CHAPTER 6

Mothers, Media, and Individualism in Public Policy

This chapter examines the role of mothers in reshaping concerns about child protection over the late twentieth century, particularly through becoming subjects of—and at times active partners in guiding—gendered media coverage. The chapter explores a series of case studies: anti-paedophile protests by mothers in the 1970s, the partnership between Parents Against Injustice and the BBC *Open Space* series in the 1980s, and the work of Sara Payne as an individual spokesperson in the early 2000s. While thus crosscutting the work of Chap. 5, this chapter also makes new contributions to this book. Most significantly, 'Mothers, Media, and Individualism' explores the gendered media representations of parents involved in child protection, and the ways in which journalistic interest in women's experiences and emotions also reconstructed mothers as irrational and hysterical.[1]

At the same time, the chapter also demonstrates that mothers were at times empowered in their work with media. Collectively and individually through the late twentieth century, mothers utilised and subverted media interest in their emotional states to direct and govern popular coverage, shaping a self-representation that could drive forward specific personal and political agendas.[2] As such, mothers were both empowered and marginalised by media coverage of child protection and by public interest in their inner lives and social roles; a position which was negotiated during the rise and realisation of second-wave feminism and amidst increasing female participation

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J. Crane, *Child Protection in England, 1960–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Childhood,
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in the workforce. The chapter therefore focuses on the gendering of the politics of experience, emotion, and expertise, again emphasising that the growing social and political focus on individual experience challenged, but did not overthrow nor entirely counterbalance, long-standing structural hierarchies.

'[T]he Sickness of the Twentieth Century'

In the 1970s, much journalistic attention was paid to anti-paedophile protests launched by mothers. Public discussion of paedophilia developed in the late nineteenth century, when the term 'paedophile' was first invented.[3] Yet public awareness of sexual relations between adults and children—and the construction of this new term—did not immediately precipitate activism. Indeed, Steven Angelides has argued that within Victorian society paedophilia was 'seldom discussed', except by sexologists such as Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud, and Richard von Krafft-Ebing, who considered it a highly 'rare occurrence'.[4] Looking at the early-to-mid twentieth century, Mathew Thomson argues that 'post-Freudian' ideas about child sexuality did not only ignore but actively averted social concerns about paedophilia, by suggesting that children were not damaged, nor innocent, in adult–child sexual relations.[5] Thomson emphasises also that perpetrators were represented first as mentally deficient and later as psychologically flawed; characterisations which saw this group subjected to medical, rather than legal or public, interventions.[6] While parents may have informally warned others about certain individuals in their communities, they rarely took collective political action against them.

From the 1970s, concerns about paedophiles became a 'major public issue', and the paedophile was newly considered 'the most terrifying folk devil imaginable'.[7] The rapid development of concerns about paedophilia were linked to broader media anxieties about child sexual abuse, child pornography, satanic rituals, and serial murder emergent in this decade.[8] Paedophile liberation groups also developed in the 1970s, further bringing this group to public attention. Two such groups were founded in 1974: Paedophile Action for Liberation and the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE). These groups had some structural differences, but both sought to create an analytical distinction between 'the paedophile' and 'the child molester'. They argued that the former group only engaged in

consensual relations with children, while the latter did not. The groups couched this argument in terms of the topical discourses of rights, choice, and freedom of association and speech.[9]

These groups formed some—albeit often tense and tenuous—links with larger liberationist organisations, which brought them further to political and public attention. Many gay rights groups at this time were arguing that the 'sexual revolution' of the 1960s had not gone far enough in terms of, for example, creating an equal age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual sexual activities.[10] Lucy Robinson has demonstrated that, in this context, the Gay Left Collective perceived paedophilia as 'a new battlefield from which to extend sexual liberation', opening up debates about the fluidity of sexuality.[11] Other gay rights groups—notably the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE)—defended the rights of paedophiles to associate and to speak publicly but sought to emphasise that this was the only connection between their organisations. CHE's annual conference of 1983 passed a resolution condemning attempts to use public concern over assault cases to conduct 'witch hunts' against minority groups such as PIE, but framed this decision as 'entirely a question of freedom of speech'.[12]

Utilising contemporary anxieties about freedom, in 1975 the PIE also affiliated to the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL); a loose association granted to nearly 1000 organisations upon the payment of a small fee.[13] Chris Moores has shown that the relationship between the PIE and the NCCL was formed mainly through the NCCL's Gay Rights Sub-Committee, primarily in order to discuss freedoms of speech, movement, and association, and the uses of 'public morality' legislation.[14] Thomson and Moores have additionally argued that paedophile movements also found some support from certain radical academics in medicine, sociology, and law at this time, who were 'uncomfortable about using the law to police sexual boundaries', as well as among child welfare workers, psychologists, and educational theorists.[15]

Paedophile rights groups were marginal and relatively small in the 1970s and early 1980s, but nonetheless also held loose relationships with factions of counter-cultural and radical thought. The development of these groups was an international phenomenon, and British paedophile groups formed fiscal and emotional connections with concurrent movements developing in Western Europe and North America; exchanging letters, newsletters, and occasionally donations.[16] The development of paedophilia movements on a global scale was ardently criticised. Mary Whitehouse stated that the PIE, 'encapsulates the sickness of the twentieth

century'.[17] In the Commons, Conservative Members branded the organisation as 'an abominable child sex group', whose membership were 'publicity-seeking freaks' and 'crackpots'.[18]

Second-wave feminists also mounted a powerful challenge to paedophile rights groups. For example, in *Spare Rib* in 1981, workers from London's Rape Crisis Centre strongly rejected these groups' attempts to function within broader movements of sexual politics.[19] Rather, the authors wrote, paedophile advocacy groups should be analysed and critiqued as part of a society in which men held power over women and children.[20] This argument foreshadowed continuing links between female activism and sexual danger, whereby women—notably mothers—became the key figures in anti-paedophile protest. These critiques—from the moral right and second-wave feminists alike—also demonstrated that paedophile organisations had failed to disassociate 'the paedophile' and 'the child molester': both figures were seen as equivalent. Any analytical distinction between these terms, indeed, dissolved further when many leaders and members of paedophile rights groups were arrested for sexual offences against children in the late 1970s.[21]

'Mothers on the Warpath'

As men associated with paedophile rights groups were convicted of sexual offences, public awareness of—and disgust about—these groups grew. In this context, newspapers focused on isolated incidences of anti-paedophile protest by individual women. The *Guardian* reported in 1977 that a woman from Swansea had 'drenched' the leader of the PIE in beer when she saw him in a local pub.[22] In the same year, another woman became a self-styled 'Campaigner against Sex Offences on Children', launching a national questionnaire and a petition to demand increased legal restrictions against sexual offences.[23] The *Guardian's* coverage of these stories noted that both women had the title, 'Mrs', and indeed that the former was a 'mother of two' and a 'woman teacher', motivated in her actions by the 'upset' caused to her family.[24]

Newspapers continued to emphasise the gendered nature of anti-paedophile protest. One notable thread of this discussion centred on the coverage of the first—and only—public meeting of the PIE in September 1977. PIE held this meeting at Conway Hall in London and priced tickets at £1.50.[25] On the day, newspapers estimated that approximately 100 people gathered outside the venue to protest. This protest did not receive

mass media attention; however two substantial articles in the *Daily Mail* and *Guardian* provided coverage. In these articles, journalists suggested that the protesters were primarily working-class women, joined by a smaller group of male members of the National Front.[26] Despite the evidence of popular right-wing political agitation, it was the mothers who were the key focus of analysis. The articles were titled: 'Mothers on the Warpath' and 'Mothers in child sex protest'.[27]

Using the language of contemporary industrial relations, the *Mail* article claimed that men from the National Front had made 'burly pickets', and 'kicked, punched and spat on' conference delegates.[28] Protesting women, meanwhile, were represented as 'near-hysterical mothers' and 'young mothers', who stood outside the building 'closely-huddled and with arms linked'.[29] In contrast to this communitarian and gentle view of femininity, newspapers also reported that those at the conference received 'deep scratches on their faces from [the] women's nails'.[30] The *Mail* reported that the women threw domestic items, including 'rotten eggs, tomatoes, apples and peaches'.[31] The *Guardian* added that in addition to throwing 'eggs', 'fruit', and 'vegetables', the women also launched 'stink bombs' and 'insults'.[32] Newspaper coverage in part represented female activism as a manifestation of a mothering 'instinct'. Indeed, a subsequent letter to the *Daily Mail* from a member of the public went as far as to state that the women's 'missiles', the fruit and vegetables, expressed 'the natural and God-given instincts of mothers in protecting their children'.[33] At the same time, media descriptions of the women's physical violence were also to an extent at odds with representations of their youth, docility, and nurturing femininity, manifested, for example, in descriptions about 'huddling'.

Media coverage did not only focus on the women's 'instincts' but also discussed their stated aims, which were, first, to register 'revulsion and disgust at the sickness of these people' and, second, to lobby for paedophile organisations to be banned.[34] The latter aim was not fulfilled, although a Conservative Member of Parliament, Geoffrey Dickens, did suggest a bill to this effect in 1984.[35] Female protest had not necessarily inspired Dickens' bill however, since it had only received minimal newspaper coverage years beforehand. Furthermore, Dickens' bill was unpopular. Other Members of Parliament argued that this was a radical move, since only two groups had previously been proscribed: the Irish National Liberation Army and the Provisional Irish Republican Army, both on the grounds of advocating violence.[36] Further demonstrative that political

representatives did not take up the messages of female anti-paedophile protesters, Parliamentarians also argued that they should ban acts, not organisations.[37]

This case illuminates a complex chain of relationships between small campaign groups, media attention, and legislative change. The 'mothers on the warpath' did not receive substantial media attention; however, their protest was documented in two significant articles which contributed to a broader media narrative in this period, focused on stoking up public disgust about paedophile advocacy groups. This media narrative had an effect on one such group: Paedophile Action for Liberation, which closed in 1977 in part in response to the *Sunday People*'s front page calling them the 'vilest men in Britain'.[38] Yet media coverage did not affect the ongoing work of the PIE. Indeed, the organisation's Chairperson (1977–1984), Tom O'Carroll, to an extent courted such attention and had, the *Guardian* reported, 'an obvious flair for publicity'.[39]

What ultimately led to the closure of the PIE in 1984 was legal and logistical pressure, raised after police arrested several of the group's members and leaders for conspiracy, obscenity, and postal offences. These offences related to the organisation's newsletter, which provided a contact sheet of its membership that, courts ruled, may have enabled paedophiles to arrange to meet up in order to abuse children.[40] These prosecutions related to broader media debates of the period about the meaning of 'obscenity', and the PIE was again used by the moral right to demand that firm legislative limits were placed around acts, texts, and organisations.[41]

The aims of the 'mothers on the warpath' were thus ultimately fulfilled. However, this was not a clear-cut case of experience or emotion becoming expertise. Indeed, the parents who were protesting were not purposefully harnessing their experiences as mothers in order to claim authority in deciding how to cope with the rise of paedophile rights movements. Rather, media coverage used their overlapping identities as women, mothers, working-class people, and protesters as an analytical framework imposed from above to bolster broader reporting narratives. The women's activism was presented dismissively as hysterical, passive, violent, and mothering, and contrasted to the male identities of the paedophiles involved. Despite this, however, the media coverage did not simultaneously reflect on the relationships between patriarchy, violence, and sexual abuse.

In part, the lens of motherhood represented the stated factors driving the women's activism. The woman from Cardiff, for example, argued that it was for her family that she threw her drink. Another protester at the

Conway Hall protest told the *Daily Mail* that these women had all acted because, '[w]e're frightened for the sake of our children'.[42] At the same time, the media emphasis on gender was also a disempowering framework, preventing the women's arguments from being taken seriously. The leaders of the PIE certainly attempted to entwine and discount the women's experiences, emotions, and identities in this way. The group's newsletter argued that the women were 'hysterical' (a term also used in the *Daily Mail* coverage) and had acted because the PIE 'poses a threat to the traditional mother role'.[43]

While problematic, the representation of women's 'hysteria' in mainstream media also marked a significant historical moment in which women's emotions and experiences were being brought to public attention by the press. The representation of these women joining together, 'closely-huddled and with arms linked', echoed concurrent coverage of the Women's Liberation Movement.[44] Although media coverage did not make this connection explicitly, these mothers were in a similar period drawing on their personal experiences to take political action; in this case demanding that their individual concerns for children should be translated into a ban on paedophile groups. The women were insisting that their individual beliefs were authoritative and worthy of attention, or expert. Newspapers documented these beliefs in terms of the gendered tropes of emotion and instinct, but nonetheless the women's activism had also commanded a media response, and shaped a broader critique of paedophile advocacy groups. In years to come, media interest in women's experiences and emotions radically extended. In response, women collectivised into formal groups, and capitalised on this interest to disseminate their arguments powerfully.

Gender and False Accusations[45]

In the 1980s, women harnessed media interest in motherhood to add complexity to visions of child protection and to drive televisual analysis. Significantly, Parents Against Injustice (PAIN)—the campaign group for parents who had been falsely accused of abuse—worked closely with the BBC's Community Programme Unit in 1986. The Unit's *Open Space* series allowed members of the public to work with BBC staff to design and produce half-hour documentaries about their lives. Between 1983 and 1997, several of these programmes were aired per year in popular mid-evening timeslots on BBC Two.[46] PAIN had the opportunity to create one

of these programmes, which was entitled *Innocents at Risk* and which aired on 17 March 1986. The programme featured extended interviews with the Amphletts and with three other families represented by PAIN. These testimonies, discussing the case histories and emotions of the parents ('guilt', 'despair', and 'helplessness'), were at the forefront of the documentary.[47] Periodically, parental accounts were interspersed with narratives provided by a doctor and a social worker, but parents' self-narratives and experiences were central.

Significantly, PAIN's role in co-curating and designing this documentary meant that the organisation was able to present a complex view of family, gender, and child protection, in contrast to the simplistic vision of female hysteria offered by 1970s newspapers. Notably, *Innocents at Risk* referred to 'family' and to 'parents', rather than to mothers alone, and also offered visual representation of mothers and fathers.[48] Indeed, when fathers were interviewed, they discussed their emotions, stating that it had been 'hard' to live without their child, and that they were finding their experiences within the child protection system 'frightening', 'harrowing', and isolating.[49] Masculine discussion of working patterns and repressed emotion in part framed fathers' accounts: one father discussed how his work schedule made it particularly difficult to see his child while they were in care. Another father contended that it was hard to describe the emotions that he felt about this intrusion into his family life. As a result, he was feeling both 'intense anger'—paralleling the masculine constructions of emotion offered by 1960s paediatric radiologists in Chap. 2—but also, he admitted, 'helplessness'.[50]

Interviews with mothers likewise featured discussion of the maternal role. One mother stated that when her child was taken away, and she could no longer breastfeed, she felt that, 'I was just another person, I wasn't her [the child's] mother'.[51] When her child was returned, she felt, 'Brilliant… I'm a Mum again'.[52] Susan Amphlett further stated that being involved in child protection investigations made her 'begin to doubt my capabilities as a mother'.[53] The emphasis on mothers as the key caregivers, and as those particularly affected by issues of child protection, was thus to an extent continued from the 'mothers on the warpath' coverage of the 1970s. At the same time, and offering a more complex vision than previous media representations, another mother—who was presented without a partner in the documentary—reversed hackneyed gender tropes. Describing the first admission of her child into hospital, she emphasised that she had tried to 'reason' with a male doctor, and to 'explain to him

how things had happened', but that he had behaved irrationally.[54] This account confronted a long-standing Western vision of hysteria as female and rationality as male, and further challenged the ability of clinicians, as experts, to respond to evidence.[55]

The documentary indeed represented mothers and fathers in complex ways as both 'rational' and 'emotional', facing stress but also mobilising to regain custody of their children and to protect other parents. Gendered tropes of motherhood, visible in the newspaper coverage of the 1970s, were not absent here, but they were modified, mediated, and re-interpreted by parents themselves, drawing on their lived experiences. While a more complex vision of gender emerged from this work, therefore, explicit and implicit representations of class continued to bolster and fortify the parents' claims. The documentary opened by portraying two parents in a smartly furnished home, carefully putting on earrings and a tie. Looking to frame the testimonies of PAIN's members, Susan Amphlett stated in the piece that none of the families had been involved with the police before. Steve Amphlett, furthermore, attested that if the Amphletts could be accused of abuse, 'knowing what kind of parents we are', then anyone could be.[56] This representation of universal—perhaps 'ordinary'—respectability was significant in PAIN's broader work.[57] The group's submission to a public consultation in 1986, for example, likewise stated that their parents were the 'type of people' who made use of state health and social work services, enabling these authorities to ensure that their children were 'weighed and examined … up to date with the vaccinations'.[58] PAIN's representations therefore drew on a vision of compliance, respectability, articulacy, and relative affluence; characteristics which framed the narration of experience and emotion in authoritative terms.

While visions of class and gender framed the work of many prominent parent campaigners, parent activists did also find new opportunities to represent their own experiences and emotions in their own terms in the 1980s. In doing so, parents did not challenge all forms of structural inequality; however, they did challenge professional competency, and they did challenge media representations of family life and motherhood. These representations became relatively influential. A small but significant proportion of the UK population—around 1.4 million viewers—saw *Innocents at Risk*.[59] This was among the highest viewing figures which the programme had ever had, and PAIN received over 400 responses after the documentary had aired.[60] PAIN claimed that all responses had been 'favourable', and that falsely accused parents had written 75 per cent, and interested professionals the remainder.[61]

This evidence speaks to the kind of audiences that PAIN's media work was reaching. Even when aired at primetime in the 'age of one-nation television', the organisation's programme was not watched universally, but rather primarily by parents facing similar experiences.[62] Nonetheless, the programme did also attract the attention of a small but significant cohort of policy-makers and professionals interested in child protection. *Innocents at Risk* may have challenged visions of gender, family life, and child protection for its viewers but, as the following sections will demonstrate, media emphasis on mothers—and indeed on individual mothers—was extended and continued through the 1990s and 2000s.

Sara Payne and Mothers in the Media

In the 2000s, Sara Payne led a highly prominent parental campaign, which illustrated ongoing media focus on the experiences of women, but also new pathways through which individual parents could influence New Labour thinking. Sara and her husband Michael Payne came to public attention after their daughter, the eight-year-old Sarah Payne, was abducted and murdered by the paedophile Roy Whiting in 2000. Whiting had previously been convicted of abducting and indecently assaulting another young girl in 1995. All mainstream newspapers provided substantial coverage of the Paynes' personal tragedy—the hunt for Sarah when missing, the grief of her parents, and the search for, and conviction of, her killer.

As with the PAIN families in the 1980s, Sara's emotional inner life was central to this coverage, particularly in the popular tabloid press. News stories discussed Sara's 'tears' and praised her 'dignified and courteous' statements to the courts.[63] One *Daily Mail* article suggested that, as the case continued, Sara's 'dignity' and her 'passionate' demeanour had shifted to a 'calmer' and 'quieter' way of being, 'as if somehow a flame has gone out'.[64] News stories entwined descriptions of Sara's emotional and domestic lives, for example writing that her home was 'a tip, both dirty and untidy… It is perhaps symbolic of her depressed state of mind.'[65] Sara herself expressed emotions clearly to newspapers, telling the *Mail* in 2002 that her pain remained 'raw', but that she had 'got used to it' and 'built a brick wall around my heart'.[66] Interlinked descriptions of Sara's devastation and her resilience were thus key to framing this case, and to constructing Sara as a significant individual spokesperson.

While Sara was the primary focus of much newspaper reporting, at times newspapers also emphasised the partnership between the Paynes and the protective role of Michael. For instance, newspaper coverage described Michael putting his arm around his wife and Sara 'clasping the hand of her husband' and 'collapsing into the arms of her husband'.[67] Nonetheless, on the whole newspapers provided less representation of Michael's grief and, when paying attention to him, often focused on his quietness, for example stating that he 'trembled uncontrollably at her [Sara's] side' or was 'so distraught that he was unable to speak'.[68] In 2003, discussing the Paynes' separation, the *Daily Mail* argued that Michael felt guilt for not having been able to protect his daughter; a description tied to a masculine vision of fatherhood protectiveness.[69] While the primary media focus was on the Payne parents, the experiences of their other children were also represented in gendered terms, for example with the oldest boy, a teenager, described as 'trying to be strong and unemotional', while the youngest daughter was 'walking around bewildered'.[70]

While the ongoing news coverage of the Payne case was far more substantial than that around the PAIN families, like the parent campaigners of the 1980s, Payne asserted that her personal experiences entitled her to speak authoritatively about child protection. Payne later recorded that she had initially questioned whether it was her 'place to get involved in something like this' since she was part of an 'ordinary family', with no particular knowledge about politics.[71] However Payne subsequently asserted her own claims to expertise, stating that she was in fact one of 'the most qualified people' to campaign on issues of family safety, because she had had personal experience in this regard.[72] The Paynes' self-framing as 'ordinary' continued in 2003, as Sara told the *Daily Mail*, explaining the emotional burden of this case, that she was part of 'a very ordinary couple catapulted into the spotlight'.[73] Newspapers subsequently linked this vision of ordinariness to working-class aspiration, describing the Payne parents as 'cheerfully struggling along, making ends meet, in and out of jobs' and as 'all squashed into a council house', for example.[74] While inflected by visions of class, *The Times* also used this construction to invite 'all parents' to reflect on their own lives and to consider, 'how we would bear up had it been one of us standing there yesterday?'[75] In this statement, the identity of 'parent' was seen to supersede class identity, and to provide an element of collective feeling across all families.

A key difference between the parental campaigning in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and that in the 2000s was that the criticism of professional authority had in part diminished by this latter period. Payne's promotion

of experiential expertise, and her testimonies about her own emotions, were not tied up with criticism of clinicians, social workers, or other professional bodies. Indeed, Payne testified that she was 'extremely lucky' as she experienced 'support' and 'respect' during her dealings with the criminal justice system.[76] The Paynes made public statements of thanks to the police involved in their case.[77] Appearing on *BBC News* in 2001, Sara also offered a moderate analysis of the judge who had previously sentenced Whiting to four years in jail following a previous sexual assault of 1995. While the director of the Victims Crime Trust told newspapers that there was 'never too high a [jail] sentence for a paedophile', Payne stated that she did not 'blame' the judge, but rather recognised that he had acted with the information he was given at the time.[78]

Payne's lack of critique for professional services thus reflected her own experiences but also, importantly, a broader context in the 1990s and 2000s in which media critiques of professional authority had, to an extent, been replaced by a focus on multi-disciplinary action and partnership working with families. In this context, newspaper reporting emphasised that Sara Payne referred to 'we' and 'us' as the family, police, and media. Newspaper coverage presented Sara as empowered within this network of actors—for example, reporting that she had made suggestions about how best to publicise the missing person case.[79] Newspapers presented Sara's empowerment as at odds with her working-class background and her feminine emotions, however, and charted a narrative transition from 'working-class Sussex family' and 'terrified mother' to 'articulate, persuasive campaigner'.[80]

While Sara thus became 'expert' in interactions with media and police, newspapers were also increasingly interested in describing the personal experiences and emotions of involved professionals, continuing developments charted in Chap. 5. Newspapers reported, for example, that detectives had 'wiped tears' from their eyes at Whiting's trial, while Sara stated that the judge who sentenced Whiting in 1995 would have 'to live with the "if onlys…"'.[81] Media coverage therefore constructed police and legal professionals as emotional and reflexive subjects. This construction was relatively new, and was not as present in the descriptions offered of, nor by, the clinicians working on the battered child syndrome in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, discussed in Chap. 2.

Media Partnership

The Paynes' work, like earlier parental activism, relied on collaboration with newspapers, though the Paynes became more deeply embedded with media contacts than previous campaigners. Sara Payne was potentially more empowered in interactions with media than previous parents, and harnessed the public interest in her experiences to lobby for change. Once police found her daughter's body, Sara began sustained research about paedophilia and child protection law. When Payne was contacted by a journalist from the *News of the World*, looking for an interview, she asked the paper to investigate Megan's Law: American legislation designed in 1994 to create a publicly accessible database of the names, addresses, and convictions of all sexual offenders.[82] Days later, the *News of the World* contacted Payne again to propose the 'For Sarah' campaign, which would lobby for a range of child protection measures, including enabling concerned parents controlled access to the Sex Offenders Register (already established by the *Sex Offenders Act* of 1997).[83] Sara was not a naïve actor in interaction with newspapers but, rather, reshaped media interest to drive change. Acknowledging and indeed analysing this complex relationship, one contemporary reporter argued that interaction with the media was a way for the Paynes to contribute to the search and to cope with their personal distress.[84]

The first effort by the *News of the World* to promote the 'For Sarah' project was a 'Name and Shame' campaign, which published the names and photographs of people on the Sex Offenders Register. The Home Office, the NSPCC, the Children's Society, ChildLine, and the police condemned this as dangerous, potentially driving paedophiles underground, further endangering children, or leading to mistaken attacks.[85] In terms of the latter, some people were mistaken for those on the list, and their homes surrounded by protestors.[86] Despite its controversial start, this campaign was ultimately influential. The *News of the World* began to collaborate with the NSPCC, police, and probation services, and constructed proposals that were partially enacted in the *Criminal Justice and Court Services Act* of 2000. This act established new laws to prevent paedophiles from working with children, ensured that police would inform victims of sexual abuse if their abuser left jail, and strengthened the resources in place to monitor sexual offenders.[87] Following this, four police areas piloted controlled access to the Sex Offenders Register.[88] This act also introduced Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: new panels to manage offenders in the community and composed of representatives from

police, probation, prison, health, housing, education, and social services—again demonstrative of a shift towards co-operation between professional services in the 1990s and 2000s.[89]

The Paynes' campaigning hence in a sense followed a similar pattern to the work of parent campaigners in the 1980s: parents, particularly mothers, provided emotional and experiential testimony, which the media disseminated and interpreted. However, newspaper discussions of the lives and feelings of the Paynes were far more extensive than ever before, led by tabloid press but also echoed in broadsheet newspapers.[90] The tabloid media also worked more directly and closely with Sara than it had with campaigners of the 1980s. *News of the World* journalists became, for Sara, 'good and trusted friends'.[91] Indeed, for journalists Sara was both a grieving mother and a powerful activist. These dual roles were expressed by the *Daily Mail* in 2002, which described how Sara had 'channelled her relentless grief into a one-woman campaign to change the law to protect the nation's children'.[92] This campaign created a debate about who should be able to access information about crime, and about whether parents were equipped to understand and utilise this information, or whether it should be left within the criminal justice system.

While the Paynes, and particularly Sara, were in part empowered in interactions with newspaper outlets, by making their experiences public they also became subject to press intrusion and sensationalism. In 2001, the *Independent* reported that when the police were telling Michael and Sara that they had found Sarah's body, the other Payne children were already hearing this news from a television in another room.[93] Newspapers thus critically reported on the level of press interest into the Paynes' family lives, while also contributing to it. In a related line of analysis, in 2001 the *Daily Mail* questioned whether the parents were 'more confident in front of cameras than the police'; again reporting on this case while also raising a set of issues about whether such coverage inhibited the Paynes' relationships with statutory authorities.[94] In 2011, such debates—about the relationships between Paynes and press—came to the fore with allegations that the *News of the World* may have hacked Sara's phone.[95] Hence, parents had new access to journalists in the 2000s, and were in part empowered in guiding the object of media coverage. However, the ethical and legal boundaries of this new terrain had not yet been established.

Individualism in Public Policy

Through Sara Payne, parental campaigning may have directly influenced legislative change. In addition to forming significant connections at the *News of the World*, Payne also developed important links in the political world; a new space for parent campaigners. In September 2000, the Paynes met with Jack Straw, the first Home Secretary appointed under the New Labour government of 1997. Demonstrative of multiple sources of influence in this encounter, the Paynes were accompanied by Sarah's grandparents and by Rebekah Wade, *News of the World*'s editor. The parents also promised to present Straw with a petition containing one million signatures from members of the public.[96] The network between policy and public thinking—connected through petitions, political representatives, and media—was not new, but the entry of parents and grandparents into political discussions, directly through meeting with politicians, was significant.

Meeting with a home secretary did not guarantee parental influence, nor the fundamental disruption of public–political relations. Following a 90-minute meeting, the press reported that Straw had 'told the parents' that the *Sex Offenders Act* would be changed. While this was what the Paynes had called for, Home Office spokespeople looked to frame the level of parental influence carefully. One department spokesman told *The Times* that the home secretary had 'an opportunity to give Mr and Mrs Payne an indication of the direction the Government will be taking'; a statement which presented discussions with the Paynes as intended to disseminate, rather than to reshape, policy.[97]

While parental influence was not instant or guaranteed, Sara Payne did form important and new informal relationships with successive home secretaries under New Labour. In 2002, the *Mail* reported that Sara and Michael met regularly with David Blunkett, the home secretary between 2001 and 2004. In interview, Sara called Blunkett 'lovely'. Further—and again demonstrating interest in discussing the experiential expertise of public figures in this period—Payne also iterated that Blunkett 'always asks about the children before we get down to any business'.[98] Emphasising the informal nature of her relationships with politicians in her own book of 2009, Payne reported being phoned on a Sunday morning 'while lounging about in her bed' by John Reid, home secretary between 2006 and 2007. Payne reported that Reid had called to warn her that a judge had mistakenly released a sexual offender, and that the media would soon be in touch.[99]

While New Labour spokespeople may have initially distanced themselves from the influence of the Paynes, the parents did find informal pathways to influence from the early 2000s and were consulted as expert. From the late 2000s, furthermore, Sara Payne also gained formal influence: in January 2009, she was named as the first 'Victims' Champion' at the Ministry of Justice, part of a broader 'explosion' in the number of outside experts appointed by New Labour.[100] The idea of utilising external experts had roots dating back to Harold Wilson's governments, but over 100 'tsars', 'advisors', 'independent reviewers', 'commissioners', and 'champions' were appointed between 1997 and 2010.[101] Many of these appointments were high-profile individuals, for example Lord Alan Sugar (Enterprise Champion), Tim Berners-Lee (Information Advisor), and Sir Steve Redgrave (Sports Legacy Champion).[102] These experts had no one clearly defined mandate, but generally their roles were as 'innovators', appointed to coordinate and inspire 'a range of actors' and to 'deal with particularly intractable problems'.[103]

The appointment of tsars such as Payne marked new opportunities for parents to influence policy—providing a further source of expertise for media discussion, as well as access to politicians and political events. The appointment of tsars also marked a shifting relationship between New Labour and the voluntary sector, moving focus from working with organisations towards appointing individuals. This strategy increased the policy capacity of central government but also changed interactions between parents and politicians. Previously, in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, voluntary groups represented parents and took their concerns, collectively, to public inquiries, select committees, and media. From the late 1990s and 2000s, individuals such as Payne embodied parental concerns. As an individual, Payne was able to speak informally with politicians, and to be appointed for a formal political role.

To an extent, the creation of tsars and the passing of the *Criminal Justice and Court Services Act* of 2000 represented an individualist policy moment. In this act, individual parents were encouraged to be increasingly 'responsible' for overseeing and monitoring their children's development. The idea that parents had rights, as long as they exercised their responsibilities, while key in the *Children Act* of 1989, was extended by New Labour governments, for example in the creation of parental control orders, curfew orders, and legislation around anti-social behaviour.[104] One of the key tenets of the Sarah's Law campaign was 'empowering parents to protect children': parents would have the 'right' to controlled information

about offenders in their neighbourhood but, with this, the conferred responsibility of ensuring that they monitored their neighbours to keep their children safe. The parent, rather than the family or indeed the mother, was to be the key object of social policy, and the agent responsible for promoting change. This escalated the interest seen throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s in engaging families, children, and parents in child protection practice. Newly however, the state and statutory agencies—as well as the voluntary sector—would support and facilitate familial responsibility.

Professional Retaliation

While the Paynes became influential, contemporary journalists, psychologists, and children's charities challenged the significance of experiential expertise. Lynda Lee-Potter from the *Daily Mail* argued that the government should not 'concede to the emotional pressure' of passing the *Criminal Justice and Court Services* bill. She further suggested that the bill's passing would evoke emotional public responses, such as 'mobs' or even murder.[105] Writing for the *Guardian*, the clinical psychologist Oliver James made a different critique: he argued that Sara Payne was not being treated as an expert by professional agencies, but rather that parent campaigners were 'wheeled out to express their concern' and exploited to sell newspapers.[106] These accounts portrayed emotions as powerful motivators for policy reform, and as underpinning popular appetite for newspapers. At the same time, these accounts also expressed concern about who controlled the portrayal and expression of parental emotion and experience.

Furthermore, and demonstrative of the pervasiveness of this hierarchy, newspapers also continued to contrast the experiential knowledge of the Paynes to 'professional' expertise.[107] This critique continued even when Sara Payne was appointed the Victims' Champion tsar. On the publication of her first report, *Redefining Justice*, the *Independent* suggested that 'some lobbying groups' had 'hinted heavily that it said nothing new'. The newspaper interpreted this to reveal an underlying attitude that 'Payne was an amateur stumbling through territory better left to professionals like them'.[108] This contrast between the 'amateur' and the 'professional' signified continuing challenges for parent campaigners. Even as they began to speak in the most influential circles, their testimony was often still interpreted as 'emotional', unoriginal, or 'amateur'. The holding of personal

experience could confer *access* to media and policy spokespeople but could not guarantee influence. As with the 'mothers on the warpath', parents were encouraged to share their emotions publicly, particularly through press, and yet the visibility of their emotions was also used to undermine their arguments.

Payne therefore gained a prominent position in British politics, yet was also reliant on a level of patronage and support from politicians at the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office. Significantly nonetheless, by the 2000s parents were not only influencing policy from the 'outside', through street protests, but also through collaboration with the most influential figures in politics and media. The Home Secretary John Reid presented this as a broader process whereby the 'sincere views of the public, represented by parents such as Sara Payne', were politically powerful.[109] Other politicians though, such as Home Affairs spokesman Nick Clegg, questioned whether the government was using these reforms as 'populist headline-grabbing announcements', rather than to fundamentally shift public–political relationships.[110] Certainly, while Payne's campaign had substantial traction, other contemporary groups representing parents struggled to be heard. The shift in parents' campaigning from a collective to an individual phenomenon, and the increasing media fixation on campaign figureheads, did not wholly confront nor subvert long-standing debates about how communities, families, and policy should work together to protect children.

Conclusion

Chapters 5 and 6 of this book have analysed a series of moments in which parents sought out influence over policy and public debate in the late twentieth century. The 'mothers on the warpath' had some opportunities to disseminate their aims in the popular press. The subsequent articles published however were somewhat dismissive. Through the 1980s and the 1990s, numerous newspaper articles reproduced the narratives of falsely accused parents at length and near verbatim. The television show *Open Space: Innocents at Risk* also disseminated the experiences of these parents. Very small parental advocacy groups such as PAIN acted as mediators in this process, recording the stories of falsely accused parents and presenting them to press and policy. By the 2000s, the experiences and emotions of Sara and Michael Payne were documented daily by newspapers, and Sara was appointed as a special advisor to government, as part of New Labour's focus on appointing 'tsars'.

Looking across these case studies, one may be tempted to draw a smooth narrative, whereby parental campaigners assumed increasing influence over

policy and media in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This may seem like a linear progression of the increasing influence of experiential and emotional expertise, amidst the rise of an investigatory media. To an extent, this narrative holds significance; however, this is by no means such a linear history. Chapters 5 and 6 also demonstrate that the extent to which parents successfully gained influence was shaped by their successes in negotiating relationships with journalists, policy-makers, social workers, and medical professionals. In the 1980s, parents had to both assert that their experiential expertise was more significant than the knowledge held by clinicians and social workers, and yet also to demonstrate that they had support from such professional groups. Media and parental focus on criticising professional practice also contributed to a moment in which social workers and clinicians defended their work in experiential terms. People's experiences and emotions became significant as sources of evidence, placed alongside medical and research reports, though such evidence was sometimes seen as irrational, as well as powerful.

Women's testimonies in particular were the focus of much media coverage in the late twentieth century. A media and policy focus on mothers—their bodies, emotions, and daily lives—has a long history throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[111] What was new, however, was the reshaping of these broader trajectories in terms of unprecedented media interest in women's narration of their own experiences, shaped by right-wing anxieties around increasing female participation in the workplace and the development of second-wave feminism. Descriptions of women's experiences and emotions were both empowering and disempowering in this moment. The protest of the 'mothers on the warpath' was explained by newspapers as a communitarian act, in the context of Women's Liberation, and yet also somewhat dismissed, and presented as a hysterical, 'womanly' reaction. Mothers were questioned from the 1980s about how their campaigning would affect their parental duties, and many felt expected to give up their jobs when contesting accusations of abuse. Mothers such as Amphlett and Payne understood the processes of media work and were able, to an extent, to channel media interest towards their own campaigning. Nonetheless, to gain influence, the women also faced significant press intrusion and the multiple burdens of parenting, activism, media work, and workplace life. Media coverage rarely analysed the position and role of fathers in child protection debates. Indeed, this absence itself motivated the activism of Fathers 4 Justice, which was founded in 2001 and undertook a variety of high-profile stunts to critique the treatment of fathers in family courts. In contrast to press coverage of

protesting mothers in the 1970s and 1980s, newspaper articles about Fathers 4 Justice emphasised and explored the men's 'masculine' identities: their vigour, anger, and use of physically demanding feats.[112] Ideas of cultural masculinity were further represented in the organisation's own publicity materials, which invited men to join the group 'for less than the price of a pint a month', and made heavy use of the iconography of superheroes, particularly Superman.[113]

In these ways, the processes through which parents came to assume influence in the late twentieth century were complex and disordered, heavily shaped by perceptions of gender, and deeply reliant on collaboration and conflict with media, medicine, and social work. Nonetheless, the case studies of this chapter were also revealing of a space in which experiential and emotional expertise was somewhat further valued—or at least further visible—by the 2000s. The next chapter of this book analyses how survivor experiences and emotions also became visible in public policy and media from the 1980s and particularly from the 1990s. In doing so, it traces many parallels with parental activism—in terms of collaboration with media, the role of voluntary groups, and the focus on individual spokespeople under New Labour. At the same time, Chap. 7 also demonstrates that survivor campaigners faced further challenges to speaking out, as literary, social policy, and media actors were often reluctant to confront and analyse the long-term effects of childhood abuse, and to consider its lived effects on adult life.

Notes

1. On the Western philosophical tradition of constructing female emotion as 'irrational', and male 'objectivity' as 'rational', please see: Leena Rossi and Tuija Aarnio, 'Feelings Matter: Historians' Emotions', *Historyka. Stuidia Metodologiczne*, 88 (2012): 172–173; Alison M. Jaggar, 'Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Methodology', *Inquiry*, 32 (1989): 163–164.
2. Analysis in this area draws on the work of Peter Bailey in terms of assessing how working-class Victorians 'move[d] through several different roles' and performed respectability as a 'choice of role', rather than a 'universal normative mode'. Peter Bailey, '"Will the real Bill Banks please stand up?": Towards a Role Analysis of mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability', *Journal of Social History*, 12 (1979): 341–343.
3. Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 157.
4. Steven Angelides, 'The Emergence of the Paedophile in the Late Twentieth Century', *Australian Historical Studies*, 36 (2005): 272–295;

Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality—Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works* (New York, 1962), as cited in ibid., 272.

5. Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, 157–158.
6. Ibid., 153–183.
7. Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, 168; Phillip Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992), 9, 24, 99.
8. Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies*, 9, 24.
9. British Library (hereafter BL), PIE, *Childhood Rights*, Vol. 1 No. 3, 1977, 'Principles', 3.
10. Lucy Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 129–139.
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12. Described in: Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'Moles, Witches and the rest of us', *The Observer*, 4 September 1983, 7; Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'Cruelty, and other tests of tolerance', *Guardian*, 18 September 1983, 7.
13. Chris Moores, 'The Paedophile Information Exchange was a product of a different time and culture', The Conversation, 27 February 2014 <https://theconversation.com/the-paedophile-information-exchange-was-a-product-of-a-different-time-and-culture-23735> (23 March 2015).
14. Chris Moores, *Civil Liberties and Human Rights in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 190–198.
15. Ibid., 201; Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, 183.
16. Mary De Young, 'The Indignant Page: Techniques of Neutralisation in the Publications of Pedophile Organisations', *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 12 (1988): 593; Julian Bourg, 'Boy Trouble: French Pedophiliac Discourse of the 1970s' in Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (eds), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960–1980* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 285–313; Phillip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 259–268; Phillip Jenkins, *Moral Panic: Changing Concepts of the Child Molester in Modern America* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1998). Archival materials—primarily newsletters—of the North American Man-Boy Love Association are available at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Yale.
17. Tom Crabtree, 'Adults only', *Guardian*, 19 May 1977, 11.
18. Hansard, House of Commons, fifth series, vol. 941 col. 901, 15 December 1977; Hansard, House of Commons, fifth series, vol. 943 col. 1833–1879, 10 February 1978.
19. Romi Bowen and Angela Hamblin, 'Sexual Abuse of Children', *Spare Rib*, May 1981, Issue 106.
20. Ibid.

21. Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left*, 133–134; 'Judge attacks paedophile group', *Guardian*, 1 April 1978, 3.
22. 'Paedophile chairman 'soaked with beer'', *Guardian*, 8 December 1977, 4.
23. Crabtree, 'Adults only', 11.
24. 'Paedophile chairman 'soaked with beer'', 4; 'Why child-sex man got a pub drenching', *Daily Mail*, 8 December 1977, 16–17.
25. 'Paedophile conference plans 'age of consent' meeting', *Guardian*, 1 September 1977, 4.
26. Philip Jordan, 'Mothers in child sex protest to continue anti-PIE campaign', *Guardian*, 21 September 1977, 5; Hencke, 'Street battle after paedophilia meeting, *Guardian*, 20 September 1977, 1; William Langley and Stuart Collier, 'Mothers on the Warpath', *Daily Mail*, 20 September 1977, 1; 'Paedophile conference plans 'age of consent' meeting', 4.
27. Langley and Collier, 'Mothers on the Warpath', 1; Philip Jordan, 'Mothers in child sex protest to continue anti-PIE campaign', *Guardian*, 21 September 1977, 5.
28. Langley and Collier, 'Mothers on the Warpath', 1.
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32. Jordan, 'Mothers in child sex protest', 5.
33. Robin Ball, 'Top marks to the stink bombers!', *Daily Mail*, 26 September 1977, 30.
34. Langley and Collier, 'Mothers on the Warpath', 1.
35. Hansard, House of Commons, sixth series, vol. 62 col. 975, 27 June 1984.
36. Malcolm Dean, 'Scotland Yard sends two new reports on PIE to ministers', *Guardian*, 25 August 1983, 2.
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40. 'Man jailed for conspiracy to corrupt morals', *The Times*, 14 March 1981, 2.
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43. Hall Carpenter Archives (hereafter HCA), Paedophile Information Exchange, *Magpie*, Issue 9, 1977, Keith Hose, 'Proud to be a pig', 8–9.
44. Langley and Collier, 'Mothers on the Warpath', 1.
45. Parts of the following section were first tested out, in slightly different form, in my article, Jennifer Crane, 'Painful Times: The Emergence and Campaigning of Parents Against Injustice in 1980s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 26, no. 3 (2015): 450–476. Select archival quotations and my own ideas are reused here in line with the article's open access status, as it was published under a Creative Commons CC-BY license.
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48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. See: Rossi and Aarnio, 'Feelings Matter': 172–173; Alison M. Jaggar, 'Love and Knowledge': 163–164.
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57. For an interesting analysis of 'ordinariness' as constructed in the 1980s, please see: Chris Moores, 'Thatcher's troops? Neighbourhood Watch schemes and the search for "ordinary" Thatcherism in 1980s Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 31, no. 2 (2017): 230–255.
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62. Joe Moran, *Armchair Nation: An intimate history of Britain in front of the TV* (London: Profile Books, 2013), 2.
63. Lynda Lee-Potter, 'Sarah's Law is not the best way', *Daily Mail*, 19 December 2001, 11.
64. Angela Levin, 'I've built a brick wall around my heart', *Daily Mail*, 29 June 2002, 30.
65. Ibid., 30.
66. Ibid., 30.
67. Julia Stewart, 'Tears and fears of a distraught family fighting to cope with the loss of their 'little princess'', *Independent*, 13 December 2001, 3; Paul Peachey, 'Sarah Payne jury is told of gruesome discovery', *Independent*, 21 November 2001, 11; Terri Judd, 'Paynes face murder suspect in court', *Independent*, 20 February 2001, 2. Describing hand-holding: Paul Harris, 'At least their daughter could now rest in peace', *Daily Mail*, 13 December 2001, 8–9.
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78. Christian Gysin, 'No regrets', *Daily Mail*, 18 December 2001, 5.
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80. Mattin, 'The Face: A Mother with a Mission', 2.
81. Christian Gysin, 'No regrets', *Daily Mail*, 18 December 2001, 5; Harris, 'At least their daughter could now rest in peace', 8–9. See also the analysis in *The Times* that the confirmation of Sarah's death, when the body was found, 'hit all those working on the inquiry' and led to an 'emotional press conference', Michael Harvey, 'Sarah's parents visit site where body lay', *The Times*, 19 July 2000.
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92. Levin, 'I've built a brick wall around my heart', 30.
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94. Harris, 'At least their daughter could now rest in peace', 8–9.
95. 'Sara Payne 'on phone-hack' list', *BBC News*, 29 July 2011 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-14332689> (26 April 2018).
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97. Ibid.
98. Levin, 'I've built a brick wall around my heart', 30.
99. Payne and Keenan, *Where Angels Fear*, 169–170.
100. Martin Smith, *Goats and Tsars: Ministerial and other appointments from outside Parliament*, Public Administration Select Committee, Eight Report of Session 2009–2010, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 2010), 42.
101. Prime Minister Harold Wilson also notably attempted to use politically sympathetic outside experts for advice in his administration. Please see: Andrew Blick, 'Harold Wilson, Labour and the Machinery of Government', *Contemporary British History*, 20, no. 3 (2006): 343–362. In terms of appointments under New Labour please see: Ruth Levitt and William Solesbury, 'Debate: Tsars—are they the 'experts' now?', *Public Money & Management*, 32, no. 1 (2012): 47.
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