time allows a more nuanced understanding and connection between the 'private troubles of families that are to be the public troubles of governmental intervention' (Ball *et al.*, 2016: 266).

More recent empirical evidence on family intervention illustrates the importance of moving beyond the private troubles of families (Bond-Taylor, 2015a; Morris and Featherstone, 2010; Morris, 2013; Ribbens McCarthy *et al.*, 2013) by paying greater attention to wider contextual and macro-economic factors that contribute to the formation of 'family problems'. Bond-Taylor (2015b) traces an 'ethic of care' (Williams, 2004) in policy documents on the TFP illustrating significant tensions in their representation of 'family troubles'. As part of this analysis, she contrasts policy documents on the TFP that present troubled families 'as a homogenous group with a fixed set of problems ... evasive and/or passive in the face of engagement with services, and blames mothers in particular for their predicament' with those that 'draw on care ethic principles of trust

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and empathy, holistic approaches to identifying need and determining how to meet such needs, alongside a collaborate and relational focus on delivering interventions' (Bond-Taylor, 2015b: 16). Further critiques on the political construction of troubled families are provided by Ball *et al.* (2016) and Churchill (2013) who demonstrate the limitations of current policy initiatives within the wider context of retrenchment and restructuring of public services. There has also been heavy criticism levelled towards the data used to provide supporting statistics and evidence for the roll-out of the TFP (Levitas, 2012, 2014).

The significance of history becomes increasingly apparent through examining the policy cycle of problem families. There are clear parallels between the past and present such as the stigmatisation of families, the position of mothers, the stress placed on the 'culture of dependency', and the centrality placed on paid employment as a means to break the 'cycle of deprivation' (see Welshman, this issue). We can also capture what might be significant junctures from the past such as the payment by results (PBR) financial framework and increasing conditionality within a mixed economy of welfare. Whilst tracing such shifts, and their impact on the policy making process is important, it is vital this runs parallel to a thorough consideration of exactly who is doing the defining. Social policy needs to strengthen its connection to the accounts provided by the subjects and objects of policy intervention. Biographical accounts of state intervention illustrate how perceptions of family intervention shift across time and place and illuminate the role that institutions play in either facilitating or hindering 'positive outcomes' and the factors that exacerbate forms of social division. The accounts of those subject to policy intervention are intrinsic to the very definition of what is regarded as 'troublesome' as well as the proposed policy solutions to such personal and public 'troubles'.

Family intervention – the perspectives of young people

Whilst increasing emphasis is placed upon adopting a 'whole family approach', the experiences of parents (predominantly mothers) persist to be the focus of research, policy and practice. Within the context of family intervention, little is known about the distinct experiences of children and young people who are integral to the TFP. This is problematic for a number of reasons.

Firstly, within the framework of the TFP the constitution of a 'troubled family' relies heavily upon the behaviour and characteristics of young people. As outlined earlier, these are primarily deficit focused, relying upon indicators such as youth crime, anti-social behaviour, truancy and school exclusion. It is interesting to note that when the youngest child within the programme turns sixteen, such families are no longer defined or indeed eligible to be part of the programme. We also witnessed how under phase two of the TFP the remit was broadened considerably to include 'children who need help' (i.e. those on a child protection plan), young people at risk of worklessness (Not in Education, Employment, or Training – NEET) and parents and children with a range of health problems (DCLG, 2014).

Secondly, experiences of family intervention need to be placed within the wider context of austerity, and, in particular, the retrenchment of youth services and provision. Research has shown that young people have been hit particularly hard by austerity measures when compared to other groups in society (Hills *et al.*, 2015). The consequences of this mean that support for young people can be subsumed into initiatives such as the TFP. However, when the foundations of family intervention rely upon the brokerage

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of services and effective multi-agency working, what are the implications when severe budget cuts create significant gaps in provision for young people? It is also important to note that the wider structural context and issues facing children and young people are distinctly different to those of adults. Contemporary transitions to adulthood are complicated, fragmented, difficult to navigate and fraught with uncertainty (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997).

Overall, despite the 'success' of the TFP relying heavily upon supporting, and indeed changing the behaviour of children and young people, we know very little about their experiences. Whilst the gendered power relations within (and between) families have been documented (Parr, 2011), very little attention has been paid to the power relations and dynamics between different generations within 'problem families' and in particular the marginalised status of children and young people. The experiences of children and young people are worthy of attention in their own right rather than merely used as a crude indicator of 'success' or 'failure' within the wider context of family intervention.

Methods

This paper presents findings from a small-scale qualitative study exploring the implementation of the TFP within a northern city in England. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve families that matched the Troubled Families criteria and who had/were receiving intensive family intervention via a key worker. Of the twelve parents interviewed, intervention with six of them had resulted in receipt of payment-by-results to the council. The remaining six were relatively new to the programme so the council had not yet received a results-based payment at the time of interview. Ten young people (aged between thirteen and seventeen) were interviewed. Six key workers delivering the TFP were also interviewed.

A semi-structured topic guide was used when interviewing young people, alongside the use of interactive visual techniques such as relational maps to demonstrate family and friendship networks and timelines to illustrate biographies and the significance of life events (Bagnoli, 2009). All interviews were conducted separately from parents, the majority away from the family home, to preserve confidentiality and anonymity, but also to provide a space in which the young people could feel more comfortable discussing potentially sensitive issues without being in the presence of other family members. After careful reading and re-reading of transcripts, key themes and sub-themes were developed into a framework for triangulating and organising the material (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

Findings

Care and relationality – 'helping mum'

The political and moral connotations of 'trouble' are embedded within policy discourses surrounding 'family problems'. However, in contrast to fears surrounding the moral deterioration of 'problem families', young people within this study demonstrated how moral values were central to their obligations, commitments and relations of care with significant others. The moral agency of young people was expressed in a variety of ways through their discussions of family 'togetherness' as well as their future projections of family life.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The data illustrated how young people do not experience their lives in silos but instead are situated in a variety of social contexts, practices and relationships. It was particularly striking how the aspirations of young people were intrinsically linked to ensuring the 'happiness' of other family members, predominantly their mothers, whom they recognised had encountered a great deal of hardship and adversity over the lifecourse. The types of issues discussed involved domestic violence and abuse, family breakdown, depression, bereavement and drug and alcohol misuse. As a result of these painful experiences many participants felt appreciative that their parents (mainly mothers) were finally receiving support through a key worker who they recognised to be 'helping mum'. Whilst participants were aware of the potential consequences of not complying (such as being evicted) with the TFP, the framework in which the relationship with the key worker was discussed was primarily perceived as positive and supportive:

> She (key worker) was more understanding . . . I mean the way she spoke. It was like having a friend basically. If it wasn't for her I wouldn't be where I was now. I'd probably be in jail or something. (Young Person 2)

> I'd probably be a drop out if I didn't get any help . . . I wouldn't care about anyone. I'd probably self-harm or something. I felt angry at everyone but at myself as well. Whenever I went out I always felt like everyone was looking at me. So I just stayed inside. (Young Person 8)

The following quotes draw attention to the importance placed upon developing trust and respect with a key worker. The young people reflected upon how meaningful relationships could provide support in helping them, and other family members, cope with extremely difficult family circumstances:

> She (Key worker) did help me with a lot, when I was at school she helped me. She pushed my mum to things my mum would never do. Like you need to set grounds rules do you know what I mean . . . she gave us ground rules and stuff like that, you know charts for your behavior . . . She really did help us. (Young Person 4)

> It's a bit weird, telling a stranger all your problems. But then I actually started to trust her . . . when my mum and my dad split up, that was really hard for me. (Young Person 7)

> After my dad died my mum really struggled. Cos none of us went to school... But x (Key worker) was like 'do you like sitting at home when your thinking of him twenty four seven? Your mum needs her space, you can't just sit round all the time'. She did help us get back into school and help us find a way to cope with stuff. As it came towards the end of having her, I did come to realize that she has done it to help my mum and all us. She helped us understand each other a bit more . . . we didn't want her to go. (Young Person 9)

When describing difficult circumstances, young people often felt protective of their family. Despite a succession of painful experiences, they never spoke of any bitterness or resentment towards their family and/or the decisions that had direct impacts upon their lives. They recognised that the pressures of parenthood were intensified as a consequence of difficult circumstances. Young people expressed a desire for 'normal' family life, but described how they had encountered a succession of adverse experiences, compounded by a lack of resources, and historical mistrust of services and provision:

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> With all the others I could see it on their face straightaway. I thought I'm not working with you. Say, if you came in here and it was a mess. You could see it on their face straightway, they wouldn't' be happy. It's the attitude. I'll tell you something, our family is strong. (Young Person 1)

For young people who had experienced statutory intervention, their passivity within the process of family intervention was further evidenced via a lack of communication and exclusion within the decision-making process. Young people described how they were not 'listened to' as difficult family situations unfolded around them:

> They (Social Services) didn't understand everything. They just go in straight away for what they think is bad. They didn't listen to the situation we're in. They started talking about care and that. And I said you're not taking me to care, not a chance. I said I'm happy where I am. I want to look after my mum. I was panicking at school and that, thinking they were going to come and pick me up. (Young Person 6)

Representations of 'trouble'

The data highlighted tensions between how official policy documents and the media negatively portray young people as 'trouble' when compared to their own accounts of severe adversity and hardship. For instance, the PBR's framework focuses upon measuring *externalising* behaviours (such as youth offending and truancy) rather than *internalising* behaviours (such as depression) that are likely to manifest themselves amongst young people with multiple and complex needs. Like other studies (Boddy *et al*., 2016), participants described extremely complex biographies encompassing a range of adversities, painful experiences and hardship that impacted upon their social and emotional well-being. The accounts provided by young people included the experience of bereavement, extreme financial hardship, child abuse and domestic violence:

> I couldn't cope with everything. I was trying to look after mum, her boyfriends and stuff, then Alex (friend) got stabbed, then my brother went to jail, then my dad he was abusing me. (Young Person 6)

Many participants reported how difficult experiences at home impacted upon their engagement with school:

> I didn't go to school for a long time because I was having all these family problems, with my brothers being sent down and that. It started to affect my schoolwork . . . I thought the best thing to do was to stay at home. My attendance dropped down to 11.4 per cent. (Young Person 2)

> I ended up having fights all the time and getting arrested, sent to court ... I was dropping out of school, ended up not going to school. I hated my deputy head, it just seemed like he wanted me to do bad all the time. I wasn't communicating with anyone, I was refusing to do my work, refusing to go to school. (Young Person 4)

Quality family time

Young people were heavily invested in the well-being of the family and valued quality family time together. Whilst the picture painted of a 'troubled family' is one of chaos and disorder, a family unable to function together, participants described the material

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

hardship that severely limited opportunities for quality family time. Even though young people described family days out and/or holidays, these were often discussed as very distant memories:

> We can fend for ourselves but that's not the point. We want to treat ourselves. Like trips to * [seaside] that's like fifty or sixty pounds. (Young Person 6)

> Having family time, family days out. That's why I wanted the vouchers because me and my brother are off swimming tomorrow. (Young Person 5)

Participants provided clear depictions of the poverty and hardship that surrounded their lives. The stigma attached to this was clearly evident:

> I get those food parcels and she (professional) ticks domestic violence but why because I'm not in domestic violence anymore? Why do they do that? There's options at the bottom (of form) but I thought they'd put low income not domestic violence . . . it's tense, you have to sit and talk to someone and they bring you food and that. You talk about how your life is and that but you shouldn't have to do that. You have to do it every time. (Young Person 1)

Despite a number of cases having been closed at the time of interview, young people were still experiencing financial hardship as well as caring, and often worrying, about their parents' well-being. Whilst young people worried about the future, these concerns did not necessarily involve a focus on their own trajectories, but that of their parents:

> I worry about my mum. She's out [the house] now. I know what she's doing but I do worry for her. I don't think she understands that though. I got her into counseling and that. (Young Person 2)

> I care a lot; I'm always there for her (mum) if she needs me.(Young Person 5)

> I'm not that sort of person who worries about myself. I worry about others, like my friends and family. (Young Person 8)

Young people described their aspirations for the future that reinforced the importance placed on family and conventional social norms:

> Mum being proud of me. (Young Person 5)

> All I want in my life is a job, a flat and a partner and then I'm happy. (Young Person 2)

> I want a job, a career. (Young Person 9)

> I just want my family to get close and be proud of what I do. (Young Person 8)

For one young person who felt disillusioned with his immediate prospects of breaking the cycle of criminality, his expectations and hopes for the future were to pursue a career that would make his family proud of him:

> In a year's time, I think I'll be in prison but I want to join the army. If I join the army, I won't die overdosing on drugs I'll die fighting for my country [pause]. I just want to make my mum proud. I just want to make my mum proud of me. (Young Person 10)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Trajectories of trouble

When considering the future outcomes for many participants in this study, there were strong indications of 'trouble' ahead. Unfortunately for young people whose cases had been closed, not one could name a professional who they were now in contact with to provide them with support despite many going on to become 'NEET'. This is concerning when we consider how the majority of young people involved in this study had been members of a family regarded as successfully 'turned around', triggering payment by results to the council. This illustrates that family lives are far from static, resulting in serious limitations arising from defining success via the TFP financial framework. Despite clear examples of effective interventions with young people, the success of such relationships was judged against a narrow set of indicators. Furthermore, the length of this relationship was judged against these indicators, resulting in concerns from key workers when claiming to have successfully 'turned lives around':

> Exit is a lot quicker now because you've achieved the target you want, and got the payment. You can't justify staying there once that target is achieved ... I see is a lot of families who end up coming back round ... so it's a bit of a revolving door situation ... Sometimes you get feedback saying why are you closing this now, they clearly need more help. And it's really difficult to say to the professionals, yes the family might be in complete crisis, but the kid's in school and the mum's got a job so we're done. (Practitioner interview 1)

Understanding young people's trajectories is especially pertinent since the TFP broadened its remit to include young people who are at risk of worklessness (NEET). It is vital that we track young people's long-term outcomes but carefully scrutinise the ways in which we measure and define 'success' and 'failure'. As the following quotes highlight, this has to take account of the wider structural context:

> I'm doing everything I can, applying for apprenticeships, going to job centres, going to Connexions, ringing people up. Everyone is trying their hardest now aren't they to get a job. They [media] are on about all these shops opening and thousands and thousands of jobs but it never happens. I'm applying for over thirty a week. (Young Person 2)

> Getting into college getting a job, it's all hard. I've been around town, shopping centres, I've handed my CV everywhere. It's so much harder now. (Young Person 1)

After the closure of working relationships with key workers, some participants felt they were not ready to 'go it alone':

> Not having nobody there, it is weird. I do need to do things on my own but I'm just feeling like I'm not ready yet, I don't want to. (Young Person 7)

To be successful, family interventions such as the TFP require effective mechanisms of multi-agency working and brokerage of support at a time when services for young people are being dismantled. This is despite research illustrating that there are no quick fixes, and that the return to work of such young people may be a complex and long-term process and therefore require a commitment to complex and long-term interventions. Such interventions are also likely to require partnership arrangements (and alliances between different agencies) to have any significant impact. By providing piece meal,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

short-term provision, the TFP risks providing an illusion of 'success' over a short period of time. Considering the structural context and scale of needs identified, it is likely that such young people will be at the margins of society further down the line. Employment and unemployment are far from static categories; the most common and typical NEET career involves 'churning' between unemployment and insecure or precarious employment (Coles *et al.,* 2010). The success of the TFP needs to be placed within the context of austerity and the cut backs to services and support for young people. Phase two of the TFP encompasses broader criteria resulting in a greater number of families being worked with. The resources attached to such developments are unclear meaning that local authorities are effectively doing more with less at a time when services are already severely stretched.

In order to effectively support marginalised young people, we also need to explore the timings and sequence of events or 'troubles' that unfold, paying close attention to the significance of 'critical moments' (see Thomson *et al*., 2002), the structural factors that reproduce social divisions, and the ways in which young people display agency in managing increasingly complex transitions. A biographical approach provides a more nuanced account of change and continuity helping identify the 'turning points' that occur in young peoples trajectories that might become 'troublesome'. More specifically, we can interrogate how policy frameworks have the potential to either hinder or exacerbate 'troubles', recognising the role that social institutions play in their production. This means paying close attention to the institutional responses to 'troubles' across a broad range of domains, including education, health, housing and welfare, appreciating that these institutions work in complex ways and will be experienced differently depending upon variations such as age. Biographical research allows us to explore the framing of family troubles in a way that illustrates how the personal and the institutional interlink and overlap with one another. When measuring 'success', it is therefore vital we track the short, medium and long-term outcomes for young people as lives unfold across the personal and institutional domains of their lives.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate a mismatch between state conceptualisations of 'troubles' when compared to the accounts and experiences of those subject to policy intervention. Whilst more recent policy documents have indicated a sharper focus on the vulnerabilities and protection of children and young people, this overlooks the real tensions in providing such support against the backdrop of deepening retrenchment and restructuring of youth services and provision. Furthermore, excluding the voices of children and young people prevents sufficient support being given that aligns to their needs.

This paper has sought to conceptualise 'troubles' on a macro level, recognising the shifting political and policy contexts, whilst also paying close attention to the individual experiences of 'troubles' via the biographies and subjectivities associated with state intervention. Exploring this relationship illustrates how the structural framing of problems are often denied by policy makers who place emphasis on the individualistic, behavioural and moralising dimensions family life. Young people's biographical accounts illustrated the painful experiences associated with hardship and adversity encountered throughout the lifecourse. 'Family troubles' should be interpreted against the wider structural context that captures movement between the past, present and future. It is therefore important

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that trajectories of intergenerational disadvantage reflect a more nuanced account of social divisions and inequalities, how 'troubles' change shape across time and place but also how these might be experienced differently across generations within a family context. The complexities surrounding the relationship between personal and public troubles demonstrate the need for methodological advances that capture the temporality and trajectories of family troubles that help explain the changing nature of social relations and social structures.

References

Ball, E., Batty, E. and Flint, J. (2016) 'Intensive family intervention and the problem figuration of "Troubled Families"', *Social Policy and Society*, 15, 2, 263–73.

Bagnoli, A. (2009) 'Beyond the standard interview: the use of graphic elicitation and arts-based methods', *Qualitative Research*, 9, 5, 547–70.

Boddy, J., Statham, J., Warwick, I., Hollingworth, K. and Spencer, G. (2016) 'What kind of trouble? Meeting the health needs of "troubled families" through intensive family support', *Social Policy and Society*, 15, 275–88.

Bond-Taylor, S. (2015a) 'Dimensions of family empowerment in work with so-called "troubled" families', *Social Policy and Society*, 14, 3, 371–84.

Bond-Taylor, S. (2015b) 'Tracing an ethic of care in the policy and practice of the Troubled Families Programme', unpublished paper presented at the Getting with the Programme, Workshop 1, February 2015, Durham.

Churchill, H. (2013) 'Retrenchment and restructuring: family support and children's services reform under the coalition', *Journal of Children's Services*, 8, 3, 209–22.

Coles, B., Keung, A., Godfrey, C., Parrott, S. and Bradshaw, J. (2010) *Estimating the Life-time Cost of NEET: 16–18 Year Olds not in Education, Employment or Training*, York: University of York.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (1998) '*Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*', Sage Publications.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2011a) *Tackling Troubled Families*, Announcement, 15 December, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tackling-troubled-families.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2011b) *Louise Casey CB Takes up Her New Role as Head of a New Troubled Families Team*, 1 November, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/louise-casey-cb-takes-up-her-new-role-as-head-of-a-new-troubled-families-team.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2013) *Massive Expansion of Troubled Families Programme Announced*, June, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/massive-expansion-of-troubled-families-programme-announced.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2014) *Interim Financial Framework for the Expanded Troubled Families Programme*, London: DCLG.

Furlong, A. and Cartmel, F. (1997) *Young People and Social Change: Individualization and Risk in Late Modernity*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hills, J., Cunliffe, J., Obolenskaya, P. and Karagiannaki, E. (2015) *Falling Behind, Getting Ahead: The Changing Structure of Inequality in the UK, 2007–2013*, Social Policy in a Cold Climate Research Report 5. London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics, http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/RR05.pdf.

Lambert, M. and Crossley, S. (2016) "'Getting with the (troubled families) programme": a review', *Social Policy and Society*, pp. 1–11, doi: 10.1017/S1474746416000385.

Levitas, R. (2012) 'There may be "trouble" ahead: what we know about those 120,000 "troubled" families', *Policy and Social Exclusion in the UK*, Policy Response Series No. 3.

Levitas, R. (2014) '*Troubled Families' in a Spin*, http://www.poverty.ac.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Troubled%20Families%20in%20 a%20Spin.pdf.

Mills, C. W. (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*, New York: Oxford University Press.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Morris, K. and Featherstone, B. (2010) 'Investing in children, regulating parents, thinking family: a decade of tensions and contradictions', *Social Policy and Society*, 9, 4, 557–66.

Morris, K. (2013) 'Troubled families: vulnerable families' experiences of multiple service use', *Child and Family Social Work*, 18, 2, 198–206.

Parr, S. (2011) 'Family policy and the governance of anti-social behaviour in the UK: women's experiences of intensive family support', *Journal of Social Policy*, 40, 4, 717–37.

Ribbens McCarthy, J., Hooper, C.-A. and Gillies, V. (eds.) (2013) *Family Troubles? Exploring Change and Challenges in the Lives of Children and Young People*, Bristol: Policy Press.

Thomson, R., Bell, R., Henderson, S., Holland, S., McGrellis, S. and Sharpe, S. (2002) 'Critical moments: choice, chance and opportunity in young people's narratives of transition to adulthood', *Sociology*, 6, 335–54.

Welshman, J. (2016) 'Troubles and the Family: Changes and Continuities Since 1943', *Social Policy and Society*, pp. 1–9, doi: 10.1017/S1474746416000415.

Williams, F. (2004) *Rethinking Families*, London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746416000464 Published online by Cambridge University Press