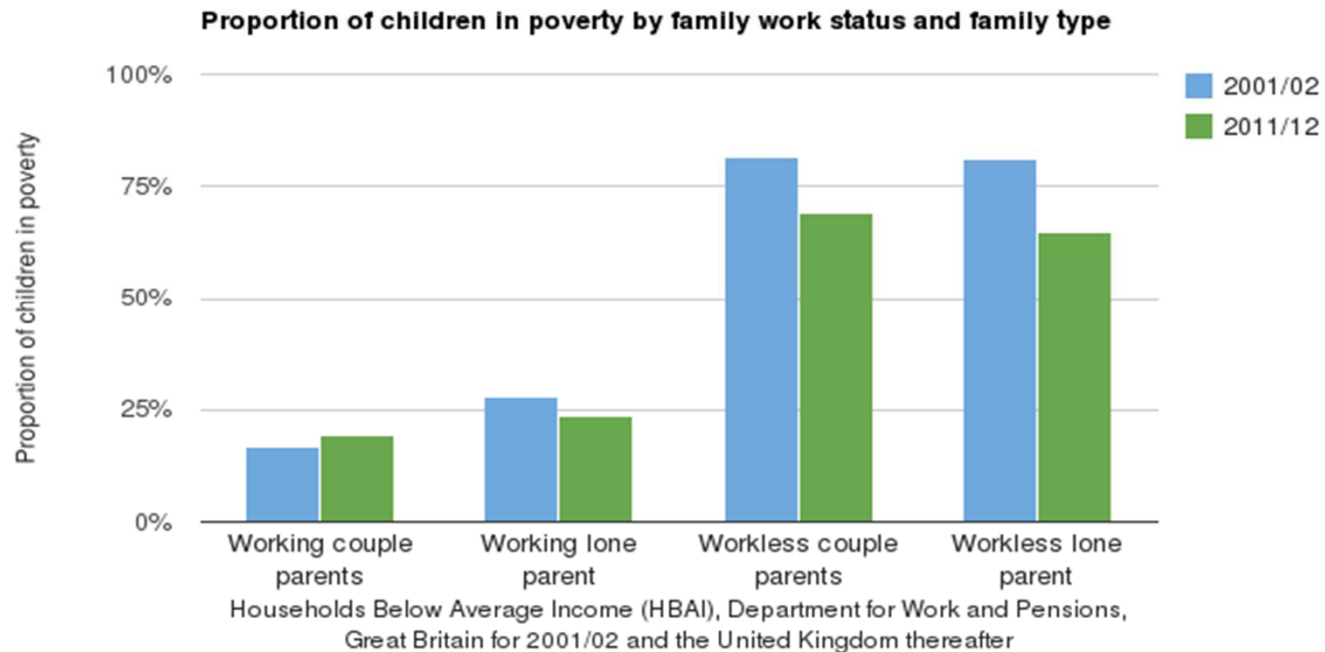
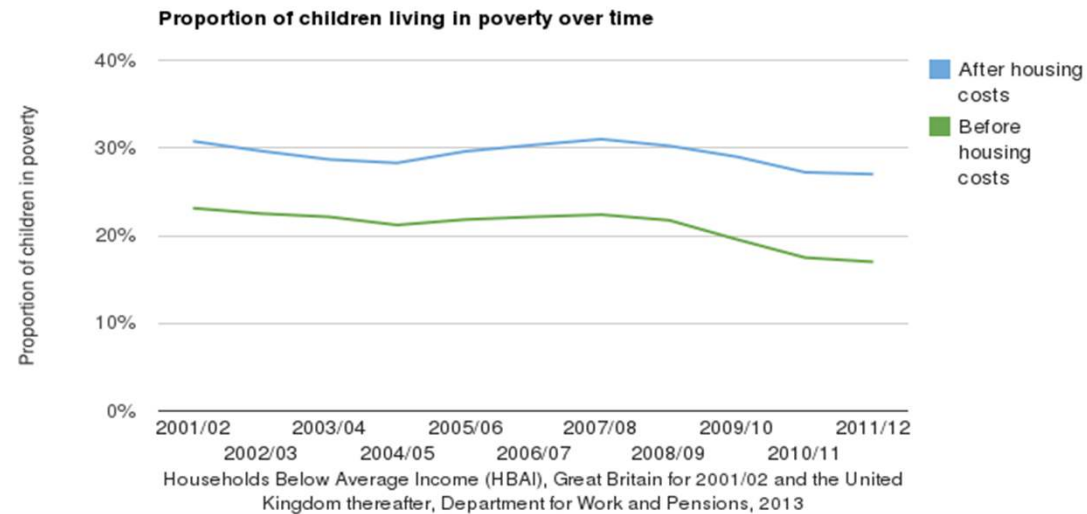
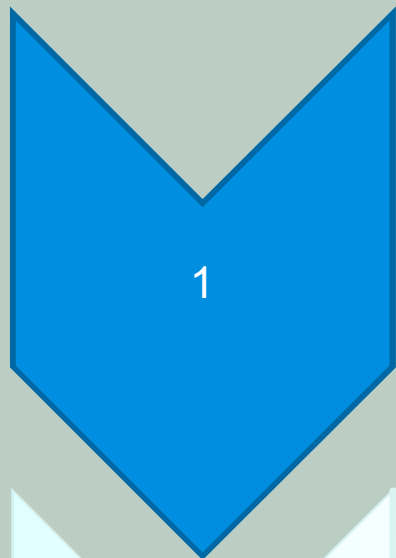


JRF: Child Poverty (from DWP 2013 data)



Talk covers



- Children's views and experiences of consumption and socioeconomic positioning



- Contingent and contextual negotiation of 'family practices' in poverty

Poor Kids BBC documentary 7.6.2011

Courtney & Holly (8 years old)

COURTNEY: Holly's family can afford nicer clothes than me because her family work and my family don't./.../ for like if something breaks down in our house, her dad can fix it and mine can't because he can't afford the money to get the council to fix stuff and that. If your family work you get more money in your house but if they don't you get less money in your house and my mum can't lend me the money when I become 21 or whatever or however older I become and then so I just wanna work and do whatever I want to do.

HOLLY: You never know when you get older you might be a richer--you never know

COURTNEY: I think that my future is going to have more of the bad things in it than a few good things 'cause her-- she is going to be richer when she grows up and I'll be poor. I'm just saying=

HOLLY: =Social workers might pay for you or summat.

COURTNEY: They won't, social workers will be dead by the time I'm 21. None of my family are working I'm a little kid about 3, 4, I'll just ignore my future and wait for my future until it comes up and that.



Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London


Narratives of negotiating are not enough: Children, families and consumption in straitened circumstances

Ann Phoenix

Thomas Coram Research Unit

www.ioe.ac.uk

NiCRM
National Centre for
Research Methods

NOVELLA

NARRATIVES OF VARIED EVERYDAY
LIVES AND LINKED APPROACHES

America's Poor Kids

BBC Two 6.3.2013

- Kaylie (10 years) and Tyler (12 years) live with their mother Barbara, who lost her factory job.
- Unemployment benefit and food stamps of \$1,480 (£974) a month.
 - Rent & bills \$1,326 (£873) a month.
 - Several house moves when grandmother no longer able to help with the rent.
 - ☐ Kaylie not at school.

"I really want to be in school. If you don't get a good education then you don't get much money, you don't get a good job, you end up sleeping at your mum's. You end up being behind a lot of rent and you get kicked out. You end up being homeless and then with no food."

Kaylie: "We don't get three meals a day like breakfast, lunch and then dinner,"
When I feel hungry I feel sad and droopy."

Tyler : "Sometimes when we have cereal we don't have milk - we have to eat it dry. Sometimes we don't have cereal and we have milk. Sometimes when there's a cooking show on I get a little more hungry - I want to vanish into the screen and start eating the food."

"For mowing other people's lawns, I got \$10 and I put in six of it for the gas, and gave the rest to my mum for some food."

Kaylie collects cans along the railway track (2-5 cents per can). Her clothes come from the Salvation Army shop "60-cent shirts are allowed", but those costing \$2 are "too much".

Subjectification to family structural positioning

Food poverty,
poor housing &
unemployment

'Style
failure'/social
exclusion from
consumption
(Croghan et al.,
2006)

Understanding
of /
contribution to
family

Foreclosed from
future possibilities
(Davies and
Saltmarsh, 2007)

Over 1 billion Barbie dolls have been sold in 150 countries since 1959 (now 215K per day)

THE ENUMERATION OF DOLLS*

Beanie Babies	165
Human/Animal Figurines	36
Barbie Dolls	22
Other Dolls	20
Porcelain Dolls	3
Troll	1
Castle Miniature	1

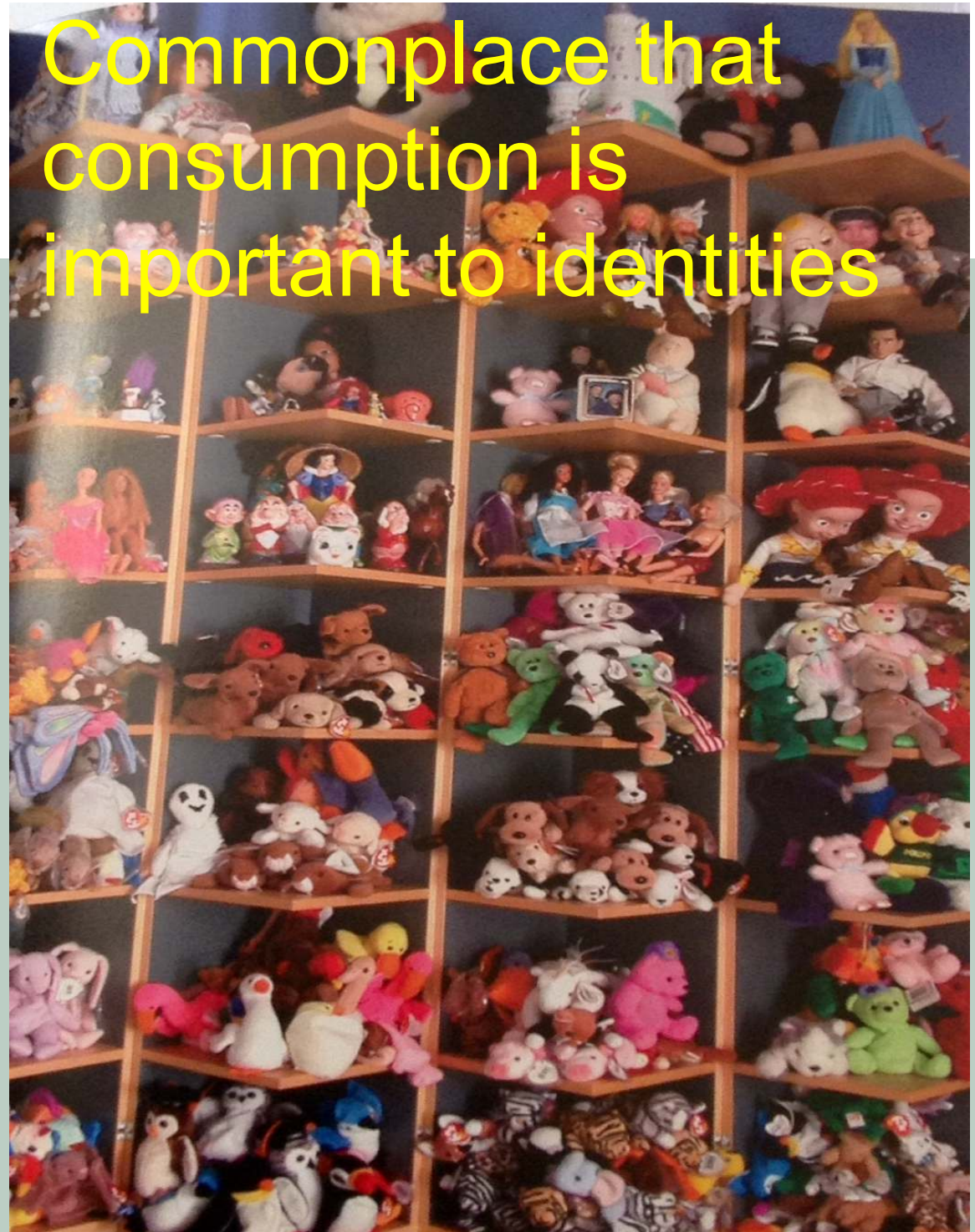
* Display shelf, girl's bedroom, Family 1 (pictured left)

Ah, there are all the Beanie Babies. Look how beautiful they are. Do you have a favorite one? I just want to show all those Barbies. Okay, there's Ken, oh that's Elvis...

Mother (Age 48), Family 1

Arnold et al., 2012 (*Life at home...* p. 33)

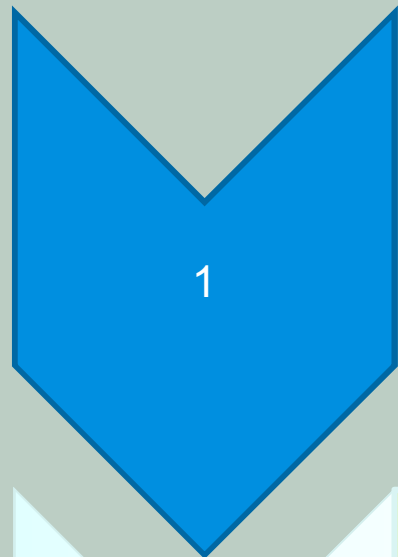
Commonplace that consumption is important to identities



Skatterbol et al., 2012, *Making a Difference: Building on children's and young people's experiences of economic adversity*

- 1) **Children worry about social exclusion, and managing life, not poverty per se -- affects their self-worth.**
- 2) **Use a variety of creative strategies to cope with economic adversity.**
 - Avoid situations where they might be financially embarrassed
 - Nurture their own and their families' financial resources.
- 3) **Families are central source of support & stress**
- 4) **Attitudes to poverty and their images of it are formed at an early age**
- 5) **(Fear of) crime for many children and young people who experience economic adversity (Backett-Milburn et al., 2003; Sutton, 2008).**
- 6) **Poverty can depress aspirations and knowledge about, and resources to reach, goals.**

'Family practices consist of all the ordinary, everyday actions that people do..., orientated to another family member. More than this, in enacting these practices, the other is defined as a family member (David Morgan, 2011, 3.3 & 3.4)



- Children's views and experiences of consumption and socioeconomic positioning



- Contingent and contextual negotiation of 'family practices' in poverty

'Family practices' linked with materiality (Morgan, 2011)

- Families are a key site where 'cuts' and austerity are lived.**
- Practices, habits, routines produced through the mundane; everyday relations, societal positioning and consumption (Shove et al., 2012; Halkier et al., 2011).**
- Everyday (family) practices developed to deal with poverty in different ways for different families.**
- Narratively produced & productive of narratives.**
- Negotiated in context & dynamic.**
- Psychosocial: Emotions; desire & agency (Illouz, 2009)**

Skatterbol et al., 2012, *Making a difference*

It can be tough at times. I remember one stage when the stock market went down or something like that, we were really struggling. Because my step-mum got a bit sick ... But I remember, sometimes, my step-mum used to cry because of money.

I wouldn't want to ask because I feel sorry for them [parents] (Tessa, female, 15 years, NSW)

My mum struggles, she gets paid on Thursdays but struggles on the Wednesday. Me and my brother if there is no food for school, we don't go to school at all. She has never sent us to school with no food /.../ My mum doesn't like having [my friend] over when there isn't much food; she gets ashamed like she is going to go tell her mum. In case she says we didn't have much for dinner tonight (Billie, female, 15 years, NSW).

Notion of 'Pester Power' is too simplistic

EVANS (2006) 45, 7-11 YEAR OLDS, 19 PARENTS--AFFLUENT & IMPOVERISHED

- Parents take account of value, educational qualities, and longer-term potential of particular products, as well as requests (c.f. Boden, 2006)
- Affluent parents tried to restrain their children's consumer desires (Pugh, 2009).
- Want to give children things they never had (c.f. Pugh, 2009).
- Parents in poorer areas had more fears of risks outside the household.

Sarah: My sister is more demanding than I am (.) and like if (.) she wants something she'll keep going on and on about it, so mum's finally gives in and gets it her and then we're broke for the rest of the week (12 year old - mainly working class Milton Keynes school)

'It's quite hard for young people to become accepted by their peer group. Consumption is part of that – part of their acceptance. By buying the same things – clothes and music – hopefully they're showing that they're part of a group and will be accepted by it... [Mother of three daughters: 9, 12 and 15 years (Consumption study)]

‘Economy of dignity’: material goods show care (Pugh, 2009, US)

- **Tess Ridge (2007) qualitative, longitudinal study of low-income working family life**
- **Ridge (2002, 2007) Children in poor families understood the financial constraints on their parents.**
- **Parents attempted to protect their children from the stigma of poverty (c.f. Middleton et al., 1998; Pugh).**
- **Some children (especially girls) attempt to protect their parents (c.f. Chin, 2001, US black children living in poverty).**
- **Children who ‘pester’ know what their parents can afford or find it difficult to deal with their position in their peer group (Croghan et al., 2006; Phoenix, 2005).**

Family Lives and the Environment



Perspectives from India (Andhra Pradesh) and the UK

**Janet Boddy, Ann Phoenix, Helen Austerberry, Hanan
Hauari, Catherine Walker, Natasha Shukla**

***Young Lives:* Uma Vennam, Madhavi Latha, Virginia
Morrow, Emma Wilson, and Gina Crivello**

Relationality and materiality accepted as context

UK Mother and Son 12 years



Katrina: I've got my parents [nearby], and they help out quite a bit. And I've got *friends* that will help out. But I don't *like* asking too much, 'cause I don't like being a burden on people (.). So it will be nice to have a car again [...] If I can't get my usual lift (JT: Mmm) (...) I have to um, get two buses in the morning, but wait for an hour in between buses.

CL.No, because my mum hasn't got a car, so um... If mum...like if mum did have a car I would ask if I can go to after school clubs. But I can't because mum hasn't got a car. And the buses don't (.) /.../

C. Is there anything that you've done for a member of your family that you feel particularly proud about?

Cl. Umm (...) on holiday I paid for our whole lun - our whole meal once. /.../
And on another holiday I paid for our drinks.

Family Lives and the Environment UK family –negotiated acceptance of area

MOTHER Well to be honest we, I, we don't have any problems. A lot of people moan about the area and say it's a dump and this, that and the other. But it's (...) it's fine for us. // Son It's only a dump when people make it a dump.

MOTHER It's the people that are in the area more than the area. It's got (...) nothing to do with the area you live in. It's how the people in the area treat it.

N And what kind of, when you say people, what do you mean by?

MOTHER Well there's a lot of um (...) drugs and (...) gangs and (...) muggings and things like that. But nothing that's directly affected us.

N OK. So things that have happened to...

MOTHER Yeah.

N ...to others.

MOTHER I mean muggings and people stealing like bikes and stuff like that. That's rose, risen quite a lot over the past (...) couple of years.

Son Riots.

T But it's not direct, that's not directed, direCtly affeCted us./.../

Father Now there's the burglaries as well.

N Pardon?

Father I'm saying now there's the burglaries. I mean there's a few of them.

Mother Yeah. There's been a (...) the, the rise in burglaries and stuff and...

N Right. OK.

Mother But it's not affected us. Both of our neighbours have been burgled, but we haven't.

Family Lives and the Environment UK family –negotiated acceptance of area

MOTHER Well to be honest we, I, we don't have any problems. A lot of people moan about the area and say it's a dump and this, that and the other. But it's (...) it's fine for us. // Son It's only a dump when people make it a dump.

MOTHER It's the people that are in the area more than the area. It's got / live

Hanan ...What sort of things do you do with your friends?

SON Er (...) I (...) um (...) round my friend's house I'll go on their trampoline.

And...

H You go what?

SON On their trampoline.

H Oh, right. Is that in their garden?

SON Yeah.

H Oh right.

SON And (...) um (...) I go park on my bike (*inaudible*) that was when it was not broke.

H And do you think there are any things that could be done to make your local area better (...) in any way? Or do you think that you like it as it is?

SON Um... Not really. Oh, put surveillance cameras around.

H You'd like that.

SON Yeah.

H And how would you, how do you think that would help? In what ways would that help?

SON Because if (...) it's generally if people (...) there if (...) there would be less robberies and that.

Socioeconomic positioning central to family negotiations

Children and parents engage in project of negotiating poverty together (c.f. Hallden, 2004)

Subjection (and resistance) to normalizing discourses of what families ought to be like.

'Interpellations of impossibility' – parental responsibility and precarity (Jensen & Tyler, 2012)