



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In July 2014, then Home Secretary Theresa May established an Independent Inquiry into Child Abuse to ‘consider whether public bodies—and other, non-state, institutions—have taken seriously their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse’.¹ After the establishment of this inquiry, May emphasised the need to involve adults who had themselves been abused in childhood, reiterating her desire to gain the ‘confidence of survivors who must be at the heart of this process’.² From the outset, voluntary groups working in this area voiced discontent. The National Association for People Abused in Childhood stated in November 2014 that the inquiry was ‘a farce’ and a ‘dead duck’ and highlighted that they had not been contacted until December 2014—months after the inquiry began to take shape.³ Survivor groups were critical of the appointments of Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss and subsequently Dame Fiona Woolf to chair the inquiry, and also argued that the inquiry should be granted statutory powers, so that it could seize documents and compel witnesses to provide evidence.⁴ Such critique proved relatively influential. In February 2015, the inquiry was reconstituted on a statutory footing, and Butler-Sloss and Woolf both stepped down, to be replaced in March 2015 by Justice Lowell Goddard.⁵ Resigning from the Inquiry, Woolf stated that ‘It’s about the victims—their voices absolutely have to be heard—if I don’t command their confidence, then I need to get out of the way.’⁶ Within the new statutory inquiry, led from August 2016 by Professor

Alexis Jay, focus on survivor testimony remained central. The inquiry included a Victim and Survivors' Consultative Panel and 'The Truth Project', which allowed any adult abused in childhood to share their experiences by phone, email, post, online, or in person.⁷

The furore over the inquiry demonstrated that politicians have recently felt the need to seek out the opinions of people who may be personally affected by legislation. This example also indicates that voluntary organisations have emerged seeking to represent and empower people who have been affected by shared experience. Today these entwined phenomena—the public discussion of experiences, the interest of policy-makers in consultation, the emergence of representative voluntary groups—may appear relatively unremarkable. However, this book argues that these trends developed in tandem since the 1960s and indeed demonstrates that the ability of public groups and communities to represent themselves in media discussions and in policy has been hard won and contested, depending on the opening and closing down of media, political, and professional interest, and rarely guaranteed.

This is particularly the case in the field of child protection, social and political understandings of which have rapidly developed over the late twentieth century, with the testimonies of children, concerned parents, and survivors themselves increasingly made public. By examining the interplay between the politics of experience, expertise, and emotion in this area, this book demonstrates that lines between 'public' and 'expert' opinion have become blurred, notably by the campaigning of small voluntary organisations, often led by individuals with direct personal experience of the issues they campaign around. These groups have challenged traditionally placed 'experts', such as physicians, social workers, solicitors, and policy-makers, and have mediated and reshaped the concerns of new identity constituencies. In doing so, the groups relied on collaboration with media to express their viewpoints. They were not always able to change policy or practice. Nonetheless, they contributed to a moment in which experience and emotion were becoming more politically and publicly visible and, to an extent, more influential. The campaigning of these groups has not been studied before, yet it has been significant in shaping definitions of child protection, responsibility, harm, and experience, in terms defined by children, parents, and survivors. Through campaigning, children, parents, and survivors have become agents in, and subjects of, rather than objects of, social policy—directly involved in changing child protection policy and practice, often in emotional and experiential terms guided by personal life narratives.

CHILD PROTECTION IN ENGLAND

In understanding the emergence of recent concerns about child abuse, it is useful to take a long historical view. Looking back over the past 150 years shows that there have been several other peaks of concern about child abuse and maltreatment, expressed in different terms. However, the experiences and emotions of children, parents, and survivors came more prominently and publicly to the fore from the 1960s. A key point in the modern history of child abuse was the emergence of concerns around ‘cruelty to children’ in North America and Western Europe in the 1870s and 1880s, which provided a significant label with which to criticise the maltreatment of children.⁸ In Britain, the *Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act* (1889) criminalised cruelty against children, which was defined as the behaviour of a guardian who ‘wilfully ill-treats, neglects, abandons, or exposes such child ... in a manner likely to cause such child unnecessary suffering, or injury to its health’.⁹ Harry Hendrick has written that this act created a ‘new interventionist relationship between parents and the state’, because for the first time police were allowed to enter family homes to arrest parents for ill-treatment.¹⁰ Many significant voluntary organisations were also established in the Victorian era—the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (1884), Dr Barnardos’ Homes (1866), the Church of England Central Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays (1881), and the Children’s Home (1869).¹¹ George Behlmer has persuasively argued that the NSPCC in particular constructed a ‘new moral vision’ in this period, in which the interests of the child were placed above those of the parent.¹²

Perpetrators of child sexual abuse were not always punished in the Victorian period, despite emergent concerns often framed around ‘cruelty to children’. Drawing on the records of 1146 sexual assault cases tried in Yorkshire and Middlesex between 1830 and 1910, Louise Jackson has demonstrated that even when cases of sexual abuse were brought to the courts, usually as ‘indecent assault’, 31 per cent of defendants were acquitted, and punishments were often very lenient.¹³ Jackson writes that court members ‘found it very difficult to believe that a man who was a father could ever have committed acts of brutality’.¹⁴ At the same time, she also argues that ‘Judges and juries were of the opinion that sexual abuse by a father ... was a particularly serious offence’.¹⁵ Linda Pollock has studied newspaper reports around court cases between 1785 and 1860 and similarly argues that parents who abused their offspring were seen as ‘unnatural’, ‘horrific’, and ‘barbaric’.¹⁶

Adrian Bingham, Lucy Delap, Louise Jackson, and Louise Settle have persuasively argued that the 1920s was another ‘time of high visibility and concern over child sexual abuse’, brought forward by the campaigning of newly enfranchised female voters and female Members of Parliament.¹⁷ The historians explain that the 1925 Departmental Committee on Sexual Offences Against Young People made numerous proposals in this context, calling for: the abolishment of ‘reasonable belief’ that a girl was over the age of 16 as a legal defence; the provision of a separate waiting room for young witnesses; and an institutional response exceeding ‘ignorance, carelessness and indifference’.¹⁸ Again, however, such concerns did not necessarily lead to change, and these measures were not broadly implemented.¹⁹ In general, the Committee assumed that ‘experts’—professionals, politicians, policy-makers, lobbyists—would speak on behalf of victims and survivors, rather than inviting them to provide direct testimony, although three mothers from Edinburgh whose children had been abused did testify, criticising the police and criminal justice system.²⁰

Later in the interwar period, concerns about child abuse faded once again. The reasons for the falling away of concerns in this period were multiple: voluntary sector focus was on reconstruction; the woman’s movement in part fractured following the granting of universal suffrage; and the NSPCC became less campaign-oriented following administrative changes.²¹ These reasons for the diminishing of concerns foregrounded many of the significant elements that later revived public, media, and political interest in child protection from the mid-1960s until 2000. Professional interests, as in earlier periods, remained significant. Notably, the first chapter of this book examines how paediatricians and radiologists shaped early medical debates about ‘the battered child syndrome’ from the 1940s. These clinicians worked through international networks as concerns about child abuse developed across Western Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand in the late twentieth century.²² Likewise, groups of parents and survivors mobilised both in Britain and in America over this period; mediating, criticising, and reshaping professional debate.²³ While paying brief attention to these international relationships, the book focuses primarily on how such debates were realised in distinctly British contexts, with a particular focus on England. In the English setting, cultural visions of family privacy and the ‘stiff upper lip’, as well as distinct contexts of state welfare provision, inflected discussion.²⁴

As in the 1920s, the work of feminists was also significant in raising public and political awareness of child abuse in the late twentieth century, and the second-wave feminist movement drew public attention to family violence and established shelters to care for affected women and children. Notably, second-wave feminists also highlighted the significance of focusing on emotion and experience as forms of expertise, particularly by emphasising the importance of listening to women's stories and making the personal political. In the documentary *Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear* (1974), based on Erin Pizzey's ground breaking book, women housed at Chiswick Women's Aid refuge spoke openly about their experiences of abuse, their fears, the effects on their confidence, and the responses of their children.²⁵ Later accounts—for example, by Louise Armstrong—continued to explore and make public childhood experiences of abuse, and to encourage others to do the same.²⁶ While many second-wave feminists sought to entwine campaigning around violence against women and children, others acknowledged that social policy and media coverage typically treated these issues separately.²⁷ Nonetheless, while focusing on campaigning led by children, concerned parents, and survivors, this book also traces moments in which this campaigning interacted with feminist work, particularly in terms of criticising structural inequalities and professional hierarchies.

While professional and feminist voices remained important in post-1960s debates, the concern of the late twentieth century was also distinctive in two key ways, both of which are the focus of this book. First, this period was distinctive in the extent to which direct campaigning by children, parents, and survivors became important. The new focus on the experiences and emotions of those affected by child abuse extended beyond feminist activism alone, and indeed campaign groups in this area were established by a variety of families and individuals, many of whom had no connections with the feminist movement. Campaigners acted in collaboration and tension with the work of long-standing professions—relying on statutory agencies but also providing self-help groups, for example. Importantly, children, parents, and survivors both relied on and criticised the ability of professional categorisations to explain their personal experiences.²⁸ The term 'survivor'—which this book uses to echo contemporary accounts—has been adopted by voluntary groups. While such groups, echoing the psychiatric survivor movement, used the term to capture strength and resilience, they also argued that it did not capture the full complexity of lived experience.²⁹

The ability of these voluntary groups to offer such critique and to construct new networks was entwined with the second key development of the post-1960s moment: the increasing interest of media outlets in representing the experiences and emotions of children, parents, and survivors. Newspapers have a long history of producing exposes around child protection, dating back to the report ‘The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’ published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1885.³⁰ Yet media interest in child protection reached new levels from 1960. Focus was often on specific cases, such as that of Maria Colwell, a seven-year-old who was beaten and starved to death by her stepfather in 1973, and the Cleveland scandal of 1987, in which two Middlesbrough doctors removed 121 children from their parents during routine paediatric check-ups, citing medical evidence of sexual abuse.³¹ Media explorations became of great length and detail, presented in sensationalist terms, looking to make inner dynamics of family life or children’s experiences public.

Child Protection in England thus focuses on activism by or on behalf of children, parents, and survivors, often enacted in collaboration with new media and through voluntary organisations. The book demonstrates that this activism has been influential in shaping public responses to child protection, and in mediating and reshaping the work of clinicians, social work, and policy—which have been central to previous historical accounts. This activism—taken ‘from below’—has represented a broader form of challenge to long-standing professions, and to thinking about how and why expertise has been constructed and determined in late twentieth-century Britain. The period on which this book focuses, from 1960 until 2000, was one in which medical, social, and political conceptions of child protection shifted relatively rapidly. Broadly, over this period, conceptions of abuse shifted from being visualised as a ‘medical’ to a ‘social problem’; from focus on the family home to ‘stranger danger’ and back to the family; and in terms of broadening in focus from the physical to the sexual to the emotional.³² Accounts offered by children, parents, and survivors themselves, however, and increased attention paid to their emotions and experiences, shaped and added complexity to these changes. Children, parents, and survivors became ‘expert’ because of their ability to represent, channel, construct, and argue for the validity of experiential and emotional expertise—forms of knowledge which rapidly emerged and became public, and which are crucial to understanding the changing social, cultural, and political contexts of late twentieth-century Britain.

EXPERTISE, EXPERIENCE, EMOTION

Three key concepts shaped the nature of concerns about child protection in the post-1960s context: expertise, experience, and emotion. This book is not a history of how people *felt* experiences or emotions over this period, no archives permit us to ‘speak for’ the people involved.³³ Instead, it is a history of the politics of experiences and emotions *as* expertise. The book assesses how increasing public and political spaces emerged in which personal experiences and emotions could be heard and indeed were expected to be performed in specific ways, bound by long-standing structural and professional hierarchies. As Joan Scott has argued, categories of experience and identity are not ‘ahistorical’ or ‘fixed entities’, but rather ‘historical events in need of explanation’.³⁴ Looking at how ideas about experience and identity are produced, and the politics underlying this construction, can reveal the ‘workings of the ideological system itself’.³⁵ As Stuart Hall tells us, ‘identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse’ and ‘produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies’.³⁶

This book therefore takes emotional, personal, political, and professional experience and expertise as ideas in flux, but whose interaction and importance to certain groups reveals shifting relations of power, authority, and hierarchy. Specifically, the primary interest of this book is in the interactions between expertise, experience, and emotion—how have these different concepts become visible and influential on the public stage over the late twentieth century? Which groups have been responsible for presenting and representing emotion and experience—small campaign groups or media, for example? To what extent has experience as a form of expertise displaced or been entwined with traditional sources of authority? This examination follows Selina Todd’s call for historians to pay attention to the complex relationships between discourse and experience in post-war England. To understand the significance of social and political theories, and of debates in press and academia, we must also analyse who ‘negotiated, modified and implemented’ these ideas.³⁷

In part, an expertise grounded in experience was not entirely new to the post-1960s moment. Angela Davis has argued that the belief that ‘women learnt how to mother in the home’ was prevalent in the middle decades of the twentieth century, drawn from psychoanalysis, sociology, and social learning theory.³⁸ The idea of experience as foregrounding expertise and authority was likely lived and discussed in daily life before this period.

What was new from the post-1960s moment, however, was the reframing of these ideas in individualist, public, and emotional terms: with individual people making personal and previously private experiences public and powerful. These changes were bound up with—and are significant for further tracing—a series of broader shifts in terms of identity, confession, and expertise. For Stuart Hall, the conditions of change in late modernity led to a ‘fracturing’ of identity. With the ‘erosion’ of the ‘master identity’ of class, and the development of New Social Movements, publics defined themselves in line with a series of new ‘competing and dislocating identifications’.³⁹ Building on developments in the interwar period, from the mid-twentieth century a ‘confessional culture’ also emerged, visible in the popularity of agony aunts, the rise of memoirs, attendance at marriage guidance counselling, and increasing media coverage of family affairs.⁴⁰ While notions of expertise have shifted throughout time—for example, in relation to the emergence of the industrial society—Joe Moran has likewise discussed how new breeds of ‘expert’ emerged in the late twentieth-century period too. Not least, Margaret Thatcher’s suspicion of public sector working drove a new focus on private sector expertise—for instance, as manifested by management consultants.⁴¹

There were hence a series of changes in the post-war period and from the 1960s specifically whereby discussions of experience and emotion became increasingly *visible*. Voluntary groups and individuals capitalised on and subverted media, political, and professional interest in experience and emotion, mobilising descriptions of these states to seek out change, as well as to form new social communities and identity groups. Looking at these processes, and particularly looking from the perspective of children, parents, survivors and voluntary groups, reveals broader structural and societal shifts in thinking about authority, identity, legitimacy over time. Of course, the work of children, parents, and survivors was to be coded, limited, and inflected by long-standing power structures. Looking at the limitations of these groups’ influence, indeed, reveals how old concerns about class and gender continued to shape the new politics of experience.⁴² Notably, and drawing on a long Western philosophical tradition in which women have been associated with ‘emotion’ and men with ‘reason’, gender framed the perception and portrayal of experiential and emotional expertise throughout the late twentieth century.⁴³ Chapter 2 traces how predominately male paediatric radiologists described their feelings of ‘rage’, ‘disgust’, and ‘anger’ about child abuse. For primarily female social workers operating at the same time, and for mothers campaigning through

the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, media and personal accounts emphasised ‘sadness’, ‘guilt’, and ‘fear’.

Thus, the ability of children, parents, and survivors to challenge overarching accounts of child protection has been limited not only by personal resource and professional attention, but also by a series of shifting—yet long-standing—cultural contexts and attitudes about *who* had the right to define their experiences and emotions in their own terms. These were debates about whose experiences were ‘expert’ and whose were not. Voluntary groups operating in this terse context analysed and criticised the construction of authority, power, and expertise. Parent campaign groups, studied in Chap. 6, advised mothers to tactically restrict their displays of emotion. Survivor groups meanwhile, described in Chap. 8, used powerful personal accounts of emotion and experience to demonstrate that abuse was an issue which affected all genders, classes, races, and ethnicities, and which was perpetrated in family, institutional, and community settings. These parent and survivor groups recognised, and sought to reframe, prevailing narratives about child protection and expertise.

In looking at the interactions between experience, emotion, and expertise, this book contends that personal emotion and experience, as mediated and represented by small voluntary organisations, became important and influential forms of expertise in the late twentieth century. Small organisations challenged, adopted, and subverted the work of long-standing professions in child protection, particularly in medicine, social work, and policy, and shaped the creation of policy, the form of the voluntary sector, and public and media understandings of child abuse, childhood, and family. Public challenges to professional expertise are evident in a variety of ways throughout this book—on the everyday level, by individual parents ignoring ‘professional’ advice about childcare, as well as in highly visible protests and demonstrations. Small voluntary groups have also challenged any division between ‘professional’ and experiential or emotional expertise: many leaders of such groups held multiple sources of authority, and they also encouraged practitioners to discuss their personal and family lives.

In this book, analysis of expertise, experience, and emotion will help to explain the post-1960s shift in discussions about child protection, whereby discussions became public, and different voices became privileged, when expressed in certain forms. This analysis will act as an example of how the nature of policy and politics shifted more generally in this era. In particular, the book examines how voluntary groups fundamentally challenged a

conceptual and lived gap between expert and public thinking; a gap identified as a key post-war phenomenon by researchers in policy and sociology, as well as in contemporary media discourse around the public ‘losing faith in experts’.⁴⁴ Voluntary groups, more than ever before, were the arbiters of experience, emotion, and expertise, and shaped a new late twentieth-century politics where experiential and emotional expertise held moral sway.

VOLUNTARY ACTION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Following the work of, among others, Virginia Berridge, Alex Mold, Pat Thane, Tanya Evans, and Chris Moores, this book looks in depth at a series of case studies of small voluntary organisations in order to ‘make sense’ of this sector.⁴⁵ Many voluntary organisations traced in this book had less than ten members of staff and earned, through public donations, grants, and sometimes commercial work, in the tens, hundreds, or thousands of pounds each year. This marked each of these charities as significantly smaller than, for example, the Children’s Society, NSPCC, and Action for Children, which raised millions of pounds and employed hundreds or thousands of members of staff over the same time period.⁴⁶ Notably, and despite their small size, the groups studied in this book attained significant influence in policy, public, and media debate, working with and challenging the work of long-standing professions, charities, and statutory agencies.

Each voluntary group studied in this book was different in terms of size, goal, and method, but each was constructed looking to provide services or representation for children, parents, or adults affected by abuse as children. There has been ‘no one unified lobby group’ that has called for change on behalf of children, parents, or survivors, but, rather, multiple local and national groups formed in specific ideological and cultural contexts over time and space.⁴⁷ Studying the array of groups in this book takes examination of voluntarism and voluntary organisations into new terrain. The book makes deep examination of how and when the subjects of policy have become involved in its creation and critique, and of the new challenges made to expertise by experience.

While the book studies a broad variety of groups and organisations, three coherent narratives are presented. The first is a reappraisal of the influences over child protection policy in the late twentieth century. Analyses led by academics of social work and media have provided rich exploration

of how ‘scandals’ and ‘moral panics’ have driven policy and practice reform.⁴⁸ Scholars of social policy and history have charted the content of changing child protection policy, and discussed the myriad interactions between research evidence, policy change, and shifts in practice.⁴⁹ What have not yet been subjected to academic attention, however, are the forms of influence wielded by people themselves involved in these debates—children, concerned parents, and survivors. The influence of these individuals was limited, and indeed at times children and parents were unable to report abuse or to seek adequate redress from statutory services. Nonetheless, this book explores shifting moments in which small voluntary groups working in this area, and drawing on experiential and emotional expertise, did influence change, alongside and in collaboration and conflict with media and social policy-makers.

The second argument is that small voluntary organisations, sometimes with as few as ten members, could play a significant role in representing, shaping, and mediating discussions of experience, emotion, and expertise in late twentieth-century Britain. In part, these organisations held significant sway throughout the public sphere because of their collaborations with media.⁵⁰ The case studies that follow demonstrate how individual journalists built strong connections with particular voluntary sector leaders, and how media and voluntary groups used their highly public platforms in tandem, looking to reflect but also to shape popular morality. Using media materials in conjunction with the available archives from voluntary groups demonstrates that voluntary leaders were by no means naïve partners in working with newspapers and television. Rather, voluntary leaders drew on their own personal and professional skillsets to navigate media partnerships, and to advise their broader memberships about driving press agendas. Drawing on analysis by Peter Bailey about how respectability has been a ‘choice of role’, rather than a ‘universal normative mode’, the book examines how voluntary leaders displayed respectability, ordinariness, and gendered emotion to garner media attention.⁵¹

Child Protection in England’s third contribution to the history of voluntarism is to assess how voluntary organisations have become key mediators of expertise, experience, and emotion. While forms of public participation and voluntary action have long histories, encompassing traditions of mutual aid, self-help, philanthropy, and early charitable trusts dating back to at least the sixteenth century, historians and sociologists have also identified distinct forms of activism which emerged in the post-war period.⁵² From the 1960s and 1970s, fuelled by progressive Labour

Party legislation, groups of people who were previously criminalised, persecuted, or subject to philanthropic intervention ‘began organising and speaking for themselves as never before’, demanding a ‘voice’, ‘equal rights’, ‘representation’, and ‘empowerment’.⁵³ Sociologists have also turned their attention towards these groups, developing New Social Movement theory in the 1980s and 1990s.⁵⁴

Long-standing traditions of self-help remained important from 1945 also, for example, in playgroups, support groups for single mothers, and therapeutic communities for drug users.⁵⁵ Matthew Hilton, James McKay, Nicholas Crowson, and Jean-François Mouhot have described the emergence of large and highly professionalised ‘non-governmental organisations (NGOs)’ in the post-war period, which in part replaced the active membership of political parties, trade unions, and churches. Instead, members of the public often supported NGOs at ‘arms-length’, through donations.⁵⁶ Reflecting and facilitating the development of all of the above groups, political rhetoric around ‘consultation’, ‘listening’, and ‘public involvement’ also developed substantially in the late twentieth century.⁵⁷

This book looks closely at a variety of voluntary organisations which have—to varying degrees—features of self-help, social movements, and NGOs, and which also emerged in a post-war and indeed post-1960s moment. Notably, the organisations which I study often acted ‘professionally’, conducting research and lobbying in a manner akin to large NGOs and professional unions, and yet also at the same time challenged long-standing professions and large-scale charities, seeking to directly address the issues of where expertise and power should lie in modern Britain. Further, these groups often held experiential knowledge, and many were formed by the communities they sought to represent. The book moves beyond categorisation and takes these groups on their own terms. In doing so, it demonstrates that divides between ‘experiential’ and ‘professional’ expertise were being challenged in late twentieth-century Britain. What is particularly notable about the voluntary organisations in this book is their small size. Representing experiential and emotional expertise was difficult—not all children, parents, or survivors wanted to discuss their experiences publicly. In this context, relatively small groups who could make claim to represent children, parents, and survivors became influential. Nonetheless, by the 1990s and 2000s, Chaps. 6 and 7 trace how professions and larger charities began to fight back against the development of experiential expertise, and to challenge the representativeness and

utility of these small voluntary groups. The new politics of expertise, experience, and emotion has not yet been fully played out, and the media has—as we shall see—also shown growing interest in portraying divides between small voluntary groups, as well as their common agendas.

HISTORIES OF CHILDHOOD AND FAMILIES

While histories of child welfare and health are often separate from those of child protection, this book seeks to ally the two fields.⁵⁸ Indeed, the issue of child protection has affected all children, parents, and families, not just those affected by abuse. Children's education has been changed by child protection classes; communities have reshaped children's curfews and the policing of individuals deemed 'suspicious'; parents have shaped their child-rearing styles and ambitions responsively. Importantly, the ability or inability of maltreated children to speak out cannot be separated from the broader social position of all children whose voices have not always been listened to in private or public. This book thus offers a history of childhood and family as well as a history of child protection. Moreover, it is a history of how public and private spaces have opened up over the late twentieth century for children and parents to discuss their experiences and emotions and, in doing so, to become 'expert'.

This history—a history of the politics of childhood—traces how the re-emergence of anxieties about child protection strengthened paternalist debate, for example among paediatric radiologists, and also the construction of a universalist model of childhood vulnerability, characterised around an ageless, classless, genderless 'child'. However, the book also traces the development of new spaces for children to defy professional and parental authority, and to themselves develop, exert, and challenge forms of expertise. In this thinking, the book uses a vision of childhood agency developed in new scholarship by Mona Gleason and Harry Hendrick. These scholars have developed a nuanced account of how children have acted as agents in dealing with their everyday lives, and indeed also of how their actions were at times exercised in partnership with adults, or in support of existing cultural and educational systems, as well as in overt resistance.⁵⁹ In taking such an approach to children's actions, this book challenges previous influential historical and sociological accounts which emphasise childhood powerlessness, and the significance of adult definitions of childhood in building nation states and shaping children's lives.⁶⁰

Child Protection in England thus provides a useful addition to scholarship on childhood resistance and disobedience over time, emphasising that childhood expertise has been enacted, contested, and changed through everyday actions, for example by children using child protection education from school settings to defy and challenge their parents.⁶¹ This type of everyday resistance is as important as visible types of disobedience—such as marches and strikes from school—and speaks to how overarching ideas about expertise and authority have shaped and reshaped daily life. Likewise, in the late twentieth century parents have manifested visible forms of political action, for instance, and as this book will trace, forming campaign groups, creating petitions, and becoming political advisors to governments, particularly in the New Labour administrations. However, parents have also exercised expertise in their daily lives, notably in terms of negotiating new child protection education programmes in the home, calling—and organising—parental helplines, and self-referring themselves to parenting classes. This book therefore considers a range of forms of ‘political’ action and activism performed and enacted by children, parents, and survivors in daily life and in political and public spaces. In doing so, the book demonstrates that children, parents, and survivors have adopted, appropriated, and rejected the shifting politics of child protection. More broadly, these actors have constructed, and worked within, new political spaces of late twentieth-century Britain—notably using and building new media interest in family life and new fora for public consultation by politicians. The political arena, and spaces for political action, have been broad, and have been mediated and shaped by small voluntary groups, often around experience.

In addition to thinking about the active political roles of children and parents, this book also seeks to trace the hopes placed on, and expertise manifested within, the family. Importantly, in terms of child protection the family is both a protective space—in which children have acted in partnership with parents and carers to change ideas of, or to learn about, child protection—and yet it is also a potentially dangerous arena. Over the late twentieth century, in the 1960s and subsequently again from the 1980s, family members were increasingly recognised as the primary source of violence against children. Social policy reflected these tensions: the *Children Acts* of 1948, 1975, and 1989 sought, in various ways, to: extend state welfare provisions, understand the interests of the child, maintain ‘family life’, and promote ‘parental responsibility’.⁶² In this context, debates about child protection became a particularly terse fora for conflicts about how family life was and should be lived. Questions about the policies and practices

of child protection were used—as we see throughout this book—by conservative and progressive commentators alike seeking to further broader agendas relating to, for example, abortion, maternity leave, adoption, and moral visions of permissiveness and decline.

This book therefore adds to existing rich texts on histories of institutional abuse by focusing primarily on the politics of family life.⁶³ Indeed, uniquely this book emphasises that children, parents, and survivors were not only objects of child protection policy—used by policy-makers in broader debates about family life—but also subjects and agents. The lives of children, parents, and survivors were changed by child protection policy and, furthermore, campaigning for and by *families* actively intervened within political and media discussion. From the 1960s, Parents Anonymous groups were formed and made representations to Parliament looking to add complexity to visions of ‘normal family life’. In the 1970s and 1980s, the New Right and Thatcher governments positioned the private sphere of the family as the primary organiser of social life, above the state, local government, and teaching and social work professions.⁶⁴ Campaign groups led by parents actively contested these visions, demanding further state resources and challenging individualist models of responsibility for child protection. Tracing such activism, this book demonstrates that ‘the family’ has not only been a proxy for political and moral anxieties in the late twentieth century, but that children, parents, survivors, and families have also challenged and changed ideas about family life and child protection.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This book traces both the re-emergence of concerns about child protection in Britain in the post-war period, and also the ways in which children, parents, and survivors shaped and mediated policy and practice in this area. Chapter 2 sets the scene for this examination. Exploring the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, the period in which child abuse came anew to public and political attention, it emphasises that children, parents, and survivors were rarely consulted or empowered in child protection discussion. Rather, paediatric radiologists, social psychologists, and the NSPCC dominated early debates. Debates were constructed transnationally—particularly between Britain and America—and looked to create policy *for* children, and which would categorise and understand the psychological motivations of parents. Debate was not unsympathetic towards children or parents, and indeed a level of paternalist concern about child welfare underlay later collaborative efforts between children, parents, psychologists, and charities.

Indeed, the remainder of the book explores in turn how children, parents, and survivors mobilised, in a variety of ways, looking to use their personal experiences to gain expertise, and to reshape public debates about child protection. Chapters 3 and 4 assess growing interest, particularly through the 1970s and 1980s, in consulting with children. Chapter 3 considers how public inquiries, charities, helplines, and media constructed new spaces to discuss and access children's experiences and emotions in public. Meanwhile, Chap. 4 analyses how small charities developed child protection education which, when enacted in schools and family homes, would empower children to act as experts, and to think critically about bodily autonomy, freedom, and consent. While children were to an extent made 'expert' by this work, adults remained mediators of child expertise. The structural barrier of age, often compounded by inequalities related to race, ethnicity, class, and gender, meant that not all children could share their experiences or expertise in public or private. While interest in experiential expertise—which could be inculcated, as well as accessed—thus grew over this period, these chapters therefore demonstrate clear limitations to this story.

Considering the same timeframe, Chaps. 5 and 6 address how and when parents sought to exert influence over child protection practice and policy. Chapter 5 analyses the significance of collective action by parents, which emerged from the 1960s in collaboration with NSPCC and in the establishment of individual self-help groups. These forms of collective action, as well as support groups established by and for parents falsely accused of abuse from the 1980s, added complexity to public policy conceptions of family life. Chapter 6 examines the partnerships formed between media and parent campaigners, and the gendered representations of mothers. In doing so, it emphasises a shift towards focus on individual parent campaigners as representatives, particularly under New Labour governments. Hence, these chapters begin to show the potential power which experiential and emotional expertise exerted in the late twentieth century. While showing how ideas of gender, in particular, limited the influence of parents, the chapters also argue that certain parent campaigners were able to critically navigate and reshape press and political interest.

Chapter 7 traces the realisation of experiential and emotional expertise in the 1990s and 2000s but also growing challenges which small representative voluntary groups began to face. The chapter discusses cases in which adults who had been affected by childhood abuse—survivors—increasingly discussed their childhood experiences, notably through letters to agony aunts, literature, and campaigning. Representatives from survivor groups

criticised medical, social work, and legal professionals in complex ways which wove together historical and present analysis and which explored the interrelationships between childhood memories and adult experiences. While these groups were influential, their influence was also at times limited by political will, resources, and structural challenges. Further exploring developments visible in Chap. 6, this chapter also charts how professions and media began to challenge the moral authority of experiential experts in the 1990s and particularly from the 2000s, and to reassert the primacy and utility of evidence constructed by medicine, social work, policy, and law.

By taking a series of case studies from 1960 until 2000, *Child Protection in England* traces a shift in terms of media and public policy focus in child protection: from focus on consultation with clinicians, social workers, and established professions towards seeking out testimony from children, concerned parents and, in more recent years, survivors. The retrieval of experience became formally and informally ingrained in policy construction over the late twentieth century. Initially, in the 1960s and 1970s, the campaign groups studied in this book were consulted through select committees, or heard via media representation. From the 1980s and 1990s, the media remained important. However, successive governments and public inquiries also appointed voluntary leaders as individual experts.

While voluntary groups faced challenges relating to representativeness, tokenism, and the significance of experience, making children, parents, and survivors central actors in our histories provides rich insight into a new politics which emerged in late twentieth-century Britain. Definitions of child abuse and child protection were not only driven by media and social policy debate, but also by testimonies about experiences and emotions. Ideas about—and claims to represent—experience and emotion became publicly visible, bestowed expertise, and acted as disruptive forces between 1960 and 2000. Even very small voluntary groups were able to mobilise experiential and emotional expertise, to create and enter new political and media spaces, and to mount new challenges to professional authority. This analysis, therefore, places expertise, experience, and emotion as key themes in the history of modern Britain. It argues that historians can—and indeed must—trace the work conducted by individuals and families, often through small voluntary groups, to understand changing social, cultural, and political terrains. Finally—and as discussed in its conclusion—this book provides context for ongoing debates around historical child abuse: tracing shifting conceptions of child protection, and exploring the barriers faced by children, parents, and survivors in discussing and disclosing their experiences.

NOTES

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9. HM Government, *Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act 1889* (London, 1889), 1.
10. Hendrick, *Child Welfare: Historical Dimensions, Contemporary Debate*, 28.
11. See: Behlmer, *Child Abuse and Moral Reform in England*; Terry Philpot, *NCH: Action for Children: The Story of Britain's Foremost Children's Charity* (Oxford: Lion Books, 1994); Winston Fletcher, *Keeping the Vision*

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12. Behlmer, *Child Abuse and Moral Reform in England*, 16.
 13. Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, 18–23, 107.
 14. *Ibid.*, 126.
 15. *Ibid.*, 126.
 16. Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-child relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 93.
 17. Adrian Bingham, Lucy Delap, Louise Jackson and Louise Settle, 'Historical child sexual abuse in England and Wales: the role of historians', *History of Education*, 45 no. 4 (2016): 414, 427; Adrian Bingham, Lucy Delap, Louise Jackson, Louise Settle, 'These outrages are going on more than people know', *History & Policy*, 26 February 2015 <<http://www.historyandpolicy.org/opinion-articles/articles/these-outrages-are-going-on-more-than-people-know>> (6 June 2015). See also: Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Feminism, Sex and Morality* (2nd edition, London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2001), 252–254.
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 22. Pierre E. Ferrier, 'Foreword—Proceedings of the 1976 International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect—Geneva, W. H.O.—September 20–22', *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 1 (1977): iii–iv.
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 37. Selina Todd, ‘Family Welfare and Social Work in Post-War England, c. 1948–1970’, *English Historical Review*, CXXIX (537) (2014): 364.
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42. See: Bev Skeggs, *Formations of Class & Gender: Becoming Respectable* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1997).
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