

Looking For The ‘Rich Child’ In Residential Child Care Workers’ Everyday Practice

A case study investigating the use of the ‘image of the Rich Child’ in a team of residential care workers’ justifications for the decisions they make in the everyday

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‘I, Cécile Remy, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.’

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Abstract

The subaltern positioning – or othering- of children in care is well documented. One of the arguments for adopting social pedagogy as an approach to professionalising the children workforce in the UK was pedagogues' awareness of the impact of constructions of 'child' on professional practice. Moss and Petrie, (2002), inspired by the Italian Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) educator Loris Malaguzzi', suggested working from an 'image of the rich child' to counter negative constructions present in British services.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how Moss and Petrie's suggestion can, if at all, transform this subaltern positioning and positively counter existing constructions of 'child' in the everyday practice of Residential Child Care workers in England.

To do this, I first highlight a disconnection in Malaguzzi, Moss and Petrie's work and much of the literature about RCC in England: the split between imagined, preferred futures and current state of affairs. In the former, the sector invests hopes and attempts to improve quality, while in the latter, negative constructions and deviations from the preferred future are highlighted. Many years of reform and improvement have not significantly changed this for the better.

I argue that a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework is adequate to investigate the transformative potential of the image of the rich child in RCC workers' everyday practice because it articulates the relationship between 'images' and material practice, and how practices can either incrementally change or socially reproduce the status-quo through attention to mediation and ideal images as defined by Ilyenkov. I describe how Change Laboratories can support those theoretical principles to be applied to workplace settings.

The analysis of the everyday situations produced through an adapted process of change laboratory demonstrates how the statutory categories of 'child in care as other' and the subaltern positioning of children in care invisibly mediate the everyday activity of RCC workers, in a way that shapes the interpersonal relationships between young people and adults in the case study home. If one is to take transformative actions to counter these negative constructions of 'child', one needs to understand how professionals use different types of knowledge to carry out their work, and how social pedagogy's ideas of value-based practice is tied with neo-liberal notions of individual responsibility.

Impact Statement

The work presented in this thesis has two strands: one that pertains to social pedagogy theory, and the other one oriented towards the workplace learning of RCC workers in England.

First of all, the thesis elaborates on current knowledge to strengthen links between social pedagogy and post-Vygotskian theory. Post-Vygotskian theory adds a more critical outlook to social pedagogy, enabling and articulating links between value-based principles and everyday practice. It is important in the context of structural, oppressive systems that narrow possibilities for change in English society. I draw on post-Vygotskian theory to show how broad categories of meaning embedded in statutory guidance mediate the interpersonal relationships between staff and young people in children's homes. This demonstrates how individual workers tacitly reproduce the status-quo and how the capacity for RCC workers' agentic action can severely be impeded by the logics that operate in the sector. The thesis explores the reproduction of categories of 'child as other'. It concludes by suggesting how actions to disrupt this mechanism needs to be collectively thought about rather than seen as a characteristic of the individual worker as social pedagogy has so far thought about it in English literature. I have started disseminating those findings through my work with the Social Pedagogy Professional Association, by organising and contributing to [an international academic conference](#) looking at transgressing the status-quo and breaking the cycle of social reproduction in professional practice.

The consequences of this are highly relevant for the training of RCC workers, and this forms the second strand with which I envisage developing the work reported in this thesis: RCC workers need to become more aware of the uniqueness and the relevance of the knowledge they use in their work. In this regard, post-Vygotskian theory would be highly appropriate when designing a curriculum for RCC workers. I intend to make use of this learning as a Knowledge Transfer Partnership Associate with Strathclyde University and a Scottish RCC provider, looking at finding ways to reduce the use of physical restraint in the organisation.

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Abbreviations

CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECM	Every Child Matters
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
RCC	Residential Child Care
SPDN	Social Pedagogy Development Network
SPPA	Social Pedagogy Professional Association
TCRU	Thomas Coram Research Unit
TRC	Therapeutic Residential Care
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

1 Introduction

It is one p.m. on a lazy Saturday and a young person living in a residential home is getting ready to go out. Before going, he asks for his pocket money, as is usual on weekends. A support worker gives it to him, but there is some disagreement about the amount given. Indeed, part of this young man's pocket money is an 'incentive': he gets £1 per day when he attends college. He claims that his timetable has changed, and he has five days of college per week, so he expects £5, yet there is no record of him having gone to college every day this week.

After some time, the young person sets the fire alarm off by breaking a fire panel. He appears calm, yet when spoken to, he explains the first support worker has been racist towards him: He was speaking in Arabic to one of his peers and they asked him to switch to English. He is less intent on getting the £1 he thought he was entitled to just now. He says the support worker is on his blacklist and he will continue to set the alarm off as retribution for being asked to switch languages. He does not really mind the fact that he will receive a sanction to help cover the price of the broken glass panels from the fire alarm (two so far).

I come to talk to the young person, whom I have known for more than a year in my role as a participation worker. I ask why he is annoyed and try to understand what is behind his feeling of being discriminated against. The conversation goes from this to swimming in clear waters (we used to go swimming together), to bike rides and to reminiscing on his journey to England through Libya, Italy and France. There are beautiful beaches in Vintimilla, and it was important to have something nice to do while waiting for the right opportunity to cross the border to France.

Then, somehow, the real reason for the resentment towards being asked to switch from Arabic to English: 'They don't know what it's like. One day I will write a book, so people here know.' The young person talks about crossing the Mediterranean, and the hope that carried him despite the realities of the crossing. The conversation is interrupted because a letter in his name has arrived.

Later on, I try to find out from the other workers in the home how they are, to integrate what I suspect may be different experiences of that same young person. It has been a stressful afternoon for my colleagues, and they portray him as 'demanding', 'money-orientated', and 'controlling yet calm' because he has not 'flipped'. It is difficult for me to explain how touched I am by what he told me, and I worry that sharing this would be understood as a weakness on my part. I am also vaguely aware of being made into the 'good one', 'the saviour' and how this creates resentment in my colleagues. Instead, I try to influence the language they use in a report of the incident, emphasising the feelings rather than using diagnosing words like 'demanding, aggressive'. I wonder about the nature of the gap in the perception of that young man between my colleagues and myself.

In my professional practice in children's homes in England, I can recall countless situations where perceptions and approaches to responding to a young person were being negotiated within the staff team. Despite an awareness of the importance of relationships and personal meanings amongst my colleagues and me, it is as if somehow the personal yet very political story of this young man's experience of speaking his native language was being erased. I decided not to bring it back into the picture we created of him while writing the report for fear that I might appear to be misjudging the situation. I overlooked what I judged, in context, to be small, petty acts like that of setting off the fire alarm, and focused instead on the big picture. This contrasted with some of my colleagues' reliance on behaviourism, financial incentives and sanctions in the upbringing of children and young people. What meaning do my colleagues make of the situation? Should the adults present be in control and authoritative, empathetic or understanding? What is it in my colleagues' and my value bases that pushed us to see this young man as someone who needed to be controlled, someone who was vulnerable and therefore needed protection, or someone who had been wronged? What about his self-awareness and his understanding of the situation? How can I learn about the factors that create such a split among professionals in considering what is important in this situation?

Throughout the thesis, my focus will be on the adults' differing attitudes towards young people living in children's homes. By anchoring these observations within the statutory system, the culture of Residential Child Care (RCC) and everyday professional practice in RCC, I question whether it is possible to change the negative and marginalised perception of young people in care. Following my professional involvement in RCC, I have been involved in UK social pedagogy for many years, where I came across the idea of working from an image of the 'rich child' (Moss et al., 2000; Moss & Petrie, 2002). Moss, Petrie and others understood that social constructions of childhood and state-level policies influenced the relationships between children and young people (B. Cohen et al., 2004; Moss et al., 1999; P. Petrie et al., 2006). They borrowed the notion of the 'rich child' from the Italian early years educationalist Loris Malaguzzi (Moss, 2011) and suggested that important aspects of social pedagogy are understanding how children are thought about and taking positive steps to think of children as 'rich' when working with them. This is the possibility that I am investigating in this thesis. In doing so, I reflect on the nature of knowledge one draws upon in the practice of RCC.

This introduction contextualises the events described in the vignette within children’s homes in England to reflect the statutory framework within which the fieldwork took place. The introduction spans nearly 30 years, from 1991, the year the Children Act 1989 was introduced in practice, to pre-pandemic 2020. During that time, the Children Act 1989, on which many of the statutory instruments governing RCC rest, has been amended¹ but not fundamentally changed, thus offering a clear practice framework.

First, I describe how the children living in RCC and the adults working with them are part of a wider system of state-funded services that shape their lives significantly. I move on to some of the characteristics of RCC professional practice, an important consideration to understand the mindset with which RCC workers think of the young people they work with.

I then introduce a key approach to theory and practice for the premise of the thesis: social pedagogy, and in particular Moss and Petrie’s suggestion that working from ‘an image of the rich child’ has ‘*profound consequences [...] for provision, policy and practice*’ (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 22).

The rest of the introduction outlines the argument and structure of the thesis.

1.1 Description of the System of RCC

To situate residential children’s homes within the overall system of children’s services, I locate their residents within the general population, before going on to detail the characteristics of those living in RCC and those who worked in children’s homes in England in 2018. From those quantitative descriptions, I move on to describe the characteristics and implications for the sector.

1.1.1 RCC Young People’s Population

Young people are sometimes placed in a children’s home by a social worker, who, following an assessment of the young person’s situation, can legally demonstrate that intervention by the state is necessary to prevent ‘significant harm’. In other cases, a voluntary arrangement

¹ A search on www.legislation.gov.uk, the website listing all UK legislation enacted, highlights 1977 amendments to the act since it was given royal assent and the date of writing.

between the family and the local authority may be arrived at (Allen, 2005, pp. 105-144; 195-256). Being ‘taken into care’ is influenced by wider social determinants, such as race, class or gender; yet an intersectional lens is relatively new to children's social care (Bywaters et al., 2018; M. Smith, 2010b; Webb et al., 2020).

1.1.1.1 Characteristics of the RCC Population

Figure 1 presents the proportion of children and young people accommodated or looked after by social services compared to the general population. This is split into two pie charts for ease of reading.

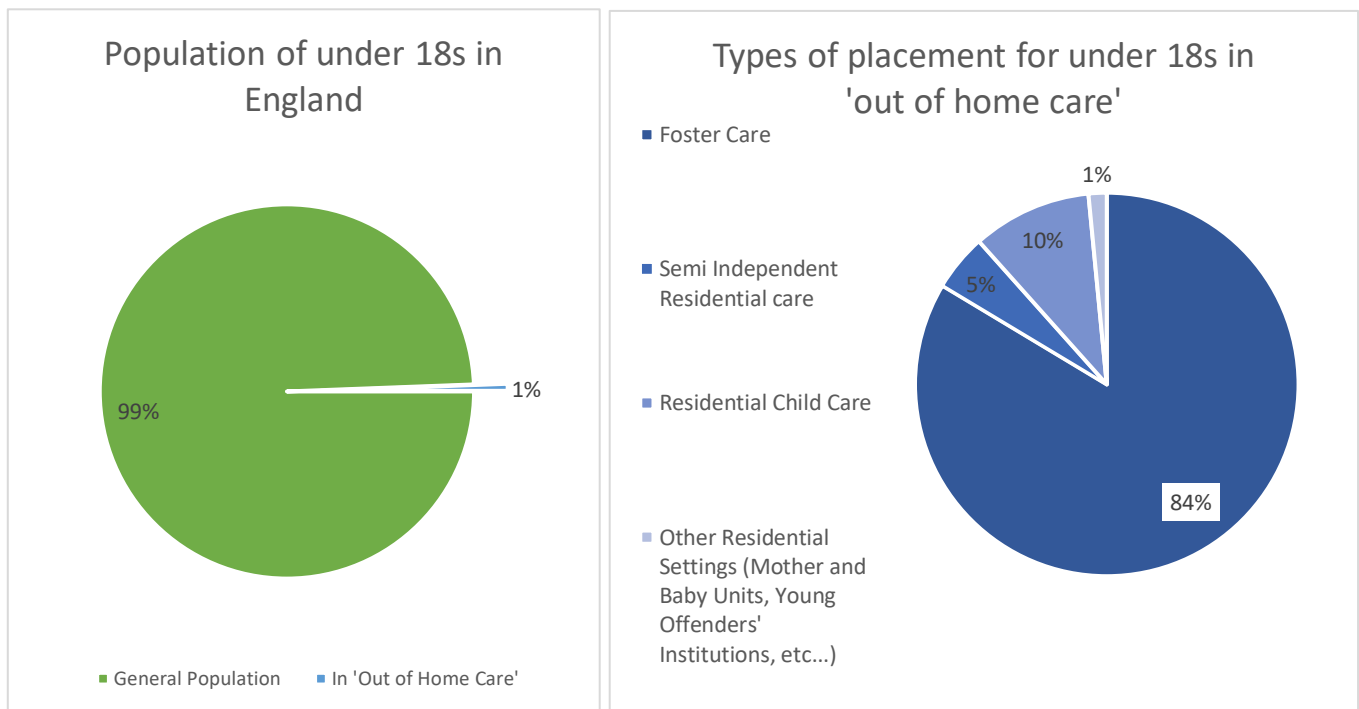


Figure 1: Proportion of under 18s in 'out-of-home care' compared to the general population in England in 2019

In 2019, there were around 12.5 million individuals under the age of 18 in England (ONS, 2021a). Of these, on the census date of 31 March¹, around 1% (78,140) were in the care of local authorities under a voluntary or compulsory arrangement between parents and the local authority (Children Act 1989 s. 20, s. 31). While 11,750 children and young people still received care from their kin or were adopted, approximately three-quarters of the overall

¹ Please note that this is a point-in-time survey, which means it does not account for successive episodes of care children and young people may experience. This does not reflect the actual number of children and young people under 18 who may be accommodated in residential settings. For example, a proportion of 16 years may live away from the parental home and require support from social services yet technically not fall under the category of ‘children in care’ as they may be accommodated by the local authority under duties as stated in the Housing Act 1996 part 7 (Shelter, 2018).

‘looked-after’ population lived in ‘out-of-home care’: 71%, or 55,760 individuals, lived in foster care; 9% (6,720) lived in children’s homes regulated by The Children’s Homes Regulations 2015¹, or in other institutional arrangements such as semi-independent residential settings (4%, or 3190) or other residential settings such as mother-and-baby units and Young Offenders Institutions (1%, or 1,020) (Department for Education, 2019a).

Figure 1 highlights how the large majority of under 18 who are accommodated under the Children Act 1989 are in foster care, as opposed to RCC (Iwaniec, 2006, p. 5). This discrepancy is the result of a choice, following a logic whereby the environment of the nuclear family is thought of as the most appropriate for children to grow up in (Boddy, 2019; Ward, 2004; Whitwell, 2002). This is corroborated by evidence that demonstrates the negative impact of institutional living on children and young people’s development (Goldman et al., 2020; van IJzendoorn et al., 2020). Yet this ignores other evidence showing that young people, mostly older adolescents, prefer the group living that children’s homes offer (Longfield, 2020; Narey, 2016, p. 5) or that comparatively to the UK many countries in Europe favour RCC as a placement for looked-after children as opposed to foster care (C. Cameron, 2014; P. Petrie et al., 2006, pp. 37–39; Sallnäs et al., 2012) despite the international trend towards de-institutionalisation. This leaves the English RCC sector in a position where it must justify its presence and its cost (Crimmens & Milligan, 2005; Holmes et al., 2018). It also illustrates some of the issues this thesis seeks to address by highlighting how some of the assumptions affecting decisions such as the type of out-of-home placement are a product of wider processes. Despite clear guidance from the Children Act 1989 that decisions are to be made ‘*in the best interest of the child*’ (Department for Education, 2013, p. 11), the attitudes, values, social and institutional positioning of the professionals shape those decisions across children’s services (Allsopp & Chase, 2019; Tisdall et al., 1998). It could be argued, for example, that the preference for fostering, in relying on the construction of the nuclear family, reinforces Western ideologies by narrowing the possibilities of choice from different forms of kinship relations (Cantwell, 2015) existing around the world. It shows how actions professionals take to ‘protect’ children from abuse are highly contested and political (Crane, 2018, pp. 197–204; Saar-Heiman & Krumer-Nevo, 2020). While this is recognised within the social work literature (Featherstone et al., 2014; Krumer-Nevo, 2016; Reynaert & Roose,

¹ This will be introduced in detail below.

2015; Saar-Heiman & Gupta, 2020), it is not yet understood or applied in the practice of RCC.

Considering that this thesis is concerned with the experiences of less than 0.07% of the overall children's population, coupled with ideological positionings standing behind differing values attributed to what a 'good childhood' is and how to 'protect' it, one becomes aware of a possibility for distortion in how RCC is perceived and understood. Indeed, the proportion of relevant children being so small, the majority of the population is unlikely to come across children living in RCC in their everyday lives. This can impact how this population is perceived.

1.1.1.2 Perceptions of Children and Young People Living in Children's Homes

It may be that this distortion is present in other ways as well. For example, within the political debates surrounding constant reforms to the institution of RCC, a pervasive theme around excellence and quality is driven by the common-sense argument that young people in care, being amongst the most vulnerable, 'deserve' the best care (Adonis, 2007; Department for Education, 2014c; Williamson, 2020). This perception of children as '*vulnerable*'; '*at risk*' or '*troublesome*' manifests in quite specific ways for those children who live in children's homes.

The issues with representations of individual children in RCC are present in the introductory vignette. The description I give of this young man is problematic in that it subsumes his understanding of the situation to mediatised generic stories of asylum seekers desperately attempting to reach European shores (Chase & Allsopp, 2020; Hopkins & Hill, 2008; Thomas et al., 2004). Indeed, by focusing on this young man's journey to the UK, I connect to social narratives that are highly political and fraught with controversy. This problem of representation is common for children and young people living in residential settings (Crane, 2018; Lonne & Parton, 2014; M. Smith, 2009, pp. 35–52). Indeed, stories of young Black men made to sell drugs on 'county lines' (Home Office, 2018a) or young girls being sexually exploited in Rochdale (Colley, 2019) are strongly associated with residential care. While abuse does happen in RCC (Ferguson, 2007; Staffordshire Child Care Inquiry et al., 1991; Utting, 1991; Utting, 1997; Warner, 1992; Westcott & Clement, 1992), this trope is now so pervasive that it overrides other aspects of residents' identity and history (Cronin, 2019; H. Ferguson, 2007; Garrett, 1999; Manthorpe et al., 2002, pp. 16–43; 223–240). Much attention

has been paid to changing this image of young people in care in the general public (Become, 2017; Garrido et al., 2016; Gerstein Pineau et al., 2018; Howard League for Penal Reform & Sands, 2016; NCB, 2003) without a significant impact having been made. Interestingly, despite a few exceptions (Copley et al., 2014; Steels & Simpson, 2017), this work has been focused on the public's perceptions of young people in care rather than on professionals' views of the young people they work with. This is a surprising oversight, as RCC workers are also members of society whose perceptions are constructed and influenced by their environment, similar to members of the public.

This overview of the characteristics of the children and young people living in RCC highlights the complexity of factors influencing how they are perceived. Focusing on one simple characteristic rather than intersectional framing, that is, the type of institutional setting children are accommodated in, this overview demonstrated how young people in care may be ideologically framed to the wider population. The following section introduces the characteristics of RCC workers.

1.1.2 RCC Workers' Population

If only 0.07% of the general population of children lived in residential homes in 2019, it is reasonable to assume the proportion of adults working in RCC would be similarly small. While no data are regularly collected about RCC workers as about social workers or teachers, a census was nevertheless carried out in late 2013 to ascertain training needs (Thornton et al., 2015a). Overall, the research estimated the RCC workforce to be around 20,000 individuals, or 0.04% of the overall labour force in England in 2013 (ONS, 2021b). This survey, however, did not count agency RCC workers, who are contracted on an ad-hoc basis when the home's permanent staff is unavailable.

This is common practice in the sector (Children’s Workforce Development Council, 2008, p. 16).

Thornton et al.’s (2015a) census describes a workforce that is somewhat balanced in terms of gender, with 58% of female RCC workers, but the gender gap becomes more pronounced for managers. RCC workers are relatively young.

The largest age category is 25 to 34 years, which may reflect the demanding nature of the work.



Figure 2: Gender profiles by level of seniority (from Thornton et al., 2015, p. 29)

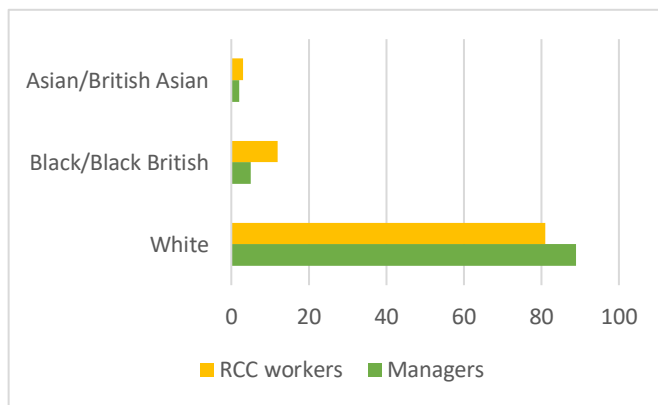


Figure 3: Ethnic profiles by level of seniority (from Thornton et al., 2015, p. 29)

RCC workers are mostly from White backgrounds, with ethnic minorities such as Black and Black British being under-represented compared to those in the general population, and significantly less present in managerial positions. When paralleled with the overrepresentation of People of Colour (Department for Education, 2019b; Webb et al., 2020) amongst children

and young people with a social worker, structural inequalities are brought to light.

The information gathered in the 2013 census was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to investigate and understand what training and level of education RCC workers had received. Throughout the 30 years since the adoption of the UNCRC and the Children Act 1989, professionalisation of the workforce has been a constant focus of policy. Immediately after the implementation of the Children Act 1989, the recruitment, support and supervision of RCC workers drew the attention of politicians and policymakers (Ferguson et al., 1996; Lindsay & McMillan, 1999; Support Force for Children’s Residential Care, 1994, 1997). Then, from 1997 onwards, raising minimum qualifications to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Level 3 for RCC workers became a priority, resulting in a 2008 amendment to the 2001 Home Regulations to the effect that RCC workers working in residential settings were to be qualified at Level 3 of the National Qualification Framework

within two years of employment (Long et al., 2010; Nordoff & Madoc-Jones, 2014). Both Sir Martin Narey (2016) and the recent independent review of children's social care continued to highlight the importance of workforce training. Most recently, MacAlister suggested that professional registration for home managers rather than for the entire workforce may be an answer to this question (The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, 2022, pp. 240–241). As yet, this remains to be implemented.

The vignette above, p.12, highlights the limits of the formal and generic training and qualifications framework for RCC. Despite the policy efforts to raise qualification levels described above, my colleagues and I make split-second decisions based on what we believe is relevant to the situation, and even though theoretical understandings may shape our judgment, unacknowledged values and assumptions do too. Further, on a structural level, the statistics about the young people and RCC workers population bring forward issues around race, gender and pay that bring another, socio-economic dimension to the situation. Yet, there is a long tradition of common-sense parenting in RCC (Bullock et al., 2006; Department for Education, 2018a) and of the use of the everyday as an important component of the therapeutic work taking place (Dockar-Drysdale, 1991a; Small, 2019). This is separate from the learning from attachment theory with young people in care (Berlin, 1997; Bifulco et al., 2017; Connor, 2011; Kay & Green, 2013; NICE, 2015), which brings another professional lens to how my colleagues and I could act. None of the possible readings are brought to bear on the situation that could be developed through educational pathways that in other professions require higher levels of qualifications than the statutory NVQ Level 3. This illustrates the disconnection between training, education and everyday practice as a central theme for the sector (Narey, 2016; M. Smith, 2009).

This subsection described the characteristics of the RCC workforce: a small, underqualified group of people that is the focus of much policy debate. Just as with young people living in RCC, societal questions of race, gender or class are present. Successive policies that focus on training, however, appear inadequate to respond to complex everyday situations. The importance of wider, structural factors is made clearer when looking at the RCC sector in England.

1.1.3 Homes, Cost, and the Wider Landscape

RCC accounts for a very small proportion of the total of children and adults in England; yet it is one of the highest spending services for children by local authorities (Andrews et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2018; Stanford & Lennon, 2019). This observation is indicative of the importance of the economic market in shaping what takes place in children's homes.

1.1.3.1 Children's Homes in England

As of 31 March 2018, there were 2209 children's homes in England, with the majority (2124) accommodating children and looked-after young people. Those 2124 homes provide 11,746 places; yet despite the surplus of places compared to the number of children and young people placed in homes (see 1.1.1.1, p.15), there is a lack of appropriate placements, with delays in admission, one of the markers for this phenomenon (Children's Commissioner for England, 2020b, p. 10; Department for Education, 2014a, p. 37). While 2018 saw a slight increase in the number of homes from the previous year, it is the proportion of privately-run children's homes (79.2%) compared to those run by local authorities (20.8%) that I will now focus on (all data in this paragraph from OFSTED & Office of National Statistics, 2018, pp. 5–6). This may be partly explained by the difference in cost between privately-run (whether or not for profit) and local authority-owned provision, respectively £3,236 and £4,527 per week per child (Curtis & Burns, 2018, pp. 72–73). Putting side by side the fact that children's homes are overwhelmingly privately run while being significantly cheaper illustrates how financial and neoliberal priorities govern the placement of children in RCC. Much has been written about the marketisation of children's social care (Frost & Parton, 2009; Institute of Public Care, 2015; Munro et al., 2014; S. Petrie, 2015; Rosen et al., 2019). This literature demonstrates the fallacy of the 'free market' ideology in this hyper-regulated area and raises questions as to how this shapes understandings and ways of seeing childhood and children if one is attentive to well-known issues raised by the sociology of childhood (Zelizer, 1994), a discipline this thesis will draw upon heavily.

Even in RCC-specific literature, the relationship between children's homes and the vast array of children's services in health, care, education and justice in England in the last 30 years is described as being shaped by several factors, namely:

- **legislative and statutory frameworks.** Initially, this was set out in the Children Act 1989 and related guidance (The Children’s Homes Regulations, 2001; *The Children Act Guidance and Regulations. 4*, 1991, p. 4). While those have not fundamentally changed, they have been regularly updated (Department for Education, 2013, 2014b; The Children’s Homes (England) Regulations, 2015; Department of Health, 2011). Successive amendments include broadening requirements for professionals in caring roles to respond to perceived threats to society and the British nation (for example, the duty to refer to Prevent, the anti-terrorism programme, female genital mutilation or to report abuse (Chivers, 2018; Foster, 2022), or clarifying the interaction between immigration and social work legislation (Allsopp & Chase, 2019; J. R. Campbell, 2022; Department for Education, 2017; Humphris & Sigona, 2019a; Tisdall et al., 1998).
- **socio-political environment and current affairs.** Successive governments have attempted to shape responses to perceived societal problems, sometimes influenced by public opinion and the media, with a complex relation between practice, research and political interests and decisions. For example, some authors have linked the murder of two-year-old Jamie Bulger to the lowering of the age of criminal responsibility and the criminalisation of children in care (Bateman, 2014; Garrett, 2003, p. 27). Similarly, the New Labour government used the then-recent publication of the Laming report on the death of Victoria Climbié to anchor the necessity of the reforms it intended to propose with the Every Child Matters agenda (Simon & Ward, 2010).
- **economic division of labour.** This has been transformed through the ‘purchaser-provider split’ that began in care services in the 1990s and effectively promoted the emergence of a private for-profit sector in RCC, the consequences of which have recently been laid bare (Carey, 2019; Children’s Commissioner for England, 2020a). For looked-after children, the purchaser-provider split has further separated and contractualised the relationship between social workers and RCC workers or foster carers (S. Petrie, 2015, pp. 277–279). While social workers assess needs and seek courts’ judgments about the possibility of accommodating a child or young person away from home if a threshold of ‘significant harm’ has been reached (Children Act 1989 (s.47)), RCC workers ‘meet’ the needs of children and young people by carrying out the care plan as assessed and designed by the social workers. This division of labour is strict and further normalised through placement processes, whereby a local

authority decides on the appropriate placement for a child using a highly codified administrative apparatus (Cardy, 2010; Munro et al., 2014) mostly concerned with cost-effectiveness. This is further codified through service level agreements and other joint commissioning procedures between different providers and the commissioning authorities (Narey, 2016, pp. 11–12).

- **Financial constraints.** A climate of austerity since 2010 has dramatically shaped local authority spending on children’s services and, one may say, all public services (ADCS, 2018; Bywaters et al., 2018). The alleged high cost of RCC and the impact of the use of other public services such as health and police can be qualified as disproportionate compared to the population it caters for (Richardson, 2016; Turner, 2017). This led some (Narey, 2016, p. 6) to talk about young people currently living in RCC as ‘*significantly more challenging than earlier populations*’.

All these different aspects of the wider landscape of children’s services contribute to the relative isolation of services providing accommodation for children in care (Children’s Commissioner for England, 2020b; Institute of Public Care, 2015) and a proceduralisation of the task of upbringing (M. Smith, 2009, pp. 165–175), a task core to RCC’s purpose. Both characteristics of the RCC sector, its isolation and its reliance on procedures, shape its culture and RCC workers’ mindsets, an issue that I will return to in depth throughout the thesis.

1.1.3.2 The Culture of RCC

Barbara Kahan, who conducted inquiries into abuse perpetrated in RCC in the 1980s (Levy & Kahan, 1991), describes the culture of residential care as she recalls her experience of chairing a roundtable between educators in boarding public schools and professionals working in RCC:

two cultures met at the discussion table. The world of education saw boarding as a highly desirable experience for children, which conferred advantages persisting throughout their lives. The world of social services, by contrast, saw residential care as a fate from which children needed to be protected – one which would be detrimental to their life chances. But when these two cultures sat down and talked to each other, there were wide areas of common ground (Kahan, 1994, p. 8).

Kahan identified how the educational potential of RCC is not actively tapped into by comparing the expectations and confidence of professionals working in the two different cultures. In further describing this roundtable, she also implied that elements of gender and

class influence how each provision operates with specific values and meaning and how that impacts professional identity (T. Brown et al., 2018; Fowler, 2016). Yet the literature review will explore how this broader sociological perspective on RCC has not been drawn upon significantly for understanding the relationship between culture and professional practice within the RCC sector.

One could argue that Kahan's observation is outdated and that different cultural norms and practices arise depending on the context of each home. However, the relative isolation of each home, with its staff team led by a 'registered manager' and the 'world' of the young people in interaction with that of the workers, creates a relatively closed environment. Further, the procedures set out in law (Department for Education, 2013, 2015a; The Children's Homes (England) Regulations, 2015) affect many areas of young people's lives, such as bringing non-residents to the home, being spontaneous about meals, the purchase of everyday items such as toiletries and clothes, or access to specific spaces in the home. This strong set of norms is to be found in all registered children's homes in England, thus reducing the possibility for local and idiosyncratic practices to develop.

It is easy to find studies on the culture of RCC in the UK (E. Brown et al., 2019; T. Brown et al., 2018; Dorrer et al., 2010; Emond, 2000; Green, 1998; Hicks et al., 1998; Jakobsen, 2009; Mullan-Jensen, 2010). Some of these publications focus on relationships among peers or between different groups such as staff and young people. Hierarchies within each group are strong, for example amongst young people (Emond, 2000) and within staff teams (Hicks et al., 1998), leading to a description of two separate worlds: the staff and the young people (Sinclair & Gibbs, 1998, pp. 135–176). Culture is an important consideration in RCC research, and attention to the assumptions behind how it is used and spoken about is a recurring theme throughout the thesis.

This first section described those who live and those who work in RCC. Even when focusing on simple demographic characteristics such as ethnicity or gender, I demonstrated how complex the factors that distort perceptions of young people accommodated in RCC are. Often described as 'a last resort' (Narey, 2016, p. 5), living and working in RCC implies assimilating and responding to an unfamiliar set of norms and history. The culture of RCC has been shaped by its relative isolation and its reliance on procedures. This interaction between individual RCC workers and the institutions they are part of shapes their professional practice, a key aspect this thesis examines.

1.2 Professional Practice in RCC

The central dilemma of the vignette describes the limits of a procedural approach to care (M. Smith, 2010a). How my colleague and I respond to the young man's actions stems from perceptions, attitudes and values attached to what is a good life and a good education and from wider societal and institutional processes. Yet, as Smith and the introductory vignette describe, little room is allowed in the everyday for those considerations, an issue that is often linked to training and qualification in the workforce (see above 1.1.2, p. 18). In the following paragraphs, I summarise the statutory history and procedures RCC workers must follow in their work since the Children Act 1989 became law. I then outline how RCC workers' everyday decisions are shaped by the wider context I have described so far.

1.2.1 The History of a Profession

The history of RCC and care work is steeped in Victorian morality (Milligan & Stevens, 2006, pp. 11–12; P. Petrie, 2006). Whether Coram's Foundling Hospital or Barnardo's homes, housing hundreds of children under one roof, many of the charitable organisations created in the 18th and 19th centuries to provide relief to 'poor' and 'unfortunate' children are still major players in the care of children and young people who cannot live with their birth families (Higginbotham, 2017). During that period, important themes related to RCC emerged.

For example, the criticism of the rigidity of institutional life was already well understood then and has since become part of popular culture through Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (Flegel, 2009; P. Petrie, 2006). In binary contrast, nuclear, middle and upper-class White families were constructed as the relational, economic and emotional environment that gave children the happy childhood they 'deserved'. This became the blueprint against which the work of social care workers continues to be framed and evaluated (Moss et al., 2006).

This has important consequences for the RCC workforce (Moss et al., 2006): Their work is associated with feminine and motherly qualities that can be found in an informal domestic setting rather than in a workplace. This claim to drawing on the 'natural' qualities of the worker has a direct bearing on working conditions: care work remains informal and low-paid because it is 'motherly' (Oliver, 2003, p. 6), something invaluable that cannot be monetised. The themes are as current now as they were in Victorian times (C. Cameron, 2003; Oliver,

2003). Paying attention to the history of the status of RCC workers highlights the symbolic contradiction between institutional regimes, the family and the home.

There are at least two notable ways in which RCC still bears the marks of the Victorian era. First, constant attempts have been made to shape the buildings, the people and the tasks of RCC to the model of the nuclear family (Boddy, 2019). Most recently, in the eighties, the sector changed significantly in response to continued scandals and the criticism of institutional forms of care (Milligan & Stevens, 2006, pp. 14–16). From housing hundreds of children in gendered dormitories, the size of the homes was reduced to ‘family-sized unit’ of two or three beds as the norm, and the legal duty of local authorities was reframed to act as ‘corporate parents’ (Bullock et al., 2006). Yet at the same time, workers increasingly work ‘shifts’, and caring tasks have become more formalised and accountable (Hill et al., 1991; M. Smith, 2010a), thus bringing concepts and practices modelled on the factory to RCC.

Secondly, I argue that the notion of care work as instinctive and ‘natural’, drawing on feminine qualities, influenced the gradual separation of the professions of RCC workers and social workers since the sixties. This has implications for the type of knowledge that RCC workers draw upon in their work (Boddy & Cameron, 2006), and one way to understand this is through changes of emphasis in the social work profession in relationship to RCC.

The brief history of residential care above shows how it is inextricably linked to the development of the welfare state and social work in the UK. Until the sixties, social work was diverse in its practices and shaped by the institutions and places within which it was carried out and therefore easily encompassed the specificities of residential care work. Generic social work, by contrast, moved away from those diverse locations and kickstarted the profession’s specialisation into the assessment and the management of ‘children’s needs’ following set protocols defined by the state (Langan, 1993). Social workers now train at degree or postgraduate levels, but RCC workers do not. Sapsford (1993) argued that the rise of psychological sciences combined with state intervention to ‘protect’ children, which originated in a gendered, classed, heterosexual and racialised view of the child (Flegel, 2009), creates a distinct knowledge apparatus embedded in psychological science. Sapsford and the radical strand of social work he worked in use Foucauldian ideas about governmentality to claim how social work interventions are based on practices including the assessment of needs and allocation of resources that rely on psychometric and observational knowledge. This professional practice is distinctively different to the intuitive and ‘natural’ act of caring RCC

workers are engaged in (Brannen et al., 2007). I would argue that comparing social work training to that of residential care workers highlights the value placed by the state on the types of knowledge workers rely on.

This brief history of perceptions of RCC work highlights the continuity and complexity of themes from Victorian times to the present. It further illustrates the point made when describing the young people and the workers in children's homes: RCC is subject to complex historical meanings and power relationships that shape how it is perceived. I now turn to introducing how these meanings and relationships manifest at more granular levels too, for example, in the relationship between statutory guidance and professional practice.

1.2.2 The Current Legislative and Policy Framework

The Children Act 1989 coincided with the signature of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Both brought the important legal concepts of needs and rights that were to have a significant impact on British children's services and RCC in particular.

1.2.2.1 'Needs' As the Lynchpin of the Children Act 1989

The Children Act 1989 brought a fundamental reorganisation of how professionals thought of their work by defining the concept of a 'child in need' (Ryan, 1999, p. 41b). This is not to say that 'needs' were not considered before this (Hoghugh, 1978, pp. 106–132), but the Children Act 1989 made it a legal concept, central to the delivery of state welfare for children. This legal concept still has far-reaching consequences for how children's services professionals think about working with children and young people (Frost & Parton, 2009, pp. 59–79; Jakobsen, 2009; Ryan, 1999).

In the context of the Children Act 1989, 'need' is defined as a developmental deficiency, whether in the child or their environment. If not catered for, the assumption is that this would result in a lack of ability in the child (Aldgate & Tunstill, 1996) and hinder their socialisation and future independent adulthood. The specific section that refers to this is Section 17 (Children Act, 1989 s. 17), which makes the new procedural implication that public resources are to be provided against each assessed need.

The children's services sector enthusiastically set out to operationalise this framework (Aldgate & Statham, 2001; Aldgate & Tunstill, 1996; Jakobsen, 2009; Rowlands, 2011; Tunstill & Aldgate, 2000). The intention behind the formulation of a 'theory of children's needs' was to provide care that is tailored to the specific needs of the child and therefore respects individuality (see, for example, Bullock in Kahan, 1993, pp. 10–12). In that sense, the idea of a 'child in need' could be linked with the rights agenda that was present at the time through the implementation of the UNCRC (Ryan, 1999). The hope was to strengthen the RCC sector and ensure that scandals of the past could be avoided. It also appeared to support a move away from the symbolism attached to RCC through its history (see 1.2.1, p. 25).

In terms of procedural changes for RCC, the 1991 Children's Home Regulations, written to implement the Children's Act 1989, required children's homes to write a *statement of purpose* for the first time. Still a requirement for each children's home, a statement of purpose is a statutory document that lists specifics of the home, such as the qualifications of the manager and RCC workers, provisions for complaints, contact and fire procedures. The 1991 Children's Home Regulations specified that the statement of purpose should describe any criteria used to select the children living in the home other than sex and age. In practice, this means the assessed needs of the child are used for deciding on the suitability of a placement (Department for Education, 2015a, pp. 6–7). This individualisation and proceduralisation of needs are characteristic of other children's services where the matching of targeted provision to the needs of the population was being systematised (Rowlands, 2011, pp. 257–258).

So far, this paragraph distinguishes between the intention behind Section 17's concept of need and the impact this has had on the sector. For more than 30 years, professionals have been 'meeting children's needs' in this manner. I would like to highlight two criticisms of how 'needs' have become central to children's services.

One seeks to highlight the narrow view of children and childhood this imposes on professionals (Moss et al., 2000; Moss & Petrie, 2002). The second is a corollary of Moss and Petrie's work. Others (Petrie, S., 2015) argued that procedural and financial considerations outstrip more educational considerations behind needs and contribute to 'commodifying' children. Those criticisms are important to situate the work I intend to do in this thesis because they start exploring how the statutory framework shapes how professionals think of children and young people and how they relate to them.

1.2.2.2 Accountability and New Public Management

The change to the New Labour government in 1997 saw a renewed belief in the importance of welfare support, through the opening of Sure Start and the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda translated into the Care Act 2004. Those policies for universal children's services were based on the belief that integrated services for health, care and education deliver better outcomes for children and young people and the reduction of poverty (Simon & Ward, 2010).

Importantly, by using the ideology of New Public Management, Labour government policies emphasised outcomes, standards of practice and leadership. Driven by a strong focus on supporting children's well-being through interagency working (HM Government, 2003; Rowlands, 2011; Statham & Chase, 2010), ECM resulted in services having to develop practices that could be measurable and accountable (Simon & Ward, 2010, pp. 11–17). This was visible at the time in the overhaul of government services, for example, with the ministry responsible for education newly overseeing children's services and the inspection of children's homes moving from the Social Service Inspectorate within the Department for Health to come under the umbrella of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) (Platt, 2004).

Practically, how does the set of laws and institutional history introduced so far impact how my colleagues and I were making split-second decisions that Saturday afternoon (see p. 2)? In this instance, Regulation 19 (2) f (The Children's Homes (England) Regulations, 2015) applies. It states that if a financial sanction is applied to replace the glass panels broken by the young person, the sanction should be proportional to his budget and manageable. While this appears reasonable as a factor for consideration, it contributes to a proceduralisation of those everyday decisions that have been shown to have unintended effects (Brannen et al., 2007, pp. 140–142; Broadhurst et al., 2010). This proceduralisation stems from public perceptions of RCC already mentioned and pushes politicians and decision-makers to 'drive improvement' and excellence (Department for Education, 2016, p. 52) through a sector-wide emphasis on **evidence-based practice**. This aspect of the culture of RCC manifests in several ways. At a level close to the everyday, in selecting its model of care, a setting should ensure that:

any specific type or model of care delivered or commissioned by the home is provided by staff who are suitably trained, experienced, qualified and

supervised. There is evidence of benefits to children and the care is reviewed regularly (OFSTED, 2019).

This is a necessary step to obtain a ‘good’ judgment¹ from OFSTED, which has implications for the financial health of the provider because a good OFSTED report makes it more likely that the ‘beds’ offered by providers are bought by social services.

Yet there are contradictory uses of the term ‘evidence’ throughout the sector. Indeed, the OFSTED evaluation criteria quoted above allude to research-based evidence, whereas within the home itself, it appears that ‘evidence’ is much narrower. Evidence refers instead to the selection and use of extracts of young people’s records to demonstrate to OFSTED inspectors how the home meets the inspection standards (Gibb et al., 2016). While an academic critique of this exists (Featherstone et al., 2014; Kerr, 2016; Rushton & Dance, 2002), I would argue that this does not penetrate to RCC workers whose training in the UK is narrow, technical and procedural compared to that common in many other countries (Berridge et al., 2011; Brannen et al., 2007; Cameron & Boddy, 2008; P. Petrie et al., 2006).

Another approach to the situation described in the vignette could be to ask what the needs of this young man are, or, more controversially, to work towards upholding his right to self-expression (Vrouwenfelder, 2011). His response to ‘sanctions’ makes the emphasis on behaviour brought by the regulations somewhat irrelevant because he accepts them as a given, and I would suggest that my colleagues and I drew on assumed philosophical and ethical positions (Charfe & Gardner, 2020; Hatton, 2001b; Hetherington, 2006; Seal & Frost, 2014) to select what was relevant and decide how to proceed. However, critical reading of the research undertaken to implement the Children Act 1989 highlights how this aspect of the caring role seems, to a certain extent, to be subsumed by common-sense and technical-rational solutions.

1.2.3 A Critical Reading of RCC Professional Practice

The phrase ‘*the other 23 hours*’ (Trieschman et al., 2017), borrowed from the title of a foundational text of RCC practice, describes the discrepancy between the one hour of

¹ Standards and compliance with the Children’s Home Regulations (The Children’s Homes (England) Regulations, 2015) are administered by OFSTED. Yearly inspections are summarised in a report whose content is crystallised in a ‘judgment’ of outstanding, good, in need of improvement or inadequate (OFSTED, 2019). Should a home judged inadequate fail to act on the actions set out in the report within a specific timeframe, the home will be closed by OFSTED (Hood et al., 2019, p. 228).

psychological therapy with a trained therapist young people would receive and the other 23 hours where they interact with each other and RCC workers at ‘home’ rather than in the therapy room. This has been a fertile ground for RCC work, as unlike teachers, therapists, or social workers, RCC workers are focused on the everyday, such as mealtimes, care of the body and the environment, sleep, or recreational activities. In doing this, the association between activity that has therapeutic benefit for the child and mundane acts of social reproduction within the home persists and remains undefined, subject to common-sense judgments. After briefly describing models of professional decision-making in RCC, I outline how the lack of theoretical interest reinforces an unequal distribution of expertise.

1.2.3.1 A Common-Sense Approach to Everyday Decisions

Ward (1995, 1996) developed a description of RCC practice as ‘opportunity-led work’. This model described how RCC workers decide to respond to children and young people in the moment. What to focus on and whether to address the individual child or the group are all key questions that Ward saw as underpinning the work RCC workers are tasked with. The intention behind Wards’ model is to enable RCC workers to decide how to approach moments such as mealtimes, relationships within the home, the physical environment or care routines. Wards’ framework focuses exclusively on the workers. Far from representing the entirety of the everyday tasks they carry out (Whitaker et al., 1998), ‘opportunity-led’ work represents only a part of the ‘think work’ RCC workers are encouraged to do. This ‘think work’ is:

extremely important because [it] is not based on the observable events themselves but on the meanings which staff members place on events, including, importantly, the young person's behavior (Hicks et al., 1998, p. 363).

Hicks et al. are also partial in their description by not considering the interpretations young people may have of their experience of RCC, perhaps because they assume a lack of competence to do so (Borgne & Tisdall, 2017; Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2019).

Ward’s four steps model (1995, p. 96) outlines situated aspects of the decision-making process an RCC worker may follow at the moment when the worker feels called to ‘intervene’, but Ward’s model does not link this with the ‘think work’ necessary to understand the lived experience of a given young person. Those are two separate processes whose relationship is not considered in detail. Ward's model provides a description of the specificities of everyday professional thinking and highlights the reasoning that may take place to justify one or the other course of action my colleagues and I took on the Saturday

afternoon described in the vignette. An extension of Ward's model is Garfat's description of a workers' intervention (Garfat, 1995). Garfat brought theoretical coherence by anchoring his work in hermeneutic phenomenology to focus on the relational experience of both young people and RCC workers, thus giving a fuller account of everyday lives in RCC.

While both Ward and Garfat insist on the importance of anti-oppressive practice as systemic rather than individual, no link is made to how RCC workers think of young people, their identity and societal position, what workers assume about them and how that plays out at that crucial point where decisions are made in the everyday.

The stress experienced by RCC workers (T. Brown et al., 2018; Heron & Chakrabarti, 2002; McLean, 2015; Steckley, 2010) may help explain why those models are not more prominent in RCC training (Berridge et al., 2016; Hicks et al., 1998; Nordoff & Madoc-Jones, 2014; Steckley, 2020a, 2020b). Stress may also be a factor in explaining the lack of connection professional practice and theory by preventing higher-order thinking (Steckley, 2018). This stress can also justify the marked preference for procedural approaches and short-term behaviour management typical of English RCC (P. Petrie et al., 2006, pp. 81–88). In the introductory vignette (p. 12) and Ward's practice models, common-sense judgment prevailed.

1.2.3.2 A Lack of Theoretical Rigour

The theoretical framing with which issues of practice in RCC are understood is diverse and contradictory. As an example, a recent statement aiming at clarifying the purpose and use of Therapeutic Residential Care (thereafter TRC) in the minority world (Whittaker et al., 2016) expresses the impossibility of unifying the 'treatment aims' of institutions that are operating in cultures where 'child'; 'protection' and 'care' have vastly different meanings and practices attached to them. The signatories' position about the place of 'evidence-based interventions' within TRC is contradictory because while recognising the diversity of practice orientations that exist in TRC, it minimised its reliance on standardised practices, and setting an ultimate epistemological goal for TRC as the identification of a group of evidence-based models or strategies for practice that are effective [...], replicable [...] and scalable [...] (Whittaker et al., 2016, p. 98).

The certainty of the claim for this epistemological goal is undermined when the authors uncritically adopt the goals of 'meeting individual child (sic) needs', relying to do so on an indiscriminate choice of methods such as applied behavioural analysis (McLean, 2015; W.

Turner et al., 2005) sociocultural views of psychological development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), or social pedagogy (P. Petrie et al., 2006). Clearly, those different strands of practice frameworks for RCC come from highly different views on the relationship between mind and environment. Further, this has consequences for definitions of knowledge (Bakhurst, 1995b; Blunden, 2010; Bowie, 2010; Seal & Frost, 2014), so it is difficult not to agree with Smith (2015) that this ‘suggests a more positivist stance than [he] might be comfortable with’. Nevertheless, this statement is important because it shows how little attention has been paid academically to the relationship between theory and practice in RCC, which in turn may have impacted the training and education of RCC workers.

1.2.3.3 Unequal Distribution of Expertise

The development of and the interest in TRC illustrated by Whittaker et al. (2016) fit well with the requirement for evidence-based practice in OFSTED inspections. Through their statements of purpose, homes can justify a chosen model of care (see 1.2.3, p.30). TRC is such a model, and it is based on psychoanalytical theories such as Bowlby’s attachment theory (Bifulco et al., 2017; Connor, 2011; K. Fraser, 2010; NICE, 2015; M. Smith et al., 2017) or Winnicott’s work with deprivation and delinquency (Dockar-Drysdale, 1991b; Winnicott, 2004). The statement of purpose further specifies the qualifications of the staff working in the home, and OFSTED seeks evidence of suitably qualified staff.

The profession of ‘psychotherapist’ working with the ideas of Bowlby, Winnicott or others is bound by specific requirements accredited and monitored by the Health and Care Professions Council and the British Psychological Society (HCPC, 2022; The British Psychological Society, 2022), in contrast to RCC workers who, as already described, are only required to hold a Level 3 qualification in childcare (White et al., 2015). This contrast in qualification requirements creates a division of labour between RCC workers and therapists. In practice, RCC workers may receive support and supervision from trained therapists (Charles et al., 2016; Support Force for Children’s Residential Care, 1995). Also, while RCC workers may well have qualifications matching this type of knowledge (Brannen et al., 2007, pp. 34–35; Thornton et al., 2015b, pp. 24–28), no structure supports them using their knowledge in their work in RCC. Little literature exists on how the division of labour between psychotherapists employed by RCC homes and RCC workers is experienced, but its existence is implied (Onions, 2013).

As already mentioned, this is also visible in the phrase ‘*the 23 hours*’ where the reliable provision of food, shelter and an emotionally ‘holding environment’ provides a ‘secure base’ (Winnicott, 2004, pp. 54–72; 172–188). This conflation of material provision and emotional support upon which Winnicott bases his claim to therapeutic work is telling because it is at the centre of how RCC’s therapeutic potential is understood. Yet it is the environment and the essentialised feminine aspect of the worker’s person I introduced above (see 1.2.1, p.25) that are understood as providing the therapeutic work thought to repair the deprivation or deficit attributed to those children and young people. I would argue that attributing therapeutic potential to a certain quality in the environment further strips the workers of any professional expertise and, in Marxist terms, relegates their work to social reproduction within capitalist economic relationships (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Brannen et al., 2009; N. Fraser, 1987, 1989; Katz, 2001; Rosen & Newberry, 2018).

This lack of understanding of wider factors influencing professional practice highlights the interaction of institutional processes with individual decision-making and appears to be important when considering RCC work. Smith (2009, pp. 81–82) acknowledges that more research into the relationship between Vygotsky’s work and RCC could be developed. I would agree with him, but rather than using post-Vygotskian work to characterise children and young people’s development as he proposed, I would suggest that the paradigm’s emphasis on institutional practices is relevant here (Daniels, 2010, 2015; Edwards, 2012; Hedegaard, 2009; Wertsch, 2007).

1.3 Social Pedagogy as an Alternative

Many of the publications on which I base my understanding of care work come from the Thomas Coram Research Unit (TCRU). In this unit, since the late 1990s, social pedagogy has been thought of as a way to address questions around situated judgment in professional practice (C. Cameron, 2014; Emond, 2016; Hatton, 2001b; P. Petrie, 2011; M. Smith, 2003, 2010a, 2020), the status of professionals working with children (Boddy et al., 2005; C. Cameron et al., 2021; Cameron & Moss, 2011; Crimmens, 1998; Davies Jones, 1991; Hatton, 2008; P. Petrie, 2011; P. Petrie et al., 2006), and the value of childhood and children in society (Eischteller & Holtoff, 2011; Eßer, 2012, 2016; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Warming, 2019; Warming et al., 2019).

Social pedagogy is a continental approach to care and upbringing, often referred to as education in its broadest sense (Cameron & Moss, 2011; Cameron & Petrie, 2009; Hatton, 2013; Kornbeck & Rosendal Jensen, 2009; Storø, 2013).

1.3.1 Central Themes of Social Pedagogy

Well developed in Europe as a humanistic approach towards social welfare, social pedagogy offers academics and professionals specific concepts and ways of thinking. Ranging from critical pedagogy and the work of Freire to more conservative and normative thinking about help and support (Eriksson, 2014; Úcar, 2013), social pedagogy is both an academic discipline and a domain of practice with a long and diverse history across the world (Kornbeck & Rosendal Jensen, 2009; Kornbeck & Úcar, 2015).

In the UK, its pertinence was mostly noticed concerning RCC (Bengtsson et al., 2008; Berridge et al., 2011; Berridge, 2016; Bradt & Eischteller, 2019; Milligan, 2009; M. Smith, 2009). In contrast to the procedural and risk-averse practices in use, professionals were encouraged to reflect on their practice and follow eight principles derived from research on the continent:

- a focus on the child as a whole person and support for the child's overall development.
- the practitioner sees herself/himself as a person in a relationship with the child or young person.
- while they are together, children and staff are seen as inhabiting the same life space, not as existing in separate, hierarchical domains.
- as professionals, pedagogues are encouraged to constantly reflect on their practice and to apply both theoretical understanding and self-knowledge to their work and to the sometimes challenging demands with which they are confronted.
- pedagogues should be both practical and creative; their training prepares them to share in many aspects of children's daily lives [...].
- in group settings, children's associative life is seen as an important resource: workers should foster and make use of the group.
- pedagogy builds on an understanding of children's rights that is not limited to procedural matters or legislative requirements.

- there is an emphasis on teamwork and valuing the contributions of others [...] in the task of ‘bringing up’ children (P. Petrie et al., 2006, p. 22).

The principles highlighted the relational and contextual view of ‘care’ and development adopted by continental pedagogues. It further linked learning to care in a way that appeared novel in the English context (P. Petrie, 2003). I would like to further single out in these principles the value placed on practitioners’ judgment and ability to situate their practice critically within the context of their work. Such an approach to practice is different to what I described in the previous section. For example, concerning the introductory vignette, how would my colleagues and I have responded to such a situation had we discussed this young man’s right to cultural expression or had we owned and voiced feelings of exclusion at not understanding the conversation because it was in a language that was not accessible by all present, including ourselves?

Further, in valuing this situatedness of action, social pedagogy takes a different view of ‘evidence’ and ‘evidence-based practice’ to that described above (see 1.2.2.2 , p.29). Indeed, from the point of view of the pedagogue, part of the ‘think work’ (Hicks et al., 1998, p. 363) is to act reflectively when dilemmas of practice arise. As Rothuizen and Harbo put it (2017), there are no ‘fixed recipes’ for the social pedagogue whose work moves in and out of the prescriptions of evidence-based programmes (Harbo, 2017; Kemp & Harbo, 2020). Because it is relational, it responds to complex emotional states and to a multitude of factors that cannot be apprehended solely analytically and rationally (Reinders, 2010; M. Smith, 2020). The epistemological apparatus necessary to move from a more positivist view of evidence towards a more tacit understanding of knowledge has not been fully examined in social pedagogy, with theoretical alignments ranging from the already mentioned Latin-American critical pedagogy to the Frankfurt school (Grunwald & Thiersch, 2009; M. Smith et al., 2017) or a soviet Marxist approach to learning and activity (Nissen, 2012; Spatscheck, 2019). A thorough understanding of the many theoretical paradigms within which social pedagogues work is still at an embryonic stage in the UK (Eischteller & Holtoff, 2011; Gardner & Charfe, 2019; Hatton, 2008); yet activity theory has been used to explore knowledge that matters in welfare and social services in the UK and the USA (Daniels, 2008; Edwards, 2012; Vianna & Stetsenko, 2019). Much of this epistemological positioning therefore remains to be done in social pedagogy (C. Cameron et al., 2016; Janer & Úcar, 2019; Janer Hidalgo & Úcar, 2020; Kirkwood et al., 2019; P. Petrie, 2013; M. Smith, 2020; Spatscheck, 2019; Úcar, 2021).

1.3.2 The Training of Social Pedagogues

This shying away from more theoretical concerns may be understandable within a UK context, where social pedagogy has been presented as a pragmatic alternative to the perceived problems of RCC (C. Cameron et al., 2021; Cameron & Moss, 2011, pp. 204–209; Davies Jones, 1991; P. Petrie, 2011). In the main evaluation of social pedagogy in RCC in England (Berridge et al., 2011), the training of social pedagogues appeared to be critical to its implementation. The evaluation described a different approach to critical reflection and professional confidence between social pedagogues trained on the continent and British RCC workers, which appeared to be significant.

Training for social pedagogues in the UK has developed from short continuous professional development provided by organisations such as Thempra (Gardner & Charfe, 2019, p. 2) to full-blown degree courses (Hatton, 2013, pp. 2–9). Those courses contrast with the compulsory NVQ Level 3 expected in the English sector: they move away from a logic that requires students to demonstrate their competency and where performance is benchmarked against standards to one that promotes self-examination and practice development (C. Cameron et al., 2007, p. 30).

This has been observed in other studies, where the training of social pedagogues has been identified as a factor in explaining different attitudes towards care in children's residential provision (Berridge et al., 2011, pp. 27–34; 151-153;213-216; P. Petrie et al., 2006, pp. 75–137).

Recently, the Social Pedagogy Professional Association (thereafter SPPA) was set up to support and develop training pathways and oversee the education of social pedagogues in the UK (SPPA, 2018) in both higher education and the charity sector. Again, the focus on training addresses some of the concerns highlighted by the RCC sector overall, which underlies some of the interest in social pedagogy arising within the UK sector. Work on the education of RCC workers similar to continental pedagogical degree training continues to develop (C. Cameron et al., 2007; Cameron & Boddy, 2008; Nordoff & Madoc-Jones, 2014; Steckley, 2020a, 2020b), yet it competes with a long tradition of competency-based qualifications introduced above.

Overall, the complex relationship between socio-pedagogical theory and its practice (Eriksson, 2014) has resulted in several models, which practitioners are introduced to during training. The ‘common third’, the ‘3Ps’, the ‘learning zones’ (Eichsteller et al., 2013) or the ‘CRISP model’ (Hatton, 2020) are schematic models that are used for reflective practice by practitioners. One such model is highly relevant to address the theme of the attitudes and mindset that RCC workers have towards the young people they work with: the ‘image of the rich child’.

1.3.3 The ‘Image of the Rich Child’ in Social Pedagogy Practice

In the UK particularly, the training of social pedagogues uses the concept of ‘the image of the rich child’ borrowed from the Italian Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) setting of Reggio Emilia (Moss, 2010, 2011; Moss et al., 2000). In thinking about the ‘image of the rich child’, pedagogues are prompted to question their assumptions about children in everyday life, within policy discourses and in society more generally (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 55–81). Whether or not purposefully adopting a certain ‘image of the child’ transforms practice has not been researched outside of ECEC, and this is the main premise for this thesis. As described so far, the social construction of children in care is complex, influenced by history, legal and statutory concepts and a marginal social positioning. While working from an ‘image of the rich child’ clarifies the stance professionals may take towards those social constructions, much remains undefined. One could ask, indeed, what is the ‘image of the rich child’?

The Scuole d’Infanzia in the municipality of Reggio Emilia is an ECEC movement that has gained much attention internationally. The school was started and led by Loris Malaguzzi (Cagliari et al., 2016), whose work continues to resonate within education circles (Hall et al., 2014). The Italian educator has spoken and written at length about his early childhood pedagogy, specifically about educators’ commitment to work from an image of the ‘rich child’, saying that *‘our image of the child [as] rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent, and most of all, connected to adults and other children. (Malaguzzi, 1993, p. 10)’*.

The relational aspect of Malaguzzi’s rich child is prominent. Through relating to peers, adults and the world around them, children, and adults as well, learn and grow. This is not the controversial aspect of Malaguzzi’s rich child, however, which he described as intently political. Supporting growth and learning is indeed the focus of any educational endeavor, yet

Malaguzzi's emphasis on context set his project apart. By portraying the rich child as powerful, strong and competent, he shifted the adult's gaze from the adult the child is about to become to the child as a being in the present.

Malaguzzi was not the only one to highlight this difference. Indeed, the sociology of childhood has developed around this central theme (Alanen & Mayall, 2001; James & Prout, 1997; Qvortrup, 2009). Yet Malaguzzi articulated what the emancipatory potential could be for educators and pedagogues, and this is what sets him apart. This shift from becoming to being is required when working from the image of the rich child, but as Malaguzzi pointed out, it is far from common.

Links between Malaguzzi's rich child and social pedagogy are tentative (Moss, 2011) and the need to consider the influence of constructions of children, and any effect they may have on RCC professional practice in England, is in its infancy (Jakobsen, 2009; Moss et al., 2000). The purpose of this thesis is to understand how the two relate to each other.

Thinking back to the introductory vignette, what assumptions and inferences about that young man's motivations for setting the fire alarm could be made? When we think about him as 'rich' in connections, meanings and power, what did he intend to communicate? Further, how do current discourses around international migration impact my colleagues' and my work?

In the previous sections above (from 1.3, p.34) I summarised relevant aspects of social pedagogy contrasts with the description full of contradictions of English RCC. The relative brevity of the section, given the complexity of its subject, may be seen as reflecting the relatively superficial take-up of social pedagogy in the UK (Spatscheck & Petrie, 2022).

Yet social pedagogy has moved forward since the mid-1990s. It has developed a training network and highlighted some avenues for practice, such as borrowing the concept of the 'rich child' and connecting it to everyday life so that practitioners can position themselves against how children and young people are constructed as 'troubled', 'troublesome', 'vulnerable' or 'at risk' in the institution of RCC. So far, this has been done at the theoretical level, but not linked at the level of professional practice to the pervasive negative image of children in care that I described earlier.

1.4 Examining the Transformative Potential of the ‘Rich Child’ in Social Pedagogy Practice

How social pedagogy has supported children’s workforce development remains to be understood in detail (Berridge, 2016; Berridge et al., 2011; Milligan, 2009; The Fostering Network, 2016). I contend that one of the points of friction between social pedagogy and the institution of RCC in the UK lies in the approach to knowledge taken. This is visible when evaluating effectiveness (C. Cameron, 2011, 2015; Kirkwood et al., 2019) as social pedagogy’s theoretical base is not well understood in the UK (Hämäläinen, 2015; Hämäläinen, 2012; Hatton, 2001b, 2013; P. Petrie, 2013; Rothuizen & Harbo, 2017; Sandermann & Neumann, 2014; M. Smith, 2020; Storø, 2012; Úcar, 2013). No doubt suffering from a lack of availability in the English language, it also clashes with the positivist approach to evidence favoured by the sector in general (Featherstone et al., 2014, pp. 53–74; Kemp & Harbo, 2020; Krumer-Nevo, 2016).

Nevertheless, by providing a framework where professionals can situate and develop their professional judgment, social pedagogy offers a language where they can articulate ethical considerations that pertain to the situation they need to act upon (Charfe & Gardner, 2020; Hatton, 2001b; P. Petrie, 2015; Storø, 2013, pp. 35–62). Moss and Petrie suggested social pedagogues working from an ‘image of the rich child’ have the potential to transform children’s services (Moss, 2011; Moss et al., 2000; Moss & Petrie, 2002). Working from an ‘image of the rich child’ is pertinent for RCC in that it positions professionals away from negative and disempowering discourses on children and young people in care embedded in law, policy and professional practice (Copley et al., 2014; Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2019; Steels & Simpson, 2017).

The purpose of this thesis is therefore to explore the thinking, attitudes and assumptions RCC workers working in children’s homes have towards the young people they work with and whether working from an ‘image of the rich child’ influences those assumptions for the better. I take everyday professional practice and professionals’ perceptions of their work as the basis for the investigation. My work is interventionist in that I have worked with RCC workers to transform their thinking, attitudes and assumptions about the young people they work with.

Through an in-depth case study in one children's home, I look for the 'image of the rich child' in the RCC workers team's justifications for their practice. I focus on 'images' RCC workers hold of the young people, and to do this I track how the concept of 'young person' is used, understood and thought of in the workers' reflections on their work. This focus on images is made possible theoretically by adopting a post-Vygotskian framework.

In the post-Vygotskian paradigm, the focus is on what people do, what they think about their actions and the mental and practical resources they bring to the process (Engeness, 2021; Ilyenkov, 2009; Sannino, 2010). While much of this theoretical apparatus is relatively well understood in post-Vygotskian educational thinking, using the discipline of social pedagogy as a starting point meant an iterative and exploratory process linking Malaguzzi's work with Marx's early writing on the 'rich human being' (Fromm, 2004; Marx, 1973, p. 409). In Marxian thinking, needs are tied to mechanisms of both production and consumption, and Vygotsky's dialectical understanding of needs (Vygotsky, 1998, pp. 7–12) provides the necessary link to apply this thinking broadly to educational work, such as the upbringing of children in care (C. Cameron et al., 2016).

This theoretical choice is also pertinent to addressing issues of knowledge that are highly relevant to RCC. Together with the recognition that culture is an important aspect of life in RCC, theoretical framings used to research children's homes cultures that have impacted policy are mostly functionalist and positivist (E. Brown et al., 1998; The Children's Homes (England) Regulations, 2015; Hicks et al., 1998). While falling short of addressing structural aspects of cultural practices such as race, gender, (dis)ability, sexuality and class, the moral engagement with practice that social pedagogy brings to the fore needs to be conceptualised and given proper consideration (Broadhurst et al., 2010; Featherstone et al., 2014, pp. 84–93). With this in mind, a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework provides important starting points. Indeed, such frameworks have been used to address questions of moral positioning and professional motives (Edwards, 2010, pp. 7–10; Vianna, 2007), and to understand organisational learning and transformation within welfare systems (Daniels, 2016; Edwards et al., 2006; Edwards, 2009; Engeström et al., 2012; Engeström, 2014; Hedegaard, 2009; Nissen, 2003)

1.5 Argument and Outline of the Thesis

The literature in Chapter 2 starts from Moss and Petrie's (2002) suggestion to work from 'an image of the rich child'. It explores possible origins for Malaguzzi's rich child, its use and criticism in ECEC, and Moss and Petrie's argument that pedagogy requires engagement with practice, culture, and the theoretical possibilities they find necessary to transform children's services. Chapter 2 then assesses the relevance of those ideas for English RCC. It concludes that there is a disconnection between the crucial evaluation of practice and the possibilities for its transformation in Moss and Petrie's proposal.

Chapter 3 suggests that a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework could offer a more refined articulation of practice, knowledge, language and power to explore how images influence RCC professional practice and their mindset towards the young people they work with.

Chapter 4 shifts the focus from existing literature to the fieldwork and data that inform the conclusions of this thesis. Chapter 4 brings post-Vygotskian theory to inform my work in the fieldwork setting and the analysis of the data.

Chapter 5's focus brings the reader closer to the everyday practice of RCC workers. It does so by explaining how I address ethical issues and my positionality within the setting, before drawing the reader's attention to the use of space in the home, and the everyday routines and group dynamics that constitute the life space of the home.

Chapter 6 describes the findings, drawing conclusions as to the presence of Ilyenkovian images and of mechanisms of othering that emerge from the analysis of 31 situations recreated from the data.

Chapter 7 discusses the findings concerning the research question, exploring whether some of the conclusions drawn in Chapter 6 may occur outside of Hilltop. It then focuses on the knowledge I draw upon for the analysis concerning the professionalisation of RCC before turning to the implications of a post-Vygotskian view of consciousness for social pedagogy and change within children's services.

1.6 A Note on Language

Throughout the literature, ‘child’ as opposed to a child or children is used to designate a composite of different norms, a sociological abstraction. It is a concept (James, 2009, pp. 35–36; Oswell, 2013, pp. 9–34) that has universalist, hegemonic tendencies (Abebe, 2019, p. 3) and is, therefore, an abstract entity borne from the context the author is working from, such as Piaget’s child (Agbenyega, 2009) the ‘poor’ child of the minority world (Hopkins & Sriprakash, 2016) or the ‘agentic’ child of the sociology of childhood (Honig, 2009; Spyrou, Rosen, et al., 2018). On the other hand, childhood is both a period of life and a sociological category, the differences between which have been articulated by Quortrup (1994), while children, in today’s UK, but not necessarily elsewhere or in other times, are individuals who have not yet reached legal adulthood at 18 years old.

The terminology used to designate specific aspects of the reality of individuals that are not adults therefore becomes important, and in this thesis, I adopt similar distinctions to those of the sociology of childhood. Further, the common language within RCC in England uses the term ‘young people’, or ‘young person’ to speak about individuals younger than 18 years old who live in the homes. I use this terminology in instances when I speak of the individuals who lived in the case study home, and I use the same verbal distinction to signify differences between individuals and the sociological category they are associated with.

Another important decision was to avoid using the word ‘youth’ in the thesis because of its rather specialist meaning within children’s services in England. The word ‘child’ is predominantly used to talk about minors in the care of the state in the UK. Indeed, youth work and youth justice are two professions found in the UK, but each refers to a particular professional remit within children’s services, with youth justice related to criminal studies and youth work to the negotiation of identities within youth-adult relationships. Further, ‘child and youth care’ is a term used in the USA and Canada with a similar meaning to social care for children in the UK.

2 Literature Review

The literature review is structured along a disconnection reflected in the publications that speak to ‘working from an image of the rich child’. It examines Moss and Petrie’s 2002 publication *From Children’s Services to Children’s Spaces* in detail, giving context to the suggestions for transformation they make and highlighting the problems that arise when implementing such a vision. Indeed, more than 20 years after the publication of this book, this thesis examines, with the benefit of hindsight, how social pedagogy has been implemented within English RCC and whether working from an image of the rich child has the potential to transform RCC.

The disconnection appears when holding in mind the possibilities for transformation in ways that are compatible with a critical understanding of the RCC sector. This is why this literature is constructed along two lines, reflecting each other. The first part looks at what could be, the potentiality, and the second part looks at what is, by reviewing current literature on RCC in England between 1989 and pre-pandemic 2020.

2.1 Malaguzzi’s ‘Image of the Rich Child’ in Social Pedagogy

The starting point for both the thesis and the literature review is Malaguzzi’s proposal to work from an ‘image of the rich child’.

Malaguzzi was a charismatic visionary who lived in the second part of the 20th century (Cagliari et al., 2016). His vision for early childhood education was embedded in a network of schools he started setting up in central Italy. His ‘image of the rich child’, still present with us, is also tied to a specific political model. In this section, I describe Malaguzzi’s ‘image of the rich child’ in more detail, give possible origins for it, and finally address some criticisms of how his vision of ECEC education is implemented to understand how it could transfer to other contexts, such as RCC.

2.1.1 Malaguzzi’s Use of the ‘Image of the Rich Child’

Malaguzzi’s ‘image of the rich child’ is a political endeavour because it stresses the choices educators are faced with in their work. Indeed, he believed that

a declaration [about the image of the child] is not only a necessary act of clarity and correctness, it is the necessary premise for any pedagogical theory, and any pedagogical project (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 374).

While Malaguzzi gives prominence to developing an image of the child as rich and competent, he contrasted it with the dominant images of ‘child’ embedded in the field of education and psychology. Malaguzzi understood the political consequences of not doing this work because *to put it crudely, I repeat, unidentified children* [that is to say, whose image has not been clarified] *who are declared ‘poor’ are more convenient than children who are identified as rich* (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 376).

To Malaguzzi, working from the image of the rich child is the key to upholding children’s rights. This assertion is strengthened by more recent work linking the children’s rights discourse to Malaguzzi’s ideas (Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2019).

Malaguzzi’s formulation of the ‘image of the rich child’ was the result of much reflection on the schools and their development. It is noticeable that the terminology of the image of the child appeared in the later years of Malaguzzi’s career¹, which could be seen as the result of a long, careful process. In earlier years, and before the work of the new sociology of childhood, he took great care to outline the socially constructed nature of childhood and encouraged his audience to investigate how childhood has changed through time (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 74).

Further, he emphasised the conscious decision of the pedagogue to work with potential, with the positive and the competence of the child (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 77). Malaguzzi described the controversial aspect of the rich child as intently political, contrary to a more conservative focus on the ‘proven capacities’ of the child. He did this by insisting on considering the child as a being in the present, in a manner taken up later by the sociology of childhood (James, 2009; Oswell, 2016, pp. 21–24). Like the intention behind the development of the sociology of childhood, this was a transformative ontological and political move.

The long maturation process that one can discern behind the ‘image of the rich child’ was also visible in Malaguzzi’s emphasis on the cooperative nature of pedagogic practice, a

¹ In the selected writings on Malaguzzi translated in English that I drew upon for this account, Malaguzzi’s use of the term ‘image of the child’ appears for the first time in an 1988 talk (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 336).

practice he situated between the children, their parents, and ‘the environment’, be that society at large or the objects, furniture and buildings that are chosen with a pedagogical purpose (Cagliari et al., 2016, pp. 406–412; Hall et al., 2014, pp. 65–89).

Ontologically, Malaguzzi assumed that the knower cannot be detached from the object of knowledge (Cagliari et al., 2016, pp. 336–348), which situates Reggio’s pedagogy well outside of a positivist, cartesian and dualistic positioning about knowledge (Murriss, 2017). Malaguzzi does acknowledge a constructivist view of learning, as Piaget does. However, he argues against Piaget’s stage view of development, preferring a more Vygotskian connection between learning and development (Hall et al., 2014, pp. 102–107).

Malaguzzi link those theoretical considerations with the image of the rich child and argued that:

substantially children [...] are mediated through microcosms, and these are historical microcosms with a historical date and historically true. They are mediated through microcosms that contain forms and materials, but they also contain principles and laws and rules: they contain empathies and revulsions. It would be difficult to say that all this is not part of an artifice: it is a man-made (sic) artifice, but it is still an artifice. So children are mediated through microcosms. They might have been part of a Spartan microcosm. Think what it means to say a Spartan microcosm, or an Athenian microcosm, or a Babylonian microcosm: and inside these microcosms I think we will find a series of images, and perhaps we will find others in our thoughts and our reflections. What I mean is, the concept of the self-sufficient child -if it still exists, the autarchic child constructing and self-constructing alone, must be distanced and brought back to contextualisation, so that the process of acquisition of ideas can run along in constant flow (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 409).

Several important theoretical points need to be drawn from this rather long quote:

- images are a product of human thoughts and practices;
- images change through historical contexts and space;
- the material circumstances and the system of social rules and constructs of a given culture (which he calls microcosms) shape images;
- mediation is an important process through which human ideas about the world can be understood;

- to be understood, images must ‘breathe’ between their context and the space created around them (the abstraction) through the process of knowing.

Through this brief description of the process of forming images, Malaguzzi gave prominence to theoretical positioning. In particular, he highlighted the relationship between the mind, social meanings, practices, norms and the material world. This chimes with how early socio-pedagogic literature encourages UK practitioners to examine their construction of ‘child’. In the next chapter, I will argue this also chimes with Evald Ilyenkov’s work on the ideal and a Marxist approach to knowledge (Bakhurst, 1991; Ilyenkov, 2010; Levant & Oittinen, 2014).

2.1.2 Possible Origins for Malaguzzi’s Ideas on the ‘Image of the Rich Child’

Both Malaguzzi and the Reggio Emilia movement avoid claiming a strict and overly defined lineage from a given theoretical position (Gandini, 2008); yet the similarities between the ‘image of the rich child’ and early socialist and utopian writing are striking. The context within which Malaguzzi developed his idea were heavily influenced by Marxism. He was not only a member of the Italian Communist Party from 1945, but, additionally, the cultural and political context of post-war Italy was highly influenced by Marxist ideas (Cagliari et al., 2016, pp. 3–6; Hall et al., 2014, pp. 7–30). This is relevant because it contrasts with the political and ideological context of the fieldwork for this thesis, namely England in the second decade of the 21st century where, overwhelmingly, neoliberalism defines how children’s services are conceived (Frost & Parton, 2009).

To situate the cultural and political landscape Malaguzzi lived in, the debate around schooling in post-war Italy is a good illustration. It was aligned with a more socialist vision for society (Cagliari et al., 2016), and hinged on whether schools should be religious or secular. The Catholic Church promoted religious education, while trade unions and the left argued for a secular type of schooling. Malaguzzi conceived of Reggio Emilia schools as secular and run by the community. A possible influence on a Marxian origin for Malaguzzi’s ‘rich child’ was Heller’s *Theory of Need in Marx* (1976), a book reprinted six times in Italy at the time (Heller, 2011, p. 37).

Considering this background, it becomes interesting to look at a Marxist origin for the ‘rich human being’. Both Thomas More and Marx argued for a society whose structure supports human flourishing, which has implicit links with Malaguzzi’s formulation of the ‘image of the rich child’. This is why I now turn to those writers.

2.1.2.1 Thomas More

The first mention of human beings as ‘rich’ in personality and fulfilment in the Western tradition that I could trace dated back to Thomas More’s *Utopia*. In the following quote, the link between social and economic structure and a fulfilled, happy inhabitant of the land of Utopia were made possible through the abolition of private property, which More referred to throughout his description of this idyllic new land:

but in Utopia, where every man [sic] has a right to everything, they all know that if care is taken to keep the public stores full, no private man [sic] can want anything; for among them there is no unequal distribution, so that no man [sic] is poor, none in necessity, and though no man [sic] has anything, yet **they are all rich**; for what can make a man [sic] so rich as to lead a serene and cheerful life, free from anxieties; neither apprehending want himself, nor vexed with the endless complaints of his wife? (More, in Kautsky, 2002, my emphasis)

Interestingly, this aspect of the ‘rich human being’ (intentionally gender neutral) appeared in a utopian context. The literature review highlighted how Malaguzzi continued with this interpretation since he asked teachers to strive towards the image of the ‘rich child’ as a stance for their work (Malaguzzi, 1993a, p. 6).

How are we, therefore, to use the image of the rich child in our everyday relationships with children, young people, their parents and carers to transform their social positioning in relation to each other? While More suggested that different economic relationships and the abolition of private property resulted in rich and fulfilled human beings, this is far from easily applicable to the social care system in England at the beginning of the 21st century. The link between More’s ‘rich human being’ and a re-imagination of social relations is, however, apparent.

2.1.2.2 Karl Marx

Marx, in a similar vein to More (Patsouras, 2005, p. 12), linked a ‘rich human being’ to societal structure and conditions. Both philosophers claimed it was through the creation of a different kind of society and the abolition of private property that human beings could reach their potential and flourish. Labour is the tangible action through which human beings relate to the world around them, yet in capitalist systems, alienation is unavoidable because human

beings exchange their labour for an abstract, normalising standard, that of money (Allman, 2007, pp. 31–50; Giddens, 2008, pp. 11–12).

The contradictory nature of economic relations in a capitalist society generates constant societal transformation. Theoretically, Marx drew on dialectical logic to account for this. He described how this manifests in a capitalist economy through:

the cultivation of all the qualities of the social human being, production of the same in a form as rich as possible in needs, because rich in qualities and relations – production of this being as the most total and universal possible social product, for, in order to take gratification in a many-sided way, he must be capable of many pleasures, hence cultured to a high degree – is likewise a condition of production founded on capital (Marx, 1973, p. 409).

This is strongly reminiscent of Malaguzzi’s rich child (Malaguzzi, 1993b) because of the focus on relationships and ‘qualities’ such as practical and intellectual competencies and potential for development.

I would like to acknowledge the many critiques of the utopian and essentialist view of human nature presented here, yet remember that it has been an intrinsic pedagogical question in Western thinking (see, for example, Seal, 2016, pp. 263–268; Vygotsky, 1994b). At present, I want to limit the discussion to linking Malaguzzi’s ideas to Marxist thinking through the ‘rich human being’.

As a result, the utopian, visionary aspect of Malaguzzi’s image is important to keep in mind. It conveys possibilities for change and some intangible qualities to the endeavour that I want to be cautious about.

2.1.3 Transferring Malaguzzi’s Ideas to Other Contexts

My proposal to investigate how the ‘image of the rich child’ transforms RCC practice in England rests on conceptual transfer between different contexts. In this section, I explore how the ‘image of the rich child’ has already been used in different contexts, with different populations.

First, I focus on how Reggio spoke of its work with children who would, in an English welfare setting, be seen as ‘*at risk*’, as ‘*vulnerable*’ or labelled with ‘*special needs*’. In the second part, I come back to the UK to understand how images have been used in critical

social theory. This contrasting view of how images work in education and social policy is important to elaborate on the transferability of the ‘image of the rich child’.

2.1.3.1 The ‘Rich Child’ in Reggio: Pedagogy or Ideology?

Reggio's pedagogy is based on specific pedagogical practices that are described as inclusive, yet the very discourse used in Reggio's publications draws on constructions that are not fully reflective of the diversity of experiences at the schools.

Gandini (2008) subverted the traditional label of ‘special needs’ with that of children with ‘special rights’, specifically referring to the ‘image of the rich child’. Characteristics of the Reggio approach are described as inclusive of children with autistic spectrum disorders. One such seemingly inclusive Reggio practice is the use of an emergent curriculum¹(Alter-Muri, 2017, p. 21). Within this, the process of documentation, or making learning visible, is also presented as a pedagogical method to uphold the image of the rich child and find competence where a label of disability may prevent some from doing so (Suárez & Daniels, 2009). In all the case studies and reflective pieces that focus on how ‘children with special needs’ can be integrated within a Reggio environment, the ‘image of the rich child’ is the foundation on which teachers work (Bredekamp, 1993; Carter & Roe, 2013; Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2019; Mitchiner et al., 2018).

Another feature of inclusion is the cooperative nature of the school, whereby the parents, the teachers and the pupils themselves are heavily involved in the running and ethos of the school (Moss, 2012, pp. 72–75). This is important for children with disabilities but also to promote community inclusion in cities with a high level of immigration (Hall et al., 2014, pp. 78–81). This points to how the institutional structure of the nurseries influences practice and the experience of the children. No attention is paid to the link between the institution and interpersonal relationships, however.

While those studies demonstrate how thinking of children as competent, meaning-makers and powerful can blur administrative categories imposed on pupils in ECEC, no work is available to understand how this can be transferred to other contexts. Given Malaguzzi’s emphasis on

¹ The term ‘emergent curriculum’ is used to describe child-led and project-based learning that is one of the characteristics of Reggio (Wien, 2008)‘.

how historical and material conditions shape the social realities where images can be found (see 2.1.1 p. 44), this is an important gap in the literature.

Further, Hall et al. (2014, p. 143) used Foucauldian discourse analysis to understand the *language maneuvers (sic) that Reggio writers have used to convince their readers of the impartiality and authority of their claims*. Those maneuvers rely on the binary opposition of themes that are relevant to understanding how the ‘image of the rich child’ can be transferred to other contexts, such as RCC.

Hall et al. (2014, pp. 122–131) introduced the binary theme of the *Exceptionality Yet Transferability of Reggio* by showing how the Italian preschool is metaphorically associated with graduate, educated dialogue that has intellectual depth. What creates Reggio’s exceptionality is the contrasting negative associations with other neoliberal, ‘superficial’ and ‘rigid’ ECEC settings. Yet teachers’ accounts describe an initiation to the pedagogy through a pilgrimage to Reggio. The ‘journey’ is necessary to understand the depth of pedagogy practised there. The assumption is that the pedagogy is transferable through this initiation, a metaphor that reinforces Reggio’s exceptionality.

Other aspects of how Reggio represents itself are addressed in Hall et al.’s analysis, such as the construction of a romantic child or an idealised worker, a worker constructed as feminine and solely dedicated to the cause. Hall et al.’s analysis also revealed how specific characteristics of individuals working there, such as gender, race or class, are etched out of the publications they analysed. This highlights that how Reggio’s pedagogies are spoken about relies on an essentialist, assumed and unexamined notion of child, teacher and community and does not bring forth the historical, material and societal constraints and specificities that are highlighted in sociocultural literature (Hall et al., 2014, pp. 142–143). Given the structural inequalities I highlighted in the RCC population (see 1.1, p. 14), this is an important point to address.

2.1.3.2 Intersectional Images in Critical Social Theory

Malaguzzi’s and Reggio’s use of images may idealise the preschool’s pedagogies; yet images are a recurring theme in childhood studies (Honig, 2009; Jenks, 2005; Kellett, 2014; Nsamenang, 1999; K. Smith, 2012; Woodrow, 1999). In this section, I look at how images can be used and understood more critically.

Alanen (2016) highlighted issues related to whether childhood studies should borrow from critical theoretical concepts such as intersectionality. She described how useful such concepts may be for childhood studies, and in examining it she argued that

an empirically based intersectional analysis requires that one or more social “mechanisms” of power can be assumed to be at work in producing positions of subordination (as well as counter positions of privilege), and their working then needs to be empirically “tested.” What makes a truly intersectional analysis even more difficult is that also the other unobservable “sources” of subordination and disadvantage (e.g. class, ethnicity, “race”) need to get a similar analytical treatment, opening the possibility to analyze the combined working of their “mechanism” (Alanen, 2016, p. 159).

When looking at the literature outside of childhood study, focusing on images may bring some answers to Alanen’s question. This is evident, for example, in Hill Collin’s (2009, pp. 77–106) description of the ‘image of the Black Mama’ as an oppressive mechanism based on binary themes and Laurence’s (1982) examination of common-sense thinking as the root of racism.

Laurence (1982) situates images within a comprehensive understanding of ideology by making them a crucial mechanism through which common-sense assumptions can be understood as a ‘natural’ part of the social order:

through the mechanism of this ‘naturalization process’ the social construction of, for example, gender roles is collapsed into the biological differences between the sexes. In common-sense terms, historically and culturally specific images of femininity and masculinity are presented as the ‘natural’ attributes of females and males. Whilst we should not forget that these dominant definitions are contested, we must also remember that they are embodied within the dominant institutional order and are inscribed within the social relations of everyday life (Laurence, 1982, p. 48).

While Hill Collins described how images and the binaries they stem from function as a mechanism to structure social relations, Laurence outlined how those same images are hegemonic and work to legitimise relationships whose manipulative and exploitative effects would otherwise be seen as highly problematic. He does so by referring to Gramsci’s work on hegemony (Laurence, 1982, p. 47) as a negotiated truth between the ruling and working classes.

Importantly for my purpose, Laurence also made the link between images, practices within institutions and everyday relationships. Images, as Laurence defined, are more than linguistic and symbolic constructs. This adds to how the term has been used in the sociology of childhood above. For Laurence, images are vehicles for common-sense judgments, and their power relies on their use of themes in binary opposition, which make visible or invisible some of the identities of the individuals involved in those social relations.

Laurence's analysis is relevant to 'child in care' as he demonstrated how the family and all its ideological associations are thought of in British society. To do this, images of the mother, youth and the social workers are important in disentangling what is common sense, or ideological in the Gramscian sense, from actual social relations historically and geographically defined, and of the justifications that are used for given practices.

An important question anti-racist writers' use of images speaks to is the transformative possibilities Malaguzzi saw in 'images of the rich child'. To understand how Malaguzzi used images, it is important to understand that Hill Collins and Laurence saw images as always controlling and oppressive. This oppressive mechanism works by assigning exclusionary meanings along binaries such as nature/nurture, Black/White, girl/woman, boy/man, and pocket money/wage labour. Those binary associations, for example, shape positions around the question of age and capacity in the debate on child labour (Laurence, 1982, p. 52). Those symbolic categories place some individuals in the shadow, while others are brought forward into the limelight as examples that justify state practices or reinforce individualistic and psychological explanations of a given phenomenon. Therefore, for both Hill Collins and Laurence, an image may be understood as a product of power and intersectional relationships within a community.

Through this awareness of how binary meanings are ascribed to an individual, we can see how an understanding of images as inherently oppressive is rooted in institutional, social practices and power relationships. This did not appear in Malaguzzi's description of images, and, as some would argue (see 2.1.3.1, p. 50), it may be dangerous to replicate oppressive symbolic associations in how Reggio educators use the 'image of the rich child'. This attention to institutional, societal and power relationships therefore appears important to embed within the theoretical framework of this thesis.

This section explored Malaguzzi's ideas about the 'image of the rich child' in social pedagogy by looking first at Malaguzzi's writings, secondly at the possible socialist origins of the 'rich human being', and finally as etched in the many publications and discourses about Reggio. This brought to the fore a disconnection that rests on the transformative potential Malaguzzi and others attributed to the 'image of the rich child'. Indeed, parallel to the work done to encourage a rights-based and more humanistic approach to education, several assumptions and binary associations that exclude and essentialise Reggio's pedagogies became apparent. Laurence's understanding of images as vehicles of common-sense meanings at the root of racism is a useful and critical model for understanding images as a mechanism of oppression. Through this review, an emphasis on the material, historical and individual identities and contexts that are key to the sociocultural approach to learning (Stetsenko, 2008) and pedagogy seems relevant, especially in trying to 'import' (Cameron & Petrie, 2009) or transfer concepts such as the 'rich child' to other contexts.

2.1.4 Moss and Petrie's Suggestion to Work from an 'Image of the Rich Child'

Moss and Petrie took up Malaguzzi's ideas about the 'rich child' and worked with them in the context of English children's services. Their suggestions raised questions about the transferability of concepts across contexts that emerged from the critique of Reggio above.

In the publication entitled *From Children's Services to Children's Spaces*, Moss and Petrie (2002) draw on several European comparative studies of children's services done at the TCRU (B. Cohen et al., 2004; Moss et al., 1999). In their 2002 book, they envision how children's services in England could be more humane by modelling them, in part, on their understanding of Reggio Emilia schools.

The argument for transforming English children's services into *children's spaces* relied on Moss and Petrie's understanding of four themes, namely pedagogy, practice, culture and possibilities for learning and transformation. Drawing on European comparisons and Reggio pedagogy, Moss and Petrie argued that English children's services should:

- adopt social *pedagogy* from Scandinavian countries for its focus on professional education and relationships;

- focus on the relationship between *practice* and policy to understand how common-sense ideas and assumptions work to shape professionals' views of children, and to see practice as a space for possible changes;
- develop an understanding of children's *cultures* to emphasise relationships, the constructed nature of learning and the importance of the work of the sociology of childhood for professional practice and development;
- pay theoretical attention to *possibilities* for learning and transformation by adopting a critical attitude towards what professionals do, how they justify it and how language shapes possibilities for action.

I use these four themes to organise the remainder of the literature review. First by delving more into Moss and Petrie's ideas and then by reviewing how each theme is discussed in the English RCC literature.

2.1.4.1 Pedagogy

One suggestion Moss and Petrie made is for English children's services to adopt pedagogy (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 137–147). Adopting pedagogy, in their eyes, has the potential to develop and train the workforce, a theme they explored in depth in other publications (Boddy et al., 2005, 2006; C. Cameron et al., 2002, 2007). This rested on a restructuring of the sector, where the professional division in England between care and education became blurred. This prefigured the New Labour agenda of multidisciplinary working that would be pushed through the ECM legislation the following year (HM Government, 2003).

2.1.4.2 Practice

A recurring theme in Moss and Petrie's 2002 publication is the critique of existing constructions of 'child' in relevant policies and their influence on professional practice. Moss and Petrie adopted a social constructionist theoretical position, where they saw language shaping practices through power (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 19–36). While I explore this in more detail below (see 2.1.4.4 p. 58), it is sufficient here to point out that Moss and Petrie's focus was on discourse analysis of policy documents rather than an examination of everyday professional practice. This is a crucial difference that I will regularly come back to.

To start exploring practice, Moss and Petrie described the child of the Children's Act 1989 as an 'atomised child' whose needs have been assessed and categorised using tools and

frameworks proven to be effective at offering the ‘best’ possible outcomes (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 63–66). This ‘atomised’ image is created, according to Moss and Petrie, through the process of assessment. Assessments focus professionals’ attention in the direction set out in policies and blind them to other aspects important to that child. In an earlier but highly related study, Moss et al. (2000, pp. 244–248) demonstrate the pertinence of this attention to discourse, power and knowledge through processes of governmentality. Indeed, they attended to the discourse of the child in need as it existed in ECEC policy derived from the Children Act 1989, and how this discourse produced in practice a child who is psychologised and individualistic, ‘vulnerable’, the object of support. In doing so, they demonstrated how policy shapes possibilities for action and offer Malaguzzi’s rich child as an alternative.

Moss and Petrie also described in detail the context within which professional decisions about children are being made under the umbrella of the Children Act 1989, which I take as another description of professional practice (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 34). They highlighted the hegemony of technical and managerial discourses and how they manifested in English ECEC in the early 2000s. This is an important aspect to bear in mind when understanding professional practice. The technical-rational logic and the logic of needs that are recognised through discourse analysis are also shaped by a pragmatism that can, in many circumstances, encourage professionals and politicians to believe they can do away with theory (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 17–19).

Practices, however, are more than discourses and logic. Some argue they are embodied (Bourdieu, 1980, pp. 111–134), and the literature on the sociology of childhood gives examples of how this manifests in professional practice in children’s services (Campling & Prout, 2000; Eßer, 2017; Kallio, 2008). The point here is that a further definition of professional practice is required, and I start this below when reviewing the current literature on RCC professional practice (see 2.2.2, p. 64).

Another noticeable element in Moss and Petrie’s argument was a disconnection between practice as described in policy, the reality of practice in the field, and their vision of future, better services. This is similar to the disconnection I describe in Malaguzzi’s work (see 2.1.3.2, p. 49). The disconnection is visible in Moss and Petrie’s wish that pedagogy could ‘rescue’ English children’s services (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 114, 137) while at the same time elaborating on the importance of avoiding universalist and essentialist characterisations and truths (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 23–28).

2.1.4.3 Culture

It is difficult to summarise Moss and Petrie's take on 'culture' because three themes run through their argument:

- one that explored what could be, and therefore drew on assumptions and a use of language that Hall et al. (2014) argued reinforced the trope of Reggio and pedagogy as fulfilling the role of the rescuer;
- one that highlighted the political project at play in children's services, emphasising choice and a specific conception of learning, knowledge and professional evaluation, a theme that I address below (see 2.1.4.4, p. 58);
- finally, a more sociological understanding of the cultures of childhood concerning wider society, drawing from the work of the sociology of childhood.

I develop the final theme briefly because of its resonance with the structural inequalities observable in the RCC population (see 1.1, p. 14) and the tendency to overlook those questions as revealed by discourse analysis of Reggio-related publications (Hall et al., 2014). The sociology of childhood highlighted the relationship between childhood as a sociological category and other social categories such as adults (Alanen & Mayall, 2001; Qvortrup, 2009).

Moss and Petrie used this structural view of childhood to explain how children's practices, meanings and spaces, that is, their culture, related to wider society. In doing so, they explained the marginal social position of children as 'other' (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 123–125) and the low value placed on children's cultural practices such as play or work by adults. This marginalisation is also apparent in the contrast Moss and Petrie made between English children's services and the value placed on children's cultural practices in Scandinavia, hinting that childhood may be a different experience in the UK to Denmark or Sweden.

Another contrast emerged in Moss and Petrie's writing, between this sociological understanding of the 'child as other' and an earlier reference they make to Levinas' caution not to make the *other* into the same (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 45–47). Contrasting the two is important because while the first one is sociological (Y. Cohen et al., 2017; Lahman, 2008), the other is ethical and relational, focusing on individual relationships and related to Tronto's ethic of care (Sander-Staudt, n.d.). This is an important distinction that I will come back to in later chapters.

2.1.4.4 Theoretical Possibilities

The final theme Moss and Petrie write about pertains to the theoretical positioning they see as necessary to undertake this deconstruction and re-envisioning of children's services. As already mentioned, this positioning combined a social constructionist, post-modernist view of truth with an attention to processes of governmentality inspired by Foucault and Rose (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 17–36).

The social constructionist focus on discourse and language combined with Foucault's emphasis on power to highlight how discourses shape possibilities for action, therefore linking the images Malaguzzi spoke about with more material aspects of human experience and practice. Following Foucault, Moss and Petrie made an all-important link between power and knowledge. The discourses, logic and justifications that are bolstered by public policies highlight or invisibilise certain ways of knowing in a way that is reminiscent of Laurence's work on images as oppressive (see 2.1.3.2, p. 51). Moss and Petrie brought in issues of power and knowledge that were not addressed in Malaguzzi's work (see 2.1.1, p. 44) and used a Foucauldian analysis to deconstruct what was then taking place in English children's services and understand the impact this has on children. Although power is invisible, it can still be experienced through relationships (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 32–35), and this is the crux of Moss and Petrie's suggestions for transformation. They argue that part of caring work is to emphasise the ethics of such relationships. Moss and Petrie chose Tronto's ethics of care to address dilemmas that arise in caring relationships (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 44–52). While this is a significant part of Moss and Petrie's argument, my concern here is to understand the theoretical positioning behind linking discourses, power, and knowledge in individual relationships. There is an apparent hiatus here, between the generic 'child' of policy and the individual children in relationships with individual adults working as social workers, teachers or RCC workers. How can this be accounted for?

The focus on the interaction between discourses and power through relationships and techniques of governmentalities implied a critical research approach. Moss and Petrie stated that the work of research is to understand power (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 35). To do so, they suggested making practices visible and 'stutter' (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 10). This 'stuttering' involved taking a critical stance towards what is happening in professional practice in children's services and how it is justified and seeking to understand justifications and assumptions behind given decisions.

Carrying out research around the transformative potential of the image of the ‘rich child’ is, Moss and Petrie argue, a political endeavour. Everyday choices need to be made visible and conscious to professionals to explore and problematise the common assumptions that bolster policy discourses and mechanisms of governmentality, such as categories of ‘needs’ and related assessment processes (N. Fraser, 1989; Moss et al., 2000; Woodhead, 1997). Moss and Petrie highlighted the importance of attending to theory as part of this process. They made an important observation about the link between discourses and practice that spoke to the need to define professional practice further. I have already mentioned how they overlooked the importance of embodied practices and limited their criticism of practice to policy discourses. The introduction described briefly how, despite some attention to everyday practice and decision-making in RCC, much of it is left to the common sense of low-status workers sometimes under intense emotional pressure (see 1.2.3, p. 30). Therein lies a gap in what we know about RCC practice, which may be important when considering the ‘image of the rich child’.

To understand the link between what professionals think and what they do, Moss and Petrie relied on Foucault’s understanding of the normative effect of knowledge (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 31–32). In that sense, selecting what is true or false in social sciences and disciplines such as psychology, psychiatry, pedagogy or social work is a form of power. Their analysis of policy discourse is revealing of how power operates at a macro level. Yet the knowledge that is necessary for care work is complex, based on interpersonal relationships and often tacit (Brannen et al., 2007; Reinders, 2010; M. K. Smith, 2014). Again, Moss and Petrie’s work is limited for my purpose in the sense that it does not give a theoretical understanding of tacit and more embodied aspects of knowledge and how that is related to power. This suggests that a different, more comprehensive theoretical framework needs to be adopted to investigate the images RCC workers have of the young people they work with.

2.1.4.5 Twenty Years On, Children’s Services Are Not Children’s Spaces

Moss and Petrie’s book raised many important issues at the beginning of the second millennium. It raised questions about the detrimental effects of state interventions in children’s lives and encouraged doubt, criticality in professional practice and an ethical choice towards humane relationships accepting of differences. This can best be summarised as an emphasis on political choices for the professionals envisioning a society that children’s spaces could be part of.

Twenty years on, pedagogy is still spoken about as a ‘seed’ (Spatscheck & Petrie, 2022). Despite evaluations of its impact on practice in the UK (Berridge et al., 2011; C. Cameron, 2011; McDermid et al., 2016; Vrouwenfelder et al., 2012), social pedagogy remains marginal. Austerity and Brexit, the latter a significant event for social pedagogy due to its continental influence (Kornbeck & Rosendal Jensen, 2009), have further shaped how children’s services are delivered (Bywaters et al., 2018; I. Ferguson & Lavalette, 2013).

With the benefit of hindsight, it is important to ask how ideas around the ‘rich child’ have been transferred to RCC. How have the embodiment of practice and the disconnection between envisioning the future and a critical understanding of current constraints on practice have been taken up and worked with? Moss and Petrie’s theoretical positioning is key here because hindsight allows us to refine the theoretical framework they adopted. The attention to the relationship between language, knowledge and power remains important but needs to be developed with an understanding of tacit and embodied aspects of practice. Further, their writing on the culture of children spoke of the effects the cultural positioning of children as ‘other’ has on children’s services, but they did not define culture and its relationship to practice. Criticism of Malaguzzi and Reggio also pointed out the presence of an institutional discourse in the Italian ECEC, a discourse that may invisibilise specific positions or meanings from individuals who cannot conform to the ‘image’ of the Reggio teacher (2.1.3.1, p. 50). This calls for a theoretical framework that distinguishes institutional and interpersonal meanings, and practices too.

In the second part of the literature review, I examine the transferability of ‘working from an image of the rich child’ in the context of English RCC by looking at issues of pedagogy, practice, culture and theoretical possibilities.

2.2 Pedagogy, Practice, Culture and Theoretical Possibilities in RCC

This section builds on Moss and Petrie’s suggestions for change in children’s services by reviewing the literature on the four themes highlighted above. It aims to develop the brief history of the RCC profession given in the introduction and to explore how the English RCC sector, as an instance of children’s services, would be amenable to change through the use of the ‘image of the rich child’ by focusing on

- how social pedagogy has developed in RCC,
- understanding RCC practice,

- the culture of RCC,
- and the theoretical possibilities for change.

This section sharpens the lens used in the first section of the literature review by focusing on what we know about the English RCC sector rather than what it could be.

2.2.1 Pedagogy in English RCC

Following on from the work of the TCRU, interest in social pedagogy grew and is visible in two waves of studies commissioned by ministries responsible for RCC at the time. The first is a European comparative study of social pedagogy practice and training by Petrie et al. (2006). In 2007, the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) sought the expertise of the TCRU to carry out a pilot project (C. Cameron et al., 2011) on the applicability of social pedagogy in RCC in England, employing social pedagogues trained on the continent to work in English residential children's homes.

I will look at those two studies in turn.

2.2.1.1 Petrie et al.'s (2006) European Comparison of RCC

Petrie et al. carried out comparative qualitative research of pedagogic training and practice in five European countries, followed by a mixed-methods comparative study of residential care in England, Denmark, and Germany (P. Petrie et al., 2006, pp. 158–168). The second study looked at different aspects of RCC work, such as the emotional support given to young people and how RCC workers went about their work.

Drawing from RCC workers' responses, Petrie et al. argued that emotional support is given in different forms depending on contexts. The authors characterise support as empathetic, discursive or procedural approaches (P. Petrie et al., 2006, pp. 77–81). In England, RCC workers report using a *discursive* approach to supporting young people emotionally. They report talking to young people, giving them advice, referring to rules and procedures, or discussing and talking about a given situation. There is a statistically significant difference with more *empathetic* approaches to support in Germany or Denmark, and the authors conclude that:

on the whole they [English RCC staff] appeared to give less priority to children and young people as emotional beings, their relationship seemed to

be based more on words and less on personal feelings and identifying with them (P. Petrie et al., 2006, p. 80).

While it is difficult to attribute such observation to a specific cause, the relationship between care practices and the qualities attributed to ‘child’ appear to be different in different contexts (C. Cameron, 2014; P. Petrie et al., 2006, pp. 110–115), thus hinting that ‘images of child’ may be discernible depending on context.

Another difference is apparent in a marked preference for procedural approaches and short-term behaviour management reported by English RCC workers, in contrast to longer-term thinking observed in countries where staff is trained socio-pedagogically (P. Petrie et al., 2006, pp. 81–88).

Both those observations suggest that when RCC is part of a system that favours pedagogical thinking, relationships between young people and RCC workers may be different in quality, emphasis and purpose. As we will see in the next section (see 2.2.2 p. 64), this may be at odds with other models of practice in English RCC. These differences in practice and outlook were picked up in Berridge et al.’s (2011) significant evaluation of social pedagogy practice in English RCC.

2.2.1.2 The DCSF Pilot

Other pilot projects took place in the second half of the first decade of the new millennium (C. Cameron, 2011; Kirkwood et al., 2019; Milligan, 2009; Vrouwenfelder et al., 2012) to evaluate social pedagogical work with looked-after children in the UK. The independently evaluated study carried out at the University of York by Berridge and others (2011) met the evidence-based criteria of the technical-rational logic of the sector, which is why I focus on it now.

The design of the DCSF pilot facilitated comparisons of different working models for implementation within RCC, whereby the social pedagogues had slightly different positions and remits within a home. The design of the evaluation also made possible a system-wide evaluation with the inclusion of many stakeholders, such as home managers, social workers of children and young people placed in the homes, the young people, RCC workers and the pedagogues employed for the project.

The evaluation could not see differences attributed to social pedagogical ‘interventions’ in young people’s ‘outcomes’ such as length of placement or school attendance in the homes taking part in the study (Berridge et al., 2011, pp. 237–238) but instead drew conclusions that pointed to similar themes taken up by Moss and Petrie. More specifically, Berridge et al. remarked that the impact of social pedagogues on a given children’s home was sometimes seen as varying greatly depending on the personality of the worker (Berridge et al., 2011, pp. 91–94). At the same time, many participants agreed that to implement social pedagogy in England wider systemic changes would be necessary (Berridge et al., 2011, pp. 99; 143–144). This concern highlighted the lack of understanding of the interaction between macro processes, interpersonal relationships and psychological aspects of RCC work.

Differences in cultural practices also manifested. For example, social pedagogy was associated with British middle and upper-class cultural practices such as going to the ballet and was contrasted with a more working-class and less-educated lifestyle by English workers (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 85;142). ‘Culture’ also manifested in the hierarchical relationships between employees, and different class backgrounds were perceived by pedagogues as barriers to good working relationships (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 96). This highlights an institutional culture within RCC that I will focus on below (see 2.2.3, p. 71). Young people and British staff were described as lacking knowledge of German and Scandinavian practices, and social pedagogues did not know the English street culture that some young people related to (Berridge et al., 2011, pp. 128; 153). Cultural differences manifested in different childrearing practices as well. The RCC workers saw the social pedagogues as too lax. While the pedagogues knew they were perceived as ‘soft’ by their colleagues, RCC workers saw social pedagogy as a form of reward, denoting the widely held influence of behaviourism in English RCC (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 207). RCC workers felt some of the pedagogues needed protection or were ill-equipped to deal with the behaviour of the young people (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 67); yet for most of the social pedagogues the young people behaved in ways they were expecting (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 124);

Unsurprisingly following Petrie et al.’s (2006) work, the training for RCC workers and social pedagogues differed in nature and scope, creating tensions between colleagues and putting RCC workers in a felt sense of inferiority. For example, the reactive, instinctual nature of existing working practices in the homes was seen as opposed to those of the social

pedagogues, who felt that their training prepared them to receive constructive feedback positively, different to the RCC workers (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 112).

Finally, I want to comment on the language used to talk about young people in the report, given the focus of this thesis. Young people are described as being ‘troubled or troublesome’ (Berridge et al., 2011, pp. 216; 218; 248; 266); ‘with the greatest difficulties’ (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 2); ‘posing serious behaviour problems’ (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 246) or ‘suspicious and testing’ (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 250). While it can be difficult to portray the experiences leading young people into care without being affected emotionally, a sense of hyperbole comes from the report’s choice of words that conflates with the negative image of children in care pervasive in the statutory literature (see 1.1.1.2, p. 17).

The evaluation could not measure more positive outcomes for young people in the homes employing social pedagogues, possibly because of the short time frame of seven months between implementation and evaluation (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 253). The close reading of Berridge’s team’s evaluation continued posing questions about the transfer of pedagogy to an English context. The example above speaks to structural differences in training, cultures and professional practices. As such, Moss and Petrie’s suggestion that pedagogy led to a specific type of reflective practice appeared validated by the differences noted throughout both studies above. Taken differently, both studies outline structural and societal specificities in English RCC that manifest in childrearing practices, social class, education and training that shape professional practice in RCC. Moss and Petrie, and others at the TCRU, emphasise training as a solution to address the mindset shift necessary to create *children’s spaces*. Further studies (Cameron & Petrie, 2009) continued to pose questions as to the transferability of social pedagogy to English RCC.

Therefore, it is important to understand how RCC professional practice has been researched by people who do not share the conviction that social pedagogy can transform the sector.

2.2.2 Practice in RCC

In this section, I describe issues of professional practice in English RCC to understand the possible barriers to implementing social pedagogy outlined in the previous section. I do this through a brief outline of different practice models in English RCC and by looking at the constraints workers may experience in carrying out their work. Professional practice is a

contested and ill-theorised area in RCC, and I conclude by giving a rationale for the theoretical framework of the thesis.

Within the TCRU publications on social pedagogy introduced so far (Moss & Petrie, 2002; P. Petrie et al., 2006), practice is referenced simply as the things people do and the decisions they make. I highlighted above (2.1.4.2, p. 55) how the focus Moss and Petrie (2002) placed on language and discourse missed out embodied and tacit aspects of RCC professional practice such as touch (Warwick, 2017) or physical restraint (Steckley, 2013b). Further, the introduction (see 1.2 p. 25) demonstrated how professional practice in RCC is still shaped by contradictory Victorian tropes of motherly care and factory work.

2.2.2.1 Models of care

Publications on British RCC¹ distinguish ‘models’ of care (Bullock et al., 1993; Clough et al., 2006; Milligan & Stevens, 2006; M. Smith, 2009), namely therapeutic or psychodynamic, behavioural, developmental and the youth care approach called the ‘life space’. Incorporating such a model of care in the homes’ statement of purpose (see 1.2.2.1, p. 27) and evidencing its use is, as already mentioned, an OFSTED requirement.

I have already introduced the first model, the *therapeutic* model (see 1.2.3.3 p. 33). It is based on the work of psychoanalysts Bowlby (Berlin, 1997) and Winnicott (Dockar-Drysdale, 1991a; Winnicott, 2004). As already mentioned, this is often delivered within a ‘therapeutic community’, yet the need for distinguishing between psychoanalytically informed work and ‘care work’ remains (Trieschman et al., 2017) due to differences in training and qualifications. Clough et al. further problematise the pertinence of the therapeutic care model by pointing out a certain *reluctance* (Clough et al., 2006, p. 33) to adopt such a model exactly because of different training requirements. Clough et al. even claim this reluctance is sometimes justified by seeing the therapeutic model as *irrelevant and inappropriate* (Clough et al., 2006, p. 33) compared to *common-sense caring*. More recently, an awareness of the impact of trauma has renewed interest in psychological therapeutic approaches, which may

¹To avoid doubt, I refer to British RCC here because up until the new coalition government of 2010 and the latest Scottish care review (Scottish Government, 2020), differences between English and British RCC were insignificant despite the devolved governments. I have referred to English RCC up to now because the publications carried out research within English homes.

offer another kind of justification for TRC (Barnett et al., 2018; Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, 2022).

The second model is the strict *behaviourist* approach of the 1950s and 1960s (Hoghugh, 1978), which is now rarer. The use of rewards and consequences is still deeply embedded within RCC practice however (M. Smith, 2009, pp. 72–73; Stevens, 2004). For example, the latest guidance in The Children’s Homes Regulations (Department for Education, 2015a, p. 46) describes in detail how each home should have a behaviour management policy, a regulation that is written with the ‘management’ of behaviours that some may find challenging in mind. It rightly makes provision for staff training on physical restraints, recording instances where behaviour management ‘techniques’ were called upon, with sanctions or reparations used as negative reinforcements. This demonstrates how the behaviourist model still shapes significant aspects of everyday life in children’s homes; and it is referred to by Smith as *common sense* (M. Smith, 2009, p. 73). Further, the rise of cognitive behavioural therapies and social learning theories, both derived from Watson and Skinner’s assumption that the human mind is impenetrable to scientific analysis (Blunden, 2010) are described as effective ‘interventions’ for those young people who live in RCC or are looked after (Armitage, 2018; W. Turner et al., 2005).

The third model is *developmental* or *compensatory*, such as Eriksson’s model of the development of identity (M. Smith, 2009, pp. 75–76) or a focus on ‘good parenting’, echoing Bowlby’s ideas on good-enough care. This model assumes that RCC workers’ role is to compensate for primary experiences the children missed due to the difficult circumstances leading to their being taken into care (R. J. Cameron & Maginn, 2009).

Finally, the *life space* is a well-established model in North American residential care (M. Smith, 2011). It could be described as the intentional and habitual use of space, time and relationships to create a caring environment. In contrast to the first three models, there is a clear focus on the group of young people rather than their individual needs and characteristics. Maier divided his model to focus on the milieu (Kornerup, 2009), which English speakers could call the environment, the rhythms and daily living rituals within the home, and finally, the group dynamics that he terms ‘developmental group care’. This model is often referred to in the more academic literature on RCC (L. Fulcher, 2001; Garfat, 1995; Steckley, 2005, 2013a; Warwick, 2017), but I would argue that it does not appear often in

statutory and policy guidance, therefore raising questions as to its widespread use in English RCC.

Those four models of care are just that: models, idealised versions of what could happen every day in children's homes. One way to further emphasise their idealised nature is to think about them in terms of the knowledge required to implement them. They all rely on a theory of how human beings relate to the world, how human beings grow and develop and on assumptions about the relationship between body, mind and world. Moss and Petrie (2002) emphasise how this remains unexamined and assumed and how the reluctance to think theoretically further reinforces this. Some have concluded that social pedagogy is one such model of care (Úcar, 2013). I would argue that many social pedagogy practitioners use social pedagogical concepts similar to the four models of care described above, overriding those assumptions and experiencing resistance and blocks without understanding their origins. I want to keep these thoughts present while at the same time focusing on the constraints RCC workers experience in their everyday practice to implement those models of care, socio-pedagogical or not.

2.2.2.2 Constraints on the Implementation of Specific Models of Care

Petrie et al. (2006, pp. 81–88) observed a marked preference for procedural approaches and short-term behaviour management for English RCC workers. They explained it in terms of differences in training and education, emphasising the much lower training requirements in the English context. This is one constraint on English RCC practice, but there are others, such as the emotional intensity of the work or its marketisation. I look at these three constraints in turn and review them, highlighting specific questions that will become important to consider when choosing a theoretical framework for this thesis.

The TCRU carried out in-depth studies problematising training and education for care workers through the professionalisation of the workforce. Brannen and colleagues link workers' narratives (Brannen et al., 2007, pp. 115–124) to Cameron and Boddy's (2006) typology of knowledge, a typology split around:

- tacit knowledge, which carers draw upon from prior experiences of care, often in informal roles or with their children;
- functional knowledge, which is necessary to follow procedures and processes and uphold standards of practice to demonstrate competency;

- professional knowledge, which Cameron and Boddy (2006, p. 60) described as *‘professional skills [...]and practical experience with a strong theoretical underpinning’*.

The links Brannen et al. made between this framework and their interviews of English RCC workers demonstrated that professional knowledge was not often found in RCC work, but also that the pervasive presence of a deficit view of children and young people, ‘lacking in love’ and ‘lacking in boundaries’, for example, (Brannen et al., 2007, pp. 105–111) reinforced the reliance on tacit knowledge because the image of the child as ‘lacking’ called for compensation. Here one glimpses the presence of tacit models of care, which speaks to Smith’s (2009, p. 73) and Clough et al.’s (Clough et al., 2006, p. 33) observation of the existence of common-sense models of care. Smith (2003, p. 240) similarly describes how RCC lacks a *practice-based body of knowledge*, distinctive from knowledge relevant to social or psychodynamic work, and how RCC became marginalised within social work knowledge and social work training (Payne, 1991, p. 71), an issue I raised earlier (see 1.2.1, pp. 16-17).

Cameron and others (Boddy & Cameron, 2006; C. Cameron et al., 2007, pp. 7–9; Cameron & Boddy, 2008; Children’s Workforce Development Council, 2008) have argued that the difference between education and qualifications in the training of the RCC workforce are salient here. They argued that the qualification framework calling for Level 3 NVQ (Thornton et al., 2015b, p. 20) is geared towards mapping out competencies, thus reinforcing functional knowledge while educational pathways modelled on the continent prepare students for a broad understanding of the profession and the task of ‘upbringing’ young people. The current state of training for RCC continues to reflect this debate (Armitage, 2018; Berridge et al., 2016; Steckley, 2020a, 2020b), yet the educational pathways to develop the workforce are few.

The second constraint on the implementation of a given model of care has to do with the emotional intensity of the work and its impact on workers’ ability to shift between different perspectives, such as from opportunities at the moment (Ward, 1995, 1996) to longer-term aims (Hicks et al., 1998, pp. 361–364; Whitaker et al., 1998). I introduced this contrast in practice earlier (see 1.2.3.1 p. 31). Steckley’s (Steckley & Kendrick, 2008b, 2008a) study of the thoughts and emotions experienced by young people and staff around physical restraint illustrates this well. She used several layers of interpretation of the interviews she carried out in children’s homes, using vignettes to elicit RCC workers’ views on physical restraint

(Steckley & Kendrick, 2008b, p. 558). After describing the personal justifications and effects arising from reactions to incidences of restraint, Steckley analysed the contexts in which the restraints took place through Goffman's interpretative frames. This was key in being able to move between micro and macro levels and consider how containment and fear interacted among individual children, staff members, homes and society at large. Steckley's interpretation demonstrated how the technical-rational logic pervading the system feeds into the moral panic that regularly surfaces around RCC (Steckley, 2010). This is the heart of this second constraint. Care work is emotionally and affectively involved, and this impacts the workers' decisions. This is borne out by the literature, highlighting, for example, the burnout that staff may experience (Heron & Chakrabarti, 2002), the culture of fear that exists in some homes (T. Brown et al., 2018) and the oversimplification between the types of thinking workers would ideally be engaged in (see 1.2.3.1 p. 31).

To work through this contradiction in practice, Steckley suggested moving away from common-sense interpretations pervasive in statutory instruments, helpfully deconstructed by Plant, for example (Plant, 2002), and rather outlining patterns of power and social construction (Steckley, 2013b, pp. 15–35). This involves reflection and an understanding of the need to protect such spaces for at personal, interpersonal and societal levels (Steckley, 2018). Steckley's work links the many different levels connected with RCC professional practice, from macro and society-level containment of irrational fears of a marginalised population to the justifications given to actions on a moment-by-moment basis at the interpersonal level. She also demonstrates the relevance of thinking institutionally about RCC by focusing on different aspects of one of the most sensitive aspects of RCC practice.

The third and final constraint on practice I want to highlight is the marketisation and proceduralisation of the work. This is based on the legal and statutory framework for RCC, where the assessment of needs and New Public Management techniques create professional logic (see 1.2.2, p. 27; but also 2.1.4.2, p. 55) that professionals adhere to.

Broadly, studies of professional practice in social care have highlighted how this logic operates:

- by splitting the task of listening to young people, which is the remit of the advocate, from that of assessing their needs, usually done by the social worker (Boylan & Braye, 2007). This division of labour, possibly linked to the image of the atomised child (Moss et al., 2000), is present elsewhere. I would argue that the task of 'meeting

the young people's need' is absent from Boylan and Braye's discussion but reserved for RCC workers and foster carers.

- by creating a feedback system where the atomised, deficit image of the child can contradictorily be used to justify the withdrawal of (Crafter et al., 2021; Dickson et al., 2023) or withdrawal from (Chase, 2010; Humphris & Sigona, 2019b) state and welfare support, as young people end up being spoken about as *architects of their own difficulties* (S. Petrie, 2015, p. 287).
- by creating a sense of professional helplessness and a lack of awareness of the skills necessary to care (Whitaker et al., 1998, pp. 44–46), therefore increasing reliance on procedures.

By presenting different models of care and some of the constraints experienced by RCC workers to use those models consciously and purposefully, I outline what RCC professional practice is not. This description reflects how much common sense is present in the decisions the workers make. It also highlights the interaction of institutional practices with individual decision-making, which appears to be important when considering RCC work. The literature on different models of care spans the 30 years since the implementation of the Children Act 1989. Arguably, despite some changes in the legislation (see 1.2.2, p. 27), the RCC experience for workers and young people is still problematic (Sissay, 2020). Changes in the sector have not seemed to change this experience significantly.

Drawing on Smith's (2009, pp. 81–82) suggestion to further explore how Vygotsky's work relates to RCC may offer possibilities to address some of those issues.

Using post-Vygotskian theory to foster change in RCC practice has already been done in the USA in a study that '*explore[s] ways to create alternative institutional practices in a child welfare residential programme by integrating insights from Vygotskian cultural-historical psychology and critical social theory and pedagogy as guiding theory*' (Vianna, 2007, p. 1).

Within post-Vygotskian thinking, practices take place within institutional settings such as a school, a family or a children's home (Hedegaard & Daniels, 2011). Within the institution, individuals and groups of individuals engage in purposeful activities using artefacts (whether concepts, specialist language or procedures) or specific resources. What is important in this definition of practice, in contrast with Moss and Petrie's work (see 2.1.4.2 p. 55); is the characterisation of the relationship between motivation, how the institution and wider society

understand and shape this motivation and, in turn, what people do within those constraints to reach their goals. In the post-Vygotskian paradigm, language is one tool amongst many that individuals can use to reach a goal (Blunden, 2012, pp. 277–290; Cole, 2003). In the next chapter (see 3.1, p. 84), I come back to this definition of practice and the work of Vianna to expand on my premise that a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework may support change and practice development within RCC.

2.2.3 The Culture of RCC

Moss and Petrie's references to culture were multiple and ranged from possibilities for transformation to the relations between sociological categories of childhood and adulthood. As a rather isolated component of children's services (see 1.1.3, p. 21), RCC is a unique environment with its norms, values and history (De Wilde & Vanobbergen, 2017; Higginbotham, 2017; M. Smith, 2010a). In this section, I further expose the culture of RCC in England, paying attention to the assumptions behind what is understood as culture.

2.2.3.1 Granular Studies of the Everyday

A coherent formulation and theoretically informed understanding of culture featured in some case studies and ethnographic explorations of everyday lives in RCC.

Emond's (2000) ethnographic study of two groups of young people living in RCC showed how the everyday is the arena where power, roles and social expectations play out. She focused on the horizontal relationships within the home and children's cultures using a Bordieuan analysis. Emond showed how youngsters actively create spaces away from the scrutiny of adults. Her study illustrated young people's responses to social expectations of being 'other' (Emond, 2000, pp. 366–370) through the blending of family and childhood ideals described by Plant (2002). In doing so, Emond drew on specific definitions of culture and demonstrated the impact of institutional logic on children and young people. Her justification for using a Bordieuan analysis is the sociologist's focus on understanding the relationship between individual, subjective meanings and the observable aspect of RCC work, of which institutions are a part. Emond's work offered a detailed understanding of how young people navigate the logic of needs they are subjected to.

Other everyday aspects of RCC life, such as interpersonal touch (Warwick, 2017) or practices around food (Byrne, 2016; Dorrer et al., 2010; McIntosh et al., 2010), also highlight the

importance of a granular focus when seeking to understand the culture of RCC. While those studies are important for practitioners to understand the complexity of their work, their relevance to understanding the ‘image of the child’ in RCC workers’ practice lies in their description of how power works in barely noticeable ways. They describe RCC workers’ insensitive offer of a hug (Warwick, 2017, pp. 214–218) as framed by wider child-adult power relationships or how surveillance is enacted through access to the contentious and highly regulated space of the kitchen (McIntosh et al., 2010). The sociological analysis used by the authors demonstrated how the identities of those living and working within homes shaped interactions, and in the case of Green especially (1998), how oppressive this can be for children and young people’s emerging gender and sexual identities.

Whether studying place (Clark et al., 2014) or the meaning of specific practices, all these studies have a granular focus on the everyday and the socially constructed meanings attributed by those involved in a home. They all allow important issues of power, institutionalisation, social relationships and identity to come to the fore. They show that a strong theoretical articulation of ‘culture’ is necessary to understand professional practice within RCC.

2.2.3.2 Further Lack of Theoretical Rigour in Researching the Culture of RCC

Institutional culture shapes the ‘dos and don’ts’ of professional practice, what explicit norms and laws exist and what operates more implicitly. The granular and ethnographic studies of RCCs’ everyday life described above have not influenced RCC practice and statutory frameworks much. Instead, the prevailing approach to the definition of culture that has been taken up by policymakers is characterised in the 1998 publication *Making Residential Care Work* (E. Brown et al., 1998, 2019), wherein culture is seen as a way to disentangle ‘causal chains’ and ‘variables’ impacting the outcomes of young people living in homes (E. Brown et al., 2019, p. 6). Further work has been done by Hicks et al. (1998) on defining how ‘culture’ is understood. I review both in turn.

Hicks et al.’s (1998, p. 362) interest in culture was motivated by staff development and defined by what a ‘learning culture’ is, with a special focus on what supports and hinders purposeful actions by RCC workers. The authors described culture as entities that bind people around a common goal. They put great emphasis on the interaction between different ‘cultures’. For example, the culture of the staff team and that of the young people, or the

culture of the staff team in interaction with other professionals, such as the police or social workers. What is unclear is how Hicks et al. distinguished culture from group dynamics, which had already been articulated by Bion (2004) at the time. Indeed, Hick et al. described ‘*cultural totalities*’, which are, in my understanding, a description of different stages of process formation within a staff group, for example, the ‘*competent, self-sufficient*’ staff group, the ‘*insecure*’ group or the ‘*relaxed and creative*’ group (Hicks et al., 1998, p. 366) Those types of groups are described by their different abilities to focus away from the team processes and RCC workers’ safety towards others, and one would assume, the young people living in the home. This is important because the focus of the work in RCC is young people’s needs, and tension may be at play here. I would argue that Hicks et al.’s focus on cultural totalities pertained to group dynamics rather than a description of the components of culture and its different manifestations, whether within a given home or the sector as a whole. Hicks et al. did not explain how they observed those elements of culture in children’s homes despite drawing from an anthropological definition of culture. Their work did not directly describe the purposeful activity of individuals belonging to the group, nor the importance of norms of behaviours and their historical development. A connection is lacking between a chosen theoretical positioning on culture and the activity of researching the learning culture in the home.

Brown et al.’s (1998) work demonstrated a similar problem. Their attempt to theorise culture is similarly detached from their data. For example, they acknowledged that the total institution of RCC influenced the development of personality through Goffman’s work (E. Brown et al., 2019, pp. 11–13), but Goffman’s work on the impact of institutions on the development of personality (Goffman, 1986) was dismissed as irrelevant because the authors saw the reduction of the size of homes to that of a nuclear family model as addressing Goffman’s concerns. The authors also sought to understand both the ‘*formal and informal worlds of staff and children*’ (E. Brown et al., 2019, p. 12) and the changes that took place in the setting. The authors contrasted their position to Goffman’s view on institutions as static entities that do not change and develop. Drawing from sociology and anthropology to position themselves theoretically, Brown et al. focused on structures and the goals of the institution in a way reminiscent of Cole’s (2003) post-Vygotskian understanding of culture. Brown et al.’s overall focus was to understand change within children’s homes, and how formal structures interacted with both children and staff cultures in shaping children’s ‘outcomes’. The breakdown between the authors’ explicit definition of culture and their

application of it in the research process appeared when they asked (Brown et al., 2019, p. 74) if '*culture exists*'. The research also reported the presence of 'weak' or 'strong' cultures. Within anthropology, sociology or cultural studies, this questioning of the existence of culture is odd. As Cole (2003) puts it, culture is '*in the middle*' between people and institutions and is internalised by individual people and the systems within which they operate. Again, as with Hicks et al., Brown et al. (2019) seemed to switch from a sociological to a psychological focus without much awareness. Their observations indeed presented culture interchangeably as either observable activities and meanings or the strength of relationships between members of the groups.

Such a common-sense and under-theorised understanding of culture is similar to that employed in Narey's review of RCC (Narey, 2016), suggesting continuity between this strand of research and policymakers in the sector. The studies reviewed in this section were highly influential statutorily. The relationship between structure and culture is indeed reflected in the most recent changes to the Children's Home Regulation (The Children's Homes (England) Regulations, 2015), with its strong emphasis on the 'culture' of the home. In policy thinking, if the structure of the home, most notably its leadership, is well thought through and effective, this will lead to good outcomes for the children and young people. Here the influence of New Public Management, implemented by Thatcher in the 80s and rolled out by New Labour between 1997 and 2010, is at play, and it is visible in Brown et al.'s (1998, 2019)' assumptions that it is possible to understand 'causal chains' leading to outcomes for children through understanding their culture.

To conclude, both studies reviewed above (E. Brown et al., 1998; Hicks et al., 1998) articulate in positivist ways the institutional processes through which the logic of need is at work in state care in England. This group of publications is interested in culture change within RCC, but I would argue it has perpetuated the status quo through its under-theorisation of culture. At the same time, more granular, ethnographic and theoretically informed studies demonstrated how power plays out, and identities are constructed within the institution of RCC. Those studies deconstructed what takes place but they did not offer suggestions for change (Green, 1998). Moss and Petrie's focus was on the transformation of the culture of children's services (see 2.1.4.3 p. 57). I would argue that to be able to envisage change, it needs to be woven within the theoretical framework of the research. I argued earlier (see 2.1.4.5, p. 59) that Moss and Petrie's theoretical framework needed to be refined. The review

of literature on professional practice in RCC highlighted the importance of embodied processes, and I suggested that a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework can be helpful in doing so. In reviewing literature on English RCC, changes and transformation emerged as important, although scholars have apprehended it differently so far. My suggestion is that a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework could bring a thorough theorisation of change and transformation and that this has been used within RCC, albeit in a US context (Vianna, 2007).

2.2.4 Theoretical Possibilities to Research the Transformative Potential of Working from the ‘Image of the Rich Child’ in RCC

In this section, I review two strands of literature that may help investigate the transformative potential of the image of the rich child for RCC workers in England. One furthers Malaguzzi’s ideas by developing how the concept of child can be observed in pedagogical practices, while the second deconstructs child in care in English policy relevant to RCC. Both strands of literature are important but incomplete for my purpose.

2.2.4.1 Murriss’ Figurations of Child

Murriss (2017, pp. 536–537) referred to Malaguzzi’s ‘image of the rich child’ when describing the figuration of the ‘ecological child’, inspired by the Italian educator’s writings and pre-schools. She described how figurations of ‘child’ (Murriss, 2016, pp. 109–120) work as imperatives for the adults to act. The figuration is a perceived ‘natural’ state for the child that can be remedied through cultural intervention by adults, such as teaching, guidance, control, and protection, making use of the nature-nurture binary to structure relationships. This built on Moss and Petrie’s assumption that the language of policy shapes possibilities for action (see 2.1.4.4, p. 58) and Laurence’s observation that images operate by shaping meanings attached to the individuals they characterise by placing alongside a binary continuum (see 2.1.3.2, p. 51).

While the figurations continue to be debated (Murriss & Osgood, 2022), I am interested in the stress Murriss put on the pedagogical function of her figurations, and I wonder if the use of English is limiting. ‘Images’ are indeed primarily visual in English, whereas figurations convey the idea of ‘child’ as a concept. For Murriss (2017, p. 545), the question

‘what does a concept mean?’ is not crucial but ‘how does it work?’ in lived experience, thereby positioning children as part of the world they share with other

human and more-than-human others and explore intra-actively through material-discursive research and experimentation.

I would like to make two observations about this focus on concepts.

First, I would like to draw attention to the possible limitations of the English language regarding ‘image of child’ to convey complex ideas lying behind Murriss’ figurations of child. Indeed, Blunden (2021, p. 180) points out that in post-Vygotskian activity theory, written in Russian initially and only later translated into English, ‘*the word ‘image’ does not imply a visual image like it does in English*’. I am justified in making this link because, in the same article, Blunden examines how the purposeful activity of individuals in groups allows for the internalisation of concepts that are created through the actions of individuals pursuing socially constituted purposes. Here Blunden talks about the pedagogical process of formation (Biesta, 2020), and, by drawing on a theoretical background that I describe in further detail (see 3, p. 83), he argues interestingly for possible conceptual links between social theory and psychology. This focus on pedagogy, on the upbringing of children, is key in this thesis and Moss and Petrie’s suggestions.

Secondly, Murriss focused on a *rhizomatic* exploration of the concept of child (Murriss, 2017). She argued for a *burrowing* of the material world and associated meanings, or should I say the ideal, as Levant (2017) suggested, that create and are created by and with children. Murriss, in line with post-humanist theory, attempted to blur the privileged positioning of the human in the material world by adopting a flat ontology. However, Blunden and post-Vygotskian theorists held a different theoretical positioning (Cole, 2003, pp. 116–118) to Murriss’ epistemological question of the subject-object binary, a binary she rightly argued is engrained in our knowledge systems and Western epistemologies (Murriss, 2016, pp. 44–76). By drawing on post-Vygotskian theory, I do not address Murriss’ point. I would argue tentatively that holding this epistemological conundrum in check may be justified by Laurence or Hill Collins’ emphasis on the prevalence of binaries in images’ functioning (see 2.1.3.2 p. 51). I return to this in the next chapter.

Murriss’ figurations of child are important for my purpose because they put a central focus on the concept of child, of young people and how it ‘works’ in practice. It further challenges Moss and Petrie’s focus on language and discourse by adopting a material-discursive theory that shifts away from language towards what people do, the material world and the relationships between all those elements through a flat ontology, but further thinking is

required as post-Vygotskian theory does adopt a different understanding of the relationship between the human and the material world (Derry, 2004).

Murris' work remains within mainstream ECEC, and in the next section, I review studies more directly linked to English RCC.

2.2.4.2 Constructions of Categories of Governable Subjects in Policy

In this section, I review two groups of publications that deconstruct 'child in care' in England, with specific regard to two aspects Moss and Petrie highlighted when deconstructing images of children embedded in children's services practices in England: first, governmentality and the construction of categories of subjects (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 31–34) and second, the shifting of the bureaucratic gaze as a selective mechanism for the visibility or invisibility of certain categories of subjects (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 28–32)

The first group of publications looks at 'child in care' as a category and a subject. Plant (2002) used discourse analysis and a Foucauldian understanding of governmentality to investigate how childhood is constructed in four legislative texts linked to the Children Act 1989, one being '*Volume 4 Guidance*' (Department of Health, 1991). Volume 4 set out the government's intentions in implementing the Children Act 1989 within RCC institutions. Plant's work is a first step towards demonstrating how national policies and statutory guidance frame RCC professional practice (Christensen, 2017; McIntosh et al., 2010).

At the macro level, Plant (2002, p. 15) described historically how British child welfare policies bind childhood to nationhood to legitimise state intervention in children's well-being. This was done by symbolically equating the nation's and the children's needs, which in turn legitimised interventions shaped by middle-class and white values, echoing Victorian tropes shaping the history of RCC (see 1.2.1, p. 25). The question of the responsibility for the care and education of children remains highly political (Meloni & Humphris, 2021; Parton, 2006, pp. 1–62; Ritcher, 2012), in part because of this history.

Focusing on meanings, Plant deconstructed the figure of the 'child in care', complete with their physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs. The trope was constructed by placing the environment of the 'natural family' as the irreplaceable missing link in such children's psychologically defined and abnormal development. The trope is also irremediably linked to abuse and scandal (Crane, 2018; Davidson, 2010; H. Ferguson, 2007; Gibbs & Sinclair, 2000;

Green, 2005; Lonne & Parton, 2014; Mistral & Evans, 2002; Parton, 2006, pp. 27–46). This creates a hierarchy between the British ‘child in care’ and the British ‘child’, where the ‘benevolent’ deeds of social workers and carers ‘protect’, ‘rehabilitate’, ‘reintegrate’, or ‘re-educate’ the vulnerable, incapacitated ‘child in care’ towards functional adulthood. The ‘child in care’ is therefore ‘other’. This last point is highly relevant to RCC workers, in that their professional purpose, similar to that of social workers, is generated by the idealised figure of the ‘child in care’ as a problematic ‘other’, and this chimes with the compensatory model of practice described above (see 2.2.2.1, p. 65).

Plant’s deconstruction of the category of child in care in English RCC policy explained how practices at the core of children’s services such as assessment and review of care impact the everyday lives of individuals. In addition, it showed how policy calls for a specific model of care that locks professionals in a compensatory logic. This gave another explanation as to why the implementation of social pedagogy has been difficult in English RCC.

More recently, Jones et al. (2020) and Mannay et al. (2017) built on a sociological understanding of othering to explore children and young people’s experience of the category ‘child in care’. Their research is based on young people’s experiences and recounts of negotiating their identity as ‘child in care’. Both studies drew on the long tradition established by Goffman’s work on the impact of institutionalisation on identity (Goffman, 1986) and Stuart Hall’s work on cultural representation (C. Campbell, 2017; Howarth, 2011). Both studies highlighted the effect that subaltern positioning, a categorisation placing children and young people as less than human subjects in social discourse, has on young people’s identity. This acknowledgement of the othering of young people in care complements Plant’s work by highlighting the young people’s experiences and relates to Moss and Petrie’s questions around the *other* (see 2.1.4.3, p. 57).

The second group of publications I review in this section adds a migration lens to the perspective. Humphries and Sigona (2019b) argue that the ‘bureaucratic capture’ of child migrants is a phenomenon that has complex implications for the lives of individuals subjected to it. Some of this ‘capture’ relies on the symbolic mechanisms acknowledged not only by Plant but also by Moss and Petrie. The mechanism works through the state’s duty to protect its citizens. This duty to protect makes the ‘migrant child in care’ status ambivalent in that this bureaucratic category is constructed as both an object of care and a ‘burden’ for the state that needs to be minimised (Humphris & Sigona, 2019a, p. 316). Chase (2010) argued that

the individuals young people navigating this ambivalence respond to it by carefully controlling their engagement with it. This is important because it makes visible the agency of individuals when they interact with the state, therefore demonstrating that this type of study is not exclusively deterministic in outlook.

Humphries and Sigona (2019b, pp. 1496–1500) further defined the state mechanism creating this subaltern positioning. They described how naming a child as ‘child in need’, ‘looked-after child’, or ‘Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (UASC)’ is a reductionist mechanism used by professionals to grant access to welfare. By deciding that a child is ‘in care’, ‘in need’, or ‘UASC’, the professional selects who will be made visible and who will be intentionally kept outside of the system depending on specific identities, such as Roma, UASC or disabled. Humphries and Sigona argued that this selection process is motivated by the necessity to hide the harm state systems do to certain populations. They concluded some individuals within the ‘subcategory of the migrant child in care’, already othered, are kept outside of the political and social limelight, while the state is portrayed as magnanimously caring for its citizens and the ‘vulnerable’. This process of invisibilisation is part of the consequence of the ‘naming’ of the bureaucratic capture.

Methodologically, this invisibilisation is perceptible by comparing different groups’ responses to the implications of engaging with state care and protection: Humphries and Sigona described how ‘UASC’ are made visible, while Roma or undocumented children remain outside of the public gaze and are excluded by default. To ensure this process is widely accepted, the general assumption lies in the ‘caring’ and liberal attitude of the state towards its citizens (Humphris & Sigona, 2019b, pp. 1498–1500). This becomes clear when focusing on the logic of protection, which assumes that families and kin ties should be severed for state care to be given. This results in some families and young people choosing to remove themselves from the system and escape intervention to preserve family connections and some form of agency. This arises because of the different values given to concepts and ideas within different cultural contexts and how the state’s hegemonic practices overshadow those in favour of the dominant discourse of child protection (Parton, 2006).

This mechanism of invisibilisation echoes Moss and Petrie’s attention to processes of governmentality (see 2.1.4.4, p. 58). When comparing publications deconstructing ‘child in care’ in English policy to the transformative potential behind Moss and Petrie’s suggestion to work from the ‘image of the rich child’, two specific areas for further research are revealed:

- the focus on how bureaucrats and, to a lesser extent, frontline workers¹ *‘are implicated in the reproduction of these categories’* (Humphris & Sigona, 2019b, p. 1501) does not take RCC workers into account. Given the different relationships to knowledge both professions have, are social workers and RCC workers bureaucrats? The literature reviewed so far shows little awareness of state logic within RCC. The question remains how those frontline workers may choose or not to support families, children and young people in the choices they make in situating themselves as visible or invisible concerning state care.
- the link between macro, institutional and interpersonal levels placing individuals with specific identities in subaltern positioning and policy. While bureaucrats may reproduce categories at a macro level, there is no theoretical articulation of how that logic is taken up and worked with individually and how it is reproduced in the everyday of those individuals in a subaltern position. Moss and Petrie’s suggestion for transformation rests on the ethical and individual activity of ‘pedagogues’ (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 141–147) or their political orientation translating through making choices in dilemmas brought by the everyday in children’s homes (Kemp & Harbo, 2020; Rothuizen & Harbo, 2017; Warming, 2019). While the review demonstrated the constraints on implementing socio-pedagogical practice in English RCC (see 2.2.2.2 p. 67) and how granular studies of space, meanings and social relationships highlighted issues of power, institutionalisation and identity, there is little focus on the everyday professional practice of RCC workers. This needs to be investigated further.

Section 2.2.4 looked at two different types of research that could work with the transformative potential of Malaguzzi’s image of the rich child. On the one hand, Murriss’ focus on how concepts ‘work’ in practice through a material-discursive approach was linked with post-Vygotskian theory on concepts and learning through historical assimilation. The second strand of the literature showed how the logic of need built into state welfare services for children selects some children as worthy recipients of care while others remain undeserving. This work is done at the level of policy, yet no work is done to investigate the link between macro or policy levels and interpersonal relationships, possibly due to a lack of understanding of the complex professional landscape at the frontline (Boddy et al., 2005;

¹ In this article, frontline workers are not RCC workers but social workers or supported accommodation managers, both professionals who are not directly subject to the statutory guidance relating to Children Homes.

Children's Workforce Development Council, 2008; M. Smith, 2003). My contention is that Hedegaard's work on different planes of activity (2009, 2012) and navigating institutional demands may be helpful in that regard.

In this second chapter, in reviewing the relevant literature, working from an image of the rich child in English RCC functioned as a metaphorical mirror. The mirror is cracked, however, and despite some direct reflections between Moss and Petrie's proposal and RCC, I highlighted much diffraction taking place. I therefore propose to use a new theoretical mirror for this thesis.

The first shard of glass in the cracked mirror is ideological. It is about Malaguzzi's ideas on the transformative potential of images reflected against critical social theory's understanding of images and linked with More's and early Marx's utopian socialism. Yet discourse analysis revealed how difficult it can be for Reggio's pedagogy to transfer to other national ECEC contexts or other types of services for children. This shard is also ideological in a Gramscian sense. Images function by marginalising the individuals they typify and placing them alongside the nature-nurture binary. In policy terms, research has argued that administrative categories put children with specific identities in the limelight and keep others in the shadows to legitimise oppressive state practices.

The second shard of glass in the mirror reflects what professionals do and the constraints they meet in their work. Moss and Petrie's thorough argument for the transformative potential of working from an image of the rich child calls for criticality. This contrasts with studies highlighting possible barriers to implementing social pedagogy in English RCC. This may be because pedagogical aims are not reflected in the common-sense assumptions embedded in RCC models of care. The logic of needs stemming from statutory guidance, the lack of training, and the uncontained vicarious trauma place RCC workers in a position of disempowerment where they rely more on common-sense judgments about the family or what children need to do their work. Common-sense assumptions are also present in some research whose understanding of culture moves between sociological and psychological explanations of a given phenomenon without highlighting the consequences of doing so.

Throughout the review, however, I made links with post-Vygotskian theory and definitions of culture, practices, and its focus on change and on linking societal, institutional and interpersonal levels of analysis. This prompts me to suggest that, possibly, another mirror is

needed to capture ‘images of the rich child’ in English RCC and to formulate the research question this thesis will investigate.

2.3 Research Question

Here I present the research question.

How does a team of RCC workers introduced to social pedagogy use the ‘image of the rich child’ in their work with children and young people living in a residential children’s home in England?

The review highlighted disconnections in the suggestion Moss and Petrie made, and the question is therefore subdivided:

- how can a post-Vygotskian formulation of professional practice, learning and change explain the disconnection between current RCC practices in England and visions of the flourishing human being encapsulated by Malaguzzi and early Marxian ideas on the ‘rich child’ and the ‘rich human being’? What images of the child guide RCC workers’ professional practice?
- what do the findings suggest about changes in the RCC sector in England, the introduction of social pedagogy into English welfare systems and the theory and practice of social pedagogy and RCC?

3 Theoretical Framework

The literature review highlighted that Moss and Petrie's (2002) theoretical choices did not articulate finely enough the relationships between knowledge, discourses, practices and language, despite the relevance of those concepts for RCC. In this section, I demonstrate the adequacy of a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework to do this and explain what aspects of this theory and methodology would be relevant to investigate the transformative potential of working from an image of the rich child in RCC.

I contend that the links among images, interpersonal relationships, institutional practices and policies are under-theorised by Moss and Petrie. Despite attention to how discourses shape possibilities for action, research and practice, development in RCC remains based on common-sense assumptions and procedural logic. Moss and Petrie claim that to be critical research needs to make power visible. They direct the attention of the researcher to making practices visible and 'stutter' (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 10) through attention to knowledge. In short, they encourage questioning and a troubling of working practices in RCC. However, knowledge is not a monolithic entity, as research on care work in general has demonstrated. Power differentials and division of labour also exist within RCC and shape it significantly.

Following important clarifications on definitions of culture and practices through Vianna's work within a US residential setting introduced earlier (see 2.2, p. 60), I suggested that the relationships among images, knowledge, power and practices can be theorised more precisely using post-Vygotskian theory.

More specifically in this chapter, I highlight how Vianna's work theorises change through attention paid to the use of cultural artefacts to act purposefully on and in the environment, before delving further into other aspects of post-Vygotskian theory and explaining how it allows an operationalisation of images by exploring aspects of the work of the Russian philosopher Ilyenkov (Lotz, 2019).

It is necessary to make a note here of the language I draw upon concerning post-Vygotskian scholarship. There are indeed many strands of scholarship about and following on from Vygotsky's work (Daniels, 2017, pp. 1–34; Stetsenko, 2008; Vygotsky, 1999). His work drew upon a wide range of sources and disciplines (Blanck, 1990; Blunden, 2017), thereby creating a range of debates in relevant scholarship. My aim here is to draw on some of the relevance

of this abundant literature for social pedagogy rather than advance any of those debates for their own sake. I will therefore use the term ‘post-Vygotskian theory’ to refer to this body of work. Within this, my inclination is that the ontological category of ‘activity’ (Chaiklin, 2019) is crucial to pedagogical relationships between generations, which explains my focus on those scholars who also base their work on this category (Blunden, 2009, 2012; Chaiklin et al., 1999; Daniels, 2009; Edwards, 2017b; Engeström & Sannino, 2010, 2021; Hedegaard & Fler, 2008; Nissen, 2011). When referring to this strand of post-Vygotskian publications, and for purposes of clarity, I will refer to activity theory.

3.1 The Relevance of a Post-Vygotskian Theoretical Framework to Investigating Change in RCC

In this section, I focus on institutional change with the premise that improvement in quality and deinstitutionalisation since the implementation of the Children Act 1989 (see, for example, 2.1.4.5, p. 59 or 2.2.3.2, p. 72), have not had the expected consequences for RCC. In contrast, Vianna’s work in a US ‘residential programme’ (Vianna, 2007) demonstrated how Vygotsky’s ideas on the mediated nature of learning can, in the context of RCC, open up possibilities for change and transformation for individuals and within institutions. I describe how Vianna’s use of post-Vygotskian theory to formulate change within RCC rests on ‘activity’ and on people’s voluntary engagement with learning.

3.1.1 Change and Development Through Learning for Children and Professionals

In the following section, I outline Vianna’s work and link it with an important post-Vygotskian concept, that of motive orientation.

3.1.1.1 Vianna’s (2007) Work in a US Residential Programme

Vianna describes his ongoing involvement in one home for three years and how he observed the leading ‘activity’ of the home gradually shifting from controlling the resident’s behaviours to supporting their engagement in school and learning (Vianna, 2007, pp. 259–265). Vianna’s efforts to support this change relied on two specific ideas that I now introduce: mediation and the activity system.

Throughout the three years of his involvement, Vianna paid attention to how new *cultural artefacts* (movies, homework hours, trips to New York, daily report cards between the boys' schools and the home, books, or more formal tutoring sessions) affected both individuals' attitudes towards learning and institutional goals. He concluded that change happened individually for the boys and the staff within the institution.

Therein lies an important aspect of post-Vygotskian theory, the dialectical relationships between individuals' learning, institutional practices and change. Vianna described how introducing cultural artefacts (Cole, 2003, pp. 117–122)¹ was key to gradually developing the young people's appetite for school learning. This rests on the Vygotskian principle of mediation, where individuals make use of resources they find in their environment to reach their goals. While the individual uses what is culturally available, such as historically developed forms of language, practices, objects and traditions of behaviour, the purpose, intention or meaning the individual attributes to the tool and the purpose of their actions may reproduce what others have done historically- or transform it.

Vianna's theoretical attention towards mediation and learning within a home contrasted with the work reviewed in the previous chapter (see 2.2, p. 60), and Moss' and Petrie's articulation of the relationships among language, discourse, professional practice and choices (see 2.1.4.4, p. 58). I would argue that this is because Vianna's attention to the mediated nature of learning and development focused the researcher's attention towards the relationships between people's intentions, their use of cultural artefacts, and what they do.

Another important aspect of Vianna's work was that he moved seamlessly between different relationship levels in the institution. He described his relationship with the boys or other professionals working in the home, and institutional relationships between the home and other institutions important in the residents' lives. This is because he used as a unit of analysis the *activity system* of the home (Vianna, 2007, pp. 152–156), which, after Engeström's work developing Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), built on Vygotsky's triangular representation of mediation to include more of the context, that is the activity, and to theorise

¹ The mediating link between a subject and their motive has been discussed thoroughly in the post-Vygotskian literature (Daniels, 2015; Wertsch, 2007), mostly around the place Vygotsky (L. S. Vygotsky & Luria, 1994) attributed to language as a mediating link as opposed to other links such as objects and ways of doing things. I use the word 'artefact' in this section to denote a wide understanding of mediating links following Cole (2003, 2019), and I give more information about artefacts in activity theory in Section 3.1.2.2, p. 81.

the facilitation of workplace learning and practice development (Engeström & Sannino, 2021).

Vianna described the activity system of the home (see Figure 4) using Engeström’s heuristic triangle of activity (Engeström, 2014, pp. 25–108), where the apexes of a nested complex of triangles indicate foci of attention for the researcher. Within the **community** of the home,

subjects work towards a **common object**, which may be the care and education of the residents. The subjects do this using **mediating artefacts** made available through the community; these tools may be care plans, therapeutic approaches, trips to New York or agreed procedures. This purposeful activity is

governed by specific **rules and norms** (whether statutory law or norms of behaviours and habits) and a specific **division of labour** (the staff provide the care while the young people receive it). Here I want to stress the schematic quality of my description of the triangle of activity to represent Vianna’s fieldwork setting: I do this to introduce the main features of this system and I will come back to it throughout the chapter to flesh it out (see for example 3.3, p. 104 or 4.1.1.2 p. 118).

Vianna’s work was directed towards young people as subjects within the activity system. He did not focus, as I intended to, on the workers’ professional practice. While Vianna acknowledged how the staff mindset is made of a complex interaction of institutional norms, welfare ideology and psychologised views on human nature that were generally used as a justification to coerce young people into ‘behaving’ well (Vianna, 2007, p. 156), Vianna did not seek to understand this further. He nevertheless set out to demonstrate how a post-

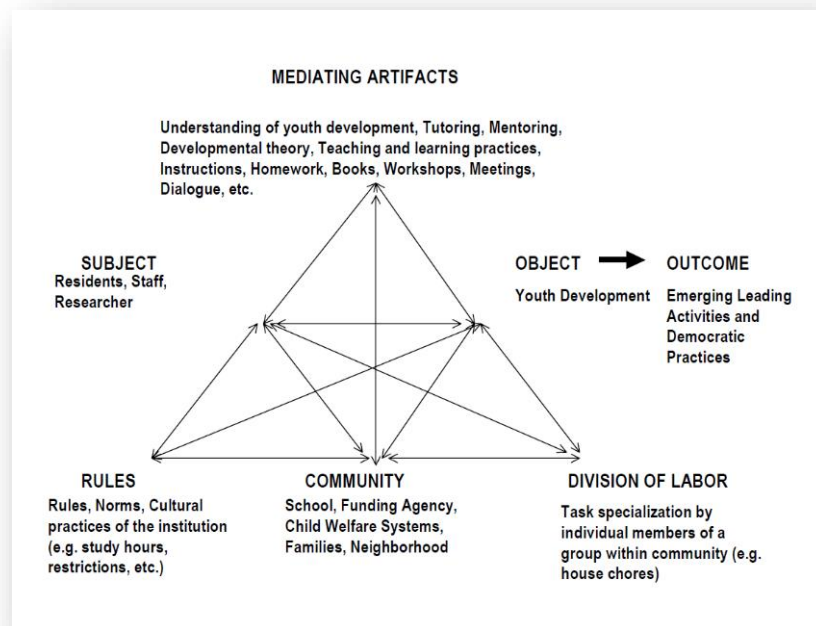


Figure 4: The activity system in Vianna's (2007, p. 152) fieldwork setting

Vygotskian understanding of learning can cut across some of the individualistic and mentalist assumptions built into the US welfare system (Vianna, 2007, p. 48), similar assumptions to those Moss and Petrie highlighted with the atomised image of the child (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 64–70). Consequently, I would argue that Vianna worked from an image of young people as capable, curious, engaged in learning and socially connected (Malaguzzi, 1993b).

So far, I described how Vianna's work made use of post-Vygotskian ideas on mediation and on the activity system to counter negative constructions of children built into the US welfare system.

However, my focus is different from Vianna's, and I therefore need to rely on other post-Vygotskian work that focuses more specifically on professional practice with children in welfare institutions. To do this, I first introduce both Marianne Hedegaard's and Anne Edwards' work.

3.1.1.2 Motive Orientation in Institutions

I see Hedegaard's and Edwards' work as focusing on two actors engaged in the same key relationship in children's services, respectively on children and professionals (Hedegaard & Edwards, 2019). Both researchers do so by paying attention to the social situation within which children and professionals orientate themselves within institutional practices, Hedegaard with a focus on children's development (Hedegaard, 2009) and Edwards by analysing expertise and collaboration in professional practice (Edwards, 2010). Their work is useful in investigating the mindset of RCC workers because it further details the intentions of people, their motivation to act and how they justify their choices.

Like Vianna, Hedegaard and Edwards are researching learning. Like Vianna, both focus on the 'social situation of development' (Edwards, 2010, p. 140; Hedegaard & Fler, 2008, p. 6) to conceptualise learning. The *social situation of development* is a concept drawn from Vygotsky, where the researcher focuses on the relationship between the individual's goals and the material and social environment in which they find themselves (Hedegaard & Edwards, 2019, p. 3). It is learning within an activity system, which is about the competent use of cultural artefacts to reach one's goal. This understanding of learning leads to development and change because when confronted with a new social situation, the child or the professional needs to learn how to use mediating artefacts differently from what they already know, and possibly reorient their goals to align more with that of the institution they find themselves in.

Hedegaard and Edwards justify their use of post-Vygotskian theory because the focus on people's motivation to act within an institutional framework highlights their competencies and the resources they use to achieve specific goals (for an example applied to RCC, albeit in Denmark, see Schwartz, 2019). To do this, Hedegaard and Edwards draw on the work of A.N. Leontiev, a collaborator of Vygotsky, who further defined the context of the mediated nature of human activity by focusing on the *object of activity*, the purposes and goals of individuals and groups engaged in doing something together, as its defining feature (Leontiev, 1978). Theorists call this activity 'motive orientation' (Edwards et al., 2019).

One way to understand motive orientation would be to define it for children's services in England. Interestingly, Edwards et al. (2009, pp. 28–29) defined the motive orientation of children's services professionals in the middle of first decade of the new millennium as 'the prevention of social exclusion'. This is important because despite Edwards, her colleagues and others acknowledging the plurality of voices within an activity system (Engeström, 2014, pp. xxiv–xxv), working on a child's trajectory to prevent social exclusion is clearly a motive that is shaped by policy, and more specifically the Labour government's policy between 1997 and the first decade of the second millennium (Edwards et al., 2009, pp. 4–8; Kendrick, 2005). This places the agency of individual professionals in a different light to the political yet individual choices Moss and Petrie's pedagogue was thought to be making (Moss & Petrie, 2002, pp. 44–49).

In addition, by binding marginality with the child's trajectory into the motive orientation of the collective activity, Edwards et al. (2009) assumed that the child's vulnerability is already built into the professionals' purpose because it is part of the institutional motive orientation of children's services.

This institutional motive orientation can shift, however. Some have tracked successive government policies historically (C. Cameron, 2003; Higginbotham, 2017; Jack & Stepney, 1995; Lorenz, 2012), and concluded that the prevention of social exclusion in policy has been replaced by a more authoritarian and interventionist role for social care professionals (Parton & Williams, 2017). The motive orientation of children's services professionals, and RCC workers in particular, can be therefore assumed to change depending on a range of factors such as trends in policy, training and professional roles within the institution, and personal and ethical orientations.

The work on motive orientation of activity theorists such as Edwards and Hedegaard is therefore useful for my purpose. This is because it shifts the understanding of professional decision-making Moss and Petrie assumed was individual and psychological to complex personal, institutional and societal factors. Here the boundary between psychology and sociology is blurred (Blunden, 2021).

In introducing the work of Vianna and its connections with Edwards' and Hedegaard's work, I reviewed activity theoretical scholarship key to researching change in RCC in a way that addresses some of the theoretical omissions I highlighted in Moss and Petrie's suggestion to 'work from an image of the rich child'. The mediated nature of learning and the work of Leontiev and newer generations of activity theorists, examining people's motivation to act, are important ideas that enabled Vianna to work against some of the assumptions built into the child welfare system, and do so in a more theoretically articulated manner than Moss and Petrie suggested. To articulate knowledge, practices and language further, in the next section I explain more specifically important analytical and research tools. Activity theory gives a theoretical account of professional decision-making that moves away from an individualistic, neoliberal view of human beings.

3.1.2 Researching Institutional Processes

In this section, I continue justifying the use of post-Vygotskian theory by focusing on some of its analytical tools: Hedegaard's three planes of analysis and work on the nature of knowledge used by Edwards (2010). This shows that, in activity theory, the relationship between policy and practice spans psychological, interpersonal, and institutional levels through mediation. Further, this reframes knowledge and practice differently from Moss and Petrie's theoretical choices because activity theorists direct their attention to the purposeful activity of individuals in response to the constraints they find in their situation of development. I conclude that this significantly alters how RCC professional practice can be researched, and I outline some of the limitations of activity theory and how I propose to address those.

3.1.2.1 Different Levels of Analysis to Conceptualise Practice

The first analytical tool I describe is Hedegaard's three planes of analysis (Hedegaard & Fler, 2008, pp. 10–30) because it frames and refines the gap between policy and

interpersonal relationships highlighted when reviewing Humphris and Sigona's work above (see 2.2.4.2, p. 77).

Initially, the model was developed to ‘describe and understand the conditions of development’ of children within institutions (Hedegaard & Fler, 2008, p. 17) as Hedegaard attempted to refine developmental psychological tools that would enable researchers to follow the child’s activity as they negotiate the competing demands of different systems in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model (Hedegaard, 2009).

Structure	Process	Dynamics
Society	Traditions, Practice	Societal Conditions and Demands
Institution Activity Setting	Practice Social Situation	Value Motive/Objectives Motivation/ Engagement/ Demands
Person	Actions In Activity	Motive Orientations and Demands

Figure 5: Hedegaard's three planes of analysis (Hedegaard and Edwards (eds), 2019, p. 6)

The table in Figure 5 can be read both vertically and horizontally. For example, Edwards et al.’s (2009) working proposal is that the motive orientation of *welfare professionals* (the persons working in institutions), is to intervene in a child’s trajectory, with the intention of preventing social exclusion. At the same time, while the societal demand requires attention to the institutional practice, the constraints which the professional experiences, the institutional objectives and the individual intention of the person.

To illustrate the explanatory potential of this framework, let us compare a social worker and an RCC worker supporting one of the young people subject to the bureaucratic capture Humphris and Sigona (2019b) describe. I will do this by moving down through the structure column in Figure 5.

The social worker’s activity setting will likely be a ‘looked after’ team, whose objectives will be to assess the child’s need and provide accommodation as per Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. Assessment practices and procedures will call the social worker to different social situations. This could involve the child’s school, their living situation and, possibly, the Home Office or the courtroom if any child protection or immigration issues emerge. In comparison,

an RCC worker's activity setting will be the children's home, and their motivation will be shaped by the young person's activity, such as their response to the 'bureaucratic capture' they are subjected to, company policies, the care plan written by the social worker, and knowledge of and interaction with other children living in the home.

Moving the analysis down one level on the **structure** column, the social worker or the RCC worker may be at very different moments in their careers. For example, their understanding of the Children Act 1989 and The Children's Homes Regulations may change over time shaped, for example, by knowledge gained through a recent degree, years of experience or informal conversations. At the same time they will have different demands made on them from the other activity systems they participate in, such as their families, which will also impact the decisions they make in the everyday.

What Hedegaard's model formalises is the ease with which Vianna, through a focus on motivation, moved between different aspects of the activity system of the home (see 3.1.1.1, p. 84). One of the points Moss and Petrie made when describing the image of the child as 'atomised' is that it is a result of the 'ever-growing numbers of government departments and other public agencies which find *an interest in the child as a means to pursue their particular goal* [emphasis added] (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 64)'. I suggest that attention to possible contradictions emerging from the different professional goals of those cooperating may, therefore, change the image of the child they work from. Here again, the historically changing nature of the motive orientation of the activity system is relevant (see 3.1.1.2, p. 87).

While my interest will not rest on interprofessional work as Edwards and others do, the importance of motive orientation within a given social situation or activity system appears crucial and shapes how 'child' or 'child in care' mediates the activity of the workers. Further, Hedegaard's analytical model also provides important clarification of terms, for example, explaining that 'activity' and 'practice' are differentiated by the structural level they relate to. Activity is linked with given people while practice is used when focusing on the institutional level (Fleer & Hedegaard, 2008, p. 16). One last term that needs to be framed within the post-Vygotskian framework is 'knowledge', which I now turn to.

3.1.2.2 Knowledge in Activity Theory

So far, my description of the relevance of activity theory when investigating the ‘image of the rich child’ in professional practice has avoided characterising knowledge, despite the importance it had in Moss and Petrie’s argument (see 2.1.4.4, p. 58). This may be a consequence of the different ontological foci in post-Vygotskian work and discourse analysis, with the former privileging ‘activity’ and what people do (Chaiklin, 2019). In this paragraph, I explain this in more detail, using Vianna’s work and my situation as examples.

One important distinction post-Vygotskian theorists make about knowledge is that, rather than relying on an independent system of categories, they see knowledge as embedded and revealed through the ‘affordances’ of things and intentions as they are used in the activity (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008, pp. 37–38; Ilyenkov, 2009, pp. 215–225). Those affordances are revealed in shifting the relationship between different aspects of what people do. Knowledge is seen as embedded in dialectal relationships between subjects and the object of their activity. For example, Vianna kickstarted the young people’s journey into school learning by ensuring they experienced some of the ‘affordances’ that books, trips to New York or the collective making of a video had for them. The activity of writing the script for the video and acting it out afforded the young people the possibility to speak about their experiences of police racism (Vianna, 2007, pp. 211–218). This transformed their **knowledge** about script writing, video making, and socially acceptable ways, to subvert their experience of oppression in that they would be able, in the future, to voluntarily use scriptwriting and video making for a chosen purpose.

I want to develop two elements in the paragraph above further: the fact that knowledge is understood dialectically in post-Vygotskian theory and the importance of artefacts to mediate a subject’s activity. I look at them in turn.

First, thinking dialectically is different from the everyday, common-sense thinking that prevails in society at large (Ollman, 2003, pp. 13–14) and the RCC sector as demonstrated in some RCC research reviewed above (see 1.2.3, p. 30 or 2.2.3.2, p. 72). Thinking dialectically means moving away from focusing on static appearances and symptoms of phenomena as isolated and finite, which can be found in a system of knowledge that relies on categories. Instead, thinking dialectically means considering how different aspects of reality change and transform themselves interrelatedly. Concerning knowledge, dialectical thinking asks both

teachers and learners to bring forward the context within which what it considers exists, and stipulate that it can only happen from a given point of view at a specific moment in time (Engeström, 1991). Methods such as understanding the historical development of a given topic at a micro level are important in revealing the relationships between the different elements considered (Ollman, 2003). Not all dialectical thinking is Marxist but given Vygotsky's intention to create a Marxist psychology (Ratner & Silva, 2017), in this thesis, I focus on a Marxist understanding of dialectics.

The second aspect of knowledge that I introduced at the beginning of this paragraph is the role of artefacts in mediating activity and how the artefacts' qualities allow the subject to express and produce different types of knowledge.

Cole (2003, 2019), after Wartofsky, describes three different types of artefacts, and the rationale distinguishing between them. He sees this as lying in the degree of sophistication with which, when using them, a person can organise their activity within the social world. Primary artefacts support the production of an object: both the computer with which I type this thesis and the letters of the alphabet I use are primary artefacts necessary for the production of this thesis. Secondary artefacts are related books, stylistic guides to writing a PhD thesis and meetings with my supervisors, while tertiary artefacts would enable me to imagine how I could use this thesis in the future to shift the subaltern social positioning of children and young people living in residential care. This tertiary artefact has, as far as I know, still to be created, but training simulations for young people at risk of criminal sexual exploitation such as 'Looking out for Lottie' (2023) are an example of a tertiary artefact where young people can imagine future possibilities for action that may change their relationship with a known or potential abuser.

Relating those different types of artefacts to the question of knowledge shows the embedded nature of knowledge in activity. My knowledge of French and English is latent in my use of the laptop and the Latin alphabet to write this thesis, while my motivation to obtain a PhD in Britain places constraints on my activity and allows for my knowledge of English to be expressed. Knowledge is therefore manifested through activity and is latent in artefacts.

The question of knowledge concerning RCC is fraught with difficulties. In the introduction, I described the unequal distribution of expertise among social workers, psychotherapists and

RCC workers (1.2.3.3, p. 33); in the next section, I describe how the work of Edwards relates to this observation.

3.1.2.3 Edwards' Work on Relational Expertise

The final aspect of activity theory I want to introduce is aspects of the work of Edwards (2010, 2012) because she seeks to understand how professional knowledge is constituted in children's services and how it may be turned to in practice within professional relationships and relationships with children. These include relationships with different professionals, such as teachers, social workers or school welfare staff. This is especially important in the context of the bureaucratisation of services through New Public Management at play when New Labour developed its ECM policies (Frost & Parton, 2009; Heffernan, 2006; HM Government, 2003; Lowe, 2013; Simon & Ward, 2010). Edwards defines relational expertise as 'an additional layer' that

includes the capacity to negotiate what matters with others. Exercising this additional form of expertise is not simply a question of collaboration [. . . It] involves recognizing how others interpret and react to problems and aligning one's own interpretations and responses to theirs (Edwards, 2010, p. 2).

The assumption here is that the recognition of differences in interpretations and reactions to problems is shaped by, but should be distinguished from, professionals' disciplinary expertise.

Bringing the concept of 'relational expertise' to RCC is complex. I described in the literature review the clear division between RCC workers' acknowledged professional 'everyday' expertise (Bryderup & Frørup, 2011; C. Cameron, 2008, 2020) and psychotherapists or social workers' accredited professional status. I would argue there is a qualitative difference here in the type of knowledge between social work, psychotherapy and RCC, an observation made by Smith (2003, p. 239) when he argues that a practice-based knowledge base remains to be developed for RCC.

With this in mind, Edwards' (2010, pp. 32–34) argues, that it is the lack of specific professional knowledge, constitutive of a distinct professional identity, that lowers the status of the school workers she studies. This argument may also be relevant to RCC. In line with activity theorists, Edwards' work with welfare professionals paid attention to the type of mediating artefacts that are used by professionals of different backgrounds to collaborate and prevent the child's social exclusion (Edwards, 2010, pp. 48–50). The question that needs to

be answered for my purpose is to define more closely the specificities of the professional knowledge base RCC workers use, and I suggest that some of Edwards' thinking may be important in doing so.

Knowledge in activity theory manifests through the use of cultural artefacts; knowledge is therefore manifested in the realisation of the subjects' intention. This focus on intentional action in activity theory is important in examining the transformative potential to work from an image of the 'rich child' because it offers a framework within which to understand institutional practices and discourses, language, knowledge and professionals' intentional actions and the constraints they experience. To account for different types of knowledge that manifest in professional activity related to children in care, Edwards' attention to relational expertise sheds important theoretical clarification about how knowledge, discourses and practices relate to each other.

By paying close attention to Vianna's work in a US children's home and the work of Hedegaard and Edwards, I justified the relevance of an activity theoretical framework for my purpose. I now turn to some of the critiques that have been made of post-Vygotskian theory.

3.1.2.4 Possible Limitations to the Proposed Theoretical Framework

This paragraph outlines how I situate the proposed theoretical framework for this thesis around existing critiques of activity theory. So far, scholars have asked questions about the articulation of power within a group of people in post-Vygotskian theory, and how activity theory situates itself within the Marxist political project. These are reservations that are relevant to my purpose, and I address them in turn.

Firstly, I have already noted how plurality of voices can be part of the activity system (see 3.1.1.2, p. 87), yet the triangle itself as a heuristic does not make room for power differentials within a collective group of subjects. Engeström (2007, p. 382) acknowledged this by questioning the suitability of using change laboratories with individuals who are not '*competent adult practitioners*'. Edwards et al. (2009, p. 72) also note how they encountered resistance to change in one of their study sites, resistance which interestingly focused on the informal categories participants used to describe children.

This points to the fact that methods used in change laboratories may need refinement and specific attention needs to be paid to how power manifests in the negotiation of collective

objects. In the following chapters(4.3.1, p. 134 and 5.1, p. 143) I come back to the issue of power and how it manifests in the data and my research activity.

Secondly, another critique of the ‘activity strand’ of post-Vygotskian work was formulated by Jones (P. E. Jones, 2011) around the importance of situating the activity of research within a broad Marxian political project. I understand Jones’ point as an invitation for researchers working with activity theory to think about their motivation for the research, to clarify how they can use it to transform the current capitalist system of relations that, in my case, significantly shapes welfare services for children. As demonstrated amply in the literature review, the ‘bureaucratic capture’ of children’s identities and their subaltern positioning significantly constrains possibilities for human connection and flourishing in English children services (see 2.2.4.2, p. 77). In that light, the connections I established earlier between Malaguzzi’s rich child and early Marx’s human being rich in needs (see 2.1.2, p. 47) are important and allow a loose linkage with a Marxist view of human beings (Fromm, 2004; Heller, 1976). This is a complex and contested area of Marxian scholarship that I engage with in the discussion chapter (see 7.3.1, p. 228). To address this from the theoretical and methodological point of view, I tried as much as possible to refer to foundational texts, such as those by Marx, Vygotsky and Ilyenkov.

So far, in this section (see 3.1, p. 84) I have justified how post-Vygotskian theory describes the relationship between language, knowledge, practice, policy and professionals’ decisions. Following Vianna, Hedegaard and Edwards, I argued that through new and inventive use of cultural artefacts, individual and institutional change can be generated. The use of an activity system as a unit of analysis allows for individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal planes of activity to be researched.

While this section provides some of the clarification I was seeking to understand the discrepancy between current practice in RCC and Moss and Petrie’s suggestions, I have not yet addressed the issue of operationalising images in professional activity. I now turn to this.

3.2 Relevant Post-Vygotskian Theoretical Ideas to Situate Images Within RCC Professional Practice

In this section, I expand on specific aspects of mediation and activity systems that I introduced in the first section of this chapter to explain how images are framed in post-Vygotskian theory.

I do this first by showing how the work of the Russian philosopher Evald Ilyenkov can be used to expand on Vygotsky's ideas on the mediated nature of learning, how this is linked to needs and goals and how it relates to everyday domestic situations found in RCC. Secondly, I outline how this relationship is theorised as both material and ideal and finally, I describe how Ilyenkov conceives of images within the ideal plane of activity. This is where I set my proposal for a theoretical framework that investigates images in professional practice.

3.2.1 The Cultural Law of Genetic Development and Pedagogical Practice

In this section, I look at why social pedagogues should be interested in post-Vygotskian work. I argue that this is because mediation can be used pedagogically to develop consciousness, and I do this following both Vygotsky and Ilyenkov.

Vygotsky declares that:

every function in the child's cultural development appears twice, first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (inter-psychological), and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

This law of genetic development is foundational for Vygotsky and all who drew on his work (Daniels, 2009). It is important because the law explains how psychological development is tied to the material conditions the child finds themselves in, or their social situation of development (see 3.1.1.2, p. 87). Vygotsky further defines the relationship between the child and the world by explaining the role of mediation in the development of the mind (Wertsch, 2007). Contrary to the tacit behaviourist model of practice prevalent in RCC (see 2.2.2.1, p. 65) Vygotsky came to reject a direct, behaviouristic link between needs and the automatic reflex this creates in the individual. Instead, he thought that human beings direct their activity voluntarily through their use of artefacts, which mediate the individual's response to the

stimulus. This is directly related to the view of consciousness embedded in Marx's human being rich in needs (see 2.1.2.2, p. 48) because it further defines how human beings interact with the material world through labour, and in doing so develop consciousness. Vygotsky, using examples, such as having their attention directed when following their caregivers' gaze, or by tying a knot in a handkerchief as a reminder (Sannino, 2015), emphasised how such behaviours become voluntary as the individual seeks to reproduce the new experience, something that I would call the substance of pedagogical practice (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1994, pp. 57–72). The individual gradually exercises control over their behaviour by using the artefacts, tools and signs that are passed on to them through the law of genetic development. This is the process of internalisation Vianna relied on in his work with young people in the USA (see 3.1.1, p. 84).

E.V. Ilyenkov (1924-1979) offer a similar take on consciousness. Ilyenkov is currently being rediscovered in the English-speaking world (Lotz, 2019), and his work is highly relevant to understanding this process within education and pedagogy in everyday settings. Ilyenkov attempted to re-interpret Marxist ideas away from soviet doctrine (Lotz, 2019, pp. 1–15). He drew on Vygotsky and A.N. Leontiev's work to demonstrate how behaviourism and crude neuroscience were a misunderstanding of Marx's work. His re-interpretation of Marxism is often called humanist or creative (Levant, 2012) and is specifically relevant to social pedagogy because of its focus on educational activity in the broad area of everyday life (Nissen, 2003; Nissen et al., 2018). His work further develops Vygotsky's (Bakhurst, 1991, p. 61) and was key in promoting Meshcheryakov's education of deaf and blind children at the Zagorsk school (Bakhurst & Padden, 1991; Ilyenkov, 2007; Suvorov, 2003).

Ilyenkov describes the cultural law of genetic development and the role of mediation in supporting the development of consciousness using the example of the shift taking place between the need for food and the conscious use of the spoon to feed oneself. The internalisation of the meaning society gives to eating in a specific manner, whether with a spoon, chopsticks or the right hand mediates how the child meets their own needs.

What occurs is no more and no less than the act of the birth of the human mind, [...]. Here the first, elementary, cellular form of the human mind turns out to be the work of the hand in **accordance with a schema and along a trajectory determined not by biologically inbuilt requirements but by the form and disposition of things created by human labour**, created by man [sic] for man [sic] (Ilyenkov, 2007, p. 89).

In that sense, Ilyenkov is applying and extending Vygotsky's cultural law of genetic development (see 3.2.1, p. 97) to move beyond the cognitive processes of attention, memory, language and school teaching to everyday life in the home.

Ilyenkov further highlights a tension between the control exerted by the adult to shape the hand of the child until the gesture is internalised and the child fulfilling their need for food using the cultural artefacts brought by the adult. This tension embodies the dialectical relationship at the heart of social reproduction and social transformation which Vianna (2007) drew upon to create change in the boys' motivation to learn through dialogue rather than coercive power.

Ilyenkov moves away from the school-based and cognitive focus often derived from Vygotsky's work (Daniels, 2001; Edwards, 2017a) towards the *life-activity* of the child. This is important for social pedagogues because, contrary to the work of Daniels and Edwards quoted above, the emphasis on social pedagogues is much broader than school learning. Social pedagogues work to create positive experiences to support well-being, learning, empowerment and community participation through positive relationships in the community, the home or institutional care (Eischteller & Holtoff, 2011). The example of eating with a spoon is apt because it implies that self-care, self-determination and human agency applied to domestic activities are, like social pedagogy, part of Ilyenkov's understanding of pedagogical thinking in ways that echo some of the social pedagogy literature.

In this section, I demonstrated that the domestic setting and activities that pertain to care work can be pedagogically apprehended in Ilyenkov's thinking to show continuity between learning in school and learning in a care setting such as RCC. I also introduced the pertinence of some of Ilyenkov's work to pedagogical work in RCC. In the following section, I continue to explore his work and its relevance to situating images and research involving them.

3.2.2 Material and Ideal Planes of Activity

Ilyenkov continued to explore how the child's internalisation of specific cultural practices such as eating with a spoon is a doorway to human consciousness. In the same lecture quoted above (Ilyenkov, 2007), he outlined how the ideal, a metaphysical category created through the interaction of human beings with the material world, has both a subjective and an objective character that sets it apart from other philosophical objects of enquiry. Ilyenkov (2009) conceived of the ideal as a web of meanings and social constructs that are part of an

individual's perceptions and that arise through interacting with the material world. Ilyenkov used his work on this philosophical category to counter the prevalence of behaviourism and positivist neurology in social sciences such as education (Bakhurst, 1995a, p. 164). Ilyenkov defines the ideal as:

the ideal form is a form of a thing, but outside this thing, namely in man [sic], as a form of his dynamic life-activity, as goals and needs. Or conversely, it is a form of man's[sic] dynamic life-activity, but outside man [sic], namely in the form of the thing he creates, which represents, reflects another thing, including that which exists independently of man [sic] and humanity. 'Ideality' as such exists only in the constant transformation of these two forms of its 'external incarnation' and does not coincide with either of them taken separately (Ilyenkov in Levant, 2012, p. 130).

The ideal is outside the head of the individual who is acting in the world, the individual who learns to satisfy their need through using a spoon, through growing food or going shopping by internalising and using anew the cultural artefacts that are at their disposal. For Ilyenkov and post-Vygotskian theorists, though, this goes beyond 'the skull', beyond psychologism through a collective understanding of mind and consciousness, which they see as an objective aspect of human activity linked to Marx's early writings on the '*life activity of social man* [sic]' (Levant, 2012, p. 129).

While defining his understanding of the ideal, Ilyenkov (2012, pp. 44–47) referred to Kant's story of the *taler*, a valid currency in Germany during the philosopher's life, to illustrate the objective quality of the ideal and how the problem of consciousness is not just one of a simple binary between material and subjective aspects of the mind. This is important when investigating 'images' in RCC workers' professional practice because it lends credence to the possibility of doing so systematically across a given context and avoids thinking of images as individual, subjective and psychological aspects of professional practice.

In his use of the *taler*, Ilyenkov agrees with Kant that *talers* afford different possibilities for action, whether they exist in the mind of an individual or as metal coins in that same individual's pocket. Ilyenkov challenges Kant's dualist notion of the mind (Lotz, 2019, p. 11) by drawing attention, as Marx does, to a third mode of action that is afforded by talers: that of the laws dictating that talers lose their exchange value once a border is crossed, reducing them to pieces of metal. The conclusion that one can draw from this is that despite its

immaterial nature, the ideal has distinct and recognisable objective consequences for groups of individuals.

Further, and as pre-empted in his example of the child learning to use a spoon, Ilyenkov clarifies that the ideal is internalised through pedagogical practice, because *there are no 'immanent' forms of individual mental activity, but the assimilated form of another external subject* (Ilyenkov, 2012, p. 48). The ideal exists between people, not solely 'in their head'. The genetic law of cultural development therefore highlights the pedagogical importance of the ideal. Further, Ilyenkov drew directly on Marx's early writings about the social human being, which, as I suggested earlier (see 2.1.2.2, p. 48), may have also inspired Malaguzzi.

The pertinence of activity, at once ideal and material, to research the transformative potential of 'working from an image of the rich child' (Moss & Petrie, 2002) can be found in Vianna's brief description of different influences on the workers' mindset when making decisions about how to work with the young people in the home (Vianna, 2007, p. 156). Vianna's description is a reference to the ideal nature of activity, which, I would suggest, can be apprehended through attention to how RCC workers use resources in their environment and the norms and rules of behaviours they contend with to reach their professional aims. Ilyenkov, though, goes further in describing images and their place in human activity.

3.2.3 The Role and Place of Images Within an Activity

Ilyenkov's position in the debate on the origin and formation of consciousness focused on activity rather than language, and this position is important to understand how his work can support investigating images of the rich child in RCC workers' professional practice.

First, I describe how Ilyenkov places images within the activity of a group of people, before focusing on how he describes the ephemeral nature of images that do not rely on stable language. Finally, still relying on Ilyenkov's position on the place of language within activity, I distinguish between ideal images and representations.

3.2.3.1 Images As a Guide to Orient Activity

Ilyenkov sees images as arising in the course of activity, itself generated by human beings' needs. This was implied in his work on the ideal outlined above (see 3.2.2, p. 99), which he further defined as

an image is not a “ghost”, not a “subjective [psychological] state”, introspectively recorded by the brain within itself. An image is the form of a thing that has been imprinted in the subject’s body, as that “bending” that the object has imposed upon the trajectory of the motion of the subject’s body. It is a representation of the form of the object in the form of the trajectory of the subject’s motion, subjectively experienced by him as “forced” – “unfree” – change in the schema of reflex-executed motion (Ilyenkov, 2010, p. 28).

Ilyenkov relies here on an understanding of the object of activity (see 3.1.1.2, p. 87) to guide intentions and activity motivated by human needs, and the dialectical relationship between the ideal and material plane of activity (see 3.2.2, p. 99). This purposeful activity is not straightforward but fraught with obstacles; the satisfaction of a need is mediated by the artefacts: tools, signs and objects, available within the culture of the individual in question. Further, the object itself transforms or ‘bites back’. It is not inert, but could, as is the case for this proposed study, be another human being or an evolving project (Blunden, 2022). To negotiate the resistance to meet their needs, the individual holds in mind the object of activity to direct their actions towards their goal, thus creating an image. Therefore, for Ilyenkov, the image was not a static sensory aggregate but a reflection of the object of the individual’s will, bound together with the action the individual is taking to conclude the activity successfully.

3.2.3.2 Ideal Images Are Not Apprehended Through Language

Images are highly personal, and bound up to activity because they *belong to the subjects’ motion* (Ilyenkov, 2010a, p. 28). This implies that images come and go as people interact with the material plane of activity that arises in consciousness, because of human needs and their disappearance once the need is met. Yet, of course, images are not subjective in the everyday sense because they are part of the ideal (see 3.2.2, p. 99).

Ilyenkov further defined images’ relationship with thinking and speech (Blunden, 2017). Images are not part of the realm of language but of activity. This is best illustrated when Ilyenkov distinguished “visual aids” from images in the ideal:

after all, a ‘visual aid’ is not the thing [represented through activity in an ideal image] but a ready-made image of the thing – it has been created independently of the activity of the student [...].

In either case, as an ‘object’, as a reality existing outside of, before, and completely independent of the activity of cognition, the student is presented with an image that has been previously organised by words, and the student has to do only one thing – to make the inverse translation of this image into verbal form. The student thinks that he is describing an ‘object’, but he is only reproducing an ‘alienated’ – a visually embodied – verbal formula, which has been used (but not by him (sic)) to create the image that was presented to him. The student thus learns only how to reproduce ready-made images – **images that have already received their citizenship in the world of language**. He does not produce the image, for he never encounters any object – any ‘raw material’ for the image – that has not already been processed by words (Ilyenkov, 2009, pp. 220–221).

In this extract, Ilyenkov implies that ideal images are not permanent and static as visual aids may be, but arise through a creative, dialectical and intentional process that can only be experienced by an individual acting upon the material world. Ideal images contain the concreteness of reality and can exist independently of language. It is through the intention of meeting a need, which is itself shaped by the artefacts at the subject’s disposal to reach their goal, that images arise. Images are ontologically in a different category to language (Ilyenkov, 2010, p. 16; Potapov, 2021).

By contrasting visual and ideal images, Ilyenkov highlights the active and dialectical character of ideal images, with important consequences for data gathering and analysis. I take up such consequences in the next chapter when describing the methodology used to operationalise images by linking ideal images with Leontiev’s ‘psychic representations’ (Leontiev, 1978) and post-Vygotskian thinking about concepts (Blunden, 2012; Engeström et al., 2012).

The distinction between images that arise through someone’s conscious activity and images that *have already received their citizenship in the world of language* -or representations- is important for this thesis. Indeed, the literature review on practice, culture and theoretical possibilities in RCC (see 2.2, p. 60) highlighted how RCC workers’ scope for making decisions is codified and proceduralised by statutory guidance and the logic of needs. By contrast, social pedagogy’s intention to focus on dilemmas in and of practice (Rothuizen & Harbo, 2017; Storø, 2013, pp. 79–106) would, in theory, require professionals to draw on images and take into account intentions, emotions, meanings that are part of material activity.

In that sense, Ilyenkov's explicit attention to aspects of human experience that go beyond language and the uncritical reproduction of practices is key. The theoretical apparatus that he brings to the question goes well beyond what Moss and Petrie and even Hill Collins or Lawrence bring to investigating images. It echoes Murriss' focus on how concepts work in lived experience (see 2.2.4.1, p. 75) with the added clarification of focusing on the intention behind the actions of individuals within an institutional setting.

Having made the case for using an Ilyenkovian understanding of images in this thesis, I now describe the remaining analytical tools necessary to investigate images of the child in RCC workers' professional practice.

3.3 How Post-Vygotskian Theory Supports Investigating the Transformative Potential of Working from an 'Image of the Rich Child'

This section sets the scene for the methodology chapter by expanding on specific aspects of post-Vygotskian theory presented so far. The section also explains how foregrounding activity and a post-Vygotskian understanding of learning can enable research into images of the child in professional practice. I do this by explaining how a post-Vygotskian understanding of concepts supports investigating the transformative potential of images within professional practice through the Marxist principle of ascending from the abstract to the concrete. To demonstrate the pertinence of the proposed theoretical framework to my research question, I finish by reviewing one study that explored how trainee teachers changed their mindset towards the pupils in their class .

3.3.1 Ascending from the Abstract to the Concrete

When describing Ilyenkov's ideal images, I referred to the 'concreteness' contained in an ideal image. This term has a specific meaning in post-Vygotskian work that needs to be clarified. Indeed, Marx came to understand the internal relations of the capitalist system within the ideal by using a specific approach towards reality and knowledge production. It is the method of ascending from the abstract to the concrete (Allman, 2007, pp. 7–9; Ilyenkov, 1982; Kosík, 1976; Ollman, 2003). In this section, I describe this process and its links to concepts in post-Vygotskian theory before explaining how expansive learning in CHAT is based on ascending from the abstract to the concrete.

3.3.1.1 Generic Description of Ascending from the Abstract to the Concrete

The process of ascending from the abstract to the concrete is tied to Marx's method (Ollman, 2003). To explain it, I first describe the terminology and then the process itself.

Within this paradigm, 'concrete' is the end goal of a process of understanding, where human activity can reveal the internal and dialectical relations, connections and properties of a given object of knowledge (Ilyenkov, 1982, p. 15; Marx, 1973, p. 101). For example, I trialled Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 2008) methods with RCC workers when piloting the fieldwork for this thesis. During that session, the participants enacted how children are often sent off to 'play' by adults wishing to discuss problems they deem unsuitable for the children to hear and be part of. This segregatory aspect is part of the concreteness of the concept of play, and one which can only truly be understood through everyday life with children.

However, this is only revealed through a specific type of analysis that brings out the internal relation between childhood, play and the adult's perception of their responsibilities towards children (Remy, 2020, pp. 7–10). I only have come to that understanding through reflection, observation, and manipulation of the concrete internal relationship between my status as an adult and that of children. This type of investigation is carried out by 'ascending from the abstract to the concrete' (Ilyenkov, 1982; Kosík, 1976) in that it highlights what Marx calls the many determinations of a concept (Marx, 1973, p. 85). What, though, does this ascent refer to?

In the context of Marx's method, abstractions are isolated facts, outside everyday activity (Blunden, 2017). For example, the idea of developmental milestones in the Piagetian sense is an abstract conceptualisation of a child (Hviid, 2008). Indeed, it isolates specific capacities of the children involved in this type of research and presents them as applicable to all children outside of the material realities of their lives. This bears few connections to the concrete experience of human beings slowly taking their place within adult society and how they orientate themselves within different contexts such as school or home (Burman, 2008, 2017; Hedegaard, 2009). Further, the use made of the concept of 'developmental stages' is not apparent in this knowledge, but rather assumed to be stable across contexts.

In that example, one can see how abstract concepts can be normative and how Marx's method may be useful through its focus on the relationship between those abstract concepts and the lived experience of individuals. The process of 'ascending from the abstract to the concrete'

is, in a nutshell, one that takes the analyst on a journey from their sensory perception and any knowledge gained through experiencing the constraints within their environment to an abstract notion, a generalisation or a word that represents it, which is then confronted with social reality and its understanding checked, enhanced and changed by observing and understanding its relationships to other aspects of everyday life (Ilyenkov, 1982, pp. 25–26; Marx, 2015, p. 14).

To understand a concept truly within this specific, dialectic methodology, an examination of the relationship between separate chaotic sensory perceptions and the relevant abstract concept is necessary at the beginning of such a journey. This should lead to a reformulation of the abstract concept that becomes concrete by being tested against reality (Blunden, 2012, pp. 89–162; Engeström et al., 2012). I will describe below (see 4.1.2.1, p. 120) how I use the ‘rich child’ in the research process, but for now, suffice to say that images of children within RCC workers’ activity can be made visible through documenting the workers’ engagement in a learning process about their professional practice that would take Malaguzzi’s ‘rich child’ as an abstraction of ‘child’ and use it to track how ‘child’ exists and is used by workers in their practice.

Within the process of ascending from the abstract to the concrete, the relationship between concepts and practices is revealed, but concepts are not static. I now turn to this aspect of Marx’s method.

3.3.1.2 Concepts in Post-Vygotskian Theory

The process of ascending from the abstract to the concrete can reveal how a concept mediates activity. A concept is dynamic and revealed through its use in time rather than a static entity (Blunden, 2012, p. 186).

The study of the concept of mobility in Swedish elderly home care cited above illustrates this well (Engeström et al., 2012; Engeström & Nummijoki, 2010). The study documents how the concept of ‘mobility’ changed through its use in the context of nurses home-visiting elderly people with limited mobility. Through ethnographic observations, the research team gradually became aware of the central tension around mobility in the activity systems they were observing. Through using a simple ‘mobility agreement’, the intention and motivations of nurses and their patients realigned and were refined and, with slight changes, the concept of mobility became realigned to something relevant to this context. The concept of mobility

developed throughout the study is strongly tied to ‘standing up from the chair’ and moved away from socially normative assumptions around mobility being running a marathon or doing yoga.

Vianna’s study highlights how, by changing the home’s object of activity, the staff’s concept of ‘young people’ changed.

In Vianna’s (2007) work or the mobility study (Engeström et al., 2012; Engeström & Nummijoki, 2010), paying attention to how concepts change, through the process of ascending from the abstract to the concrete, documents how change and transformation can happen in small, incremental steps where the subjects give new meanings to the mediating artefacts they use; realign their intentions; or create more suitable artefacts to carry out their intentions. Throughout this chapter, I have described how different aspects of activity theory frame the researchers’ gaze to understand how to become aware of those small shifts.

The literature review (see 2, p. 44) described at length the disconnection, in both Malaguzzi and Moss and Petrie’s work, between an imagined future and the reality of professionals’ working with an image of the atomised child. In contrast, activity theory, as described in the current chapter, conceptualises the change that is necessary to move from a wishful ‘image of the rich child’ to the reality of the ‘image of the atomised child’.

In the last paragraph of this section, I turn to how CHAT has developed a process to support this change in professional practice.

3.3.1.3 The Expansive Learning Cycle as a Mean to Develop Dialectical Concepts for Transformative Learning

In the previous paragraph and elsewhere in this chapter, I draw on the work of philosophers such as Marx and Ilyenkov. My concern is professional practice, and in this section, I explain how change laboratories can operationalise aspects of Marx and Ilyenkov’s work so as to investigate images of the child in RCC professional practice.

CHAT draws on the work of Ilyenkov, Davydov, Leontiev, and Bateson (Engeström, 2014) to make visible workplace practices, rules and division of labour (Engeström, 1999). This is formalised through a learning process called the ‘change laboratory’, whereby workers come together to examine their professional practice through the activity system and its relations to

the object of activity. The change laboratory stimulates an expansive learning cycle that has been devised to support and foster ascending from the abstract to the concrete, within a given activity setting (Engeström et al., 2014; Engeström & Sannino, 2010). This expansive learning cycle is presented in diagrammatic form below in Figure 6.

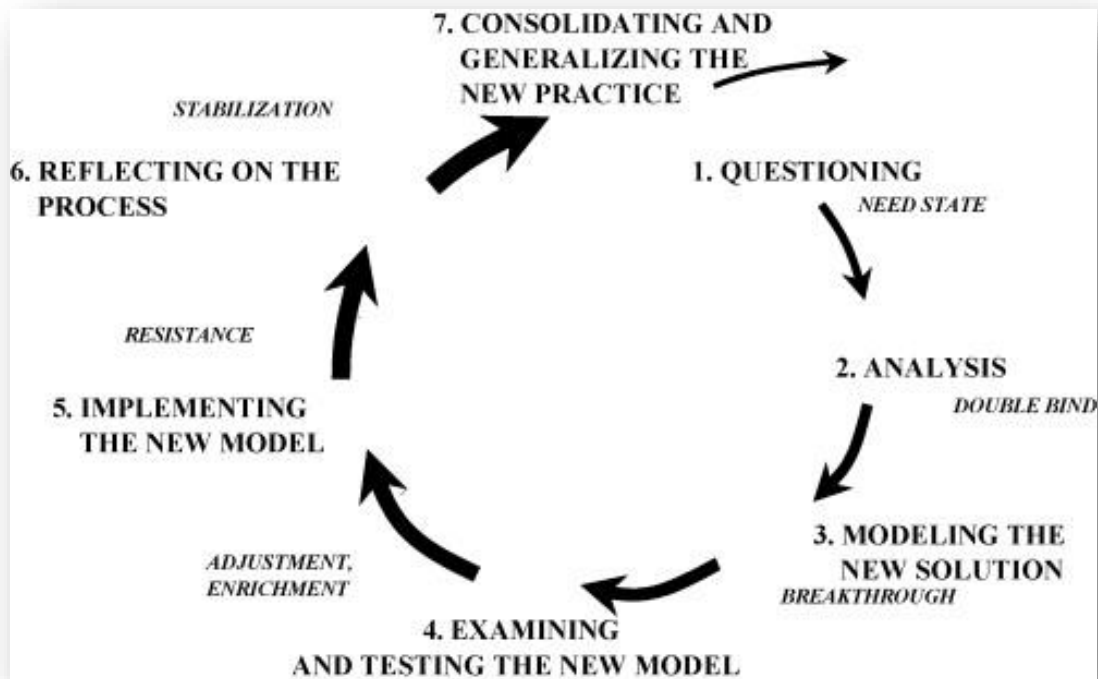


Figure 6: The expansive learning cycle (from Engeström & Sannino, 2012, p. 8)

This conceptualisation of ascending from the abstract to the concrete is important for making visible the concreteness of ‘child’ in the everyday life of a residential children’s home. It starts with what happens currently in the home: the difficulties and perceived conflicts and dilemmas experienced by all involved in the situation.

It poses specific questions (Step 1 in the expansive learning cycle) to professionals so they become aware of the purpose and structure of their activity, of the rules, norms and resources they tacitly use in their everyday practice. The change laboratory is structured to question practice, and support professionals in understanding the difference between abstract concepts that appear to be connected to their professional practices, and the concrete, everyday uses and meanings that drive their intentions and purpose (Steps 2 and 3). This is important in revealing contradictions for example, between personal and institutional motive orientations, creating a tension where people become aware of the need to use different artefacts to reach their goals (Step 4). This is a crucial step in the cycle because it is where the concepts may be

redefined, or new artefacts are devised (Engeström et al., 2012). This is when professionals may start questioning their image of the atomised child.

In his work within US children's homes, Vianna drew on Engeström's work through his characterisation of the activity system (Vianna, 2007, pp. 151–154). My focus on the professional activity of RCC workers allows for a wider use of the research tools developed by Engeström and his colleagues because their purpose is clearly to investigate professional practice and institutional change (Engeström & Sannino, 2021), the change laboratory being specifically designed to do this. I describe in the next chapter more fully how I intend to do this in the fieldwork. Before doing this, I examine previous relevant work within CHAT.

3.3.2 Learning from Previous Relevant Studies

I want to illustrate the relevance of change laboratories to transforming the professional concept of 'child' by looking at Sannino's (2010) study of Italian trainee teachers' conceptualisation of their pupils.

Sannino frames her work within post-Vygotskian theory; she focuses on trainee teachers' emerging professional practice and more precisely on how they 'break away' from their initial concept of the pupil (Sannino, 2010, p. 151) during their practice placement in a post-Vygotskian classroom. What is interesting is that Sannino introduces the term 'pseudo concept' to designate trainee teachers' initial concept of the pupil and that under activity theory she conceives of the pseudo concept as an idealisation of the object of activity. Through the contrast between the ideal and real object and the resistance it creates, the pseudo concept changes. Sannino describes how the trainee teachers can break away from the pseudo concepts they have of their pupils through a four-step process (Sannino, 2010, p. 158) consisting of:

- contrasting different views
- experiencing conflicting views
- experimenting with mediating artefacts
- establishing dialectical connections

This process contains many elements of the expansive learning cycle introduced above (see 3.3.1.3, p. 107), and the intention to break away from the pseudo concept is therefore to bring the concreteness of 'pupil' to conscious awareness in the trainee teachers. This shows some of the methodological possibilities of activity theory to examine mental conceptions of child in

professional practice and its transformative potential. Sannino highlights how double stimulation is necessary to ‘break away’ from the abstraction.

3.3.2.1 Double Stimulation

Double stimulation could be defined as the affective and intellectual recognition of the contradictions at play within a specific activity system. For this to be successful and to facilitate an expansive learning process, however, it needs to meet a set of precise circumstances, which are described by Vygotsky and Sakharov’s method (Engeström, 2007; Engeström et al., 2015; Haapasaari & Kerosuo, 2015; Lund & Rasmussen, 2008; Ritella & Hakkarainen, 2012; Sakharov, 1994; Sannino, 2015a, 2015b; Sannino, Engeström, & Lemos, 2016; Sannino & Laitinen, 2015; Thorne, 2015; Virkkunen & Ristimäki, 2012). This is one element in the grammar of interventionist research within activity theory (Engeström, 2011; Engeström et al., 2014; Sannino et al., 2016).

The process consists of bringing to consciousness the contradictory meanings embedded in the purpose of the activity under scrutiny. In the case of Sannino’s trainee teachers, the purpose of the activity is mediated by the concept of ‘pupil’. The intervention of double stimulation is to give Participants a neutral stimulus they may use to resolve the contradictions they experience. For example, Sannino describes how trainee teachers’ descriptions of pupil’s difficulties with school tasks were transformed once the researcher had encouraged them to create mediating artefacts, such as a cardboard clock or an alphabet board to support pupils’ engagement with, and ownership of, school tasks. In this case, the stimulus for the teacher was Vygotsky’s theory of the mediated nature of activity, and for the pupil the mediating artefacts created by the teachers. The trainee teachers had adapted those artefacts to the specific needs and cognition of each pupil, and the transformation was effective to the extent that the fully qualified teacher in charge of the class was surprised at the pupil’s performance (Sannino, 2010, p. 156), thus bringing about a conceptualisation of the pupils’ potential more in line with their actual activity than with the teacher’s pre-conceptions. The study demonstrates how the process of ascending from the abstract to the concrete through double stimulation has the potential to foster changes in professionals’ assumptions about a child’s capacities, which could be transferable to RCC.

3.3.2.2 Volitional Action and Images

In this section so far, I appear to have subsumed images and concepts into the same term and used them interchangeably, but they are distinct from each other. I now need to clarify this.

While double stimulation is a key component of change laboratories (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013), Sannino's interest in the 'waiting experiment'¹ exposes different interpretations and uses of double stimulation (Sannino, 2015b). This provides interesting information on the relationship between ideal images and ascending from the abstract to the concrete, which is important for my purpose.

First, Sannino shows how Vygotsky and Shkarov's seminal experiment exposed the Participants' mindset when faced with indecision, and the tools, signs and resources they draw upon to resolve the tensions they experience. In her investigation, Sannino claims that while Vygotsky expanded the method of double stimulation to include concept formation in children (Sannino, 2015, p. 5), he was also interested in the subject's exercise of will (Derry, 2004), broadening the application of double stimulation to other aspects of human development and activity. I argue that this can be extended to operationalising 'images' by connecting Sannino's work on double stimulation and volitional action to Ilyenkov's description of ideal images that arise in the course of activity.

It is made possible by emphasising the link between double stimulation and its impact on the ideal plane of activity, latent in Sannino's article. Sannino's work on breaking away from the proto-concept of 'pupil' referred to how double stimulation brings into consciousness at both the personal and societal level, including historical meanings (Sannino, 2015, p. 5). Further, Sannino quotes Vygotsky, who refers to how a subject's purpose is conceived first ideally then it is realised in a manner reminiscent of the Ilyenkovian image I describe above:

A volitional act inevitably presupposes the presence in our consciousness of certain wishes, desires, and strivings associated, first, with the representation of the ultimate goal we are striving towards and, second, with the representation of these deeds and actions that will be needed by us in order to realize our goal. Thus, duality is at the

¹ The waiting experiment was attributed by Vygotsky to Lewin (Sannino & Laitinen, 2015) and consisted of placing Participants in a situation of uncertainty, of unrealised potential for action. In short, Participants were asked to wait in a room until the 'experimenter' came to start the psychological tests they believed they were being recruited for. As the Participants are kept waiting, the experimenter observes through a two-way mirror how they resolve the tension in the 'waiting situation'.

very foundation of the volitional act, and this duality becomes especially prominent and vivid whenever several motives, several opposing strivings, clash in our consciousness (Vygotsky, in Sannino, 2015b, p. 8).

It is possible here to link the material and ideal planes of activity, double stimulation and Vygotsky's dialectical understanding of needs. The process of double stimulation brings to awareness the ideal image the subject holds of the purpose of their activity.

All in all, Sannino's work is important for my purpose. It shows the relevance of activity theory to answer parts of the research question (see 2.3, p. 82), specifically

How can a post-Vygotskian formulation of professional practice, learning and change explain the disparity between current RCC practices in England and visions of the flourishing human encapsulated by Malaguzzi and Marx's early ideas on the 'rich child' and the 'rich human being'? What images of the child guide RCC workers' professional practice?

The chapter's main themes could be represented as separate but converging spirals that gradually come together as the specific methodological tools within activity theory that are necessary to operationalise images in the professional activity of RCC workers.

First, I drew on the work of Vianna, Hedegaard and Edwards to describe activity theory and the theoretical importance of mediation, intentional action, and the purpose of activity in different institutional and social contexts.

Second, within this broad definition of activity, Ilyenkovian situated images theoretically.

Finally, I translated Ilyenkov's philosophical thinking to workplace learning through the use of Engeström and Sannino's work.

Together they ground the methodology, which I turn to in the next chapter.

4 Methodology

In this chapter, I outline the methodology for the proposed research and how the research process itself was guided by how knowledge, practices, purposeful human activity and learning are understood in activity theory, as described in Chapter 3.

Earlier studies focusing on understanding how the ‘image of the rich child’ is used in Reggio Emilia drew on a range of methods, from thematic analysis to quasi-autoethnographic investigation (see 2.1.3.1, p. 50). I decided not to follow this methodological path because those investigations did not offer a pedagogical answer to operationalising images, whereas activity theory did.

The question broached in the last section of Chapter 3, ‘How can images be operationalised within the paradigm of activity theory?’ is addressed here methodologically. This question has two important aspects. One refers to the type of knowledge that will be produced through data collection and analysis, and the other to the methodological tools needed and my understanding of them within activity theory.

The first aspect of the question around the operationalisation of images implies thinking dialectically about the data to come to an awareness of how images of the child influence the practice of residential care workers, and vice versa. It deals with the epistemological nature of images. Chapter 3 described how activity theory, as an investigation into the object of human activity, takes a specific view of the nature of non-material phenomena. In this thesis, as with some writers within activity theory (Engeström, 2011; Jones, 1998; Levant, 2011), I take Ilyenkov’s work on the nature of the ideal and its relationship with activity as the background. In what follows, the focus of enquiry - images of children in RCC workers’ practice, sits entirely, therefore, within the ideal, but can only be understood through involvement in the ordinary, material activity of the children’s home. In other words, data collection and analysis are an exploration of the system of meanings, practices and societal expectations that constitute the RCC workers’ mindsets on the basis of what happens in practice.

Activity theory takes a particular understanding of practices and meanings through its epistemological positioning by assuming that knowing reality is revealed through acting within it. It is an interventionist methodology (Engeström, 2011; Engeström et al., 2014;

Leontiev, 1978, pp. 34–43; Sannino et al., 2016). Thinking of research as an intervention in the activity system one is seeking to understand has implications for knowledge and ethics, which I address in this chapter. Here I would also emphasise that the focus of my enquiry is not language but practices, as Ilyenkov’s definition of ideal images differentiates them from language (see 3.2.3.2, p. 102). I would relate this to research in the sociology of childhood and more specifically Norman’s (1999) emphasis on the ‘sensory knowledge’ that is accessible only through taking on specific roles within an institution as:

a means of understanding how others experience and live their lives which no utterances alone can convey. Something happened to me, was done with me, that made me sense mechanisms and emotional dimensions of how relations of authority and subordination are upheld in ways I had not quite come in contact with before (Norman, 1999, pp. 70–71).

Bringing this type of knowledge to the fore is supported by a specific methodological apparatus belonging to activity theory, which I detail in this chapter.

The second aspect of the question ‘How can images be operationalised within the paradigm of activity theory?’ has to do with my choices of relevant methodological tools within activity theory. Indeed, the focus on ‘images’ within the research question highlights a specific aspect of the activity (Bakhurst, 1997; Davydov, 1990, pp. 108–143; Ilyenkov, 2010; Jones, n.d.; Leontyev, 1978) that needs to be clarified epistemologically. The previous chapter was important in identifying the place of images within concept formation from a Marxist point of view and how double stimulation can be a starting point for changes in concepts and their use. Those ideas, as outlined in the previous chapter, were the guiding principles of the fieldwork, but I had never used them in practice when devising and carrying out the fieldwork. This is why it is important to document the decisions made while carrying out data collection and analysis as an emergent practice (Lareau, 2021). This idea of emergence helped me, a novice researcher, to deal with the uncertainty of the research process. Further, researching and operationalising ‘images’ in professional practice is a field whose core literature has changed over the period when this thesis was researched and written, adding to the importance of revising and working iteratively.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first looks at data collection, the second at data analysis, and the last at ethics.

From now on, for clarity, I refer exclusively to the RCC worker team working in Hilltop, the home where the fieldwork took place, as Participants: the young people are not included in this term. In a few instances within the text, it is important to distinguish between RCC workers and young people, which is why I limit the use of the label ‘Participants’ to RCC workers only. Young people have been included in the ethics process because of the relevance of their stories for the focus of the research; yet the research question focuses firmly on the RCC workers working in the home, who are therefore designated as ‘Participants’.

4.1 Data Collection

This section describes the process I followed to collect data relevant to the research question.

How does a team of RCC workers introduced to social pedagogy use the ‘image of the rich child’ in their work with children and young people living in a residential children’s home in England?

- **How can a post-Vygotskian formulation of professional practice, learning and change explain the disparity between current RCC practices in England and visions of the flourishing human being encapsulated by Malaguzzi and early Marx ideas on the ‘rich child’ and the ‘rich human being’?**
- **What images of the child guide RCC workers’ professional practice?**
- **What do the findings suggest about changes in the RCC sector in England, the introduction of social pedagogy into English welfare systems and the theory and practice of social pedagogy and RCC?**

The data collection process was devised iteratively, guided by the principles of activity theory I established in Chapter 3. The theoretical framework indeed situates ‘images’ within the ideal plane of human activity (Ilyenkov, 2009, 2010). Images are subjective ‘place-markers’ that arise during activity to guide an individual’s actions and operations towards meeting the need that propels them to act. In other words, images provide a personal roadmap for reaching one’s goal. Images are distinct from concepts because they are partial, incomplete representations of what the subject is aiming towards. They are not purely cognitive and do not belong solely to the realm of language, but neither are they purely sensory and emotional. Leontiev’s work on images is drawn from Ilyenkov, but I refer to it here because he approaches images more practically for the researcher than Ilyenkov does. Leontiev highlights the ‘*role of practice in the formation of psychic images*’ (Leontiev, 1978, p. 39).

This means that images can be understood and researched through an active process, which Leontiev refers to as '*probing*' metaphorically, (Leontiev, (1978, p. 37). In my setting, I chose to 'probe' the Participants' activity with Malaguzzi's image of the rich child, guided by my observations of everyday life in the home and the young people's input. In a second step, consisting of analysing these data, I identified the boundaries of the ideal object and from this, worked backwards to what images the Participants could have held (see 4.2, p. 124).

The format of the change laboratory, introduced earlier (see 3.3.1.3, p. 107), seeks to refine the object of work within a professional setting (Engeström, 2007). This format offered a theoretical fit with my chosen way of operationalising images, and I followed the overall structure of change laboratories to dialogue with Participants about their practice and *probe* their understanding of it with the 'image of the rich child'. I conceived of the process of gathering the data as separate from analysing them because I wanted data gathering to be shaped by Participants' concerns and issues, a point I come back to when considering ethics (see 4.3.1, p. 134). This required specific steps in setting up and carrying out the data collection process, which I now describe.

4.1.1 The Planned Change Laboratory Sessions and Mirror Data Gathering

Change laboratories are interactive workshops where Participants examine their professional practices and, through specific principles (Engeström et al., 2014), gradually identify and seek to overcome some of the contradictions they experience in their work. The preparation for change laboratory workshops is important (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013) because it allows the researchers to observe and understand the practice to be investigated and to set out the aims of the work. Some of this preparation was done while obtaining consent (see 4.3.1, p. 134), but more information was necessary to use as a 'mirror' to reflect practices at Hilltop.

4.1.1.1 Gathering Mirror Data to Use in the Workshop Sessions

The process of gathering data to support Participants' reflection on their professional practice was ongoing throughout the period of fieldwork. At this time I had started working for the charity (anonymised as 'the Charity') running the homes where the fieldwork took place. I was to be employed at Hilltop, as 'participation worker' (see 4.3, p.132 for a description of what the role involved) Here, I report on the stages of the research chronologically.

Mirror data in a change laboratory (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, pp. 69–74) are important because during workshops they can be used, with the Participants, to reflect on practice, but also to challenge some conceptions and explanations, and transform Participants' understanding of their work.

After obtaining consent for the research from the Charity, a period of familiarisation with the setting took place, (see 4.3.1, p. 134, but also in Chapter 5), and interviewed Participants who gave consent, and carried out ethnographic Participant observation. I ruled out videoing my work with young people for ethical reasons (see 4.3, p. 132), which implied using ethnographic Participant observation to gather some of that mirror data.

Participant observation sessions were organised weekly for four hours. The purpose of the Participant observation session was to become immersed in the social situations the Participants would be referring to during the change laboratories. I drew on my role of participation worker in the Charity, which was useful because it justified my spatial and social position in the home arising from making myself available to the young people if they wished to interact with me (Lareau, 2021, pp. 140–144). I positioned myself in the communal spaces (see 5.2.2, p. 157) and only went into more defined spaces when invited. I responded to requests for help by referring to my remit with children as participation worker.

While at the beginning I had set out specific activities with young people (See Appendix 3 Sessions with Young People) I soon realised that I needed to be responsive to their agenda while building a relationship with them and clarifying my role. This meant that while I had clear aims at the beginning of each observation session, I also followed the young people's lead and joined them in their activities if they allowed me to do so. It is difficult at this stage to report more about the different activities; however, those will be signalled in the following chapters. If we created something together, I asked young people's permission to use it during the workshops with the Participants.

I wrote detailed field notes after each visit and structured them to distinguish as much as possible between what happened, the feelings that were part of those events, and the intentions of people. I followed a structured format with specific headings for all observation sessions in a manner reminiscent of Lareau (2021, pp. 167–172). Notes were written straight after the sessions finished.

The interviews, another aspect of this process of gathering mirror data, were open to all Participants. Three of them agreed to participate, and I ensured that interviewees held different positions within the hierarchy of the home. The interview schedule (see Appendix 2, Interview Schedule) was devised to establish Participants' understanding of the purpose of their work and the different aspects of the apexes of the activity system, see 3.1.1.1, p. 84), such as the norms and rules, the division of labour, and the tools they used to reach their goals. Further, I asked the Participants to recount their perspectives on the history of the home since they started working there. The interviews were transcribed and anonymised, and I agreed with the Participants that I would check with them when using some of them during the change laboratory.

I had a reflective diary for the length of the fieldwork, in which I recorded my impressions of and reactions to the work necessary to enter Hilltop, the observation sessions and the change laboratory workshops.

After a month of this process, I had enough detailed information to start the change laboratory workshops.

4.1.1.2 The Workshops With Participants

In the workshops with the Participants, I wanted to elicit the RCC workers' recollections and justifications for their professional practice following the format of Engeström's change laboratory (Engeström et al., 2014). Change laboratories are highly relevant for this. Engeström, for example, highlights how change laboratories make the 'invisible nature' of professional practices visible (Engeström, 1999). To make work practices visible in a children's home, I selected relevant activities from Virkunen and Newnham's (2013) work to plan sessions drawing on the practice-based problems the Participants identified. The plans for the sessions are available in Appendix 2.

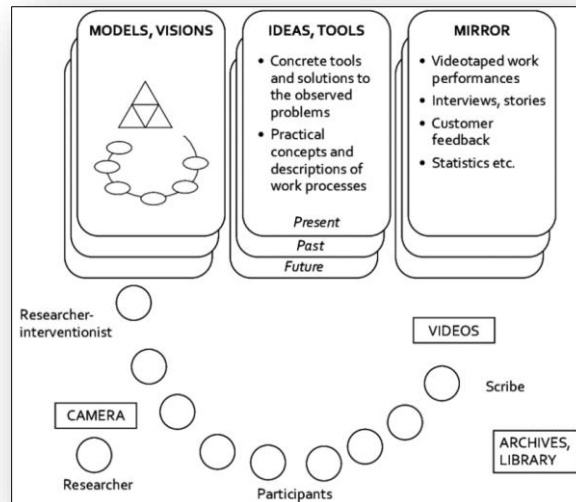


Figure 7: A prototypical layout of the change laboratory (Engeström, 2007, p. 317)

Figure 7 represents the main resources used during change laboratories (Engeström, 2007, p. 371). This diagram illustrates the setup of the room where the workshops took place, a setup aiming to clarify the object of activity in a given system, together with taking some steps towards a cycle of expansive learning (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, pp. 49–55). The three display panels are key to supporting how Participants reflect and understand their professional practice against a post-Vygotskian’s understanding of activity through specific exercises. For example, Participants used recent records of activities they did with the young people (the mirror in the diagram) to reflect on young people’s involvement in their care against specific and relevant aims (the models and visions). Participants used this newly developed understanding of ‘participation’ to take steps towards furthering young people’s involvement, for example, by suggesting adjustments to the format of meetings (any concepts to be introduced and the tools employed).

I gave Participants the freedom to choose which aspect of their practice they wanted to focus on. As I describe in the literature review (see 2.2.2, p. 64), the overall professional practice in children’s homes is overtly directed towards the well-being and safeguarding of young people. In that sense, I was reassured that Participants’ mindsets, practices and values concerning the young people would automatically become part of the conversation, which I could analyse later to answer the research question.

From my previous experience working in children’s homes, I anticipated the research process to be intrusive in the relatively closed environment of the home. This made it important to

support the Participants in making the fieldwork useful for their work rather than giving them an experience of research as extractive (Kouritzin & Nakagawa, 2018). I was, however, clear throughout the process that there would be two strands to the work, one to support the team's practice development, and the other my investigation of the 'images of the child' in the Participants' professional practice. I spoke about its dual purpose from the beginning. I envisaged that analysis of images of the 'rich child' would take place during the later stage of processing the data and so, during the fieldwork, I could concentrate on creating the conditions for starting an expansive learning cycle (see 3.3.1.3, p. 107).

4.1.2 Adaptations to the Prototype of the Change Laboratory

Having gained some understanding of the particular conditions of the home that had agreed to participate in the study, I modified some aspects of the prototype of the change laboratory to support engagement and respond to feedback from the Participants, by intentionally using Malaguzzi's 'rich child' and by adapting to specific constraints at Hilltop.

4.1.2.1 My Use of the 'Rich Child' to 'prod' the Participants' professional practice

While at first, I had assumed that 'child' as a concept would feature highly in Participants' discussions during the change laboratory, the focus overall was directed towards events, such as the Monday meeting, takeaways or more practice orientated concepts such as 'communication' or 'engaging in activities'.

The Participants also fed back that they would have liked clarification on the themes of the sessions, as their open-ended nature was unsettling. This is understandable in the overtly prescriptive nature of residential care work (see 1.2.2.2, p. 29 or 2.2.2, p. 64), and I addressed this in the planning for the three last sessions (see Appendix 2).

The remaining sessions therefore focused on modalities of 'the rich child' and, following some of the themes around preparation for adulthood that were discussed before the break. The three remaining sessions also explored practical ways in which Participants could start establishing a dialogue with the young people about their futures. This more practical focus was designed to support motivation and ensure that the data created were relevant to the research question. I took care to make this practical by finding ways of communicating with young people the aspirations, hopes and fears the Participants had of them. I would achieve

this through creative and practical activities, while at the same time ensuring that the research remained true to post-Vygotskian principles (see Appendix 2).

4.1.2.2 Constraints and adaptations to Hilltop

The workshops with the Participants were aimed at supporting expansive learning, where each session (see Appendix 2) followed specific aspects of the expansive learning cycle. While running the workshops, however, tensions started to appear that required some flexibility in the approach taken. In this section, I describe how I addressed those tensions.

The first specificity of the fieldwork setting had to do with **the level of training of the Participants**. As I describe in the introduction, RCC workers in children’s homes have a wide range of qualifications, but the requirements can be very low (see 1.2.3.3, p. 33). I was therefore mindful of the prototypical format of a change laboratory possibly being too formal and academic. I anticipated this could be a barrier for the Participants, and several of their remarks during the workshops showed me this was indeed the case. Because of this, I decided against projecting the three surfaces (which are called ‘mirror’, ‘concept and tools’, and ‘objects and visions’) in front of the Participants. Instead, I included Engeström’s tools in the format and handouts for each session (see Appendix 3) and presented them as reflective frameworks, something that is commonly used in care work and in social pedagogy to develop practice (Brownhill, 2014; Hatton, 2020; Holtoff & Harbo, 2011; Storø, 2012). This made the activity more accessible for the Participants, which was important in supporting their engagement with the process. I cannot be definite, however, about how this decision influenced the process overall. For example, it meant that it was harder to demonstrate continuity of thinking across the different workshops despite sending a summary email after each workshop to all Participants.

Consistency of attendance was the second feature of the fieldwork I needed to adapt to.

Workshop	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Number of Participants	7	5	4 ¹	4	2 ²	3	6 ³

Figure 8: Attendance at the workshops

¹ A fifth Participant joined but asked for their contribution to be removed from the record.

² A third Participant joined for half of the session, having to accompany a young person for an appointment.

³ Only one of the Participants in this session had attended Session 5, for half of the time. None had attended Session 6.

Figure 8 records participation in each workshop, but it does not convey the fact that only eight individuals in total participated in the workshops, while 22 RCC workers are mentioned by name throughout the data collected. They are workers who may have left or who were working shifts that precluded their attendance during the sessions. For example, four RCC workers were on secondment from another home within the Charity. This accentuated the Participants' feeling of disengagement from the process.

This structural tension leading to relatively low attendance had a major impact on the overall process of transformation and learning around 'child', as intended, because it moved ownership of the process away from the Participants. Indeed, the number of Participants who were aware of the continuity of themes and discussions between different sessions was small, and decisions made by Participants in one session were perceived as 'imposed' in the following session because they relied on my summary of what had happened in the previous sessions. This was something caused by the 'live' nature of the setting and nothing could be done to remedy it once the change laboratory process had started.

The third adaptation to the prototype of the change laboratory I made was in response to the **emotional response of the Participants**. After the third session, both non-verbal and clearly expressed signs showed that some of the Participants found the process difficult. This was conveyed by the manager, and I discussed with my supervisors the possibility of stopping the fieldwork altogether. We decided that I would offer the possibility of a break in the frequency of the workshops, during which time I would think about the structure of the workshops. The Participants agreed to a three-week break. I used this pause in the weekly rhythm of the fieldwork to think through the design carefully, using the Participants' feedback I had asked for before the break.

4.1.3 Data Created with Participants and Young People

While it appeared at first as if the design of the study had perhaps been compromised, I realised that the continued focus on specific problems and dilemmas encountered by the Participants in their professional practice meant that the conditions for double stimulation (see 3.3.2.1, p. 110) were still present. In each workshop, Participants were confronted with the negative constructions of child embedded within institutional practices, and the more positive, abstract 'image of the rich child'. I intended to continue offering the possibility of moving dialectically between the two.

The open-ended nature of the process of initiating expansive learning as I initially conceived of it was difficult for the Participants, who were accustomed to being told what to do and were not able to experiment in their practice for fear of not being able to justify their actions. Engeström (2007, p. 382) alluded to the difficulties in eliciting transformative agentic action with Participants who are not accustomed to it. Participants attempted a few times to take agentic action during the fieldwork (for example, Session 2, 28 November; Session 5, 17 January; and Session 6, 24 January; see Appendix 2) and, while some Participants tried out and experimented with different approaches to dilemmas they identified in their practice, this was not sustained and amplified by the team as a whole.

Data created with the Participants	Data created with the young people
<p>-Three interviews with three Participants (manager, team leader and permanent RCC worker) totalling three hours, six minutes and 20 seconds of audio recording, and corresponding transcripts</p> <p>-Seven workshops with the Participants, totalling seven hours, 15 minutes and 59 seconds of video recording, and corresponding transcripts.</p> <p>Each workshop transcript is accompanied by a workshop summary where photos of posters, worksheets and other resources created during the workshop are collated.</p>	<p>17 sessions with young people of four hours each with notes written shortly after the sessions.</p> <p>Of those, in three sessions, young people created artefacts to reflect their understanding of their situation.</p> <p>With each session, photographs of artefacts created with the young people during the sessions were included in the workshop summaries used with the Participants.</p>

Figure 9: Data gathered during the fieldwork

Despite this, the data are rich (see Figure 9) and document some of the complexity of life in residential care. They highlight how RCC workers and young people live in different spheres (Emond, 2000) but also how Participants justify their actions, what they privilege, what they notice, and what they keep silent about. The power relationships made visible in the different stories told about the same event were clear to me throughout the process. It was a source of puzzlement and anxiety as I was socially unable to join either group in the home, being neither an RCC worker nor a young person. This position, however, gave me access to some of the narratives at play in the home, more so those of Participants than those of the young people. Faced with transcripts, photos of posters and other artefacts we made during this process, I then needed to transition to a new phase of the process, that of analysing the data.

4.2 Data Analysis

The records of my dialogues with the Participants about their professional practice, their understandings, motivations, meanings, and the barriers they encountered in their work were where I was able to clarify the boundaries between the concepts, images, and artefacts Participants used to reach their goals. Reading Leontiev suggested, again through the probing analogy (Leontiev, 1978, pp. 37, 39), that considering boundaries between concepts would be necessary to isolate the focus of my research from other considerations which the Participants paid attention to in their practice. Using such principles of activity theory gave me a framework for the decisions I made during analysis. In this section, I describe how I have worked to process the data to identify the boundaries of the concept of child, and how this led me to identify what image was guiding the Participants at the time.

The process of interpreting the data was twofold, much as Coffey and Atkinson (1996, pp. 28–31) introduced the idea of coding consisting successively in simplification and reduction, followed by data complication as interpretation. This is relevant to the different steps and iterations I went through to decide how to single out the images of child at play in the Participants' interpretations of their professional practice. Indeed, choosing the units for coding consisted of finding a simple commonality in all transcripts and artefacts, which then would be a reference point for digging deeper into the many aspects of the Participants' views of their professional practice to find images of 'child'. In keeping with Coffey and Atkinson's twofold method, I therefore describe the process through which I arrived at simple 'chunks' of data that could be interpreted to answer the research question. I then describe how I interpreted those chunks to arrive at 'images' following on from the epistemological consideration of Ilyenkov's and Leontiev's work outlined so far. This process was iterative and reflexive, as I was then not aware of work that would similarly focus on 'images' in practice. To ensure overall theoretical coherence throughout the thesis, I kept:

- a focus on the object of the activity, so that the motivation of the Participants and their interpretation of their work could be highlighted;
- a focus on the material conditions within which the work took place, such as division of labour, resources and tools and rules, from Engeström's triangle of activity (Engeström, 2014, pp. 198–203);
- a focus on the concepts used, and the boundaries between concepts, as described in the previous chapter.

Next, I attempted to code the data by bringing together aspects that described specific events, such as a birthday party, a meal or an unusual occurrence, that could be identified as different actions within the activity system. This brought together different interpretations of those events under a single heading. After

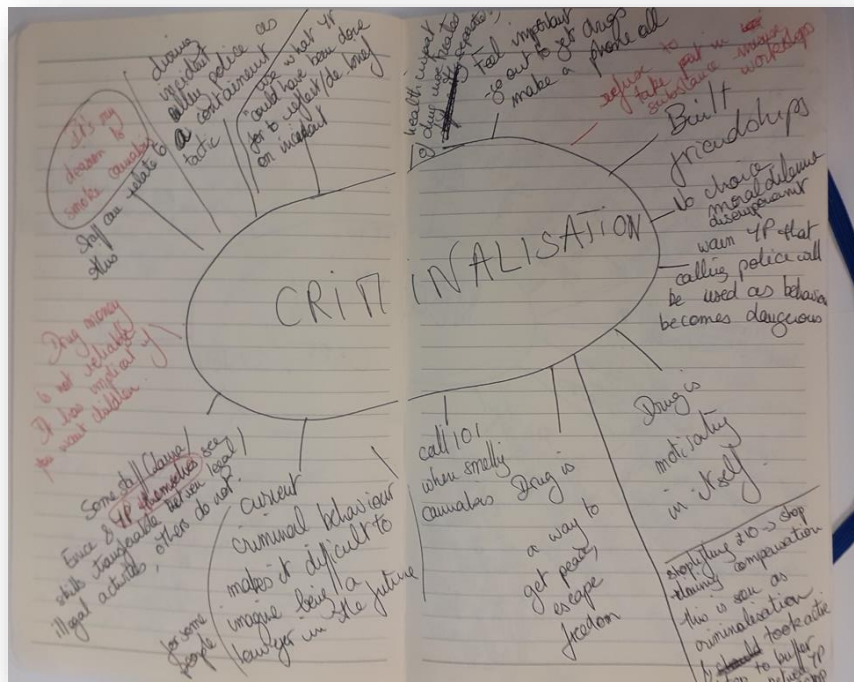


Figure 11: Concept of 'criminalisation and its determinations

having trialed three specific events, I trusted that this codification allowed for the object of activity to come through or be reconstructed from Participants' interpretations regarding, for example, residents' meetings, meals, or attending a football match. The material conditions of those events were easily understandable through the data and my knowledge of the home, such as the artefacts created by the Participants and the young people, the written records, and the statutory framework. Finally, the concepts Participants used to mediate their goals could be identified. For example, I had transcripts of discussions between Participants about their understanding of the needs of each young person living in the home, which could be compared with the recordings of a workshop, or conversations with young people about the same event. This was key in highlighting the boundaries of mediating concepts, a boundary that Leontiev argued is key to revealing ideal images through activity (Leontiev, 1978, pp. 22–32).

I therefore decided to proceed with coding the data related to single and identifiable events.

The significant aspect of this coding system was that it simplified the data, while at the same time remaining true to the three principles I outlined at the beginning of this section. I was satisfied this was the case because:

- the focus on the object of activity was maintained. Indeed, many of the conversations during the workshops related to the intentions the Participants had while the situation was happening. Further, it was clear that the data contained different interpretations by different subjects within a given situation, thus highlighting how motivation differed for each person involved in it. As such, I also addressed the concerns around the possible lack of multiplicity of voices and issues of power that may arise when change laboratories are undertaken with people who do not see themselves as competent professionals (see 3.1.2.4, p. 95).
- the data referred to the material conditions in which everyday events occurred, either formally in the data through Participants' and young people's descriptions or my professional knowledge of residential care. For example, I have been able to link Participants' contributions to specific paragraphs in the statutory regulations that govern their work, and I detail this fully in the summaries of each situation in Appendix 3.
- by focusing on actions, operations, and activities as they took place in the everyday, I was able to apply analytically the triangle of activity and isolate the tools and concepts the Participants used to reach their goals. This aligned with the theoretical description of images I established in Chapter 3, whereby images arise ideally as a roadmap that the subject follows, adjusting their action until the need that gave rise to activity is met.

I coded 54 events in NVivo. The criteria for selection were that the events were datable and descriptions of actual events within the children's home. It was important to make this distinction from the generic events that are often spoken about in the sector due to a highly institutionalised use of time and space in residential care, such as 'three p.m. on Friday; pocket money time'.

Some of those events were repetitive in theme and practices, for example, 'Resident's Meetings' or 'Young People Asking Staff for Money'. They were therefore grouped together.

Accordingly, the data was organized in a database of 31 'situations for interpretation' in NVivo, with easy access to the specific reference in the many documents created to store the data. As such, data simplification, the first step of Coffey and Atkinson's description of analysis (1996, pp. 28–31), was realised. I was still not able to single out images of the young

people who were at work in the activity of the Participants. Interpreting this would require ‘complication’.

4.2.2 Data Complication Leading to Interpretation

In this section, I set out the remaining steps in the analysis to reconstruct images at play at Hilltop. The fact that this process is reconstructive rather than analytical will become clearer as its steps are outlined. It is indeed an interpretative process. While here I will detail its parameters and stages, it is important to frame its potential and ensure the findings can be interpreted meaningfully within the context of residential care. I will therefore give a thorough description of Hilltop in the next chapter before reporting on the findings.

4.2.2.1 Bringing the Underlying Logic of Activity to the Fore

As mentioned above, both Ilyenkov and Leontiev highlight the fact that images only arise as a response to a need, which they see as motivating activity (Ilyenkov, 2010; Leontiev, 1978, pp. 44–54), and that, as a multimodal roadmap to meet that need, the image shapes how the subjects reach the goal of the activity. To bring this element to the fore in the interpretation of the 31 situations coded in NVivo, I decided to use Engeström’s model of the ‘*layers of causality in human action*’ (Engeström, 2011). It highlighted the logic and internal rules that guided Participants’ actions within a specific situation.

This analytical framework is relevant because it asks the analyst to focus on rules of practice before focusing on the aim of the activity and the relationships the subject enlists to reach their goal. Those three layers are detailed in Figure 12.

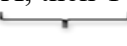
	Who is the researcher focusing on in the data	What is the researcher focusing on in the data	Interpretation of the data
Interpretative layer	In activity the actor...	...takes into account, according to this or that logic, that...	...if X, then Y  Law, rule
Contradictory layer	As a Participant in collective activity...	...is driven by contradictory motives...	...searching for resolution by often unpredictable actions
Agentive layer	As a potential individual and collective agent...	...takes intentional transformative actions...	... inventing and using artefacts to control the action from the outside

Figure 12: Three layers of causality in human action (adapted from Engeström, 2011, p. 610)

This table, just like Hedegaard's (see 3.1.2.1, p. 89), not only articulates Participants' motivation at the individual, interpersonal and institutional levels but also guides data interpretation by focusing on the meanings, interpretations and justifications for action in different institutional practices.

The first row of the table illustrates the first layer of causality and is the most relevant for my purpose. It is taken from previous work by Eskola (1999) in his attempt to overcome the nature-nurture debate in psychology by proposing the use of activity theory. It is useful for eliciting images of the object of activity in that it defines the intention of the subjects in their work. Indeed, and it is worth quoting him at length, Eskola describes how the researcher focuses on the internal logic Participants use to think through their work:

these stories form the material from which the researcher then attempts to extract the structures and meanings of the activities occurring in them and to identify the laws and logic followed by the actors described in the stories. Experimenting is an integral part of this method in that the researcher makes minor modifications to the script and observes the effects of these changes on the stories (see Eskola, Kihlstrom, Kivinen, Weckroth, & Yli-joki, 1988, pp. 239-311). However, the texts that are produced by this method should not be treated and analysed as representations of a fixed reality. They are fictitious texts in the same sense as literary works,

although they are not arbitrary or meaningless. The texts have been created under the guidance of the researcher's experimental thinking by human beings who have the skill to act and rich experience with various sorts of activity. This is why they not only replicate existing reality and its power relations but also produce new solutions, new logics, and new ways of acting (Eskola, 1999, pp. 112–113).

The analysis allowed me to understand in more detail the conversations we had during the workshops. By relating and reflecting on specific everyday events in the home, the Participants were asked to interpret or re-interpret their practice through slightly different lenses. I could read and think through those interpretations and compare these with other interpretations relating to the same situation. This gave me contrasting descriptions and practices linked to 'child' within the residential setting. Analysing all 31 situations allowed for this internal logic to become clearer, and the overall purpose of the activity. This was not yet leading me to images; however, another step was necessary.

4.2.2.2 Defining the Boundaries of Concepts and the Images at Play

The use of Engeström's *'three layers of causality in human actions'* linked the data I had gathered to the definition of images given in the preceding chapter because it outlines the object of activity and the logic that is called upon to justify the choice of artefact to reach ones' goal. Once the object of activity had been ascertained in each situation and the underlying rule of practice the Participants used was made visible, I could pinpoint the concepts that mediated their activity, and focus specifically on how 'child' or 'young people' featured in this situation. With attention to the pertinence of each concept in the situation, whether the use of that concept was overstating its significance, and whether some aspects were present in one of the interpretations but not in others, I probed to find the boundaries of the concept. From this, the assumptions behind those 'rules of practice' could be used to arrive at the image the Participants held in mind when carrying out their work.

To ensure transparency for the analysis, I have compiled all the situations using a similar format, and all of them are available in Appendix 3. The situations use the justifications that were used by the Participants and me in the context of English RCC. The importance of tacit and situated knowledge for interpretation is such that many of the justifications would appear arbitrary should the reader not be familiar with the setting itself. That is why I contextualise Hilltop in the next chapter. I use a thick description of the life space of the home. This is

important for two reasons: first, my positionality as an insider researcher gave me access to information and familiarity with practices that need to be made conscious in order to understand specific aspects of the analysis. The second reason is theoretical, because of the importance of context in activity theory.

4.2.2.3 Galperin and Images

This chapter so far has described how I used the theoretical framework to develop a methodology to investigate images of ‘child’ in RCC professional practice. I now want to acknowledge the work of Galperin, a pupil and collaborator of Vygotsky, in researching ideal images.

Indeed, some corroboration of the possibility of using Vygotsky’s process of internalisation dialectically, and proceeding from activity towards its idealised aspect, became available in English only in early 2021, when the work of Y.P. Galperin on this specific subject was translated into English. I will therefore outline how Galperin’s work is relevant here.

Galperin was interested in fleshing out Vygotsky’s work on internalisation processes and researched how activity moves from the material to the ideal plane of activity. In doing so, he described activity as both material and ideal, following post-Vygotskian thinking. For Galperin, subjects orientate themselves towards the object of activity, which is the ideal plane, where an image of the activity is necessary, and secondly, an executive, material plane, where the subject carries out the activity using the image to check and readjust what they are doing externally (Engeness, 2021, pp. 1–18).

Engeness describes Galperin’s work:

for Galperin, the transformation of the learning activity was described by the measure of its acquisition by learners engaged in the activity i.e. when transferred from the social external to the internal plane. During 20 years of research, Galperin outlined the dialectically developing forms this transformation may go through (Engeness, 2021, p. 108).

What is important methodologically for my purpose in the work of Galperin is that once an activity has been honed and is well understood, it can be manipulated and worked on in discussions with others, before becoming internal to the individual in question.

In dialogical thinking, a mental activity:

- (i) presents itself as a reflection of the materialised activity on the ideal plane where the material or materialised objects are substituted with their images;
- (ii) is directed to the images of the material or materialised objects; and
- (iii) reflects learners' ability to perform the activity with the images of the material or materialised objects mentally.

Learners' ability to perform an activity in the form of dialogical thinking reflects the pathway the activity has undergone from its materialised to dialogical form (Engeness, 2021, p. 109).

While Galperin describes this process unidirectionally, its dialectical nature is embedded in the theoretical framework within which he works (Edwards, 2010, p. 6; Engeness, 2021, p. 108; Hedegaard & Flear, 2008, pp. 30–46). Galperin's purpose was to support teachers' professional activity, but his description of the relationship between the material and the ideal plane of activity was not limited to teaching. It is indeed possible to envisage that, just as a teacher aims at creating an 'image' in a learner's mind, a researcher can trace back an image from observing the activity itself.

Galperin's lectures only became available well after I had decided to adopt an activity theoretical framework, using a combination of ideas from Engeström's change laboratory, Ilyenkov and Leontiev. Reading the precise description of the process of internalisation consolidated my emerging understanding of post-Vygotskian theory and my interpretation of the data created by the Participants, the young people and myself.

Having described the proposed theoretical framework and the methodological tools I intended to use, I move away from a generic discussion to the specificities of Hilltop by considering first ethics.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

In this section I turn to ethics, and how it shaped the process of research design, data collection and analysis, and the writing of this thesis.

Previous research in residential care settings highlighted how doing so ethically requires constant attention to the personal experiences of the Participants (Emond, 2000; Green, 1998; Vianna, 2007; Warwick, 2017). In a group setting such as a home, where power dynamics, personal meanings and hierarchies operate, I translated this literature by dealing with

situations as they arose, following a set of principles established before entering Hilltop. This took the form of a formal ethics approval by the University College London Institute of Education Ethics (UCL IoE) committee number Z6364106/2017/11/01 and was supplemented by the use of a reflective journal and supervision.

Having worked in residential care for many years, I was aware at the outset of the difficulty for a home to be 'intruded upon' when agreeing to participate in the research process. I attempted to mitigate this intrusion in several ways:

- by selecting a research design that was open to the Participants' priorities and would benefit their work. At that stage, I was aware that changing laboratory methodology gave the Participants enough scope to raise their issues, and this was an important factor in choosing it.
- by accessing young people's personal records by their invitation only, so as to bring issues of consent into ongoing relationships and events occurring during the fieldwork.
- by video recording only the *workshops* with the Participants, despite the common use of video observation of practice to prepare change laboratories (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 69;80). The latter would have intruded upon the young people's lives in too direct a way.

by becoming an employee of the Charity running the home. I thus increased the possibility of building strong and more long-term relationships with young people within the boundaries of the role of participation worker (Hart, 1997; Kennan et al., 2018)¹. This also showed I was willing to work with the consequences of the intrusive nature of the fieldwork. The alternative of confining my role strictly to that of a researcher could have made my presence in their lives short-term and more extractive.

The assumption behind all those choices lay in mitigating the intrusion I was aware the fieldwork may create. While I focused on the impact this may have had on the young people

¹ It is necessary to limit my description of the organisational scope of the role to maintain anonymity. The presence of a participation worker in organisations that support children and young people in care is relatively common but needs to be distinguished from the role of the advocate. The advocate's role is to support professionals in applying the principles of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). The remit of the participation worker was applied much broadly, in the young people's everyday lives.

initially, the reality of the fieldwork showed that I underestimated the impact on the staff. I return to this later on in this chapter (see 4.3.1.4, p. 137) and throughout the following ones.

In the remainder of this section, I look at different themes about ethics that ran through my thinking during the research process, both from formal and informal points of view.

4.3.1 Consent

Three levels of consent needed to be obtained before starting the fieldwork: from the institution, from the group of people involved in the home where the fieldwork would take place, and individually from all people connected with the home. This layered process shaped my access to Hilltop, where the presence of gatekeepers for researchers is unavoidable (Kendrick et al., 2008). I obtained organisational, group and individual consent, in that order, to clarify communication with each person involved. This was not ideal in terms of young people's participation because it placed them at the end of the process. Yet safeguarding requirements from The Children's Homes Regulations (The Children's Homes (England) Regulations, 2015) meant that I needed agreement from the Charity and Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) clearance before talking with young people.

I will describe each layer of the process in turn.

4.3.1.1 Institutional Consent

Institutional consent was sought with the host organisation, anonymised as 'the Charity', from the onset of my employment with them. Indeed, I set out the broad outline of the fieldwork in the job application I submitted when applying for the post of participation worker. This was discussed during the interview for the role, where a young person participated in making the final decision about my appointment. I was offered the job and decided to proceed because all parties felt there was a strong alignment between the remit of the participation worker role and the focus of my PhD. As a participation worker, the role was set organisationally to support workers in the different homes to make space for young people in the decisions they made about young people's lives (Lundy, 2007). In that sense, it asked the post-holder to support adults in working based on an image of 'child' as competent, a meaning maker and socially connected, and to develop adults' imagination to see young people as capable. This view of participation as seeing children of all ages as competent was already part of the discussions around participation (Alderson, 2008) and has since been

validated further to include Malaguzzi's work (Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2019). At that stage, I felt confident that the Charity broadly supported the research aim and understood the alignment between working from an 'image of the rich child' and meaningful participation. I was then able to proceed to gain consent from the group of adults.

4.3.1.2 Group Consent

In parallel to gaining employment in the Charity, I approached two of its children's homes and was invited to their weekly team meetings to discuss the possibility of carrying out the fieldwork there. During my visits, I shared written information about the study (see Appendix 1) but also carried out an activity inviting Participants to reflect on the dilemmas they experienced in their practice. I wanted to convey experientially the active and participatory intentions that were embedded within the methodology without relying on alienating theoretical vocabulary. One home declined the offer as they were seeking support to 'deal with the behaviours' of the young people living there. I returned three months later to the other home for a second meeting, where I met other adults working in the home. In this meeting I adopted a similar format to the first ones, with added clarity about time frames for the fieldwork and practical expectations: the team was then given some time to decide internally before communicating their positive decision to me.

Once I had obtained this generic agreement from the adults, I proceeded to contact each young person's social worker to inform them of the study. All young people living in the home at that time were unaccompanied asylum seekers or on a full care order (meaning the local authority was legally responsible for their care rather than a shared agreement with the young person's parents), and all were 14 years old or older, so passive consent was sought. This meant that social workers were required to contact me only if they were to refuse participation on behalf of the young person (Lareau, 2021, p. 141). Rather, I wanted the focus to be on giving young people the possibility to participate or not in the study, but as in this case social workers were legal guardians it was important to inform them of the work.

4.3.1.3 Individual Informed Consent with Young People

This section depicts the informal negotiation with the young people around their participation in the research. Concerning residential care especially, the literature highlights how consent can be relational (Kendrick et al., 2008, p. 90), and I was interested at the time in how young

people require some form of epistemological trust (Hagelquist, 2018, p. 64) before considering their participation in research.

On a procedural level, I ensured that each potential Participant and each young person had access to written information about the study and could consent formally in writing (see Appendix 1 p. 291). This was part of the formal ethical approval by UCL, and while Participants followed those simple procedures, consent continued to be negotiated in many ways. In these discussions, my position as a participation worker was significant. I had committed to work with those young people beyond the period of fieldwork, and I was following the Charity's stance on the voluntary engagement of young people with the participation worker. Indeed, unlike the common practice in the RCC sector (Jakobsen, 2009; McLean, 2015), the Charity and my line manager were very clear that engagement in 'participation activities' was based on the sole voluntary consent of the young people.

Having obtained consent from gatekeepers within the Charity, I could proceed with obtaining that of the young people. This consent meant giving them some control over which material I had obtained from them could be shared with the Participant workers. The focus of the research involved what the Participants made of the young people's lives in the home and beyond (Postholm, 2015; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Prompted by others' earlier PhD fieldwork in residential care (Emond, 2000; Green, 1998; Vianna, 2007), I took a non-confrontational and reassuring approach, whereby my presence in the home was regular, but at the same time, I was openly asking for young people's verbal consent before joining them and using their contributions.

I also wanted to convey that my role was multiple, being both a participation worker and a researcher. This was further complicated by the fact that six of the young people were learning English at the time, with some of them newly arrived in the country and therefore with very limited vocabulary and cultural understanding of the English care and higher education system. After a settling-in period during which I intended to convey the meaning of the role of 'participation worker' to the young people through my actions and intentions, I used Google Translate to make the information sheets more accessible to the young people (see Appendix 1). I differentiated the roles I held partly by making a clear distinction about the timing of the fieldwork, making it clear I was there in my role as researcher only for four months. Within this timeframe, I was present and available and young people exerted their control over how much they interacted with me. Their responses to the activities I suggested

ranged from active refusal to full engagement or quiet acceptance. As time went on, the young people accepted my presence and asked for support with going to the shops (many of them were not allowed to go shopping without an adult present), doing their homework, or getting their takeaways.

As the fieldwork came to an end, I continued working with them and subsequently developed stronger relationships, where they would direct my work and ask for what they wanted from me specifically. This was important in ensuring that their experience of research was not merely 'extractive' but contributed positively to their everyday lives.

The question of the young people's consenting fully to the study is far from resolved for me: While they controlled the information they released, the individuals who lived in the case study home did not themselves have a say in choosing me. Indeed, it had been a young person living in one of the Charity's other homes who was involved in interviewing me, initially. This means that, while a young person was involved in deciding whether I could have access to the case study home, this decision had no connection to the subsequent events that took place during the fieldwork. This is an example of a practical situation where the young people's 'voice' is disembodied and therefore does not fully represent their meaningful participation (Garcia-Quiroga & Agoglia, 2020; L. Hanson et al., 2016; Hooper & Gunn, 2014; Lundy, 2007).

While this is specific to children and young people because of their social category as 'other' (Lahman, 2008), informal negotiation of consent with Participants was also an important aspect of the fieldwork, to which I now turn.

4.3.1.4 Individual Informed Consent with Participants

Despite having formally obtained consent from the Participants (see 4.3.1.2, p. 135), they were ambivalent about the research process and I needed to respond to this on a moment-by-moment basis.

One example of this was their perception, during the workshops, of the video camera as intrusive. I dealt with this by acknowledging their discomfort and eliciting questions about it. It was necessary to remind the Participants both at the beginning and the end of each session that participation was also voluntary as their patterns of attendance were fragmented due to the demands of their work. This proved important as one worker who had been present during

the initial information meetings and had consented to the research came into the room halfway through Session 5. She queried the presence of the camera and I briefly explained this to her without interrupting the flow of the session, coming back to a fuller explanation at the end of the session. As she requested not to be included in the discussion, we agreed that I would delete the video recording and would not transcribe her contributions from the audio recording, as those were minimal.

This was an extreme example, but the Participants' ambivalence about the fieldwork manifested in several other ways:

- a Participant who came to all but one workshop, yet often contributed emotively and negatively, appearing frustrated at some of my questions. On the other hand, Alexis (p) and Ram (p), on separate occasions, explicitly commented on the sessions being enjoyable.
- participants did not carry out the tasks they set themselves as a team between sessions.
- some refused to engage in activities that relied on non-verbal and creative methods, and all showed a clear preference for verbal exchange, despite my attempt at using embodied methods that are part of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 2008).

To mitigate such reactions and convey the message that this was a negotiated process rather than a hierarchical one, I offered several opportunities for feedback formally in Session 4, and informally at the end of each session (see Appendix 2, p. 297 for the plan for each workshop). I was vocal about how I incorporated this in subsequent sessions, negotiated a pause in frequency between Workshops 4 and 5, and was prompt and very vocal in marking the ending of the data-gathering process. This proved important as my continued relationship with the RCC worker team changed significantly for the better after this was finished.

Overall, the process of obtaining informed consent from the Participants was iterative and shaped by institutional practices in residential care. Being mindful of this ensured that power dynamics were brought forward and made visible despite the discomfort it created (Morris, 2016; Ross, 2017; Southgate & Shying, 2014). One apparent tension was between formal written consent, given through agreed procedures, and the experience of the fieldwork. Indeed, all adults working in the home had been fully informed of the form of the fieldwork and the implications for their work, yet some of them found it difficult to participate fully. This may be linked to how Lareau (2011, pp. 326–330) questions the validity of formal

informed consent processes when cultural backgrounds are diverse, as here among the RCC workers, the young people and me.

4.3.2 Anonymity

Maintaining the anonymity of those consenting to take part in the research, was a concern for the adults but not for all the young people. During the workshops with the Participants, it was important to repeat that the data would be anonymised and it would be impossible to identify the individual and the Charity involved, as this was something the RCC workers queried regularly.

The process of anonymisation of the data took place during transcription when I replaced the names of all Participants randomly from an international list of names taken from the internet. When I went back to the home to present my analysis and disseminate early findings, I also gave Participants the possibility to choose pseudonyms. One of them took up the offer.

It could be argued that this is only superficial anonymisation, as the relationships, the personal narratives and effects were very much part of the data produced and analysed. At that stage, however, I wanted to ensure that the data included the relationships and the precise contexts Participants referred to in the interviews, the change laboratory workshops and in their interactions with me, so that the analysis could include this level of lived experiences.

This is why a further process of anonymisation took place while writing this thesis. Identifying details were purposely removed so that neither the home nor the individuals within it could be identified. Despite salient details being used concerning events that involved a young person, their individuality and personal characteristics are easily hidden within a generic narrative of what happens in a residential home.

4.3.3 Safeguarding

Another strand of ethics needs to be considered: safeguarding. Indeed, my witnessing abusive practices or a Participant or young person alleging either historical or current abuse was possible. As an employee of the Charity, I was legally bound to report current abuse, which gave a clear reporting line to the Charity's Designated Safeguarding Officer (Department for

Education, 2018). Concerning historical abuse allegations, the application to the UCL IoE ethics committee outlined how this would be reported through UCL channels first.

No allegations of abuse as defined by Working Together (Department for Education, 2018b) were brought to my attention during the fieldwork.

While Chapter 3 concentrated on why I used activity theory to investigate images of ‘child’ in the professional practice of RCC workers, in this chapter I turned to how I investigated the images of child in the Participants’ professional practice. In doing so, I moved away from theoretical constructs to the specificity of the research site.

I described how I adapted the prototype of the change laboratory to constraints that were revealed while facilitating workshops with Participants. I then describe in detail the process of analysing the data and how I inferred images from them.

Finally, I described how I dealt with the ethical questions that arose throughout the project.

5 Context of the Fieldwork: Making Norms and Professional Practice Stutter in Hilltop

The introduction and literature review described how residential care is steeped in common-sense assumptions yet is experienced by young people as alienating because the norms and practices are at odds with the norm of ‘family’ life in the wider population (Boddy, 2019). This mismatch between lived experience and the accounts given of it can be visible in multiple ways, through the history of residential care or the experience of living in groups, neither of which are common experiences of British childhoods (Hart et al., 2015; Jakobsen, 2009; Kahan, 1994; Morgan, 2011). Simply put, there is no equivalence in everyday language for relationships and habits that are commonplace in children’s homes, yet they are spoken about through the metaphor of the nuclear family (Kendrick, 2013).

The marginality of life in a residential home is also visible quantitatively: only 11% of the overall population of looked-after children experience residential care (Children’s Commissioner for England, 2019). The number of RCC workers working directly in homes is also quite limited, with just over 20,000 in 2013 (Thornton et al., 2015a, p. 6), compared to the overall population in England. It is therefore reasonable to assume that not enough individuals with experience in residential care are in a position to articulate, informally or otherwise, to the general public what it means to live in a home. This limits the understanding of the general public and of decision-makers so that they lack the understanding to come to an educated judgment on what actually happens in residential care and to define what the problems are. Inversely, immersion in the culture of residential care and the ostracism that one may experience as a RCC worker may make it more difficult to understand the practice logic that the sector has developed and to be blind to its consequences and unintended effects.

In this chapter, I will therefore give readers who may not have first-hand knowledge of the sector some of the context necessary to understand the tacit meanings that exist at Hilltop. At the same time, I hope to make it possible for those well-versed in life in residential care to take a step back and consider it anew, thus making the narrative ‘stutter’ as Moss and Petrie (2002, p. 10) suggest.

I do this in two ways. First, I define my position within the setting to demonstrate the partiality and situationality of the knowledge that was created through the process of fieldwork and data analysis.

Further, I do this through a description of life in the home, mostly from the point of view of the RCC workers. Stressing that this is an adult perspective is important, an ethical positioning that I described in the previous chapter. Indeed, my positionality as an RCC worker, a researcher, and an adult makes it epistemologically impossible to represent the perspectives of the young people as fully as those of the RCC workers, and this is reflected in the research question.

Here again, a note on the choice of words is required. I have adopted the use of the first person singular as opposed to the passive voice throughout the thesis. This is to highlight how my positionality shaped the many decisions taken throughout the process of researching and writing the thesis, in line with the situated approach to knowledge I selected. I also continue to maintain the distinction between Participants(p) (those adults who took an active part in the study) and young people (yp) (those who were living in the home at the time of the fieldwork), but a third group of people is mentioned in this chapter: the other adults working in the home who did not participate in the fieldwork. I refer to them generically as ‘staff’, and when involved individually, I use their pseudonym followed by (s).

5.1 My Positionality as a Researcher

Overall, my position as an ‘insider researcher’ had several advantages, enabling, for example, access to tacit ‘situated’ knowledge because of my accumulated experience in the RCC community of practice (Bailey & Wills, 2010; Costley et al., 2010, pp. 1–6).

While my professional experience is an integral part of my understanding of children in RCC, the specific context of the fieldwork has characteristics that shaped the study in several ways. In an interventionist methodology like change laboratories, relationships can be a key source of information for evaluating power differentials and knowledge that eschews abstract and superficial relationships and categorisations (Sannino, 2011, p. 586). Further, the interventionist methodology I adopted needs to be clarified by contextualising who I am, what I bring to Hilltop, the values with which I operate, and the power relationships in which I am involved as a researcher. This is important when it comes to evaluating how the conclusions I draw from the data analysis may be applicable and useful to the sector as a whole.

In the following section, I therefore define my positionality along the insider-outsider researcher continuum in the different spaces I accessed as an employee of the Charity (Chavez, 2008; Costley et al., 2010; Hou & Feng, 2019). I also outline the value base that motivates me to ask the questions I address in this thesis.

5.1.1 My Ideological and Political Position Concerning the Participants

In this section, I explore how my background, my ethical stance concerning the research and the values embedded in the role of participation worker shaped how I related to Hilltop.

Within the chosen interventionist (4.1, p. 115) and Marxist (3.1.2.4, p. 95) research paradigm I have chosen, this is important because it influences the knowledge that I may make claims about in the final chapters of this thesis.

5.1.1.1 Race, Class, Gender and Education

At the start of the fieldwork, I had more than eight years of experience working in different residential settings, which is a pattern that fits with other workers in the sector (Brannen et al., 2007, pp. 153–176). What is slightly unusual is my educational history, where my qualifications are usually higher (Level 7) than those in managerial positions, where Level 4 in the national qualification framework is required (Children’s Workforce Development Council, 2008, pp. 84–86). I am a cisgender female, and as this fits well with how care work is constructed (see 1.2.1, p. 25) it did not become visible as different to the Participants’ expectations.

However, my White European ethnic background, my middle-class origins and my age fit the profile for managers more generally (Thornton et al., 2015b, p. 29), but this is a role I have always avoided because of my interest in the young people’s experiences rather than the running of the home itself. This became an important element of my positionality as a researcher.

Although the Participants did not verbalise their understanding of my role as managerial, I believe this played a role in their expectations that I would give them answers and shape their practice during the workshops. For example, in Workshop 2, when Participants were deciding what aspects of their practice they would focus on, one of the members exclaimed: ‘*Oh, yes, help us with that!*’, denoting an expectation that I had solutions to the issues they were

raising. The relative passivity of the Participants to implement ideas they had during the workshops reinforces this assumption. In Workshop 5, where Participants compared their teenage years to those of the young people living in the home, I asked the Participants to draw links and connections between their lives and those of the young people. The mood became heavy, described by one Participant as a ‘negative place’. It was difficult to articulate the links between the Participants’ teenage experiences and the young people’s. One of them, in trying to make sense of that feeling, said:

but we kind of need to have, we need to be competent to be able to do our job, we need to [sic] more to do our job, we need to be powerful enough to know where our limits and boundaries are and what we are capable of doing. [...] so we kind of need to be the rich child as well. (Workshop 5, 10 January, 01’26’’43 – 01’27’’17)

The assumption is that, like the young people, Participants are not competent, not powerful. The discrepancy in power and the capacity to step back from the situation that this Participant describes is different from my own experience as an RCC worker, where I can rely on my qualifications and social class to negotiate difficult situations. By asking for her and her colleagues to be given the same consideration the young people were given by being thought of as ‘rich’, she highlighted her awareness of this difference between my situation and hers. In a system relying on hierarchy and procedures to contain and cancel possible ‘human errors’ (Lorenz, 2012), it is understandable that the Participants found it difficult to be openly agentic, which contrasts with my position as a researcher. This was significant in my relationship with other RCC workers at Hilltop, but with the Participants even more so, because they were dependent on my interpretation of their work. This created an unequal power dynamic, which Participants could easily map to their experience of management in their work. I was not able to change this during the fieldwork, and only gradually and partially once the fieldwork stopped.

5.1.1.2 The value base linked to working from ‘Image of the Rich Child’

Another aspect of my position within the home pertained to the research question itself and the value base on which it was drawn. This is because I encouraged Participants to think of young people as ‘rich’ in a manner inspired by Reggio Emilia, and away from constructions of children as vulnerable and other, a construction embedded in statutory frameworks, as shown in the literature review. In doing so, I gave a value judgment to my intervention. This is a position well recognised in social pedagogy practice: the *Haltung* or ethos of the

pedagogue (Charfe & Gardner, 2020; Eischteller, 2010; M. K. Smith, 2019). This can justify my specific positioning as a social pedagogue, yet this does not address the question of the researcher's neutrality and its impact on validity (Baumfield et al., 2013, pp. 28–32). On the other hand, values are not automatically dismissed within the broad sociocultural post-Vygotskian paradigm. For that purpose, I find that Stetsenko's work to define a Transformative Activist Stance (TAS) is relevant here, concerning my position within the research and ethically. Indeed, this is how she introduces TAS:

according to this stance, the core of human nature and development has to do with people collaboratively transforming their world in view of their goals and purposes—a process through which people come to know themselves and their world as well ultimately come to be human. [...] This approach therefore dismantles the rift between facts and values rendering all human activities, including research and science at large, ineluctably ideological and political (Stetsenko, 2008, p. 474).

Indeed, it could be said that I use the 'image of the rich child' as a heuristic for the formulation of a '*sought-after future*' (Stetsenko, 2017, pp. 69–75) which I am working towards. This was different for the Participants, however, because such ethical positioning automatically questions assumptions about how a child is constructed in their professional practice according to statute, which they may not be aware of. In the context of the power imbalance I described in the first part of this paragraph, it was difficult to avoid the possibility that Participants felt judged negatively. To mitigate this, I adapted some of the workshops to build in positive self-image for Participants, for example at the end of Session 4 (See Appendix 3).

5.1.1.3 Values Attached to my Role as a Participation Worker

The value-laden nature of 'working from an image of the rich child' is justifiable from a research point of view, but this is also relevant to the insider-outsider positionality within a research site. In my case, my professional role in the Charity already gave me a specific position, as part of the role of participation officer. Participation work is strongly linked with advocacy (van Bijleveld et al., 2015). Indeed, participation is understood as a practice that upholds Articles 3 and 12 of the UNCRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). This emphasis on rights is different from the logic of needs within the system that I describe in the literature review (Vrouwenfelder, 2011). Therefore, inside the Charity, my role as a

participation worker asking RCC workers to make space for the views, feelings and wishes of young people was appropriate. It was compatible with my role as an interventionist researcher, asking RCC workers to question their constructions of ‘child’ and to see the capacities and positive actions young people take. These aspects of the roles combined well in terms of my positioning within the activity system. By doing so, the importance of being positioned as a researcher slightly outside the common sense of practice alive within the team, allowed me to initiate the reflection and criticality necessary for the research process (Coghlan, 2014, p. 443). There was more than criticality, however, in the distance between me and the Participants.

Indeed, in my notes about the meetings that took place before starting the fieldwork, I wrote:

Josephine (p) referred to me as ‘external’, putting me together with people doing sex education/drug awareness. I had another staff member earlier asking if “I’m external”. Preparatory notes for fieldwork, 31 August

This status as ‘external’ shifted during the fieldwork as I acted both professionally during my observation visits as an *employee* of the Charity and as a *researcher* during the workshops with Participants.

During observation visits, the Participants would treat my presence, more or less overtly, with passive disapproval (See Observation Notes 18 December and 8 January), lack of interest (Observation Notes 29 January), or open disclosure that my role was misunderstood (Observation Notes 27 November). At the end of the fieldwork, I made it clear that the data collection was terminated, and this relieved some of the tension.

Many factors contributed to the ideological and political stance I wanted to take in the work and how this was shaped by Hilltop and the Participants. I was not one of the Participants, and there was a gap between my motivation for the research and the Participants’ motivation to be part of the project. Some of this distance was important to create a reflective space, but what has been called a ‘culture of fear’ (T. Brown et al., 2018) present at Hilltop made it somewhat oppressive for the Participants.

5.1.2 Positionality Within the Charity

Becoming an employee of the Charity allowed me to gain access to the setting of the fieldwork. This brought with it some privileges, visible in the stark difference in which my requests were responded to before and after employment. They included the ease with which

I could ‘invite myself’ to RCC workers' meetings, for example, as was expected in my professional role within the Charity. This difference in access is understandable. The Children’s Homes (England) Regulations (The Children’s Homes (England) Regulations, 2015) Section 32 and Schedule 2 positions the registered manager as a gatekeeper to the home by stipulating that they must prove the suitability of all persons working or ‘*carrying out work*’ within the children’ home by obtaining for each person:

- valid photo ID
- enhanced DBS check
- two written references
- contact with the previous employer if the worker has worked in a similar occupation
- evidence of qualifications
- full written employment history, accounting for any gaps with a suitable explanation of these

Further, the Charity’s Children’s Home Manual stipulates that visitors who have not been DBS checked by the Charity are always to be chaperoned. This has obvious implications for the day-to-day activities of the home and therefore tends to be avoided.

In the previous chapter (see 4.3, p. 132), I explain how from the outset I embedded the research question within the requirements of the role of participation worker. Therefore, while fully inside the Charity, from the start my status as a researcher placed me in a unique position that would not have been given to an RCC worker attached to the home where the fieldwork took place. This was because RCC workers are near the bottom of the hierarchy within each home, and working across sites requires approval from line managers. This was another organisational position that set me apart from the Participants. Together with the focus on the ‘rich child’, this positioning also set me apart from the Participants and the rest of the RCC workers team in the home.

I need to mention a final organisational advantage of the post of participation worker. Indeed, this specific role made it possible to obtain a wide range of historical and organisational information and allowed easy access to records and charity-wide and home-specific policies. Further, I had the possibility of contacting members of the Charity at different levels of its hierarchy, for example, through informal conversations with regional managers who had known the home for several years. This was important to bear in mind as I held a privileged position compared to many of the Participants, who had access only to information about the

home itself. I was mindful of this and did not seek to use my position to obtain information the Participants and young people chose not to share with me. Further, I started the fieldwork shortly (about three months) after joining the Charity, which was important to ensure that I was relatively innocent of internal politics (Coghlan & Shani, 2008).

In the first two sections of this chapter, I pointed out how my position as a participation worker and a researcher yielded power and access and how that contrasted with the experience of the Participants. The section that follows moves on to consider my position concerning the young people.

5.1.3 Positionality Concerning the Young People

Working with the young people was more straightforward than with the RCC workers' team in that my overall relationship with the young people was that of an employee of the Charity, albeit one with a different remit compared to that of the Participants. As a participation worker, my focus was their wishes, feelings and opinions rather than their overall care and well-being, which would be the remit of residential care workers. I mentioned in the previous chapter how the continued professional relationship I was starting to build with the young people evolved and ensured that they understood that my intervention could be positive in their lives.

One of the issues encountered by Vianna (2007, pp. 91–100) and Connor (2011, pp. 73–74) was the different expectations placed on young people in the home by its RCC workers compared to those of the researcher and the impact this sometimes had on the data-gathering process: I was expecting the overtly behaviouristic and authoritarian culture of the sector to impact how Participants presented and related to me and to the young people and how this influenced relationships between the staff and adults within the home. This did not happen; my professional role within the Charity was useful in that regard, in that it gave me the institutional approval to adopt a more distanced, critical position in line with the Participants' expectations of the role of a participation worker. Their understanding of 'participation' meant that they expected me to take a different view of the logic of needs and the technical-rational logic documented in the literature review.

What happened, however, when building relationships with the young people was their active positioning as separate from adults and the redirection of my intentions away from their

group. In all likelihood, this was due to the felt experience of separation between RCC workers and young people, which is well documented in residential care (Emond, 2000, 2003). For example, on separate occasions (Observation visits on 23 October, 27 November and 18 December) a young person consciously rejected the relational and personal elements of our interactions. On that day, he and another young person had actively declined participation in activities that could elicit their understanding of the home. I recorded one of their responses in my notes:

I tried to ask Peryiar (yp) to sit with me and explained I was trying to understand people's [read RCC workers'] ideas about young people living in Hilltop. Peryiar (yp) said, 'I'll do it, I'll sit with you, but you have to understand, we're different, we're not talking' ['we' likely meaning 'we Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children']. He put two books standing on their spines forming a cross with each other. He then left. I asked if he would do it and he said, 'Later, tomorrow.' I said, 'No, tomorrow I'm not here.' He laughed and walked off. (Observation visit 18 December)

While the laugh was probably about this young man's opinion of RCC workers' working patterns (for example, if they want to do something with a specific worker, young people need to plan their time depending on the adult's shift), a deeper structural problem exists here. This young man had much experience with the home's RCC workers, which he associated with me in our interaction. Indeed, he purposefully negated both our individualities and explained generically how unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people related to adults: '*We're different.*' '*We're not talking.*' No explanation is given for this chosen silence, but, 'we' probably refers to the young people's immigration status. Indeed, the practice of 'silence' is well documented for UASC (Chase, 2010). Further, this gives an inkling of the scope of action children and young people can take to express their views in residential care. Despite the involvement of young people in the recruitment process for my role as a participation worker, this young man had no say in my access to the home. I was part of the 'given' of his environment, another adult he had to contend with by navigating around me to suit his purposes. This discrepancy in decision-making power between a child and a member of RCC workers is rarely acknowledged (McIntosh et al., 2010), yet it is part of everyday experience in the home.

Overall, the first part of this chapter reveals the organisational constraints that affected my actions in the data-gathering process. It brings into awareness structural assumptions about how decision-making power was distributed at Hilltop, and how I slotted myself and the process of the fieldwork within it. By taking on a role that was different from that of RCC workers and conflating several of the demands of the research process with those of my professional role, I counteracted some of the expectations of what a ‘good’ worker does. This was useful to some extent, but the strong normative social world of residential care that I observed left little room to play with and created different power relationships in the home. Therefore, group dynamics limited the possibilities for rehearsing change embedded in the interventionist methodology I had chosen (see 4.1, p. 115). Further, my stance on the choice of the image of the ‘rich child’, reinforced by my professional role within the Charity, turned out to diverge from that of the Participants and RCC workers team. In a ‘culture of fear’ (interview Eunice (p) 00’57”01; Brown et al., 2018), my presence was perceived as threatening and negated some of the learning processes I was trying to facilitate.

My relationships with the young people were also governed by strongly held norms and expectations. It took time to actively demonstrate to the young people in the home that I did not intend to reproduce all the practices that the RCC workers adopted (for example, by not contributing to daily records such as keywork¹ sessions, or by having a different working schedule by not being ‘on shift’).

For me, the process of carrying out the fieldwork was deeply emotional. The juxtaposition of ethical concerns about Participants’ understanding of it and the young people’s views, together with my working habits, gained over many years working in residential care, put me in a Vygotskian double bind that I only now understand while writing about it. The learning I needed, which was not yet there, had to do with the practicalities of giving a voice to others and how easy it is to slip from the intentions of problem-posing to authoritarian education (Freire, 1996). Re-reading Freire helped me understand the importance of humility within this process (Freire, 1996, p. 71) together with that of collegiality. Given the structural and

¹ The keyworker is a permanent member of staff who coordinates the care of the young person. There are ten pages of detailed guidance about aspects of the role in the organisation’s children’s home manual: from ‘being there for the child’ to responsibility for records about the child to coordination with other health, education and social work professionals, this role is quite important. In practice, workers are monitored through the frequency of ‘keyworker sessions’, a recorded meeting that can either be ad-hoc or planned, where the child and staff member discuss specific issues pertaining to the child.

institutional power imbalances at play, I would have greatly benefited from a peer in the research design, to be able to tease out the personal from the institutional and the relational. This is my learning from the process, a positive aspect of which is the conscious exposition of the oppressive nature of relationships at play within residential care that I can now consciously describe. It manifested itself for both the young people and the RCC workers working there, albeit in different ways. In introducing Chapter 4 (see p. 113), I refer to Norman's concept of 'sensory knowledge' (Norman, 1999). He described this as a type of knowledge achieved through experiencing and consciously describing relationships and institutional power mechanisms that are part of how childhood is 'invisibilised'. This lengthy examination of my position as a participation worker brought some of that sensory knowledge forward. It is a tacit element of the knowledge that RCC workers have to contend with in their everyday work and forms part of the background experiences from which they make everyday judgments. Making this aspect of the work visible is therefore highly relevant for answering the research question. I now need to turn to another aspect of Hilltop: its life space.

5.2 Context of the Fieldwork

Despite the clear tensions inherent in my dual position as a researcher-professional, my position in the Charity enabled access to significant, but not all, characteristics of life at Hilltop. Having access to this tacit knowledge is one way to understand the life space of the home. The concept of the life space (see 2.2.2.1, p. 65) could be described as the intentional and habitual use of space, time and relationships to create a caring environment that is thought to be therapeutic, and therefore desirable, in a residential care environment (Garfat, 1995; Maier, 1991; M. Smith, 2011). The description that follows retains the initial intention, stated at the beginning of the chapter, to bring relevant situational knowledge to readers who have little or no experience of residential children's homes, while at the same time making the familiar strange to those who have a thorough experience of the setting.

I have chosen it against describing the activity system of the home, as Vianna (2007) did (see also 3.1.1.1, p. 84) because I have not yet analysed the data gathered from the Participant observation, but I am conveying the situated, local and everyday knowledge that is necessary to make professional decisions in Hilltop.

In this section, I describe Maier's model of the life space (Maier, 1987a, 1991) by focusing in turn on the milieu, the rhythms and rituals within the home, and finally the group dynamics that he terms 'developmental group care'. I foreground this section with a brief outline of the RCC workers and the young people.

5.2.1 RCC Workers and Young People

Both the RCC workers and the young people are part of the residential setting. For the former, it is their place of work, for the second, where they live. In this section, I introduce each in turn.

5.2.1.1 The RCC Workers and Participants

The home's statement of purpose (see 1.2.2.1, p. 27), which was being amended while I carried out the fieldwork, described the staffing structure. The manager, the deputy and the team leader supervised up to 11 permanent RCC workers, together with the cook and an administrator. At the time, there were nine permanent workers, one of whom did not finish their probation period and two others who left shortly after the end of the fieldwork.

This is how the manager described the remit of each worker:

in terms of their roles, they are all key workers, so oh, except for the night workers. [...] We have the night workers who are, when they're on shift, they, there is only two of them, generally, and they are there during the night, which is arguably one of the more eh difficult times. So, their job is more focused around safety. A lot of the (unclear) work does really need to be done by the day RCC workers because they have more options to do it, the night workers are not key workers, they do not have the caseload that day workers have, ehm, so the administrative tasks are slightly different. We do expect though that they do still record, and they do share out information and even help out the keyworker as and when needed. Ehm key workers I've sort of established what they do in terms of case management and that, we then have a cook, who isn't really keen on being involved with the young people, so she is, I mean she is nearing retirement, so it's more of a, you know she's at the final stages of that. ehm and then we've got [...] our admin worker, em possibly a bit of an untapped resource, really (laughs). She's really good with the young people, and really good with the team as well, ehm, she's very systematic and structured [...].

And then we have the manager, myself, and then the deputy, the team leader, then we've got the bank workers. (Interview Eunice (p) 00'21''35 – 00'26''40

During the preliminary negotiations for access and the fieldwork itself, a period lasting about nine months, I was in contact with 21 RCC worker members employed by the Charity and working directly in the home. This does not include social workers, professionals from the virtual school, police officers, substance abuse workers or regional managers from the Charity who routinely came into the home. While 21 was already seen as a high number of staff members, the home was still recruiting more RCC workers because at the time it was relying heavily on the Charity's bank of 'flexible workers' (called bank staff¹), or it went to outside agencies² to fill in the 56 weekly shifts needed to give the home its minimum cover. Further, the manager changed during the time I was negotiating consent, which was an important transition and an uncertain time for the home.

Without carrying out the data collection for a much longer period, it is difficult to say whether the images of young people at work during that time were affected by new RCC workers and the different styles and visions the two managers had for the home. Table 5 below names each RCC worker and gives a brief description of their role. It also distinguishes whether they participated in the workshops. Their names are followed by the letter (s) if they worked in the home but did not participate in the workshops or (p) if they worked in the home and participated in the workshops.

Abigail (s)	cook; had worked in the home for more than ten years
Alexis (p)	residential care worker; had worked in the home for less than six months, on secondment
Chris (p)	residential care worker; had worked in the home for less than six months
Cicely (p)	residential care worker; had worked in the home for more than a year
Eunice (p)	the home's manager; started managing the home just before fieldwork started

¹ Bank workers are employed by the organisation and work flexibly around several homes. They are trained in the same manner as permanent staff and receive supervision from their own manager.

² Agency staff are employed by an external agency and are therefore less familiar with the organisation's policies and procedures than bank workers. They do not receive supervision and receive only mandatory training, such as first aid or health and safety, rather than the organisation's own training programme blending social pedagogy with statutory training in safeguarding or equality and diversity.

Josephine (p)	team leader; had worked in the home for more than two years
Kelly (p)	Eunice's (p) deputy; had worked in the home for more than three years
Laura (p)	Administrator
Mary (s)	residential care worker; had worked in the home for more than four years
Ram (p)	night worker; had worked in the home for more than two years
Rex Tobin (p)	residential care worker; had worked in the home for more than two years
Theresa (s)	residential care worker; had worked in the home for less than six months, on secondment
Vikam (p)	residential care worker; had worked in the home for less than six months

Figure 13: List of Participants and staff who are part of the data analysis

The table above outlines the length of service in the home for permanent RCC workers; with eight permanent RCC workers working for more than a year within the home, all the Participants who were interviewed still conveyed a sense of impermanence and instability.

5.2.1.2 The Young People

I now turn to describing the group of young people living in the home at the time of the fieldwork. Just as with the RCC workers, there was a lot of movement: one young person left halfway through the period to move to a semi-independent placement, and two new residents joined at the beginning and at the end of the four months I was in the field.

None of the young people had much of a say about their placement in the home. The two young people who moved in just before fieldwork started had been sent to the home as an emergency placement. Another was there while waiting for his foster placement to be approved. Again this was meant to be short-term, but he stayed in the home for nearly a year. The type of contract that had been made between the local authority and the Charity (see 1.1.3.1, p. 12), a so-called 'block contract', was a factor in this: to fulfil their statutory duties, the local authority effectively had bought the Charity's services.

Despite this lack of control over their placements, over time the young people formed important relationships with the home and each other. There is a strong chance that young

people knew each other already or would continue to use the same facilities as referrals to the home for new placements all came from the same local authority. Once they leave, many young people came back to visit, keeping in touch with each other and some of the workers. A sense of community emanated from their experience and, having spoken to some of the young people since they left, overall, they were attached to the place, some of the people, and the time they spent there.

In the table below, I present a list of all young people living in the home at the time of the fieldwork. To distinguish them from Participants (p) and RCC workers working in the home (s), their names will systematically be followed by (yp) in the remainder of the thesis.

Ishwar (yp)	16 years old; UASC; living in the home for one year at the beginning of the fieldwork
John (yp)	16 years old; UASC; living in the home for more than two years at the beginning of fieldwork; moved out of the home during the fieldwork
Luis (yp)	16 years old; White British; moved into the home during the fieldwork
Manmohan (yp)	15 years old; UASC; living in the home for six months at the beginning of the fieldwork; had lived in the UK before placement
Mithum (yp)	14 years old; UASC; living in the home for one month at the beginning of the fieldwork; arrived in the UK hours before being placed in the home
Peryiar (yp)	16 years old; UASC; living in the home for six months at the beginning of fieldwork
Ralph (yp)	15 years old; UASC; living in the home for one month at the beginning of the fieldwork; arrived in the UK hours before being placed in the home
Ron (yp)	16 years old; White British; living in the home for six months at the beginning of fieldwork

Figure 14: List of young people who are part of the data analysis

The purpose of introducing the Participants and some of the young people in this way is twofold: it presents the main relationships in the home as some take an important role in the

description of the situations that are key to data analysis. It also gives a sketch of the constellation of possible relationships that are constitutive of the life space of the home.

In the following description of the life space of the home, I refer to the people involved by name. The description is structured using Maier's (1987b) focus on the 'milieu', the 'rhythms and rituals' and 'group dynamics'.

In his account of the life space, Maier (1991) never disassociated the material and physical characteristics of the home from their emotional and pedagogical potential. In this description of the home where the fieldwork took place, I attempted to do the same. It is a lengthy description, something that is deliberately meant to convey the nature of what RCC workers must contend with. The description of Hilltops' life space is organised along three themes: the milieu, the rhythms and rituals, and developmental group care.

5.2.2 The Milieu

Hilltop stood tall above the busy main road, looked imposing as an aggregate of different buildings and styles. Maybe this was because of the caged fire exit, or the trainers or teddy bears that can sometimes be seen hanging from the windows. The outside of the home was monitored by a CCTV system.

The doorbell did not work, and each young person had developed a way to attract RCC workers' attention to open the door; some politely used the letter box, while others took to kicking the door. Only a select few (the manager, her deputy and a few permanent RCC workers) had a key to the house, and only people who were well-known to the RCC workers team could come in straight away. IDs had to be checked, and visitors like myself signed in. Young peoples' comings and goings, and details of their appearance, were recorded in the 'logbook', in case they were later reported missing to the police. Once opened, the front door revealed a carpeted hall, with access to the office, the lounge and the kitchen-dining room. From the entrance hall, the stairs wound their way to the upper floors.

The entrance hall was akin to a spaghetti junction: while people greeted each other when coming through the door, they could see the cook in the kitchen or the staff in the office. Some young people rushed upstairs to their rooms, often in a bid to avoid questions and scrutiny from RCC workers. During my visits, I often spent time sitting on the stairs or the

floor in the hall, sometimes alone, often talking. Impromptu and illicit games of football and piggy-in-the-middle took place there; friendly conversations often occurred.

The office, accessible through the entrance hall, was a highly contentious place. The office threshold was a place of negotiation for young people. From the threshold, through the closed door, young people could attract the attention of RCC worker members busy at the computers, “doing the logs”, answering the phone or doing “handover”. Sometimes young people forced their way through the threshold; at other times they were invited in for a private, important conversation with an RCC worker. There were two sets of keys that the RCC workers shared, as the door was locked most of the time. The manager and the deputy had their own keys. The office was the exclusive domain of RCC workers. Its door had a small, reinforced window panel, a Yale lock, filing cabinets full of confidential information, a safe with petty cash, allowances or other pocket monies, and a CCTV monitor. The eggs and knives were, it might appear oddly to outsiders, kept in there as well, for safety.

On the other side of the hall, the lounge was furnished with sofas, a coffee table, a shelf with some games and old children’s books. On the outside wall was a 27-inch flat-screen TV and a Sky™ box. Sometimes the young people sat there unsupervised; however, if more than two young people were in the room at the same time, an RCC worker would join them. The lounge was where the young people's meetings took place and where they came to eat their meals. This was also where the team meeting was held once a week, and where most of the fieldwork workshops took place. Often meetings with social workers and other professionals were held there. During school hours, the lounge could be locked to limit the distraction from school learning that the television was thought to create. The lounge and kitchen were also locked at night, usually after one a.m., but this was left to individual RCC worker members’ discretion.

The big kitchen was the domain of the cook, who came on weekdays from late morning to mid-afternoon. At those times, no other RCC workers used the kitchen, despite the recognition that cooking with young people could be a very enjoyable activity.

The kitchen was divided in two, and the football table at the dining side of the room used quite frequently, next to a large dining room table easily seating eight people. The table could be turned into a table tennis as well. On the wall, a built-in unit housed the table tennis net,

bats and balls, and the home's cutlery and crockery. Some of the crockery was ceramic, but at the time of the fieldwork, most of it was plastic as it often got broken.

When going up the winding stairs to the upper floors, the atmosphere became more subdued. The layout was rather complicated, mostly with bedrooms and bathrooms for young people. The sleep-in room was the exception, as it enabled a third worker to sleep there and support the two night-wake workers if the frequency of incidents¹ warranted it. During the day, the sleep-in room could be used as an extra, quieter office and a storage room.

Some bedrooms had windows to the front of the house and the busy main road, while others faced the back garden. The bedrooms varied in size, and a lot of effort went into decorating them before young people moved in.

RCC workers went up to the bedrooms only for cleaning or when wanting to speak to a young person. The bedrooms were very much the space of the individual occupants, who had a key. If another young person wanted access, they must knock. Often, in the evenings, a smell of cannabis came from one of the bedrooms there. When RCC workers noticed this, it was logged, and conversations were held with the local Police Community Liaison Officer.

There was a complicated set of norms about who could go into whose bedroom; some of those rules were reinforced by the RCC workers following a logic of safeguarding, others by the young people. More formal rules taken from The Children's Homes Regulations (Department for Education, 2015) policed 'room searches', triggered if a young person was suspected of holding illegal items (for example, cannabis, weapons, or stolen items) in their bedrooms. Access could always be gained by RCC workers with a master key, and this was sometimes judged necessary if there are concerns for the safety of the occupant.

¹ An incident here in the context of residential care is an event that is judged by staff as significant enough to be recorded using a prescribed form as defined by the Organisation Policies and Procedures Manual. The Children's Home Regulations 2015 (The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, 2015) stipulate that all episodes where children are missing from care have to be recorded and notified to relevant professionals. Further, it is the responsibility of the registered manager to ensure staff have the "skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying" (The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, 2015, p. 12). Another mention of "incidents" stipulates that failure to report an incident of abuse may give grounds for disciplinary action for the staff member involved and leaves it up to the manager's understanding of the seriousness of the "incident" (whether with police involvement or not) to report to OFSTED. This statutory context therefore frames incidents differently within everyday life in residential care than is understood in mainstream society.

There was a clear dynamic between RCC workers and young people's use of space, which had to do with privacy. Maier (1987a, pp. 61–67) outlined different types of spaces in a home: private, personal, and public. In practice, at Hilltop, little attention was paid to these distinctions, but their impact on the power relationships between RCC workers and young people was great. While the RCC workers had access to all parts of the house, including the young people's bedrooms, the space with some of the most emotionally contentious aspects of young people's lives (their files and the records written about them) – the office – was out of bounds to young people.

The two aspects of this contradiction are best expressed in terms of who attributed the meaning of privacy to which space. While young people fought vehemently for their privacy in their bedrooms, it seemed to me that this was more about adults' non-interference, which was structurally denied to them because of the regulations reported earlier. The RCC workers' claim to "privacy" would be better understood as a space that always belonged to their professional selves, where they could reinforce professional confidentiality towards the young people as a group.

Personal privacy for an RCC worker could be achieved when going back to their own homes away from the children's home, whereas, for the young people, this was impossible. At the same time, the spaces young people occupied outside of the control of the RCC workers (outside of the home) were still deemed unsafe for them, due to their status as 'child' and as 'vulnerable'. Warming (2019) noticed a similar phenomenon in a Danish home.

The observations about private space at Hilltop were related to the overall theme of this work. Alanen and Mayall (2001, p. 127) hinted that children's competency seemed to be more recognised in the private sphere of relationships with adults or with peers compared to the more public sphere of the school. They did so by comparing how children and young people were seen as competent in private and public spaces. The lack of truly private space for the young people in the case study home is pertinent here, and this lead me to ask how this shapes how young people's competency was perceived.

The second aspect of the physical description of the milieu of the home is related to the institutional surveillance that takes place throughout. It is apparent in the removal of private spaces reminiscent of a Foucauldian panopticon built:

to induce in the inmate [young people] a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates [young people] should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. To achieve this, it is at once too much and too little that the prisoner [young people] should be constantly observed by an inspector [RCC workers]: too little, for what matters is that he [sic] knows himself[sic] to be observed; too much, because he[sic] has no need in fact of being so. Given this, Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate [young people] will constantly have before his[sic] eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he[sic] is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate [young people] must never know whether he[sic] is being looked at any one moment; but he [sic] must be sure that he may always be so (Foucault, 1979, p. 201).

Foucault was very clear that the layout of the building is a metaphor for the relationships between different categories of people using it (Foucault, 1979, p. 205). Surveillance could be seen as part of the unspoken, internal logic of the norms and rules of the home. In that sense, the implementation of The Children's Homes Regulations fell very short of the benevolent intentions it overtly stated and constrained the relationships between RCC workers and young people.

Having looked at the use of space and the milieu of Maier's life space, I now move on to the use of time and how it is structured.

5.2.3 Rhythms and Rituals

In this section, I describe the everyday work of RCC workers at Hilltop, and how they met institutional and statutory demands, in the context of their interactions with young people and other professionals outside of the home.

Rituals and repetition are important to mark time, and Maier and others (Garfat & Freeman, 2014) talked about their pedagogical potential. At Hilltop, there was some awareness of this but no systematic and purposeful way to use it. Rather, as the description that follows

demonstrates, the rhythms of the house were mostly shaped by procedural concerns. I first look at a typical day in detail, before describing events that were less frequent but ritualistic.

5.2.3.1 Daily Rhythms

On a typical weekday, the RCC worker members doing the early shift started work at eight a.m. This was also the time at which Kelly (p), the deputy manager, came in. One of the night workers left at that time and the other stayed for handover. Handovers could take from as little as ten minutes (which was rare) to 45 minutes or so. A form must be filled out to ensure specific topics were addressed, such as a summary of each young person's night, the diary must be consulted to ensure appointments would be honored, and tasks that needed to be carried forward from the previous shift needed to be noted. Petty cash and medications were counted to comply with Regulation 23 of The Children's Homes (England) Regulations (The Children's Homes (England) Regulations, 2015). At the same time as this handover, young people attending school or college were getting ready to go. This might interrupt handover routines, for example if they needed help finding appropriate clothing or their lunch money. Cereals and milk might be set out on the kitchen table but young people tended not to eat. The evening before, some young people might have asked to be 'given a knock' if they had an appointment. At the start of the fieldwork, only one of the young people attended school regularly. By the end of it, four of them were in full-time education. For the other young people, the RCC workers reported that there was often some regularity in their daily timetable. For example, John (yp) and Ishwar (yp) went out at regular hours, which made RCC workers suspect they were in employment. Due to their asylum claim, this was something young people understandably were very reluctant to speak openly about.

As the day progressed, Eunice (p), the manager, and Laura (p), the administrator, arrived. Eunice (p) might be given a briefing about the previous shift, especially if an incident had taken place, as she would need to decide whether it was a notifiable incident (The Children's Homes (England) Regulations, 2015 Reg. 40) and to ensure that any follow-up was carried through. Notification of meetings, Annual Reviews, RCC workers' supervisions and management meetings, were usually recorded in the diary. Paperwork such as care plans, incident reports or key working sessions were completed. The weekly shopping delivery could be ordered too. All RCC workers ensured that social workers and other professionals were informed of any incidents, possibly including any referrals. Kelly (p) and Eunice (p), as managers, ensured the statutory paperwork was up to date. This might mean responding to

the Regulation 44 inspections and writing Quarterly Monitoring or Regulation 45 reports. Other possible tasks included preparation for the yearly OFSTED inspection or dealing with the recruitment of new RCC workers. Josephine (p), the team leader, ensured shifts were covered.

At about 11 a.m., Ron's (yp) tutor came in. One of the RCC workers went up to Ron's (yp) room to wake him up, and on occasion, he came down, but this fluctuated. Kelly (p) liaised with the tutor and their agency to make the session as appealing as possible to Ron (yp). Later during the day, she might have a key work session with him and discuss education. Ralph (yp) and Mithum (yp) also had a tutor temporarily, and attended the session every day, keen to learn English and get the education they came to the UK to receive.

Abigail (s), the cook, came around 11 a.m. She cooked what was on the menu for that day, until four or five p.m. There may have been some cleaning and paperwork needed to adhere to food safety standards.

RCC workers on shift might eat the lunch they brought from home at the kitchen table. If young people were around, they chatted and encouraged them to have something to eat.

If young people went to the lounge and started watching TV, the fuse of the lounge sockets might be flicked to turn off electricity until three p.m. and encourage education, because of the assumption that those who attended school would not be watching TV. I am unaware, however, whether this was consistently done.

At two p.m. the afternoon shift came in. Another handover took place, following the same structure as in the morning. The morning RCC workers left at four p.m. unless working two shifts.

Between three and five p.m., some of the young people came back from school and there was a slight change of atmosphere in the home, in that it became more informal: most of the meetings of the day had taken place. Some RCC worker members may have hung around the kitchen and hall and chatted with young people coming back from school. Others stayed in the office to ensure each entrance was logged as required in the logbook, and to be on hand if the phone rang. Around that time, if there were no meetings outside of the home, Kelly (p) the deputy manager might spend some time with Ron (yp) who had come to ask for daily

keyworker sessions with her. They had a routine where he hid her water bottle while she got herself ready to leave. She could only do so once she found the hidden bottle.

This was also the time at which Abigail (s), the cook, left the home. She left the dishes on a work surface for young people and RCC workers to help themselves to. Between five and six p.m., an RCC worker plated up some food for each young person so they could eat when coming back home. Each plate was covered in cling film and the young person's initials were written on a sticker.

Each evening, young people's activity planners recorded specific activities and household chores the RCC workers would encourage them to do. These plans were rarely followed, however, as young people often made arrangements to meet their friends or attend the gym or a boxing club. To do so, they came to the office to get their public transport pass (these were kept in the office and often needed to be topped up, which a worker would do), or the entrance fee to the gym. Some of them might have asked for their clothing money or their 'personal care allowance' for a haircut. As some of them were not allowed "cash in hand", this could lead to friction because a member of staff might not be ready to accompany them straight away.

At 6:30 p.m., Ron (yp), a worker and another young person could often be found in the lounge watching Hollyoaks. The evening continued with some homework, watching TV or being on social media in their rooms, although this was dependent on the Wi-Fi being in good working order. At around eight p.m., most of the RCC workers were in the office writing up a summary of the day for each young person. Petty cash needed to be accounted for and young people's expenses recorded and signed.

At nine p.m., one of the night workers came in to receive the handover, which followed the same structure as the two previous ones. Phone calls and texts were sent to the young people not yet back in the home, reminding them of their curfew times. This information was quite important because if young people were not back by their curfew time, they would be classified as Missing From Care, triggering a procedure set in The Children's Homes (England) Regulations, (2015, Schedule 3, para 14). The procedures also impacted the young people directly as the incident would be reported to the police. This also called for specific paperwork, ensuring that key responsible people were informed. If the young person did not return, at some point during the night the police would come to the home asking for detailed

information and access to the young person's room to help establish the context of the incidence of going missing. For the young person, this involved invasion of privacy (often personal items such as hairbrushes or toothbrushes were collected for DNA evidence) and a follow-up voluntary return interview with another professional independent of the local authority and the home.

At ten p.m., day RCC workers left and night RCC workers combined cleaning duties with promoting a routine for the young people, for example by encouraging them up to their rooms at a specific time. They monitored snacking and tended to discourage eating, which was seen to be disruptive to the overall mood of the home. The night staff would encourage the young people to have healthy sleep routines, but this created tension between them. At the beginning of the fieldwork both the lounge and the kitchen were locked at one a.m. However, the team discussed this and decided to stop doing it because of the friction it created.

5.2.3.2 Special Times and Other Rituals

While I outlined above the typical components of a regular weekday, some routines took place weekly, at weekends and holidays.

During the fieldwork, I came in at four p.m. on Mondays, shortly before the RCC workers got ready to 'do the resident's meeting' and takeaways. This was quite a lengthy process involving finding out what young people wanted to eat and going to several food outlets to get specific orders. Sometimes young people accompanied the RCC workers. Before that, another RCC worker 'did the meeting', and ensured its content was recorded in the meeting's book. Minuting the meeting was important for planning the following week's menu, informing the agenda of the RCC workers' meeting, and for use during OFSTED inspections to evidence how specific regulations were being implemented.

Once the takeaways were bought, they were displayed on the counter and initialled to avoid misappropriation. If a sanction was in place, and a young person missed out on their takeaway, an easy dinner, such as frozen pizza or chips, would be prepared for that young person.

The residents' meetings created a lot of stress for RCC workers because of the extra work involved, due to the many uses to which young people's views could be put. Indeed, there was an emphasis on the meeting being a tool to embed statutory duties in practice. For

example, the Charity's 'Procedures Manual' devoted 11 pages to 'the Provision and Preparation of Meals' and related it to six of the regulations in The Children's Homes (England) Regulations (2015):

- the quality and purpose of care standard
- the children's views, wishes and feelings standard
- the health and well-being standard
- behaviour management and discipline
- privacy and access
- fire precautions

Only scant attention was devoted in the manual to how young people's preferences should be included in menu planning, yet menu planning appeared to be one of the main purposes of the meetings.

The young people saw the meetings as boring because of their repetitive nature, yet they also understood them as a platform to talk about what was important to them. Their main intention in joining the meetings, though, was to get their takeaway meal, which was an important part of their weekly routine.

Another notable weekly event was 'pocket money', which took place at three p.m. on Fridays. To do this, Laura (p), the administrator, prepared a small envelope for each young person with the required amount and recorded it accordingly, both on the home's petty cash record and each young person's pocket money record.

The amount for each young person was calculated by considering:

- age.
 - incentive money, accruing at 50 pence per day when the young person observed their curfew.
 - 'chore money,' earned over the weekend by doing cleaning tasks around the home.
- For Laura (p) needed to find accurate information on this was a lengthy process. Sometimes the records were not accurate, which could create conflicts if the young people disagreed with the amount given. Records were often the only evidence of what had happened, as the RCC workers who witnessed a young person doing something warranting money may not have been on shift when Laura required the

information, or could not be called upon at the time the young person contested the amount they received.

- ‘sanction’, recorded in the sanction book. The Charity’s ‘Procedure Manual’ stipulated that no more than half the young person’s weekly pocket money could be withheld. To my knowledge, sanctions were rare during the time of the fieldwork.

Once Laura (p) had prepared the envelopes, they were kept in the safe until three p.m., at which time young people knew they could request them if they were allowed ‘cash in hand’. Some social workers had agreed to young people being denied ‘cash in hand’ for safeguarding purposes¹. The young people knew this and could come to the office to ask for their money and, when the workers were free, go to the shops accompanied.

If young people were allowed ‘cash in hand’, the RCC workers would go up to check their room’s tidiness. This was seen as important to teach ‘independence’, which translated into an insistence on young people doing the cleaning themselves. There were some exceptions when young people struggled with planning tasks, however. If the workers thought the room was not tidy, they withheld the pocket money until they became satisfied.

The young person then signed the records to acknowledge receipt of the money, a fact then logged in the ‘logbook’.

Fridays at three p.m. marked the symbolic beginning of the weekend. One of the more notable differences at the weekend was the quieter atmosphere. There were no meetings and only three workers on shift at all times. Sometimes young people brought their friends home, and at the time of the fieldwork, the workers were struggling to organise activities with young people. Nevertheless, some trips to the Houses of Parliament or a pantomime were organised. Young people woke up later on weekends, did chores and went out with their friends. On Sunday, RCC workers cooked a traditional Sunday roast and Manmohan (yp), sometimes joined by Ralph (yp) and other young people, took it upon themselves to have a ‘homework club’, an informal homework session that provided support. Cicely's (p) experience as a language teacher was instrumental in making this successful, as all the young people in

¹ Often this happened when it was suspected that the young person would use the money illegally or was being exploited financially in some way.

education at the time of the fieldwork were studying English for Speakers of Other Languages courses.

Again, while some attention was paid by the team to how they could use the rhythms and rituals of the home to develop the nurturing atmosphere they strove for, it is questionable whether they had a clear understanding of how this could be practically accomplished. During interviews, only Eunice (p) spoke of this, and observation showed that Kelly (p) use of games with Ron (yp) was developmentally specific by including rhythmical, repetitive and non-verbal aspects that contrasted with Ron (yp)'s numerical age. Both Cicely (p) and Josephine (p) struggled with talking consciously about this tacit aspect of life in the home and teasing out the differences between norms and rules. For example, Cicely (p) talked about "expectations more than rules" but stressed the fact that they could not be enforced (Interview Cicely (p) 01'10"05 – 01'11"29) and the fact that the rules were individualised. Josephine's (p) answer had a defensive tone to it, justifying the need for rules but pointing out that this was not the decision of '*just one person just sitting back saying that's it and this is it, and that's the rule*' (interview Josephine 00'38"15 – 00'39"28). While she emphasised negotiation to demonstrate how the staff team adapted to '*find a common ground*', the example that she chose followed a behaviouristic logic. Obeying rules would result in obtaining cash in hand, something the young people repeatedly asked for. I believe her assumption here was that young people could change the situation but did not want to.

These examples of how RCC workers lacked the understanding to truly make use of the life space of the home and point to the inadequacy of their training. Indeed, well-developed frameworks can be used to support such development, but they were not (Garfat & Freeman, 2014).

5.2.4 Developmental Group Care

The last aspect Maier identifies as an important area of work for the life space is best described as working with group dynamics. My observation visits, workshops and interviews at Hilltop did not reveal RCC workers paying significant attention to the group as a whole, preferring individual attention to each young person. It was Ralph (yp), on the other hand, who presented an image of the whole group to me.



Figure 15: Hilltop's group dynamics

This started as a quirky exchange between Ralph (yp), Alexis (p) and me, where Ralph (yp) was drawing famous footballers from FC Barcelona on post-it notes, to which I responded by drawing individual members of the household. Ralph (yp) soon caught on and continued with the home members. We then placed them on a hastily-drawn imaginary football pitch. This is how Alexis(p) recollected the activity during the following workshop:

like on a football pitch and to see the concept of the RCC workers team and the young people it was just so, the way he was saying it yeah, you know, Teresa (s) helps me,

I'm moving on to the RCC workers team, and Mithum (yp) sometimes helps me so he can come onto the RCC workers team as well. So he's like, him and Mithum (yp) joined us, and (*all laugh*) left everybody else there. ...'

(Transcript Session 2 29 November 0'26'' – 0' 27''46)

What Ralph (yp) highlighted in this drawing is the assumed separation of young people and RCC workers, which can be changed as individual bonds develop. The Participants also reacted with laughter when young people moved between the young people and the staff team, which denotes unease at breaking this assumption. What is interesting as well is that for Ralph, the network of those who help him is fluid, in that Mithum (yp) was also part of Ralph's (yp) support network, and so he enlisted him into the adults' team.

Attention to Hilltop's group dynamics reveals that while they are present in young people's and RCC workers' minds, they are not worked with pedagogically in the manner Maier suggests may be possible.

This chapter has a different focus from the previous ones because it marks an 'entry into the field'. Rather than talking about RCC in England generically and of theoretical principles that are relevant to investigating 'images of child', I shifted to considering the unique place that is Hilltop, and my position in it.

In describing how I negotiated my place in the field, together with a thorough description of Hilltop's layout, and the habits and routines of its young people and adults at the time of the fieldwork, I want to acknowledge the shift between knowledge about English RCC and post-Vygotskian theory at a generic level, and the situated and local knowledge that becomes important when thinking about the data.

This is an important shift because I mirror something I experienced when carrying out the fieldwork: a certain disdain for knowledge that is generic and that applies across different contexts.

In Workshop 4, the Participants discussed how the use of the ASI (Attachment Style Questionnaire) (Bifulco et al., 2008) had profoundly changed the relationship between Ron (yp) and Kelly (p) for the better. The ASI is a standardised psychological questionnaire administered by a trained professional to assess the attachment pattern of young people.

Several interviewees shared a concern that Ron(yp) found it difficult to build trusting relationships with them, but Kelly (p) was an exception, and the Participants attributed this to the shared experience of the intimacy provoked by the ASI.

Rex (p) replied to the question of the relevance of the ASI for his work in Hilltop:

this is the point I would have made. I don't think it's helpful at all. To have them, [the ASI] because even if you've got like [...] even if you're perfectly ehm if you've got this perfect rapport with someone's personality, with their likes and dislikes and everything, you can't use and apply it with them, because you don't have the right to do that.[...] So you have to, it doesn't matter who you are, you have to work start from scratch with anyone you work with, you can't just say like oh, I know you, so I've got this [...] this information

Transcript Session 4 00'36"32 – 00'37"10

Here Rex (p) made the point that ethics and values were factors in deciding what knowledge to use. Even if the information that Kelly (p) collected during the ASI had been shared with the team, it was only relevant between her and Ron (yp). Therefore, the context of knowledge is highly important in RCC. It is this knowledge I attempted to bring forward in this chapter, and it is this localised, situated knowledge that I drew upon to analyse the data and come to the findings I shall describe in the following chapter.

6 Findings: Images of Young People at Play in the Everyday Practice of Hilltop's RCC Workers

Ilyenkov's work on the relationship between ideal and material activity is important when operationalising images (see 3.2.2, p. 99). The bulk of this chapter consists of a description of what the Participants held in mind when working towards specific goals and meeting the various demands Hilltop, as an institution, placed on them.

It is the resistance one meets against those goals that creates the images; they are not automatic and stereotypical representations. For Ilyenkov:

an *image* is not a “ghost,” not a “subjective [psychological] state,” introspectively recorded by the brain within itself. An image is the form of a thing that has been imprinted in the subject's body, as that ‘bending’ that the object has imposed upon the trajectory of the motion of the subject's body. It is a representation of the form of the object in the form of the trajectory of the subject's motion, subjectively experienced by him as ‘forced’-‘unfree’-change in the schema of reflex-executed motion” (Ilyenkov, 2010, p. 28).

Images arise when Participants' intentions are challenged by the situation they find themselves in, when they encounter some kind of resistance or experience what may be seen as grit, working against what they are trying to achieve. From an activity theory point of view, it is in the mismatch between intentions and the object of activity that images arise. Both the ephemeral nature of images and the grit that is necessary for images to arise are important to bear in mind when contextualising the findings. Images are dialectically bound up with material activity, which makes it difficult to bring them into awareness when that context is removed, such as when writing this thesis. Further, images are partial; they are not representative of all the elements Participants can draw upon when making decisions in their everyday practice. This observation is well illustrated in the data.

It is therefore important to be sensitive about how the link between ideal and material aspects of activity can be broken. Writing research is a process of decontextualisation through language (Pinker, 2015, pp. 57–76), and therefore this is unavoidable if shared beyond the people involved in the fieldwork setting at the time the fieldwork took place. I feel limited by the writing medium, both in terms of grammar and expressivity. This is why so much emphasis was put on outlining the context of the home in the previous chapter, and a very

detailed presentation of the data is available in Appendix 3. All are relevant to understanding how I came to my descriptions of the images from the data. My positionality is of course partial, which led me to focus on some aspects of the myriad of possible concepts and boundaries that interact with the data. For example, the fact that my observation visits took place on the same day of the week, while important for developing trust with young people, allowed for a significant amount of data on resident's meetings. This was partly prompted by the choices of the Participants, but a visit on another day could have revealed other aspects of the relationship between Participants and young people's experiences. My role as a participation worker and my views on what a good childhood and a good life are (Crafter et al., 2017, pp. 517–520) further shape the tacit process that led me to select specific meanings, and interpretations of the different meanings, that are embedded within each situation.

To be as transparent as possible, I will therefore explain the process through which I have analysed the situations recorded in Appendix 3 (page number here) before presenting the images Participants held in mind because of the frequency of their repetition across all situations. In the last section of this chapter, I reflect on a pattern noticeable amongst the images that I detected in the fieldwork setting.

6.1 Situation Analysis: An Explanation

The data gathered (see 4.1.3, p. 122) consisted of three interviews with Participants, 12 observation sessions of roughly four hours each, seven workshops of between 75 and 90 minutes each with the Participants, and artefacts made with both young people and the Participants. I then proceeded to try to understand the boundaries of different concepts that were at play in the Participants' justifications and explanations of their decisions using Engeström's (2011) '*layers of causality in human action*'. I used the wealth of views on a single event to situate where those boundaries lay and deduce from this the possible images of young people by which Participants may have been influenced. To make this process transparent, each situation is presented through the following structure:

- reference to data
- narrative description of the discussion
- concepts at play
- images that arise

The 'reference to data' is a simple description of the different items that were coded under that specific situation. It is followed by a summary of the event and of the discussion that took place as it appears in the data. Transcripts and photographs are quoted if relevant. The next section, 'concept at play', is a first step towards images: It outlines the concepts and ideas involved in the situation and therefore highlights the boundaries of those concepts. This situates the Participants' ideas and responses within a specific context.

Finally, from this, the images the Participants have of the young people are described, being inferred from the concepts described previously.

This abstract description of the process becomes clearer, perhaps, when applied to actual fieldwork situations. I now present two situations chosen for their relatively short length and the clarity of boundaries between different concepts.

6.1.1 Situation 8. Cinema Outing.

Reference to data:

Transcript session 2 29th November

Narrative description of the discussion:

Rex (p) illustrates a point he is trying to make: that young people's communication does not have much common ground with adult communication. He gives the example of a remark Peryiar (yp) makes about going to the cinema with him. Rex (p) brings educational, planning elements such as researching what movie to watch, and how to get there that Peryiar (yp) dismisses.

The underlying assumption here is that while young people can be spontaneous ("*Oh, let's just go*") adults need to plan and bring in some learning element to it (although this is not emphasised by Rex (p) as learning). Rex (p) interprets this as Peryiar (yp) putting the responsibility of the cinema outing back onto him, but Eunice (p) interjects and takes the conversation back towards modes of communication and what a computer might mean for Peryiar (yp). Josephine (p) relates it to her mum's idea of the computer as "the nuke in the corner" that is very scary to use.

The team then starts thinking about ways in which they can overcome the supposed reluctance to use technology and how they could bring the information in a format that was more accessible for Peryiar (yp). This was taken up and Rex (p) changed the format of the young people's meeting (observation visit 4th December).

Concepts at play:

The social separation of adults and young people is apparent and informs the discussion. Both are portrayed differently in their performance of communication: young people can be spontaneous and rely on adults for making things happen; adults, on the other hand, plan activities and are responsible for making them happen. However, this separation is contested by Eunice (p), who posits that there may be other reasons for Peryiar (yp) to give up because some element of planning is introduced in the cinema trip. This leads to a long discussion about the reasons one mode of communication can be preferred to others.

Representations/Images of young people that arise:

Reliant on adults' help

Separate from adults, spontaneous while adults plan

Shaped by their experiences and environment

6.1.2 Situation 27. Shopping with Peryiar (yp).

Reference to data:

Observation visit 1st January
Transcript Session 5 10th January
Summary of session 5

Narrative description of the situation:

During the workshop, the Participants are trying to find examples of situations when Peryiar (yp) embodies some of the qualities of the ‘rich child’. I give an example of him exploring complex and abstract ideas.

Recalling the visit to the shop I had made on 1 January with Peryiar (yp), I suggest that the haggling he does with the shopkeeper and his awareness that his behaviour needs to be adjusted depending on the shop he goes to are cultural awareness and therefore complex and abstract.

Alexis (p) does not see this and changes it to Peryiar (yp) being “quite entrepreneurial, business-minded”. A couple of minutes before that, Josephine (p) had been talking about Peryiar (yp) and how he swindles staff and get a sense of power from this. She then goes on to explain that Peryiar (yp) uses the haggling, and the possibility to exchange items bought in the local shop we went to on 1 January, to obtain money that is not bound by the rules of the home to provide receipts: by buying something with money from the home, where he has to bring the receipt back, later exchanging the bought item for another sum of money, he can then use the money as he pleases without having to justify his purchase with a receipt.

Concepts at play: Peryiar’s (yp) cultural awareness is negated by the Participant’s sense of being cheated by Peryiar’s (yp) methods of obtaining money that he does not have to justify the use of.

In comparison with Participants’ own life stories (in the same session), there is a clear implicit contrast between Participants’ exercise of responsibility and agency during their teenage years. Josephine (p) insists that she chose to work, to make money and to contribute to her household, and Peryiar (yp) cannot work due to his immigration status.

Representations/Images that arise:

A swindler, entrepreneurial
Separate from Participants’ own teenage experience
A-cultural

How is the process of data analysis (see 4.2, p. 124) visible in the two situations above? The first stage of analysis is present in the narrative description of the situation, a section that contains Participants' interpretations and the logic they used. That logic comes to the fore when reading the data through Engeström's '*layers of causality in human action*' (see 4.2.2.1, p. 128). The second stage of analysis is visible in the section entitled 'concepts at play'. Those conceptual boundaries appear either through a contradiction noticed by the Participants themselves or through other relevant data. The aim is to reveal attributes attached to an idea or determinations around specific concepts such as 'engagement', 'participation' or 'rich child'. The statutory or policy framework is then brought to bear on the interpretations of the situation. This process contrasts and highlights the boundaries and different meanings of a concept the Participants used to reach goals and some of their motivations to act in a given manner.

The images or representations Participants hold of the young people can now be deduced from the first two stages of the analysis, and they are listed in the third section as images that arise.

This process has been repeated with the remaining situations and is available in Appendix 3, p. 308.

While I addressed at length the decisions made to plan the workshops and the methodology for data analysis in Chapter 4, p. 113, I want to emphasise here the main purpose with which I have selected significant aspects of data during the analysis: it is to show how Participants interpret the situations that are constitutive of everyday life in the children's home. Some way through the data analysis, I came to realise that the interpretations were selective. Specific aspects of the young people's activity were ignored. Through conversations with and observation of the young people, I was nevertheless aware of their importance to the young people. I have therefore decided to problematise my own understandings and observations in those everyday situations through cross-comparison with the available data. Those seven situations are namely:

- Situation 9. 'Ex-resident's Visit'
- Situation 13. 'John (yp) Communal Meals'
- Situation 15. 'Luis (yp) Moving to His Foster Carers'
- Situation 17. 'Manmohan (yp)/ Mithum (yp) Playing Xbox'
- Situation 21. 'Political Conversations'

- Situation 22. ‘Ralph (yp) Sharing Sofa 16th October’
- Situation 31. ‘Youth Club Mithum (yp)’

This focus on meanings and interpretations that are invisible to Participants but not to young people needs attention because it is a mechanism highlighted by others in the literature review (see 2.1.4.4, p. 58 and 2.2.4.2, p. 77), the literature on the ‘invisibility of children’ (La Fontaine & Rydstrøm, 1999; Mayall, 2002) and more specifically on invisibilisation processes created by the ‘bureaucratic capture’ of young people’s experiences described by Humphris and Sigona (2019b).

I return to this invisibilisation at the conclusion of this chapter, while the following section turns to the findings following the analysis of the 31 situations presented in Appendix 3).

6.2 Representations and Images at Play During the Fieldwork

Ilyenkov’s ideas on images (see 3.2.3, p. 101) read within the description of the context of the home (see 5, p. 142) imply that images are highly situated, malleable through interaction, and time-bound. Ontologically, *images* belong to the realm of intentions and *concrete activity* refers to as goals and needs (Ilyenkov, 2010, p. 16), while representations are more schematic and automatic, having already taken up their *citizenship in the world of language* (Ilyenkov, 2009, p. 221). Ilyenkov brings nuanced distinctions between the two terms, in that an image is unique to the intention and activity of an individual in a given situation, while representations are more schematic, linked to language and social constructs. When introducing this earlier (see 3.2.3.2, p. 102), I linked it to different approaches to professional practice: one that is more procedural, while the other assumed a more conscious response to the situation. This is relevant in the data in that many of the findings are more representations than images. For reasons of clarity, I will use representations rather than images when indicated by the above distinction.

Having clarified language use, I now present the findings: first through a frequency table (see figure 16), then through a generic description of each recurring representation or image.

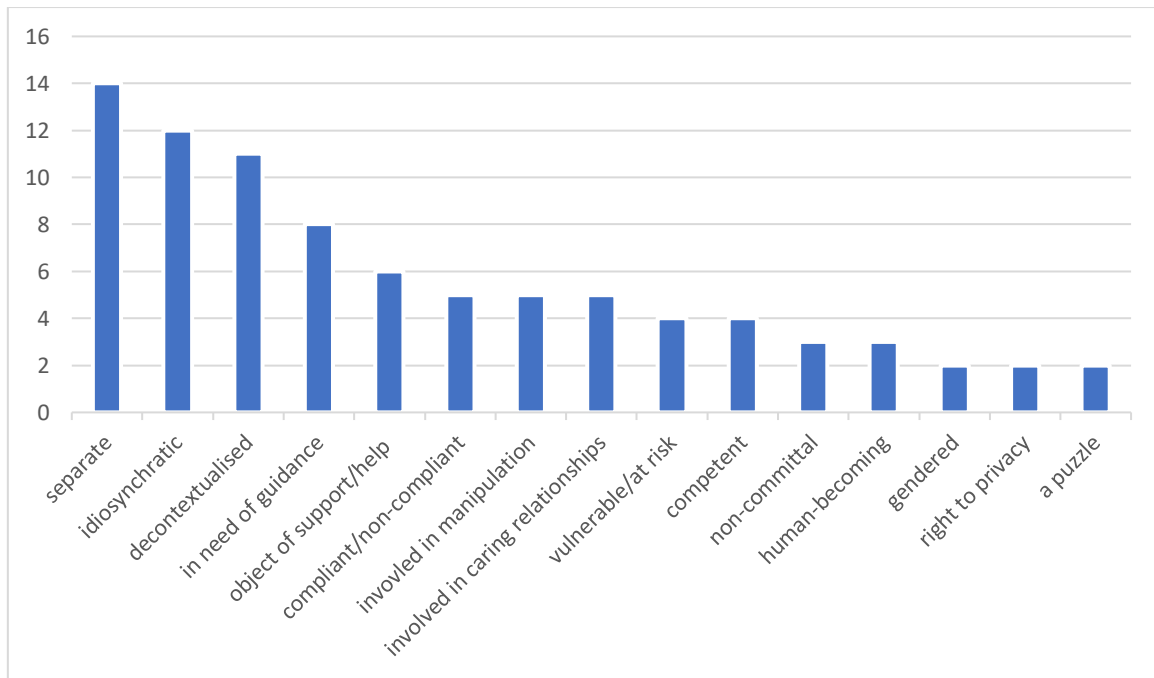


Figure 16: Representations and images in the data by order of frequency

The images or representations that guide the situated judgment of residential care workers are varied, and one of them, ‘involved in caring relationships’ does resonate with Malaguzzi’s rich child (see 2.1, p. 44). This is, however, infrequent in the data, in a way that corroborates negative constructions of ‘child in care’ presented in the literature review (see 1.1.1, p. 14 and 2.2.4.2, p. 77). How, though, are those meanings manifesting in the data, and the Participants’ interpretations of their professional decisions? I now examine each child as separate, and child as decontextualised, in turn.

6.2.1 *Separate*

This representation of young people as separate from adults It recurred in 14 of the 31 situations interpreted and is the most frequent representation arising from all the situations. It was also associated as a secondary assumption with several idiosyncratic representations (see 6.2.2, p.181). This indicates that young people in the children’s home operate in a different sphere to that of the adults. The separation is, as we shall see, expressed concerning the adults in the home, but also to mainstream society in different ways.

Young people are being described as:

- ‘difficult to catch’, in a way that requires the Participants to position themselves in specific locations in the home (the hallway and staircase) when needing to interact with young people.
- requiring a different type of communication to one that Participants use with other people.
- requiring education as to the expectations of everyday practices in the home. This may be because, while both young people and Participants appear to have similar aims (such as sharing meals, making friends, or discussing their wishes and the daily life of the home), in fact it is how both groups go about their aims that creates the separation. For example, the Participants set the table with individual placeholders, and the food is plated up individually in the kitchen, whereas one young person describes how communally he would set up the dining space if he could. This suggests that practices marking belonging to different cultures may be shaping this separation, but also that the Participants’ habits take precedence over that of the young people.

Separation is apparent from a spatial and relational point of view with the Participants but also with each other and other young people in that:

- a physical demarcation in the spatial layout of the home may sometimes be used to act within specific situations. For example the office may only be entered by a young person when invited in, for example for a private conversation. Often Participants talk about ‘being on the floor’ or ‘out there’, by which they mean being in spaces where young people are also allowed to be.
- young people seeking asylum in the UK are assumed to care for each other, under the assumption that their journey to the UK has created bonds, Whereas care expressed across cultural groups, and in other situations, is surprising to some Participants.
- young people are spoken about as separated into different groups, those who engage with the support provided by the team and those who do not.
- young people in the home are also thought of as separate from other children, simply because the reality of their daily lives is far from the practices one expects in a mainstream British family. This is visible in the data in discussions around pocket money or the distribution of chores in the home. There is a strong tendency to aim for the ideal of the ‘mainstream British family’, yet with a coexisting understanding that

the home is a different sort of institution and that the residential home cannot function in the same way.

The separation between the young people, the Participants and other aspects of society is deeply embedded in the life space of the home. It is a norm that is not easily brought to awareness, and my reflective notes from the fieldwork describe this separation as ‘a wall of silence’, an ‘emotional boundary’, reflecting my hope that Participants and young people would eventually ‘lower their guard with each other’. This separation is situational, however. For example, in Situation 11, ‘Ishwar (yp) Shoplifting’, Cicely (p) wants to introduce the norms of the home to a professional unfamiliar with it. She consciously relies on the separation between young people in the home and mainstream family life to communicate this. When mediating between Ishwar (yp) and that same professional, she makes use of this knowledge to stand with Ishwar (yp) in interpreting the circumstances of his life, so the professional does not penalise Ishwar (yp). In Situation 2, ‘28th of November Sitting on the Bench’, on the other hand, she sees herself as separate from young people and acts upon this. This demonstrates some situational awareness of this tacit separation.

6.2.2 *Idiosyncratic*

I named the second most frequent group of representations ‘idiosyncratic’ because each only appear once in the data.

There are some overlapping themes, however, in representations of young people as subjected to strong emotions, which is different for adults. For example, Situation 12, ‘John (yp) Abigail Kitchen’ is embedded with meaning because John (yp) is perceived as caught up with emotions. The associations work because they rely on a cluster of binaries that combine:

- present/future
- emotions/ reflection and rationality
- young people/adults

This association between young people and emotions, compared with adults and rationality, is present yet transformed when it concerns Ron (yp), who is thought of as ‘in control’ (Situation 25, ‘Ron (yp) Engaging in Education’). The association here is that he gives *rational* explanations for his actions, which are associated with being adult, although this goes against Participants’ beliefs in what could contribute to Ron’s (yp) well-being.

Another representation in Situation 28, 'Sunday Homework' is interesting because it is created by collapsing two separate concepts into each other rather than being generated by the boundary between them. In describing how Sunday was, in her eyes, a good day, Cicely (p) takes the positives of the day she refers to (the respect young people show each other, the connection she shared with a young person through their common love of Italian coffee, the relaxed atmosphere) and equates it with *'how it should be in a family on Sunday'*.

It is also important to know that this surprise and serendipity are expressed in several of the situations perceived as positive (Situation 9, 'Ex-resident's Visit'; Situation 16, 'Residents' Meeting'; Situation 19, 'Peryiar (yp) Calling Doctor').

One of the representations I conjure up during Situation 18, 'Peryiar's (yp) Birthday' is that of a materialistic young person. Indeed, in our conversation, I redirected his focus on presents and birthday money towards the relational and affective aspects of celebrating birthdays in Britain. In doing so, I had not acknowledged that affecting him there are clear policy guidelines about birthday money and presents that regulate his experience of birthdays, which Peryiar (yp) would certainly have been aware of.

Seven other images or representations that have idiosyncratic elements to them arise through the separation between adults and young people (see 6.2.1, p. 179). Young people are thought of as 'without knowledge of the system', 'with regrets', 'dissatisfied' or 'expendable'. For example, the reason Ron (yp) is represented as expendable (Situation 24, 'Ron (yp) During the First Session') arises is because I worry about the consequences of including him in the first workshop with Participants without prior consultation. This was warranted, to my mind, by his interactions with myself and other participants on the day. However, this would have broken the norm of young people as separate from the Participants.

Overall, this group of idiosyncratic representations demonstrates how interconnected they can be within the activity of the case study home. The representations appear only once in the data, yet they can easily be associated with more frequent ones, such as 'separated' or 'in need of guidance'. They also highlight wider mechanisms at play, for example, through the reliance on binaries between rationality and emotionality to create the representation of 'young people caught up in emotions' in a manner reminiscent of Hill Collins' (2009) or Laurence's (1982) description of images (see 2.1.3.2, p. 51).

6.2.3 Decontextualised

This grouping of images or representations is different from others in how they feature in the data, in that they are an absence, where possible cultural and political interpretations generated by young people have been erased or invisibilised.

In five of the images of young people as ‘decontextualised’, it is the cultural meanings young people attribute to the situation that are hidden due to the adults’ reframing or associating a more ‘appropriate’ meaning to the events in focus. In Situation 27, ‘Shopping with Peryiar (yp)’, it is a young person’s subtle understanding of where to follow his ‘own country’s practices of haggling and where to observe British practices around money that is being dismissed. Instead, Participants prefer an explanation that emphasises their experience of being ‘manipulated’ by the young people. In others, it is the lack of cultural understanding that young people may attribute to the situation that highlights mainstream, British, Christian explanations about a given situation.

Indeed, the other type of decontextualisation that occurs when thinking of young people is to strip them of their political agency. In four situations (Situation 15, ‘Luis (yp) Moving to His Foster Carers’; Situation 18, ‘Peryiar’s (yp) Birthday’; Situation 21, ‘Political Conversations’; Situation 23, ‘Ralph (yp) 22nd of January Not Eating’), the young people clearly express what I identify as political views. They may be publicly protesting against how they are being treated through hunger strikes or withdrawing their participation, yet this is ignored and even belittled. In their understanding of those situations, the Participants drew on the logic of needs (see 1.2.2.1, p. 27; 2.2.2.2, p. 67 and 2.2.4.2, p. 77) to explain and re-define the young people’s chosen ways of acting by making them the recipients of specific interventions depending on assessed or perceived needs.

Further, there are three instances in the data where young people are curious about political issues, current affairs and the different political histories of their countries of origin compared with those of the UK. Such curiosity only appears in the Participants’ views of the young people when associated with their compliance with anti-extremist guidance, which itself may be seen as an expression of the technical-rational logic that permeates RCC.

The last representation that invisibilises the young people’s interpretation is their portrayal as ‘a-financial’. In Situation 5, ‘Attending a Football Match’, young people are thought of as

lacking financial maturity. This is within the situated constraints that come with pocket or clothing money and other allowances (see 5.2.3.2, p. 165). Rather, expectations around young people's compliance are modelled on the mainstream family model. Yet, the young people's interest in money comes in many guises (Situation 16, 'Residents' Meeting'; Situation 27 'Shopping with Peryiar (yp)'; Situation 30, 'Young People Asking Staff for Money'). Indeed, Cicely notices that this is the only topic they consistently and frequently ask to be put on the agenda during the 'young people meeting' (see 5.2.3.2, p. 165).

In this group of images both 'need' and technical-rational logic are most clearly at work. It appears in the data as silence, and only through the young people's direct participation in the data-gathering process is it possible to become aware of this phenomenon.

6.2.4 In Need of Guidance

Participants think relationally of young people as 'in need of guidance'. This relational characterisation is present in two different ways: The stronger one is about young people's potential acculturation into UK norms and practices, and the other is educational. Questions of acculturation were specific to young people who were seeking asylum in the UK.

The young people are seen as needing cultural guidance in that they need some kind of initiation into British traditions and rituals, such as birthdays or making real to them the political institutions that impact their lives (Situation 29, 'Visit to the Houses of Parliament').

There is an expectation that if a young person does not act, it is because they do not understand the implications of specific artefacts such as a debt collection letter for their lives (Situation 11, 'Ishwar (yp) Shoplifting'). Another explanation for this lack of action may be the young people's response to Home Office policies (Chase, 2010), yet this is not considered by Participants.

In two situations (Situation 16, 'Residents' Meeting'; Situation 28, 'Sunday Homework') that are recounted by Participants as 'good days', the young people comply with Western, Christian standards of the nuclear family, and this obscures the young people's differing cultural practices around eating and rest.

Mainstream society can construe young people as apolitical (Marsh et al., 2007), and within RCC the societal and statutory pressure to check for extremist and radical views shapes

young people's political interests and opinions in a way that makes them suspicious (Situation 21 'Political Conversations').

The other type of guidance Participants believe young people may benefit from is more general, in line with ideas around upbringing and education. Indeed, a young person is described as ruled by emotion (Situation 12, 'John (yp) Abigail Kitchen'), acting spontaneously and therefore needing guidance to develop their capacity to think. This comes strongly, too, in the emphasis on planning activities (Situation 5, 'Attending a Football Match'; Situation 8, 'Cinema Outing').

One interesting aspect of this representation comes from Participants' attempts to mediate between young people and social expectations. In doing so, Participants are prone to highlight the structural discrimination at play for the young person, and to guide young people so they understand how the actions they take in the present will impact their future (Situation 8, 'Cinema Outing'; Situation 11, 'Ishwar (yp) Shoplifting'; Situation 12, 'John (yp) Abigail Kitchen'; Situation 14, 'John (yp) Eunice (p) College'; Situation 20, 'Peryiar (yp) Cannabis Smoking Meeting'; Situation 25, 'Ron (yp) Engaging in Education'). There is also a clear intention to help young people understand the value of money (Situation 5, 'Attending a Football Match'; Situation 11, 'Ishwar (yp) Shoplifting'; Situation 30, 'Young People Asking Staff for Money').

In some instances, the data showed young people can welcome this guidance: for example, Ralph (yp) explains about one Participant that '*She helps me*' (see 5.2.4, p. 168) while Luis (yp) gives examples as to what he expects from Participants on at least two occasions (Situation 15, 'Luis (yp) Moving to His Foster Carer').

Another way Participants think of young people is as 'objects of support/help'. This representational also relates to the role Participants play, as in the example presented above.

6.2.5 Object of Support/Help

The situations that gave rise to the image or representations of young people as objects of support or help are dynamic, in Ilyenkovian terms, as they are the only examples of self-advocacy by young people present in the data. This is why I would argue that, despite following societal expectations and constructs, young people thought of as objects of support or help are closer to Ilyenkovian images than representations (see 3.2.3.2, p. 102). Below I

organise relevant aspects of the data along a continuum from Ilyenkovian representations to images.

The first assumption attached to young people as objects of help requires their genuine engagement with the situation. Eunice (p) is very clear that unless she feels that John (yp) is being truthful and honest, she will not be able to ‘work with him’ around college attendance (Situation 14, ‘John (yp) Eunice (p) College’).

Another aspect of this representation is the passivity and assumed helplessness the young people are thought of as having. When Cicely (p) acts as an advocate between the debt recovery agency and Ishwar (yp), she articulates the systemic discrimination he is faced with because of his status as a looked-after child and his temporary immigration status (Situation 11, ‘Ishwar (yp) Shoplifting’). She positions Ishwar (yp) as inactive and states that he does not understand the language of the letter or how the situation could impact him both in the present and the future.

Luis’s (yp) placement plan describes him as an object of support, detailing his emotional needs and needs that arise from the difficult and prolonged transition he is experiencing (Situation 15, ‘Luis (yp) Moving to His Foster Carer’). Luis (yp) interprets the situation differently, however, seeing it as political. He engages in protest by refusing to speak and participate in activities, thus demonstrating his refusal of the institutionalisation of both the home and his school. This is not spoken about by the Participants, and I would argue they replace it with the logic of need they are required to adopt with other professionals.

Participants assuming Luis (yp) needs support is strongly linked to s being decontextualised and apolitical.

The last instance of a young person’s image being an object of help and support is not problematised by Participants but by my bringing together observations, information gained during interviews, and observation sessions. In this instance (Situation 22, ‘Ralph (yp) Sharing Sofa 16th of October’), Ralph (yp) was seen as an object of help and support because of an incident where he displayed ‘sexualised behaviour’ towards a member of staff. I was not given much information about the event, and for ethical reasons, I have not accessed the incident report (see 4.3.1.2, p. 135), but it is clear that the sexual nature of the incident is what calls for intervention outside of the home, and the high level of resources put in place

(panic alarms for Participants and extra ‘one-to-one’¹ staffing for a period lasting a couple of weeks). What both Eunice (p) and Cicely (p) emphasise in the interview is that the team works with very scant information about Ralph (yp). He only arrived in the country recently and has no records. It may be that this is why his active protest and negotiation may have quickened the decision to stop the extra ‘one-to-one’ staffing shortly afterwards. So, while for a short time Ralph (yp) was understood as an object of help and cast as a sexual predator, his energetic contribution to the situation appears to have influenced the Participants’ image of him for the better. Further, the interventions put in place are a procedural response. It is through the application of ‘*Working together*’ guidance (Department for Education, 2015c) that a multiagency response is triggered, putting in question the scale of the intervention and the capacity of the team to tailor it responsively to what happens in the home. There are different views as to what constitutes behaviours of concern (interview Eunice (p) 0’34’’19 – 0’34’’52) amongst different agencies, which hints that there may have been other ways to work with Ralph in this situation but that this was not recognised by other professionals and agencies. This shows how the image of an ‘object of help’ can be shaped in part by the procedural nature of residential care work.

On several occasions, young people alluded to the fact that they think of the Participant as a source of help (Change Lab Session 2 29th November 0’23’’59 – 0’26’’59, Observation session 18th December), which shows acceptance and awareness of their position in the social fabric of the home.

All in all, the representations described above, paragraph highlight how the tools and ways of acting at the disposal of the Participants influence the representations they hold of the young people. Safeguarding procedures and the logic of needs have played a part in the assumptions Participants have of the young people. Yet in one instance, the representation changes in response to the actions of a young person. This is more closely related to the process of change and responsiveness which Ilyenkov gives an account of in *Psychology* (Ilyenkov, 2010a) when describing images.

¹ In the everyday language of RCC, ‘one-to-one’ refers to workers’ allocation to specific young people. In the fieldwork setting, there was an expectation that young people did not require constant attention and support; therefore workers were ‘allocated’ one worker to three young people. In this instance, this means that Ralph (yp) will have one member of staff with him at all times, which makes him stand out from others.

6.2.6 Compliant

There are some variations in the meaning of compliance in the representation in this group. This has to do with the young people's willingness to submit to the expectations of the Participants.

Two representations are related to compliance with the rules: one is the fact that young people smoke cannabis in Hilltop (Situation 20, 'Peryiar (yp) Cannabis Smoking Meeting') and the other is highlighted in situations relating to residents' meetings (Situation 16, 'Residents' Meeting').

In the first instance, the fact that cannabis use is illegal in the UK creates discomfort for the Participants. This is ignored during a discussion focusing on supporting Peryiar's (yp) health (Situation 20, 'Peryiar (yp) Cannabis Smoking Meeting'), yet several coercive measures impact the situation without being acknowledged. This is hinted at a difference, in terms of conscious awareness and decision-making, between these measures and the work towards supporting Peryiar's (yp) health. The coercive and somewhat tacit practices include having to go shopping with an adult who will handle the money and the use of window restrictors to stop young people from gathering in a well-ventilated room when they smoke. Such practices are commonly used in the fieldwork setting and are understood as reasonable steps to prevent young people from smoking cannabis, yet the smoking is ongoing at Hilltop.

The other situation (Situation 16, 'Residents' Meeting') is informative because it highlights different perceptions of norms and rules between Participants and young people. There are quite a lot of instances in the data where Participants struggle to express clearly what rules and norms are in the home. Young people, on the other hand, comment on the fact that the rules are inconsistent. Could it be that this different experience with of creates the representation of young people as non-compliant?

Another set of assumptions linked to young people's compliance is related to social and cultural expectations (Situation 19, 'Peryiar (yp) Calls Doctor' and Situation 28, 'Sunday Homework' with Situation 29, 'Visit to the Houses of Parliament'). In these representations, young people willingly conform to wider social constructs, such as having a 'homely' day on a Sunday by conforming to ideals around Sunday rest, or being allowed to ignore the formal and overly complicated language of tour guides when visiting a site of national significance.

In two out of three situations, the Participants expressed positive feelings towards the young people and the situation. Those are good moments for the Participants, that stand out in the everyday. In those situations, the young people involved are those who grew up outside of Europe. It may be that the representation of young people as compliant is linked to notions of Britishness in the case study home. This may be an instance of the differential treatment I identify for those young people seeking asylum in the UK and those born British.

6.2.7 Involved in Manipulation

In this group of representation, young people appear as manipulating their environment to their advantage, as much as Participants themselves manipulate the young people.

One of the points of conflict between Participants and young people in Hilltop centred around money, and the representation of young people as manipulative is visible here. Indeed, in Situation 27, 'Shopping with Peryiar (yp)', Peryiar (yp) characterised as a swindler.

'*Swindler*' is a word chosen by Josephine (p) to describe how Peryiar (yp) takes advantage of the bond he has with a local shopkeeper (they speak the same language and come from the same region) to his advantage. The representation captures the feelings of the Participants' towards the young person. They may themselves e feeling manipulated and unable to intervene positively in the situation. This representation of the young people as manipulative also appears when Ram (p) talks about the young people as '*quite creative, they're very creative because [...] they're pulling wool over our eyes with their tricks you know how to get money, you know, leave the house*' (Ram (p) Change Lab 7 24th January 00'15'' – 00'16'13). There is also a generic assumption made about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children in Situation 3, 'Age Assessment' who are lying about their age.

This representation of young people as manipulative appears throughout the data in different ways, such as being 'attention seekers' (Situation 24, 'Ron (yp) During the First Session') but also during Workshop 6 when talking about Luis (yp). There is a Participants' norm underlying the response to Luis'(yp) perceived demandingness: Alexis (p) refers to the importance of not giving in to the young people's demands and, when her colleague does not comply with this expectation, it needs to be stated as a clear expectation for all members of the staff team.

Participants also may be said to manipulate young people. This appears in different ways, such as Situation 3, 'Age Assessment', whereby the social worker portrayed by Josephine (p) assumes the young person has so little knowledge of the system that his demands can be redirected towards procedural solutions.

In Situation 24, 'Ron (yp) During the First Session', Eunice (p) and Kelly (p) are disguising their actual purpose -checking on Ron's (yp) emotional state-, which is later described as a legitimate way of working. Laura (p) talks about a 'dance' that provides structure for the young people. What Laura (p) highlights is that Participants

just [...] pretend "I'm going to do something and then check the situation", eh, and then I think this, that seems to work, eh with the kids, that there is this kind of structure, but not no structure from the, I guess their point of view.

(Transcript Session 1 22 November 0'59"17 – 01'00"32)

This hints that the Participants are not open and honest with the young people about their intentions, as if it is important that somehow the young people do not know what the Participants are doing. Whether or not the young people see through the pretence is not visible in the data. Looking at the intentions of the Participants to respond to Ron (yp) at the time Laura's (p) reflection was made (Situation 24, 'Ron (yp) During First Session'), it seems that Participants are balancing the different aspects of a sensitive situation, taking into account their understanding of what is expected of them, and at the same time their negative perception of Ron's (yp) intentions are understandable given the constraints they are working under. At the same time, a norm around not communicating adults' intentions is at play here.

The representation of young people as involved in manipulation also reveals the strength of the link between justifications for Participants' professional decisions and their feelings of powerlessness. This is not unexpected, but quite far from the rational, repetitive, and procedural reporting framework they are used to in communicating with other professionals (visible, for example, in the young people's placement plans). This shows some of the difficult feelings that residential care work induces. Yet this representation of young people as manipulative also highlights how Participants do not separate the restrictions on their capacity to act, from the feelings this generates, and from their understanding of the young people's actions. I link this to the tacit nature of much of RCC work (Boddy & Cameron, 2006; Reinders, 2010; Steckley, 2015).

6.2.8 Involved in Caring Relationships

There are five situations where young people are thought of as involved in caring relationships, either amongst themselves or between Participants and young people (Situation 4, 'ASI Ron (yp) and Kelly (p)'; Situation 9, 'Ex-residents' Visit'; Situation 10, 'Eid Celebration'; Situation 23, 'Ralph 22nd January Not Eating'; Situation 28, 'Sunday Homework'). In two of those situations, the data show an element of Participants' surprise when confronted with evidence of young people's social connections. An example appears in Situation 9, 'Ex-residents' Visit' when an ex-resident comes to visit the home and a Participant whom he might have known when he was living there. The Participants' surprise lies in the strength of the young people's social network. The other element of surprise is stressed in Situation 23, 'Ralph 22nd January Not Eating' where the fact that Ishwar (yp) is aware of Ron's (yp) struggle with food and encourages him to eat is commented upon. There is an element of separation here too, as a similar supportive relationship is noted between Mithum (yp) and Ralph (yp), but this does not evoke surprise. The only difference between the two sets of young people is that Ron (yp) and Ishwar (yp) are of different ethnic groups, Ron (yp) being White British and Ishwar (yp) Arabic.

The second theme that appears in the representation of young people involved in caring relationships is based on relationships between Participants and young people. Those descriptions contrast with the image of young people as 'separated'. Indeed, in Situation 28, 'Sunday Homework', Cicely (p) holds an image of young people as caring, and this manifests in her description of how young people can share both space and preferences and the Participants's positive attention. Cicely (p) highlights the respect that is present during that day, and while this is not clearly stated, she expresses a certain amount of wonder and incredulity when saying: *'This didn't feel like hard work'*.

This serendipity is also present in the last image of young people involved in caring relationships, an image describing Ron (yp) and Kelly's (p) bond (Situation 4, 'ASI Ron (yp) and Kelly (p)'). This is quite specific and situational to them both, in elements of their history. Kelly (p) administering an Attachment Style Interview (Bifulco et al., 2017) to Ron (yp) is described as shaping their relationship uniquely. For example, Cicely, in her interview, explains how Ron (yp) expresses care for Kelly (p) in an unexpected manner. This is striking because there is little in the data that allows us to expand on how Participants view unique and strong relationships between RCC workers and young people in how they describe Kelly

(p) and Ron's (yp). Building relationships with Ron (yp) is a recurring theme in the data, but is not relationships with other young people. This is an important silence. As social pedagogy practitioners, the Participants would have been trained to develop a sensitivity to this (e.g Bryderup & Frørup, 2011; P. Petrie, 2011; P. Petrie et al., 2009; Petrie & Eichsteller, 2013; Smith et al., 2017; Thrana, 2016), yet it does not translate equally across all young people in Hilltop.

6.2.9 *Vulnerable or 'At Risk'*

The prevention of possible future negative or harmful behaviours is a common thread running through another group of representations, that of a young person 'vulnerable or at risk'. Part of the representation involves an orientation towards the future, something that is embedded within the statutory framework, which influences multiagency work. Indeed, in three situations (Situation 11, 'Ishwar (yp) Shoplifting', Situation 21, 'Political Conversations' and Situation 22, 'Ralph (yp) Sharing Sofa'), the representations arise concerning mandatory reporting duties: The first is a duty placed on the registered manager to work with their local police force and to reduce the criminalisation of young people (Department for Education, 2015a, p. 47). The second mandatory duty, to report politically motivated statements and behaviours stems from Prevent (Great Britain & Home Office, 2011), and the last duty is to report an instance of possible sexual assault towards the young person or by the young person (Department for Education, 2015c, p. 70).

All the representations of young people as 'at risk' arise through suspicions of illegal activity. In the data, the words 'at risk' are used to call on specific resources (extra staffing, anti-radicalisation training) and I would argue they are seen as tools to enable and allow Participants to connect with the multiagency network, and shape the young people's situation in specific and sometimes blunt ways (Situation 22. 'Ralph Sharing Sofa'). It is therefore understandable that Participants have been cautious in deploying this concerning John (yp) and only do it indirectly.

The representation of young people as 'at risk or vulnerable' exemplifies a technical-rational logic at play, and how, through an awareness of its consequences, Participants are using some discretion to deploy those tools. It is likely, but not visible in the data, that the staff hierarchy in the home plays an important role here. It may be that while the registered manager becomes legally responsible, the rest of the team is not as directly impacted if a given

decision is under retrospective scrutiny. This may further shape the representation of a given young person.

6.2.10 Competent

Four situations in the data call for the representation of young people as competent (Situation 20, ‘Peryiar (yp) Cannabis Smoking Meeting’; Situation 25, ‘Ron (yp) Engaging in Education’; Situation 26, ‘Participating in Annual Reviews’; Situation 6, ‘Making the Boxes’). While the term ‘competent’ is one that Malaguzzi used to characterise the ‘rich child’ (Malaguzzi, 1993b, p. 10), the meaning within the data is much narrower.

This is apparent in Situation 20, ‘Peryiar (yp) Cannabis Smoking Meeting’, where Alexis (p) works from a representation of Peryiar (yp) as competent in giving rational explanations for his decisions. Yet, in the context of the many attempts to stop Peryiar (yp) from smoking cannabis, this is rather odd. Why would Alexis (p) think of Peryiar (yp) as competent when she clearly states her worry about his health? There seems to be a disconnect between the conversations Alexis (p) reports in her meeting with Peryiar (yp) and all the factors that affect his situation (Home Office decisions, racial tensions within the home, the illegality of smoking cannabis, the concerns around his health, his disengagement with education). Many of those are addressed tacitly, and they are likely discussed only perfunctorily, if at all, with Peryiar (yp). For example, there is mention of putting window restrictors on his windows or reducing his access to cash as a measure to support his choices, yet there is no evidence in the data that this created opportunities for discussion and learning, or how they were perceived by Peryiar (yp) at the time. Rather, the representation of Peryiar (yp) as competent stems from the fact that he gives rational reasons for his decisions. The use of ‘rationality’ when Peryiar (yp) advocates for himself is reminiscent of the binaries based on associations between emotional reactions and young people on the one hand, and rational behaviour and adulthood presence on the other in idiosyncratic, unique representations (see 6.2.2, p. 181). By calling upon this binary, Alexis (p) may be seen as lifting Peryiar (yp) out of the realm of childhood and into adulthood. It also makes it difficult for Alexis (p) and her colleagues to engage in a caring process around Peryiar’s (yp) health.

The focus on young people’s competence to rationalise their decisions is also found in Situation 26, ‘Participating in Annual Reviews’, where Ron (yp) refuses to engage in Annual

Reviews¹. The data reveal that this is accepted by the Participants. However, this separates Ron (yp) from other young people at Hilltop. Throughout the data, there is an acceptance of Ron's (yp) idiosyncrasies, of his refusal to engage with the processes that the home should support him with, such as education and taking steps towards an adult life where he participates in legal activities, for example, engaging in training or work. This casts Ron's (yp) identity apart from other young people because Participants assume that their habitual ways of working will not work. There is a sense in the data that Ron (yp) is respected by Participants, which is not present with other young people.

This 'competency in knowing what to say' echoes Situation 25, 'Ron (yp) Engaging in Education', where Ron's (yp) decision not to engage with his tutor and his general reluctance towards formal education is contrasted with activities he is believed to be good at.

Participants identify 'fixing motorbikes', 'playing football', 'maths and numbers'. Again, Participants are ambivalent towards those competencies and on how to build on them in the everyday because of the worry that Ron (yp) will use them for illegal means. Participants also believe he sees illegal activities from a particular adult point of view (Situation 6, 'Making the Boxes'). They understand it as a job role from his point of view, a transaction where he expects a good financial reward for his work. In that sense, this shows that the representation of a competent young person can be linked with young people's positions within the economic sphere.

Overall, the representation of young people as competent is restricted because of their age and the worry Participants have about their future economic prospects. The representation highlights binary associations concerning rational decision-making and finances.

6.2.11 Non-Committal

During the workshops, Participants consciously wanted to address issues around the 'engagement' of young people in the life of the home. From this arose a representation of young people as non-committal, sometimes is related to the age difference between adults and young people and sometimes associated with a certain resentment towards the young

¹ Statutory meetings where the care of a young person in care is reviewed, these meetings are compulsory points in times when the rights of the child to participate in decisions made about their lives is most likely to happen because legally required (Bolin, 2016; Diaz et al., 2018; Kennan et al., 2018)

people for not recognising the work the Participants do (see, for example, Situation 24, 'Ron (yp) During the First Session').

However, the thread of young people being non-committal ran deeper into the many layers of relationships within the home. At the surface level, young people are characterised as not committing to activities, so the solution is thought to be to ask young people to reimburse the cost of an activity to which they agree initially, but eventually do not take part in (Situation 5, 'Attending a Football Match'). They also adapt their communication style to a light-hearted one, which is thought to suit young people better. Those two responses to everyday situations might highlight the difficulty of conceptually associating money and young people in Participants' minds. Indeed, the sociology of childhood established early the complex relationship between childhood and money, where childhood appears excluded from the economic sphere, despite important symbolic and other associations between children and money in Western societies (Katz, 2004; Watson, 2009; Zelizer, 1994).

Participants' expectations of how young people should exercise commitment runs deeper as they expect young people to take some responsibility in the running of the home through their active participation in the residents' meetings (Situation 16, 'Residents' Meetings') or when planning outings and activities (Situation 5, 'Attending a Football Match'; Situation 8, 'Cinema Outing'). But the young people's response is not consistent; and Rex (p) and I observed that the young people are expecting the Participants to take responsibility. For example: they may put all responsibility for them onto adults Situation 8, 'Cinema Outing'); Manmohan (yp) stopped engaging in conversations when such matters were raised (Observation visit on 27 November 2017).

It seems that the representation of young people as 'non-committal' is generated by the power dynamics between Participants and young people. The concepts at play in Situation 16, 'Resident's Meeting' highlight the differences between Participants' and young people's concepts of 'responsibility', where the young people describe how their responsibility is circumscribed by adults, whereas Participants give it a broader, more individualistic definition.

Young people are also constructed as non-committal when they do not engage in education. The example of John's (yp) patchy attendance at college (Situation 14, 'John (yp) Eunice (p) College') is not problematised further, but Peryiar's (yp) situation is (Situation 20, 'Peryiar

(yp) Cannabis Smoking Meeting’). In the discussions around his non-attendance at college, Participants describe Peryiar (yp) as depressed. Yet at the time of the discussion, the emphasis was still on Peryiar’s (yp) decision to smoke cannabis, and how that prevented him from going to college. His placement plan revealed that there are many other factors influencing his situation (such as inter-tribal relationships from his country of origin between himself and another resident, the separation from his family of origin, or his yet undecided immigration status). While they are known by Josephine (p) and Alexis (p), these elements are not taken into consideration at first during the workshop, and it takes both Laura's (p) and my intervention to arrive at a slightly different image of Peryiar (yp).

Overall, the representation of young people as non-committal reveals how the systemic constraints placed on young people are minimised and that, in Participants’ everyday practice, the capacity to act is attributed to the individual. Certain pieces of information appear to be ‘relevant’ while others are not in the process of making professional decisions for Participants. This is an indication of the nature of representations as partial and always contextual, and shows the importance of the group process in supporting Participant teams in working with representations and images of young people in their practice.

6.2.12 Human Becoming

The developmental view of children and young people that prevails in society, often referred to as children as ‘*human becomings*’ (Burman, 2017; Qvortrup, 2009; Stables, 2008) can be found in the data in Participants’ attention to the futurity of young people. While it is clear that this is somehow linked to representations of young people as in need of guidance or objects of support (see 6.2.4, p. 184 and 6.2.5, p. 185), some meanings focus more clearly on the adult person the young person will become. The distinction is important because this representation stems from understanding childhood as a stage of life, that places the object of Participants’ work as requiring care. Indeed, requiring guidance appears specific to preparing to become ‘adult’. This is apparent in the data in the following ways:

- how Cicely (p) and Vikam (p) talk about their actions towards Ishwar (yp) and John (yp) (Situation 11, ‘Ishwar (yp) Shoplifting’ and Situation 12, ‘John (yp) Abigail Kitchen’). This implies a sense of worry about the young people: while at present both boys have the support of the Participants, and their behaviours may be forgiven, Cicely (p) and Vikam (p) assume this will not be the case when they are adults. The worry for Ishwar (yp) is his inexperience around administrative procedures, and for

John (yp), it is the consequence of his lack of ‘self-control’ and rationality. This draws on the binary between children as full of emotions and adults as rational, as mentioned earlier (see 6.2.2, p. 181 and 6.2.11, p. 194).

- Ron’s (yp) futurity is present in the attention Participants pay to helping him create good habits despite the assumed likelihood that he will not agree to this if done upfront (Situation 24, ‘Ron (yp) During the First Session’). Indeed, Laura (p) talks about how the Participant ‘dances’ around the young people. Cicely expresses this worry when talking about Ron in her interview.

6.2.13 Right to Privacy, Gendered and a Puzzle

While those representations are present in the data, the insights that come from contrasting their meanings are not easily accessible because of the small number of situations within which they arise. This is why this paragraph will be brief: generalisations are difficult to ground in the data, and meanings cannot illuminate each other merely through juxtaposition.

There is one aspect of the Ilyenkovian image, (rather than representation, (see 3.2.3.2, p. 102 and 6.2, p. 178), of young people as a ‘puzzle’ that is worth noting. In both cases, this image arises because the Participants struggle to reconcile their aim for the young people they are working with and the conflicting messages the young person gives. In Situation 14, ‘John (yp) Eunice (p) College’, the image of John (yp) as a puzzle appears through Eunice’s (p) apparent refusal to draw negative conclusions about him. She holds back from implying that John (p) is lying; instead, she highlights the dilemma she faces. In Situation 22, ‘Ralph (yp) Sharing Sofa’, the lack of complete information is also apparent, and this is one of the situations where the most dialogue and change occur in the data.

The image of young people as a ‘puzzle’ may be an instance when Participants suspended their judgment to consider the situation they were facing. This is an important emergence highlighting the importance of suspension of judgment to hold in mind several aspects of a complex, seemingly contradictory situation.

The representations of young people as having a right to privacy and being gendered are not as easily summarised as that of the image of young people as a ‘puzzle’, and I invite the reader to consult Appendix 4 to understand them.

Given Green's (1998) findings about the strong heteronormative nature of relationships within RCC, I have been surprised by the relative absence of representations around gender. One factor that may explain this is that before the fieldwork started, a female young person left Hilltop. This meant that all the young people living in the home at the time of the fieldwork, identified as male, thus bringing fewer contrasting views and assumptions around gender to the situations. This is a limitation of the findings.

The analysis of 31 situations captured in the data highlights the complex relationships among the Participants' work environment, statutory guidance, other professionals they are accountable to, the young people themselves and the feelings that the work engenders. Images and representations are relational, situational and time-bound. Some show how difficult it is to differentiate between strong emotions, structural constraints and the young people themselves. Others are actively countered by the young people themselves, while still others appear in direct relation to statutory duties.

Methodologically, the data are based on group discussions, observations and consultation of documents chosen by the Participants. This makes it impossible to look at personal constructs and how Participants thought of individual young people in a personal sense (Gonzales Rey, 2008). The bonds of friendships and attachment, or rejection and indifference, which may be seen as characteristic of individual relationships within a children's home, are not explicitly part of how the findings are presented. However, it is possible to understand how institutional processes are at play in the representation the Participants hold of the young people, and under what conditions the more flexible and responsive Ilyenkovian images may arise. There is an important pattern in the frequency of representations and images that I now turn to.

6.3 From Individual Representations to Mechanisms of Othering

The representations and images presented above differed in themes, such as 'separated', 'decontextualised', or 'in need of guidance', but a pattern emerged through their repetition.

Mechanisms of power transpired in the interactions of different meanings attached to a given situation. Further, the analysis demonstrates how constructs of 'child' operate in the practice of RCC workers. For example, the socially constructed trope of the innocent child, resulting in children's and young people's exclusion from the economic sphere (Watson, 2009; Zelizer, 1994) is clearly at work in situations such as Situation 5, 'Attending a Football Match',

Situation 30, ‘Young People Asking Staff for Money’ or Situation 27, ‘Shopping with Peryiar (yp)’. Another example of the interaction between different constructs is the hegemony apparent in policy and institutional conceptualisations of child. It may come about through the absence of the construction of child from the Participant’s own socio-economic status or background and is a phenomenon recognised by scholars within the sociology of childhood at macro levels (K. Hanson et al., 2018). The trope of the ‘family’ as an idealised set of practices is also strongly present (Boddy, 2019), often concerning what Participants perceive as good days. Those tropes are meaningful to the Participants but are also reinforced by sector-wide and policy concepts (Plant, 2002).

In the literature review, the category of the ‘child in care as other’ or the ‘supported subject’, shaped by policies and concepts at the macro level, was prominent (Humphris & Sigona, 2019a, 2019b; L. Jones et al., 2020; Mannay et al., 2017; Meloni & Humphris, 2021; Plant, 2002). How does this translate at the level of individual relationships? It is clear from the data that there is a strong separation between the Participants and the young people, but can this be understood further?

A glance at the literature on othering (Cohen et al., 2017; Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012) brings interesting parallels with the frequency of representations found in the data and the possibility of making links between micro and macro levels within RCC. A sociological view on othering (see 2.1.4.3, p. 57) highlights a mechanism that comprises three components impacting the relationship between the people enacting the othering and those being othered (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 399; Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012, p. 300):

- a value judgment as to whether individuals in the group being othered are inherently good or bad;
- a physical and psychological separation between the two groups;
- a lack of knowledge of the culture and history of those who are othered.

To demonstrate how this is visible in the data, Figure 12, showing the frequency of different images and representations, is useful. I reproduce it here for ease of reading.

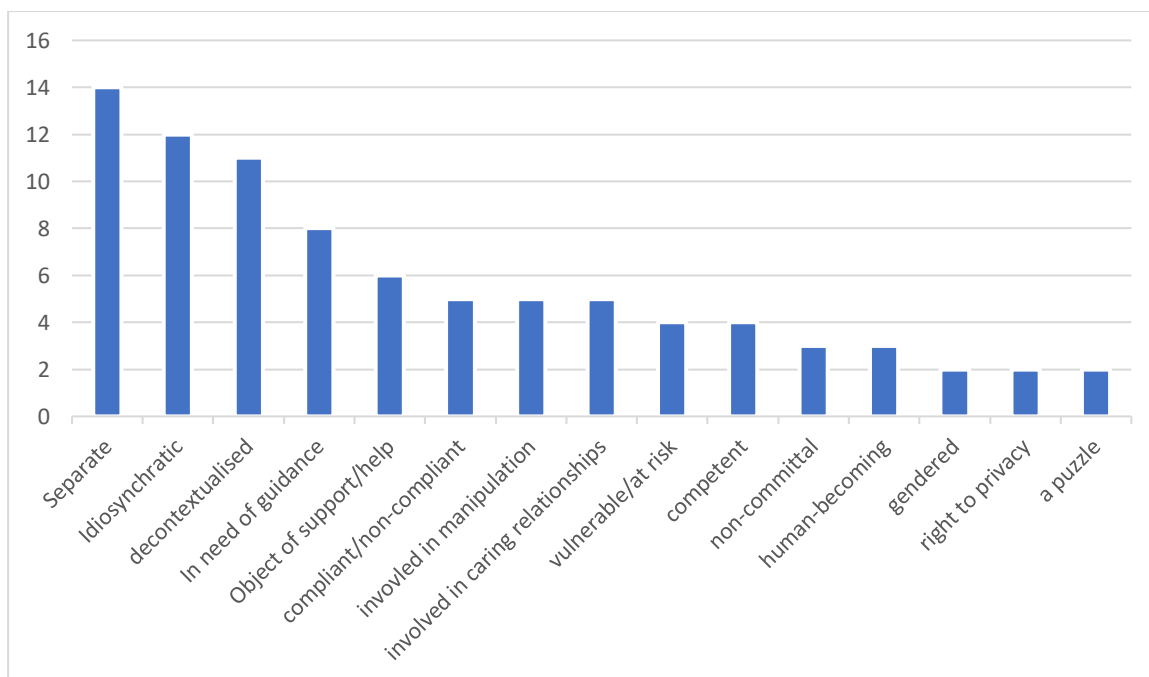


Figure 16: Frequency of representations and images in the data

Separation and lack of attention to personal meaning and cultural background feature highly in the representations and images, but the workings of this mechanism can be demonstrated further. I now turn to how all such components of this mechanism of othering are present in the data.

6.3.1 A Value Judgment on the Young People

The Participants' negative judgment towards the young people is perceptible in representations such as 'involved in manipulation', 'non-committal', or 'non-compliant'. The data highlighted a lack of understanding of the boundary between self, others and institutions in Participants' minds (see 6.2.6, p. 188; 6.2.7, p. 189 and 6.2.11, p. 194). In that sense, Ilyenkov's thinking on images and representations is apt (3.2.3, p. 101) because this traces the origin of an image or representation as the psychic work that orientates a subject's activity, arising from a need to the fulfilment of that need and taking into account all the obstacles and adjustments that are required to complete the task (Ilyenkov, 2010, pp. 22–23).

The messiness and unspoken nature of this process, away from safe and simple procedures, is likely to elicit guilty and shameful feelings. This is visible, for example, when Participants were asked to envisage what young people could become in the future. The data describe strong, negative feelings towards the young people, and it is especially the 'resistance' young people demonstrate towards the Participants' work that triggers strong emotional reactions in

Participants' interpretations. For example, there is resentment in Josephine's (p) reaction to Ron's (yp) angry outburst during Situation 24, 'Ron (yp) During the First Session', in Alexis' (p) attempts to coax Peryiar (yp) out of his habit of smoking cannabis (Situation 20, 'Peryiar (yp) Cannabis Smoking Meeting') and in Ram's (p) justification of young people as 'creative'. Those feelings are not processed and understood with the necessary and containing emotional distance Steckley (2018) argues is necessary to support young people's developing self-regulation. Rather, at Hilltop at the time of the fieldwork, the negative feelings experienced by the Participants appeared to be tacitly associated with the young people.

Such negative reactions need to be related to the professional status of RCC workers, who are perceived as unqualified yet partly responsible for the difficult experiences young people living in RCC undeniably have (see 1.2.1, p. 25 and 2.2.2, p. 64). I have already alluded to this data in the previous chapter, but I want to expand on it to give it more context. During Session 5, 10 January, Josephine (p) and Alexis (p) respond to my remarks about the different qualities their own experience of power has in comparison to the young people's. This triggers difficult feelings, which Josephine (p) acknowledges, and in reflecting and exploring those I ask her if she does anything to help the young people, using some of the positive examples she previously shared with me. She answers:

all you can do is be consistent and be there for them [...] But we kind of need to have, we need to be competent to be able to do our job, we need to (sic) more to do our job, we need to be powerful enough you know where our limits and boundaries and what we are capable of doing....

(Transcript Change Laboratory Session 5, 10 January 01'21''51 – 01'27'17)

She goes on to list how as an RCC worker, she also needs to be seen as a 'rich, competent, powerful, knowledgeable'. In this episode, it is the helplessness and heaviness of her situation that I remember Josephine (p) communicating. This has been documented elsewhere (Brannen et al., 2007, pp. 108–109). I emphasise this here, because, in Cohen et al. (2017) and Krumer-Nevo and Sidi's (2012) publications, the feelings and value judgments reported by individuals associated with the 'othered' group are important. In describing the lack of recognition of the Participants' work by the young people, by the social workers in the placing authorities, and by society at large, I touch upon difficult feelings experienced by Participants. At the time of the fieldwork, there were no formal processes other than individual supervision through which those feelings could be identified and processed. The impact this had on the images and representations of young people in Participants' minds is

linked to the value judgment Participants make of the young people, but the methodology I adopted did not allow for a more in-depth understanding of those feelings.

6.3.2 Separation

The second component of the mechanisms of othering emphasised by Cohen et al. (2017), separation, is abundantly present in the data. Overall, the most common representation in the situations (14 out of 31) is that of young people as separated from adults and the rest of society. This is expressed both in spatial terms, through the use of space and time in the home, and emotionally and symbolically, whereby the Participants find it difficult to draw parallels between their own teenage years and those of the young people. Perceived differences between young people within the home and young people in general are also apparent.

I have already drawn attention to the strength of this norm in several ways. The spatial separation within Hilltop is visible in the mechanisms of surveillance operating in the home. Chapter 5's thick description demonstrates the link between the surveillance of young people and statutory duties (see 5.2, p. 152), and it is therefore likely that features of how the separation manifests in the case study home are found across children's homes in England. The work of Ruth Emond (2000), although situated in Scotland and now more than 20 years old, clearly speaks of the separation between adults and young people in children's homes, further reinforcing this suggestion.

This second aspect of the mechanism of othering may have roots in many aspects of the history of children's residential care. Combined with the strong feelings of guilt and shame that Participants and I have experienced during the fieldwork, this fits well with Cohen, Krumer-Nevo and Avieli's (2017) description of the symbolic boundaries that exist in the soup kitchen they worked with. What is interesting is the use of the researchers' experience in understanding the boundaries between the main group and the 'other'. Indeed, Cohen et al. (2017, pp. 401–402) describe how they used reflective awareness of their experiences as a volunteer cook and a soup kitchen diner to come as close as possible to experiencing both sides of the symbolic boundary. Cohen et al. (2017) report different attitudes towards the researcher between the two groups separated by the symbolic boundary of othering, a phenomenon that requires a reflexive position, as I documented earlier (see 5.1, p. 143).

While my position as an adult and staff member at Hilltop made me one step further removed from young people living in the home, my position as a ‘participation worker’ nevertheless allowed for a reflexive process similar to that reported by Cohen et al. (2017) to take place. This is visible, for example, in Situation 24, ‘Ron (yp) During the First Session’. During the first workshop, I chose not to break the symbolic boundary separating Participants and young people by not inviting Ron (yp) to join the workshop, despite his indirectly showing interest. I felt quite guilty afterwards about this, but also struggled to reflect on the incident with those involved. Only later did I realise that my choice to respect the norm of separation was motivated by a tacit understanding of this norm of separation between Participants and young people, and its breach would have resulted in severing Participants’ acceptance of me (Leigh et al., 2021). This deeply felt emotional experience is one of the markers that allowed me to become able to consciously consider and manipulate the tacit knowledge that I held as an RCC worker, thus bringing greater awareness of my responses and the alternatives open to me.

I now turn to one important aspect of the mechanisms of othering concerning cultural knowledge.

6.3.3 Lack of Cultural Knowledge

A clear lack of knowledge of the young people’s culture and history is present in the data, which allows me to conclude that mechanisms of othering are present at the interpersonal and micro level at Hilltop.

An example of this is visible in Situation 13, ‘John Communal Meals’. The situation captures Participants’ adherence to the (idealised) Western norm of family dinners around a dining room table, with food portioned out on individual plates. This takes precedence over John’s (yp) experience of sharing food in North Africa and that of several other young people in the home with African cultures of origin. Other examples of the lack of knowledge of cultural practices are evident from my lack of knowledge of birthday celebrations following Islamic custom and historical facts about reliance, or otherwise, on precise dates of birth in some countries (Situation 18, ‘Peryiar’s (yp) Birthday’) or the ignorance of the significance of cooking and sharing food with others for Ishtar during Ramadan (Situation 10, ‘Eid Celebration’).

This hegemony of Western practices is reinforced hierarchically by the weight of statutory duties, where the sense of helplessness of the Participant in the face of multiple, and sometimes contradictory, regulations prevents a more individual and sensitive understanding of the intentions of the young people. Yet at Hilltop and elsewhere (Thornton et al., 2015a, pp. 29–30), team members come from different cultural and religious backgrounds, which could contribute to the team’s understanding of cultural subtleties. There is an awareness among the Participants of a need for culturally sensitive knowledge (L. C. Fulcher, 2002), for example, in our discussion of the cultural differences between Western and Muslim understanding of mental health (Session 6 17th January 2018). However, this gets lost in how statutory duties are operationalised. The young people’s desire to ‘fit in’ and to adopt a British lifestyle cannot be underestimated either. Yet the extent to which Participants communicate their awareness of how culture shapes responses to different circumstances, affects whether young people feel permitted to draw on their cultural capital or how much they need to operate from norms drawn from what they experience at Hilltop and elsewhere. Those examples, and others reported above show, how the interpretations given by young people about their situations are misunderstood, unacknowledged and ignored. This is not random; however, there is consistency in how certain interpretations and meanings are made ‘invisible’. Indeed, in those instances, the Participants use the ‘logic of needs’ or ‘technical-rational logic’ and rely on interagency procedures to interpret and act in the situation. This is important because the literature review (see 2.2, p. 60) revealed how the logic of needs and reliance on procedures were part of how RCC workers' decisions were made. It further highlighted how governmentality relied on mechanisms that made certain identities visible while others were made invisible at the macro level. I would argue that the same process is happening here at an interpersonal level. This is the main contribution to knowledge this thesis makes.

This chapter simply lists the representations and images of young people present in the Participants’ justifications for their professional practice.

In the descriptions of those representations and images, I want to demonstrate how the medium of writing is too permanent to convey truly how the representation and images manifested during the fieldwork. Another important idea I try to convey is that representations can become true Ilyenkovian images through negotiation and that they change depending on the nature of the interaction between Participants and young people. One

important aspect of this is the fact that very few situations led to the Participants' active and conscious construction of images as Ilyenkov thought of them.

The frequency with which some representations recur in the data is important to the literature on the othering of children and young people introduced in the literature review. This prompted me to revisit the findings in light of Cohen, Krumer-Nevo and Alievi's (2017) mechanisms of othering.

I establish a link between my findings and the scholars' take on othering to demonstrate how the representations of young people I describe in the first part of the chapter reflect the othering young people living at Hilltop experience in society at large. This societal marginalisation was made clear in the literature review by citing studies demonstrating how specific categories of 'child' as other are present in policy documents and at a macro level. Focusing on what is made visible and invisible in interpersonal relationships between Participants and young people further links the interpersonal, institutional and macro levels.

7 Reconnecting Criticality and Transformative practice in the Representations and Images of Young People as ‘Other’

The literature review (see 2, p. 44) highlighted theoretical gaps in Moss and Petrie’s suggestion to ‘work from an image of the rich child’ when applied to English RCC. Rather, I proposed that aspects of post-Vygotskian theory offered a more appropriate theoretical formulation of practice because it articulated power, knowledge both tacit and more embodied, and language. Post-Vygotskian theory offered a wealth of theoretical and methodological concepts (see 3, p. 83 and 4, p. 113) to investigate how RCC workers think of the young people they work with through specific concepts and methods for data collection and analysis. Further, the disconnection the literature review noted between a critique of the current system and an unattainable idealised future, present in Malaguzzi and Moss and Petrie’s publications (see 2.1.3, p. 49 and 2.1.4.5, p. 59), called for a more thorough articulation of changes processes, which could also be addressed through a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework (Sannino, 2022; Vianna & Stetsenko, 2019).

Having carried out data collection and analysis using a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework and methodology, the representations of young people that emerged are reminiscent of some of the literature. For example, representations of young people as ‘involved in caring relationships’ or ‘decontextualised’ emerging from the data analysis (6.2.3, p. 183 and 6.2.8, p. 191) are reminiscent of the concept of ‘*absent presence*’ described by Rosen et al. (2019) when investigating young asylum seekers’ caring practices with each other. In both analyses, an ‘*absent presence*’ brings to the fore the power mechanisms that render young people’s care acts invisible or suspicious to professionals. In my data, this absence is made visible by the selection process to which personal meanings, interpretations and stories about everyday situations are being subjected in the case study home. Specific meanings and interpretations belonging to the young people appear to be consistently absent or made to fit the logic of needs in my Participants’ explanations of their work. In addition to Rosen et al.’s (2019) observations, the previous chapter highlights what appears to be recurring patterns in the selection process and concludes this follows mechanisms of othering.

Another characteristic of the data is the paucity of Ilyenkovian images compared to static representations listed in Chapter 6 (see 6.2, p. 178). The fieldwork lasted for three months, a

very short time compared to Vianna's (2007) work, for example, and this is one reason the data do not document change or transformation. Another reason I did not report significant findings about processes of change in Hilltop is that, for ethical purposes (see 4.3.1, p. 134), I was not able to conduct the historical analysis that is part of CHAT (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, pp. 29–32; 84–89). This absence of data that could highlight transformation through time is a significant limitation of the study because it restricts the possibility of thinking dialectically about small changes in the concepts RCC workers use in their work.

Nevertheless, the unique contribution to knowledge this thesis makes is twofold:

- first, it highlights how processes of othering can take place in interpersonal relationships and as part of the decision-making process of RCC.
- the second contribution to knowledge is theoretical and comes from articulating how post-Vygotskian theory can contribute to social pedagogy by providing a theoretically coherent way to operationalise images and representations.

In this chapter, I explore related questions to give context to the findings. The first theme in this discussion investigates the **presence of representations of young people as 'other' within welfare systems such as those in Scandinavian countries and Canada**. Despite the relevance of Rosen et al.'s (2019) work on this, I limit this exploration to RCC rather than to other parts of the welfare system only because this focus is important when, in a second set of questions, I outline **the limitations of the thesis by considering the type of knowledge it produced**. This pertains to the training of RCC workers; I then suggest how the **localised and situated knowledge I draw upon in the analysis is characteristic of RCC workers' decision-making process**. This has implications for interprofessional relationships and the status of RCC workers, which has been one of the motivating factors for this thesis. Finally, I examine how **Moss and Petrie's (2002) critical and transformative intentions have fared when 'looking for the rich child' at Hilltop**. Using theoretical links between post-Vygotskian theory and social pedagogy, I discuss possible areas and themes practitioners and scholars interested in social pedagogy should explore to strengthen the discipline's critical features.

7.1 Images and Representations of Young People as 'Other': International Reflections

Sociological images of children, mothers or teenagers (Freymond, 2003; Gupta, 2006; Jenks, 2005; Laurence, 1982; Moss, 2012; Woodrow, 1999) are used across cultural groups, and the analytical work of this thesis has highlighted connections and mechanisms linking individual actions to those wider societal constructs. Given that the conclusions in the thesis are drawn from a single case study, however, questions of generalisation become important. Within post-Vygotskian literature, dialectical thinking has a different take on case studies to the evidence favoured in the RCC sector (see 1.2.2.2, p. 29). The formal and positivist logic, seen in much of the literature on RCC I reviewed earlier (see 2.2, p. 60), conceives of generalisation and reliability in strict linear and causal terms. This is different to post-Vygotskian theory, which investigates seemingly unrelated elements of everyday life relationally in their material and ideal context (Hedegaard & Fler, 2008, pp. 30–45). Instead, it relies on a description of causality that eschews statistical, unidirectional relationships (Cabell & Valsiner, 2014) and privileges genetic links going back to the genesis of a given phenomenon and the use of concepts in practice.

So how do the findings from Hilltop compare to the rest of the RCC sector in England and elsewhere? The literature on social pedagogy highlights two contexts where practice is qualitatively different to that of England and the UK in general. These are Scandinavian countries (B. Cohen et al., 2004; P. Petrie et al., 2006, pp. 75–90) and the more geographically diffuse ‘child and youth care work’¹ (Daniel, 2021; Maier, 1991). I draw on literature from those two different geographical areas to explore othering mechanisms in RCC outside of Hilltop.

7.1.1 Othering of Young People in Different National Contexts

Examining whether or not mechanisms of othering are at play in Nordic RCC is pertinent to the findings of this thesis because the social democratic welfare systems that have been developed there differ in significant ways from the liberal welfare state present in England (B. Cohen et al., 2004, pp. 26–43; Esping-Andersen, 2013). The literature argued that policy and institutional levels influence how children and young people are thought of (B. Cohen et

¹ The journals associated with Child and Youth Care work are published in English with regular contributions from South Africa, Canada and New Zealand.

al., 2004; P. Petrie et al., 2006; Surel et al., 2011). There is therefore evidence that the type of welfare system may influence the presence or not of mechanisms of othering.

The analysis I propose now is focused on three articles about the experience of care within residential settings of young unaccompanied asylum seekers in Sweden (Basic, 2015), Denmark (Warming, 2019; Warming et al., 2019) and Canada (Gharabaghi & Phelan, 2011). In those articles, I look for instances of the three components of othering (Cohen et al., 2017) I highlight in the previous chapter:

- value judgments towards the othered group
- symbolic and spatial separation
- denial of cultural meanings and interpretations

7.1.1.1 Reading Everyday Events in Swedish RCC Through an Othering Lens

Basic (2015, p. 25) identifies an everyday event that is similar to the 31 situations (see Appendix 4) that form the basis for my analysis. The difference between my work and the Swedish example is that the latter is narrated from the point of view of the resident young people, whereas mine is from the staff members' point of view. In Basic's situation, a young person is cooking with an RCC worker. There is an angry altercation because the worker believes the young person has not washed his hands after using the toilet, and the worker responds with a violent, sexualised verbal threat when the young person walks out of the kitchen and stops participating in the cooking activity as a result of the communication breakdown. The young person speaks Arabic during the exchange, but this angers another RCC worker even more due to a rule whereby only Swedish should be spoken in the setting, and a physical altercation ensues. The young person asks permission to report the assault to the police but is denied this at the time.

In this short vignette there is a clear separation between the young people and the workers in terms of access to resources (the workers control the young person's use of the phone). This separation is present too in Basic's report of other situations. Further, there is a negative judgment of the young man who is perceived as 'unclean' or 'dirty' by the worker. In the final development of the vignette, his ethnic and cultural identity is denied through the exclusive use of Swedish as a medium for communication. It can be concluded that the three components of othering I found in my analysis are present in this situation and can be found repeatedly in the accounts gathered by Basic in the same article (Basic, 2015). This gives

weight to the hypothesis that othering is a mechanism that is pervasive across institutional contexts, despite differences in the architecture of the welfare state in England and Sweden.

7.1.1.2 Reading Everyday Events in Danish RCC Through an Othering Lens

Just as I do, Warming (2019, p. 2) bases her analysis on professional practice within a setting similar to the case study home. By focusing on the deviations from accepted practice, Warming shows how both RCC workers and young people navigate and understand their environment. The articles' analytical focus is therefore slightly different to Basic's and mine, yet the reading will similarly seek to identify the presence of mechanisms of othering.

Warming is interested in how a team of care workers and a young person called Anna manage professional and interpersonal boundaries. Anna is described as having a 'hungry heart', and the team of social pedagogues is keen to 'manage' this to avoid placement breakdown or professional burnout.

Warming reports that Anna has internalised a view of herself that is 'too much, too demanding'. Anna expresses this verbally to the researcher, but also by accepting and working around the institutional rules that are intended to maintain professional distance. There are several examples of how RCC workers also comply with local policies and work around them to give Anna the quality attention she craves. In doing this, Warming outlines how the separation between RCC workers and young people is performed in this setting. For example, the analysis points out how Anna herself expects RCC workers to keep the feelings caused by her rejection of them private, while she objects to aspects of her private life being shared in the public space of the home. The separation can therefore be found in the definition of 'private space'. Adults' private space is dealt with in supervision sessions and bound by social norms around work-life balance, away from the collective gaze of the community of the setting. On the other hand, for the young people, their 'private' space is kept visible to the community through RCC workers' intervention in a way that can be humiliating.

Warming's article also describes how Anna 's political agency is translated into emotional needs, in a way that pathologises her. Conforming to institutional life means silencing Anna's 'hungry heart', and Warming details how Anna works towards meeting those constraints. In my fieldwork, a similar silencing of political awareness is visible in Situation 15 'Luis (yp) Moving to His Foster Carers'. Indeed, my observation notes from 29 January record his

feelings towards the situation he is in and how he works with the rules and expectations his social worker sets. Luis (yp) is also clear that those expectations keep changing, yet he is expected to behave as an 'adult' while he associates the inconsistency of the social worker with childish behaviour. The agency and political understanding that Luis (yp) expresses is, like that of Anna, silenced in his placement plan. This second aspect of othering, silencing of cultural and political meanings and interpretations, is therefore present in the Danish home Warming describes.

Anna is also subject to the third element of othering: that of a value judgment placed on her because of her status as a 'child in care'. As a consequence, Anna is perceived by some (not all) RCC workers as manipulative, 'showing off' (Warming, 2019, p. 4), and humiliated by having private items, that stigmatise her mental health, shared with the home community. Warming also hints that those practices are common in the setting.

All in all, through a detailed description of the interactions and interpretations different parties have of a short series of events relating to one young person, Warming's work reveals how mechanisms of othering operate in a Danish residential setting.

So far, a reading of Basic's (2015) and Warming's (2019) ethnographic work has shown that mechanisms of othering are present in Danish and Swedish children's residential institutions. I will now turn to a different context, that of child and youth care in a Canadian setting.

7.1.1.3 Reading Everyday Events in Canadian RCC Through an Othering Lens

Within the Canadian context, I will read Gharabaghi and Phelan's (2011) work through the lens of mechanisms of othering. The Canadian study is based on focus group sessions with the staff teams of 12 RCC homes, where the authors want to understand the RCC workers' perceptions of young people's accountability towards themselves now and in the future, the setting they live in, and in society. There is a clear intention by the author to explore the assumptions behind behavioural control and staff's expectations towards young people, and my reading highlights two mechanisms of othering present in their account of the work: separation and value judgment.

First, the symbolic separation between adults and young people manifests in the different ways in which the social world is understood by RCC workers and young people (Gharabaghi & Phelan, 2011, p. 80). This translates into different expectations around honesty and strict

obedience to rules. The RCC workers use causal and simplistic explanations of the social world they imagine young people will encounter when adults. Even when challenged about the different standards they hold to judge their own and the young people's social worlds, the workers interviewed still justify their position as correct because of their perceived duty to prepare young people towards independence for adulthood. This duty is bolstered by the assumption that it is unkind to create an environment in the home that does not match the assumed harshness of the 'real world', although the RCC workers intuitively acknowledged that standards for young people do not apply to all situations, and especially not to themselves. The separation is therefore present in the different perceptions RCC workers have between the young people's capacity to navigate the 'unreliable' social world and their own perceived capacity, together with a view that young people's morality should be fostered through the use of higher standards than those applying to adults.

Gharabaghi and Phelan (2011, pp. 82–83) also found that young people are thought of as demanding and manipulating, which implies a negative value judgment towards them. The authors cite staff's understanding of their role as having a duty 'to catch' young people in the act when manipulating the system to their advantage. The choice of words in the Canadian setting mirrors my case study home. Indeed, Alexis (p) uses the same metaphor when she corrects a colleague who is letting young people 'get away' with more than is thought appropriate (see 6.2.7, p. 189). This symbolic, negative association of young people as manipulative is one of the aspects of othering that is present in my English case study home, and in Warming's (2019) Danish example. In the work of Gharabaghi and Phelan, therefore, two out of three elements of the mechanisms of othering present in the English case study home are found.

There is no direct mention in the article of the erasure of cultural meanings and interpretations of young people's lives by RCC workers, despite the well-documented overrepresentation of First Nation children in Canada's welfare system (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2017). While it is therefore difficult to draw a direct correlation between Gharabaghi and Phelan's Participants and the erasure of cultural meanings systematically done in the fieldwork setting for my study, the authors of the Canadian study notice a difference of emphasis in the use of values and cultural meanings between the RCC worker and young people. This is visible in the justifications RCC workers give about their work and the decisions they make in the everyday. Young people's political and cultural interpretations are

likely made invisible in the Canadian context too; however, this requires further investigation.

In three different national contexts, with different welfare models to Hilltop, separate researchers using ethnographic methods and a granular description of everyday lives in residential settings recorded instances of symbolic separation, the silencing of cultural meanings, and the belittling or victimisation of young people. This lends credibility to the claim that othering through invisibilisation is present at the interpersonal level within the institution of RCC.

7.1.2 Questions of Method

When introducing this chapter, I highlighted two methodological choices that limit the scope of the findings: the first is the lack of historical understanding of how ‘child’ has been used in English RCC and at Hilltop, and the second is the exclusive focus on RCC workers’ mindset towards young people they work with.

7.1.2.1 Historical Othering in English RCC

The first methodological point relates to my use of a Marxist methodology, where analysis calls for an understanding of the historical genetic development of concepts together with an investigation of the use of the concept in practice in the present (Blunden, 2012; Ollman, 2019; Virkkunen & Ahonen, 2011). While I have investigated the concept of ‘child’ in everyday current practice, there is no historical element to my analysis, which may appear as a limitation, which I justified earlier with ethical considerations. In a small way, I bring here historical information about the position of children living in residential institutions as ‘other’. I found this historical evidence during a visit to the Foundling Museum in London. In the house where Thomas Coram established the first institution to care for abandoned children in 18th Century London, I looked at hundreds of tokens of love and mementoes the foundlings were given by their birth families (Styles, 2010). The custom was to acknowledge the heritage and the identity of the babies through those tokens, with the hope a parent would be in a position to reconnect with their child in the future. This was due in part to the hospital giving all children new Christian names upon admission. Those tokens demonstrate how widely understood it was at the time that the institution silenced aspects of the foundlings’ identity. Again, in this case, people are responding and acting to counter dehumanising

institutional norms and practices. Yet what this shows is that historically, the silencing of heritage and identity was an accepted norm of the Foundling Hospital, demonstrating that at least one element of mechanisms of othering was present historically in England in RCC.

I have reflected throughout this thesis on the power relationships, the mindset, and the emotional responses I experienced during the different stages of the project. This is another such moment where I want to recognise complex feelings which are generated by the hurt young people and their families experience through ‘welfare’ intervention. It informs the anticipation of both my colleagues’ and the young people’s reactions to making visible this position as ‘other’. Despite this, I feel justified in making this claim because of the consistency with which invisibilisation and denial of culture are evidenced across different contexts.

I relate the historical evidence from the Foundling Museum in London to the evidence I have presented in Chapter 6 and the contexts examined above. In doing so, nuance is required because activity theory analysis demands attention to the relationship between different activity systems and slight differences in local meanings and intentions. This applies here as well. Linking the Foundling Museums’ tokens to the findings from the case study home and extending outwards to RCC contexts such as Scandinavia and Canada is establishing links and similarities in institutional and societal contexts, rather than the interpersonal level my work is based upon. This raises questions about differences in the knowledge I draw upon in my work and other studies. I explore those questions of knowledge in more depth in the next subsection, after another methodological point raised by reading Basic, Warming, Phelan and Gharabaghi’s work.

7.1.2.2 Basic and Warming’s Relational Methodologies and Ethnography

The second methodological point that limits the scope of this thesis is important because it situates the singular focus of my work on RCC workers’ constructions of ‘child’ within other studies.

Basic (2015) links his analysis to Goffman’s work on the impact of total institutions on the self (Goffman, 2007, 2017) and highlights the institutional racism present in his case study. Young people from a refugee background are actively countering the racism they experience, for example by using institutional control to minimise its effects. The focus of the analysis in Basic’s work and mine lies on opposite sides of the relationship between RCC workers and

young residents. It shows that both use similar strategies to promote their interpretation of the situation, for example, by withholding information (Basic, 2015, p. 27) (see 6.2.3, p. 183). In my findings, the image of young people as decontextualised shows how Participants draw on technical-rational logic and the logic of needs to invisibilise other political or cultural interpretations which young people may have of a given situation - a phenomenon that Basic recognises in the young people's account of specific situations. This is an important point that suggests that young people may also hold images of RCC workers in mind. It can be extrapolated from my data that young people may also hold images of the staff, through passing remarks from the young people (Situation 7 'Giving the Boxes'). Indeed, John (yp) comments that *'They don't do that here'*, where 'that' refers to the staff at Hilltop thinking about what young people are good at. While this is a single comment, John is clearly thinking of Participants in a specific manner; and other young people also adapt their everyday activity to the image of the staff they hold in mind.

Further, Warming makes a few additional points in her analysis that speak to the question of professional judgment I raise throughout the thesis. She specifically highlights the relationship between the culture of the home, institutional practices and individual workers positioning around those. Warming qualifies some of the actions taken by RCC workers as contradicting the ethos of the home, yet those actions are influenced by the representations of young people as vulnerable and childish that prevail in Danish society. This speaks to the relationship between societal and institutional constructions, albeit fleetingly. Nevertheless, data gathered by Warming allow for a fuller interpretation of the situation than in my analysis, mostly because of how Anna herself has given her reading of what is happening. This information given by young people allows Warming to highlight relationally how interpretations of a given situation relate to and interact with each other, and in doing so how workers agentially navigate institutional constraints while working towards a given goal. In that sense, Warming's analysis gives a fuller picture of the dynamics present in the institution and the activity system articulated by Hedegaard's plane of analysis (see 3.1.2.1, p. 89). This shows some of the limitations of my thesis, in that the focus on adults' images and representations of young people reflect only a small part of RCC workers' professional practice. I now turn to this, with specific attention to the knowledge required to carry out the task of RCC.

7.2 Images and Representations: Different Knowledge at Work in RCC

In the previous chapter (see 6.2, p. 178), I focused on the representations and images that appeared in the data. Yet my written account gives images and representations more permanence and fixity than they ever had in the interpersonal relationships I built and observed during the fieldwork. The crux of the analysis is based on local knowledge, constituted by the experiences and relationships within the home. This is a specific type of knowledge, different to that used to observe attachment patterns in adolescents living in out-of-home care (Bifulco et al., 2017) or standards of effectiveness for models of care (Daly et al., 2018). Rather, the knowledge I use consists of the meanings individuals attribute to their experiences and their local environment. It is embedded in Hilltop's activity system (see 3.1.2.2, p. 92). This confirms, if needed, the presence of different kinds of knowledge in care work (Brannen et al., 2007, pp. 103–128; Edwards, 2010; Golding & Rose, 2015; Mason et al., 2003; Shaw, 2019), the purposes that knowledge is put to (Eenshuistra et al., 2019; Remy, 2020; Rothuizen & Harbo, 2017; M. Smith, 2020) and the political choices about what knowledge matters and what does not within RCC and concerning other welfare and children's services (C. Cameron, 2011, 2014, 2015; Kirkwood et al., 2019). My argument here is that the knowledge the analysis is based upon is of a distinct quality, a quality that reflects the concerns and meanings the Participants attribute to their work. It is knowledge that is imbued with emotions, relational information and purposes (Edwards, 2012). Another way to characterise this knowledge is that it loses its relevance when taken out of the context of Hilltop. This is not 'scientific' knowledge in a Vygotskian sense (Blunden, 2012, pp. 223–290; Vygotsky, 1994). However, the conclusion that mechanisms of othering may be systematically present within the sector is. How is this distinction relevant to RCC practice? I would argue that the difficulty here lies in the lack of awareness of the roles different types of knowledge play in RCC workers' ability to meet the demands placed on them and to interact with other professionals. It is therefore important to articulate the place of the knowledge produced and reported in this thesis.

Mapping out knowledge production in the thesis will complement the description of the situatedness of my position as an insider researcher in Chapter 5 (see 5.1, p. 143). It is also intended to guard against a type of linear generalisation often associated with evidence-based practice as the type of knowledge statutory and policy directives rely upon to reform RCC (Whittaker et al., 2016 but also, for example, MacAlister, 2022). This has implications for research in RCC, its theorising (Cabell & Valsiner, 2014) and education (Nordoff & Madoc-Jones, 2014; M. Smith, 2003; Steckley, 2020a, 2020b), which could, from more positivist

theoretical perspectives, be seen as a limitation to this thesis. This is why understanding how those different types of knowledge relate to each other will support understanding how this thesis relates to some of the literature introduced in Chapter 2 (see especially 2.2, p. 60).

I do this in three ways:

- by relating the findings to post-Vygotskian ideas of mediation and the relationship between individual, institutional and societal analysis;
- by situating images and representations theoretically within decision-making in RCC;
- by exploring how the findings could add to the education of the RCC workforce.

7.2.1 Invisibility and Mediation: Linking Different Planes of Analysis

In this section, I relate the findings outlined in the previous chapter (see 6, p. 172) to specific aspects of post-Vygotskian theory introduced in Chapter 3. (see 3.1.2.1, p. 89 and 3.2.1, p. 97).

Ilyenkov (2010) places images within the ideal aspect of activity, the purpose of the image being to guide the subject towards their chosen goal (see 3.2.3, p. 101). As such the image is constituted by the ‘groping’ Ilyenkov (2010, p. 19) thinks necessary to reach the goal and organising the subject’s activity. This is situated and localised knowledge, which Ilyenkov himself describes as partial. He is indeed at pains to describe images as subjective, localised, emotionally and bodily imbued ‘imprints’ of the contours of the object of activity and the obstacles encountered (Ilyenkov, 2010, p. 29) by the subject, in working towards their goal.

In the data analysis, the partial knowledge that constitutes images and representations is visible methodologically. When looking at the conceptual boundaries at play in each situation, I used information available in the data and explored a few other avenues to highlight alternative interpretations to those formulated by Participants, going back over interpretations I assigned in my observations or through discussions with young people (see 4.2, p. 124). This is limited and there is no claim to the systematic presentation of alternative meanings and interpretations. Rather, this juxtaposition makes the implicit selection or rejection of given meanings and interpretations visible; and this was key in gradually identifying ‘*absent presences*’ (Rosen et al., 2019) in the data. Methodologically, the role of alternative interpretations is to highlight the rationale for the selection of the RCC workers’ interpretations. In post-Vygotskian terms, I would argue that the juxtaposition of alternative interpretations is methodologically necessary to shed light on invisible mediational tools

(Daniels, 2010, 2015; Edwards, 2010, pp. 7–10; Wertsch, 2007). Indeed, when reflecting on ways human activity is shaped and mediated by institutional cultures, Daniels expresses the need to analyse and codify the mediational structures as they deflect and direct attention of Participants. In this sense [he is] advocating the development of cultural-historical analysis of the invisible or implicit mediational properties of institutional structures that themselves are transformed through the actions of those whose interactions are influenced by them (Daniels, 2010, p. 381).

While my analysis did not focus on the impact of individual actions on institutional culture, I would argue that my search for Ilyenkovian images led me to stumble upon such a mediational structure. Indeed, the shift from images to categories of ‘child as other’ found in statutory literature (Plant, 2002), signifies different levels in the analysis. Can images and categories be linked?

To understand how the image of the child as ‘other’ in RCC works as an invisible mediational tool¹, it is important to bring together different planes of Hedegaard’s model (see 3.1.2.1, p. 89). In particular, the vertical division of the model considering persons, activity settings or institutions and societal levels is pertinent.

The same static representation, that of ‘child as other’, is found at the interpersonal level within the activity system, and the category of child in care as other has been documented at societal levels. Similar mechanisms of invisibilisation across different levels of Hedegaard’s model (see 2.2.4.2, p. 77). I argue that the ‘*bureaucratic capture*’ Humphris and Sigona (2019b) described can be connected to Daniels’ visual metaphor. Indeed, in the quote above, Daniels describes how mediational tools ‘*deflect and direct*’ attention in ways that are similar to the impact on given individuals during their ‘*bureaucratic capture*’. My suggestion is that the category of ‘child in care as other’ present in policy and legislation invisibly mediates the professional activity of RCC workers, therefore deflecting attention away from the young people’s interpretations of their lives and redirecting towards the logic of needs and technical-rational procedures that are present institutionally. Young people’s meanings and

¹ I use the word ‘tool’ here to hint that the ‘thing’ upon which activity is mediated exists in varied forms, such as material objects, in thought, and in language. There is an ongoing debate within post-Vygotskian scholars about the appropriateness of specific words to designate the ‘thing’ that mediates depending on its relationship with language, thought or the material world (Daniels, 2015; P. E. Jones, 2004; Wertsch, 2007) and the wider system within which it finds itself (Engeström & Sannino, 2021; L. S. Vygotsky, 1978). My choice of word is guided more by pedagogical than post-Vygotskian concerns, and I do not take a position here in this debate.

interpretations are becoming invisible at the interpersonal level, as a more granular instance of their bureaucratic capture. This also interferes with individual workers' attempts to work from an image of the 'rich child', and significantly constrains the possibility to work with dialectical images as described by Ilyenkov.

The answer to the research question:

how does a team of RCC workers introduced to social pedagogy use the image of the 'rich child' in their work with children and young people living in a residential children's home in England?

could be that individual efforts to use the image of the 'rich child' are thwarted by statutory categories such as 'child in care as other'. Against RCC workers' intentions, the category of 'child as other' is invisibly mediating their professional activity and accordingly deflecting and directing attention away from certain meanings at the interpersonal level, while at the institutional and societal level, it marginalises young people and shapes their identity into that of the 'supported subject position' (L. Jones et al., 2020; Mannay et al., 2017).

In dialectical thinking and within the activity of the fieldwork setting, images and categories are not static, however, but shaped in interaction with young people's intentions, the tools at the RCC workers' disposal within their community of practice. This was not visible in the data, but my focus has been and remains pedagogical, in a way that directs my gaze onto the necessity for RCC workers to deal with complex, competing dynamics in the everyday. The thesis makes some of this complexity visible by grasping the power differentials at all possible levels of analysis: interpersonal, institutional and societal, through mechanisms such as invisibility and othering that cut through them. The sociological literature ascribes other mechanisms shaping those power differences (Rosen, 2017), and future work could do well to bring them into understanding pedagogical work.

7.2.2 The Position of Images and Representations Within Decision-Making in RCC Professional Practice

In this section, I consider how the findings inform previous child and youth care literature on decision-making within RCC, concerning the types of knowledge and the theoretical framework used.

I have already pointed out how focusing on all sides of a relationship between RCC workers and young people would have required a different design for this thesis. Many studies are based on young people-care workers dyads (Garfat, 1995; Meetoo et al., 2020; Warming, 2019) or relational networks (Alminde & Warming, 2020; Dalrymple, 2005; Emond, 2000; Green, 1998; Vianna, 2007). Keeping the focus on all individuals involved in a relationship makes it less likely to ‘essentialise’ qualities associated with one or the other role, or identity, attributed to given individuals, and keeps in focus one aspect of the dialectical processes at play in the everyday. One such study (Garfat, 1995) already mentioned in the literature review as similar in scope to Wards’ opportunity-led work (1995, 1996) because both deal with decision-making within RCC specifically. It is useful to delve into Garfat’s work more deeply to understand the boundaries of this project.

Garfat’s (1995) focus is much broader than mine: he explores the meanings and interpretations given by dyads of young people and RCC workers to ‘interventions’, that is, the decisions and consequent actions, of RCC workers. Garfat defines ‘interventions’ as:

intentional caring actions, taken into one of the daily life-systems of which the youth is part, which facilitates a change in that system such that a context is created for the youth to have a different experiencing of herself and/or the meaning which she gives to her experiencing (Garfat, 1995, p. 218).

There is much to unpack in this definition, but the main focus is on meaning-making, on shifting perspectives with an attention towards the young person’s ‘horizons’ in the phenomenological sense (Malpas, 2018). Much of this definition can be understood theoretically from a hermeneutic, phenomenological point of view (Friesen et al., 2012), which is Garfat’s chosen theoretical model. Much can also be learnt from his work because of this choice. For example, he concludes that part of the training of RCC workers should include as much attention towards phenomenological knowledge as it does towards what he calls ‘natural science knowledge’ (Garfat, 1995, p. 203). ‘Natural science knowledge’ can be transferred across contexts, independent of the lived experience of young people and child and youth care workers. In that sense, Garfat makes the same claim as I do, highlighting the importance of more tacit, situated and embodied types of knowledge because they are crucial for understanding the task of care and its uniqueness compared to other professions, with important consequences for training. What Garfat advocates is an educational content that develops an awareness of meaning-making, and in so doing educates the worker in how to connect humanely with people. It is irreplaceable yet rather lacking in the training recently

piloted in England (Armitage, 2018; Berridge et al., 2016) because, as Garfat subtly identifies, it is not about ‘knowledge of’ the young people but an attitude towards understanding their experience (Garfat, 1995, pp. 203–205).

I do not describe the knowledge I have produced phenomenologically or hermeneutically in the same way as Garfat does because I include, in the post-Vygotskian tradition, activity, its purpose and its genetic, historical development (Hedegaard & Flear, 2008, pp. 30–45). The knowledge I produced in this thesis is anchored in interpersonal relationships which became crystallised with institutional categorisations. In this instance representations interact with social constructs, and mediate how RCC workers think, act and feel towards the young people they work with. What Garfat’s work brings forward is the all-important search for understanding the other, the ‘client’ one is working with, as Moss and Petrie (2002) also identified (see 2.1.4.3, p. 57). But this involved individual, partial understanding of what those meanings are, without positioning them socially. To my mind, the ‘horizons’, the ‘life-systems’ or ‘lifeworlds’ that Garfat suggests RCC workers should investigate for meanings and experience are not abstract entities floating into nothingness. They are part of a wider societal network that transforms and interacts with the lives of the individual or individuals considered, which, by contrast, I have brought into my work through the use of post-Vygotskian theory. Garfat does not define pedagogical work as I have done, drawing on Ilyenkov. He is not interested in questions of internalisation, social reproduction or mediation by historically developing artefacts.

This shows the diversity and complexity of the knowledge implicated in the everyday judgments of RCC workers. Two different theoretical frameworks are called upon, neither of which can be dismissed because they are used for different purposes. Garfat’s choice supports connection, empathy and meaning-making, while mine is pedagogical, situated in the liminal space between psychology and sociology (Biesta, 2011; Daniels, 2009; Saevi, 2014). The two complement each other, something that emerges in previous studies of RCC. Indeed, Warwick (2017, pp. 112–142), in her study of touch in RCC, shows how considerations of the life space of the home need to be complemented by an intersectional analysis to allow for the complexity of relationships to be described. This is notwithstanding the division of labour I described in the literature review (see 1.2.3, p. 30 and 2.2.2.2, p. 67) between the psychoanalytical knowledge thought necessary to build therapeutic relationships and the more situated knowledge that prevails during the ‘other 23 hours’ (Trieschman et al., 2017).

The ability to switch among all those different areas of knowledge and understand their relationship has important implications for the profession and education of RCC workers. One would be, for example, to move away from attributing gendered and essentialist qualities to the ‘good worker’ in RCC (P. Petrie et al., 2006, pp. 23–24) and open the possibility to develop those personal qualities through training.

An awareness of those differences could be fostered through training, and in the following section, I address this through the perennial question of the adequacy of a curriculum for RCC education (C. Cameron et al., 2007; Crimmens, 1998; Eenshuistra et al., 2019; McFarlane & McLean, 2003; Milligan, 2009; Nordoff & Madoc-Jones, 2014; White et al., 2015).

7.2.3 Questions of Curriculum for RCC Education

While professional learning and development is an integral part of CHAT and activity theory (Billett, 2010; Daniels et al., 2007; Engeström, 2014; Engeström & Sannino, 2021; Virkkunen & Ahonen, 2011), I have so far skimmed over the issue of professional learning and education in RCC. I address this now by explaining how the type of knowledge upon which the analysis is based can inform the perennial question of the adequacy of the RCC curriculum for the task at hand (R. J. Cameron & Maginn, 2009, pp. 100–102; Clough et al., 2006, pp. 48–52).

7.2.3.1 RCC Workers as Experts in Everyday Life or Lacking in Relational Agency?

Clough et al. (2006, p. 48–52) relate RCC’s inadequate curriculum to how its education and practice tends to be subsumed in the UK to ‘neighbouring’ practices within children’s services, such as social work, teaching, educational psychology, or clinical psychology. Consequently, and following Edwards’ (2010) work on interprofessional collaboration in children’s services in England, is it possible to develop RCC workers’ awareness of their expertise and of their ability to work with other welfare professionals? This has been addressed in detail already (C. Cameron, 2004, 2020; C. Cameron et al., 2001; Cameron & Boddy, 2008; Crimmens, 1998; Dench et al., 1998; Eenshuistra et al., 2019; J. Ferguson et al., 1996; Gharabaghi & Phelan, 2011; Halvorsen, 2018; Hicks et al., 2009; Kilpatrick et al.,

2008; Maier, 1991; McElvaney & Tatlow-Golden, 2016; Nordoff & Madoc-Jones, 2014; M. Smith, 2003; Steckley, 2020a, 2020b), yet the issue persists.

In this long list of references, in one article, Cameron (2020) argues that RCC workers and foster carers should be seen as '*experts in everyday life*'. While the intention to support RCC work status is clear, Cameron explains that RCC workers' expertise is far from being recognised, but is instead dismissed through the trope of the natural caring woman and the incompetent child (C. Cameron, 2020, p. 2). My contention here is with the use of the expression '*expert in everyday life*' because it is liable to the same distortions.

To my ears, the choice of word 'expert' sounds similar to how Peryiar (yp) was described as 'entrepreneurial' when Alexis (yp) wanted to qualify his dealings with money (Situation 27, 'Shopping with Peryiar (yp)'). In both cases, there is a mismatch between the intended meaning of the word and the practice context within which it is applied. Peryiar (yp) cannot be 'entrepreneurial' in the same way as an adult, British citizen would be because his Home Office status does not give him a legal basis on which to be economically active. His age also prevents him from doing so, compared to an adult. To continue the parallel between Peryiar (yp) being 'entrepreneurial' and RCC workers being 'experts', RCC workers cannot demonstrate the specificity of the situated and relational knowledge they hold because of the general assumption of their unqualified, low-paid status, with a Level 3 award the minimum requirement (Boddy et al., 2005; Department for Education, 2015a; McFarlane & McLean, 2003).

For Cameron, 'expertise' is used to redress an imbalance in the status of care workers as opposed to that of other professionals through recognising the specificity of the knowledge RCC workers rely on in their work. Enabling good interagency work within children's services overall I would argue, entails identifying the practicalities of supporting professional recognition for foster carers and RCC workers. Good interagency work requires addressing the power imbalances within children services by articulating the many types of knowledge in use in neighbouring professional practices, *and* the theoretical frameworks they are taken from. . In doing so, it may be useful to borrow from Edwards' (2010) suggestions for '*being an expert professional practitioner*'. arguing that professional expertise needs to be articulated relationally with that of other professionals. Edwards describes relational agency as the '*extra layer*' that makes a worker a professional (2010, p. 2). In multiagency work, expert knowledge is what allows professionals to contribute to solutions to common problems

when working relationally with other professionals. But this is not enough, as they must also convey the importance of this knowledge to others who have a different experience and understanding of the situation.

Cameron (2020), in line with publications reviewed in Chapter 2 holds that this is not happening in RCC and that workers are stripped of their competency and essentialised (see 1.2.1, p. 25 and 1.2.3, p. 30). Edwards is aware of issues around how ‘care’ is produced through welfare services and involving care professions, and she cites some of the TCRU’s work on the status of care workers in England (Edwards, 2010, p. 106). The crucial point that Edwards identifies, elaborating Cameron’s (2020), is that while the knowledge RCC workers and foster carers draw upon is situated in the everyday and linked to individual young people, professionals who can be considered experts need the ability to draw on this knowledge consciously and to work purposefully towards a common goal with other professionals who operate from a different knowledge base (Edwards, 2010, p. 108). Issues of education and hierarchy of knowledge are at play here (Boddy & Cameron, 2006, pp. 59–60; Sapsford, 1993). The conceptual apparatus that Edwards brings to support and develop relational agency may, I suggest, be necessary for RCC workers in developing expertise as Edwards defines, but is as yet underdeveloped.

7.2.3.2 Emerging Relational Agency in the Data

This underdeveloped relational agency is visible in the data for this thesis when staff at Hilltop demonstrate a tacit awareness of the differences in theirs and other professionals’ specific knowledge, mostly through their withdrawing from engagement and a communication breakdown.

For example, there is evidence of a perceived division of labour between RCC workers and the Independent Reviewing Officer¹ who Cicely (p) judges to be either unable or unwilling to deal with the anger of a given young person (Situation 26 ‘Ron (yp) Participating in Annual Reviews’). This points to the recognition of a certain expertise, as RCC workers are those who deal with the angry behaviour of a young person rather than a social worker. Participants in the workshop used in Situation 26 ‘Ron (yp) Participating in Annual Reviews’ continue to

¹ IRO are tasked with overseeing the care plan for children in care and ensuring social workers take into consideration the views and wishes of a particular young person (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010).

draw on their expertise to bring significant contributions on how to model the format of the Annual Review meeting so it becomes more relevant and accessible to young people. Yet, in their interviews, Cicely (p), Eunice (p) and Josephine (p) all talk about misunderstandings between the social workers and themselves. This manifests in:

- ‘serious conflict [where] you just think it’s really hard to believe we’re all working towards the best interests of the young person (see interview Eunice (p) 00’28”18 – 00’30”24);
- difficulties, and unofficial pressure in sharing the right kind of information about young people (interview Josephine (p) ‘00’13”07 – 00’17”31);
- the lack of recognition and appreciation of what staff do at Hilltop (Interview Cicely (p) 00’46”35 – 00’48”00).

While the picture is complex – both Cicely and Eunice are at pains to give examples of positive interactions between placing social workers and staff at Hilltop – the general impression is one of submission to the demands of the placing authority, ignoring the concerns and interpretations of both Hilltop’s management and its workers. Speaking of their contractual arrangements, Josephine (p) explains that the placing authority has them ‘*over a barrel*’, Hilltop being unable to influence the placement of a new young person despite of any adverse effect this may have on current group dynamics. This hierarchical relationship between two distinct professions is introduced earlier (see for example 1.2.2.2, p. 29), but what the data speak of is frustration and conflictual relationships between the RCC workers and social workers. Part of this frustration at a lack of professional recognition may explain the envy Berridge et al. (2011, p. 251) note English RCC experienced towards the professional status of continental social pedagogues. For their part, continental pedagogues were ‘*taken aback by the role of the residential worker in England, [and felt] bemused and deskilled*’ (Berridge et al., 2011, p. 252). Education and the use of knowledge are at stake here, but RCC workers at Hilltop report experiencing a subaltern position when working with other professionals.

Within this context, RCC workers’ view of their own expertise is complex. For example, the Participants’ use of situated, partial knowledge, the knowledge I use in my analysis (Appendix 3), does not transfer across situations easily. This becomes apparent during interviews, where both Cicely (p) and Josephine (p) struggle to answer and appear quite uncomfortable when asked about the theories they draw upon in their work, in contrast to the

confidence with which Eunice (p), the manager of the home, navigates between models of social pedagogy and her situated knowledge of the home .

This difficulty in transferring the ‘situated, partial knowledge’ across situations is also present in Situation 6, ‘Making the Boxes’¹ where Ram (p) asks several times how he will know what to do about the boxes. In Situation 7, ‘Giving the Boxes’, Participants do not share the boxes with the young people, despite their previous agreement to do so, and its importance for starting the discussion with young people on their imagined futures. Instead, Participants actively maintain the symbolic separation between adults and young people, which I interpret as a sign that they are sensitive to a different context in some way. This is a rather isolated observation and would require further investigation to understand better. Nevertheless, it demonstrates a lack of confidence in the utilisation of situated, partial knowledge in slightly unusual situations, and a lack of relational agency as Edwards conceives of it.

An awareness of contexts and their relationship with knowledge is visible in Situation 4, ‘ASI Ron (yp) and Kelly (p)’. The situation involves a discussion about the qualitative difference between Ron (yp) and Kelly’s (p) relationship and Ron’s (yp) relationship with other adults in the home. Participants attribute the depth of the relationship to the fact that Kelly (p) administered the Attachment Style Interview (Bifulco et al., 2017) to Ron (yp). They also comment on the fact that the intimacy created between Ron (yp) and Kelly (yp) after the interview cannot be replicated with other Participants. In this case, Rex (p) makes the point that the use he makes of the knowledge he shares in his relationships with young people needs to be considered ethically as well, bringing another dimension that is less prominent in Edwards’ work.

This example, however, demonstrates an emerging awareness of the subtle differences in the contexts Participants are sensitive to when using the kind of knowledge I relied upon in my analysis. Such emerging awareness could be fostered and developed through training and education.

Edwards’ work may be brought to bear on RCC by supporting workers to understand how the purpose of their work relates to that of other professionals. Edwards suggests that workers

¹In this situation we are discussing creating artefacts and mementoes based on Reggio’s practice of documentation (Formosinho & Peeters, 2019; Rinaldi, 2004; Suárez & Daniels, 2009) to initiate dialogue between Participants and young people about the young people’s desired futures.

should develop an awareness of what constitutes the specificity of the expert everyday knowledge they hold and how it differs from neighbouring professions' expert knowledge (Edwards, 2009, p. 35). She makes the point that relational agency may be developed; indeed, the above examples show Participants' emerging awareness of the differences in their knowledge from that of social workers, for example, and their sensitivity to slight differences in the purpose of each form of work. I see the growth of such awareness as an essential step towards professionalising RCC work and the development of a true 'expertise'. It may be possible for training providers offering education in RCC to develop modules which would support RCC workers' relational agency.

While in the first section of this chapter (see 7.1, p. 207) I considered whether mechanisms of othering may be present outside of Hilltop, in this section I looked at the implication of the specificity of the knowledge I drew upon in the analysis for RCC professional practice. In the last section of this chapter, I turn to the implications of the findings for social pedagogy.

7.3 Images and Representations of Young People as 'Other': Implications for Social Pedagogy

One of the reasons researchers at the TCRU chose to focus on social pedagogy was to make a comparative argument for the professionalisation and higher status of care work in the UK (C. Cameron, 2013; Kemp & Harbo, 2020; Kornbeck, 2014; Petrie et al., 2023.; Vrouwenfelder et al., 2012).

The difficulty social pedagogy has in articulating its claim to change the status of care work is visible in the repetition of such claims being made by the TCRU since the 70s (Boddy et al., 2006; Brannen et al., 2022; Moss & Petrie, 2002; P. Petrie, 2013; Spatscheck & Petrie, 2022).

This can be attributed partly to the narrowed political approach to social care, pedagogy and schooling prevalent more recently in England (Edwards, 2017a; Kemp, 2011; Parton & Williams, 2017). This lack of ambition and imagination is visible in the political differences in approaches to children and young people's social care in the four countries of the UK (Children's Commissioner for England, 2020a; Johnson et al., 2022; Steckley et al., 2023).

What follows looks at the case of England, where this lack of willingness to think politically moves care and social welfare further away from the more critical 'value base' to be found in

social pedagogy (Hatton, 2001b; Kemp, 2011). It also obscures the disconnection between imagined, idealised futures and the critical evaluation of present practice I highlighted in the literature review (see 2.1.4.5, p. 59)

For England, a recurring theme of this thesis is the contrast between the complexity of the task of RCC and the human and epistemological resources made available to carry it out. Further, such an imbalance highlights the structural inequalities built into the system, making its reform difficult to envisage. Yet, because of the increasingly clear authoritarian state interventions that children's services perform under the guise of working towards the 'public good' (Parton & Williams, 2017; Rosen & Twamley, 2018), we need more than ever to imagine new forms of supportive care beyond the current models (Haymarket Books, 2021; Hunter & Wroe, 2022). Given the conclusions I came to, what steps could be taken towards the realisation of human potential and flourishing to retain the original intention behind Malaguzzi's rich child? How can social pedagogy contribute to this?

In this last section of the discussion, I examine two possible implications for social pedagogy resulting from the othering of young people at the interpersonal level documented in this thesis. First, I suggest that the image of the rich child, unable to counter the institutional logic at work within RCC, may be replaced by a critique of the logic of needs. This rests on a Marxist understanding of human needs that has interesting corollaries for the second implication I explore the Marxist view of human beings offers a possibility to shift our understanding of responsibility from neoliberal, individualistic notions to a more collective outlook.

7.3.1 Transformative Potential of the 'Rich Child' or Developing a Critique of Needs?

Part of my argument that a Marxist theoretical framework is relevant to operationalising images rests on the suggestion that Malaguzzi's 'rich child' may be an interpretation of Marx's human being 'rich in needs' (see 2.1.2, p. 47). I concluded that the potential for transformation, which Moss and Petrie attributed to working from an image of the rich child, is made impossible by the invisible mediation of categories of subjects defined by policy, such as 'child as other', 'vulnerable', 'at risk', 'troubled and troublesome'. I want to suggest that practitioners wanting to work within a socio-pedagogical approach should instead focus on developing a critique of needs based on Vygotsky's dialectical psychology.

7.3.1.1 Marx, the Human Being Rich in Needs and Vygotsky

To do this, it is worth revisiting Marx's words, by which he sees economic development as: the exploration of the earth in all directions, to discover new things of use as well as new useful qualities of the old; such as new qualities of them as raw materials etc.; the development, hence, of the natural sciences to their highest point; likewise the discovery, creation and satisfaction of new needs arising from society itself; **the cultivation of all the qualities of the social human being, production of the same in a form as rich as possible in needs, because rich in qualities and relations** –production of this being as the most total and universal possible social product, for, in order to take gratification in a many-sided way, he must be capable of many pleasures, hence cultured to a high degree –is likewise a condition of production founded on capital (Marx, 1973, p. 409).

Within dialectical, transformative logic, the assumption is that the focus on a qualitative rather than quantitative development of needs as experienced under a capitalist economy, leads to a qualitatively different structure of personality, cognition and cultural practices (Hedegaard & Flear, 2008, pp. 10–29; Vygotsky, 1994b). This is possible because of the Marxian view of human beings as political animals, whose consciousness arises during activity that coordinates the individual's intentions with that others and the material resources available. This forms part of the assumptions upon which Vygotsky, Leontiev, Ilyenkov, and others such as Hedegaard and Vianna work, and upon which I have based the operationalisation of images and representations at Hilltop (see 2.1.2.2, p. 48 and 3.2.1, p. 97).

Vygotsky links Marx's ideas about the development of human personalities and capabilities directly to psychology and education (Vygotsky, 1994b) and specifically to this idea of the '*human being rich in needs, because rich in qualities and relations*'. In the same publication, Vygotsky further argues that this dialectical materialist view of the human being is the basis on which he develops his psychology (see also Ratner & Silva, 2017; Stetsenko, 2017). Within this psychology, as introduced earlier (see 3.2.1, p. 97), needs drive activity. It is through an understanding of the cultural and biological ways in which needs arise and, throughout the activity, are represented in the mind as necessary to meet that need, that Ilyenkov (2010) situates images and representations.

Yet Vygotsky does not seem overly concerned with the needs of children and young people in the same way that RCC workers at Hilltop are required to justify their actions.

Vygotsky's apparent 'neglect' of needs is visible through an index search of all volumes of his collected works. 'Needs' only appears in one volume with any depth, and then only on six pages (Vygotsky, 1998). There are two other references in the other volumes, one being erroneous.

However, key aspects of Vygotsky's ideas about needs are fundamentally different from how the staff at Hilltop thought of the young people's needs.

As expected, owing to his Marxist theoretical grounding, for Vygotsk, needs generate consciousness through their interaction with the material world (Vygotsky, 1987, pp. 345–346). Needs are understood as dialectical, structuring activity and, in the same way, shaping human consciousness. He writes:

a unique relation between human beings and the objective activity arises. Lewin finds this unique relation in the fact that on the basis of such temporary need or interest, the structure of man's environment, or, as the investigator puts it, the structure of the field changes radically. Even with real needs, we note that they do not directly lead us to certain actions; most often their direct influence is that they change for us the character or the things around us (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 10).

From this statement, Vygotsky elaborates that the individual's particular choice of activity to satisfy their needs develops, over time, in interaction with the social and material context they live in. This context frames both the possibilities for action and the individual's interests, systems of thinking and habits in satisfying developmental and culturally created needs (Potapov, 2021; Vygotsky, 1998, p. 8).

What Vygotsky adds to Marx's ideas around needs is their impact on an individual consciousness, and the way meanings attributed to a situation impact their psychological development. In that argument, need drives changes in how the person subjected to those needs perceives and acts within their environment (Vygotsky, 1994). The need is both the craving for its object and the motivation to act in meeting that need. There is no doubt in Vygotsky's writing that the human being experiencing the need is also the person who will meet that need, using resources within their environment. The need 'produces' an 'object motive', a goal, a purpose, that the subject will later 'consume' to meet their need.

7.3.1.1 Maslow's Pyramid of Needs

Vygotsky's understanding of 'needs' is quite different to that in Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989. Contrary to Vygotsky's, our current societal view of needs is characterised by Maslow's pyramid of needs (Maslow, 1970). Much literature aimed at social work and social care draws on Maslow's ideas (Nolan, 2007, pp. 152–157; Payne, 1991, pp. 29–30; 171) and his pyramid of needs is part, I would argue, of popular conceptions of psychology¹.

Maslow's individualistic conceptualisation of needs (Mubaya et al., 2016) echoes how the RCC sector's original interest in establishing a 'theory of needs' (Kahan, 1993, pp. 10–12) implied the planning and delivery of individual care plans with a narrow consideration of culture (see 2.2.3.2, p. 72). In this logic, children and young people are seen as receptacles for the actions of well-meaning adults, as *consumers* of care and support (S. Petrie, 2015). The recent authoritative trend that Parton and Williams (2017) highlight, further embeds this thinking in everyday practice. This is connected to constructions of children and young people as passive (Jakobsen, 2009; Woodhead, 1997).

Maslow's ontological position on the human being and their relationship with the environment is at odds with Vygotsky's. Like the Russian psychologist, Maslow (1970, pp. 28-9;162) situates the origin of motivation and needs' within the organism, but in a clear split from the framing of this thesis, he:

cautions the theoriser against too great preoccupation with the exterior, with the culture, the environment or the situation" (Maslow, 1970, p. 28).

The context within which this quote is taken is important, in that Maslow is not arguing for a purely behaviourist view of motivation, nor is he convinced by a purely biological explanation for it. He wants the focus of study to be on the 'organism', the human being. Yet Maslow's insistence on a strict separation between the individual and their environment severs the capacity for action that Vygotsky and those working with his ideas were at pains to understand.

A critique of Maslow's conception of needs and the implications this has for social pedagogy may therefore argue that needs should be seen and understood relationally and dialectically

¹ The Wikipedia page for Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Wikipedia, 2022b) totalled 5,788 daily views on 14 October 2022, whereas Vygotsky's page (Wikipedia, 2022a) totalled 634 daily views on the same day.

instead of the currently unexamined and universalist assumptions behind Maslow's theory. The critique should make use of the already existing evidence of how such an understanding further reinforces a view of children as passive and as consumers (Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2019; Murriss, 2016; *Posthuman Child Manifesto*, 2018; Woodhead, 1997), in line with neoliberalism.

This critique of Maslow's theory could also emphasise Marxist and post-Vygotskian ideas around the drive which human beings have to meet their own needs, and how this is epistemologically and historically contingent on individuals and their social, economic and political positioning. This would encourage professionals, such as social workers under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, who 'assess' those needs, to observe how children, young people and families solve their own problems. It could be a direct critique of more interventionist and positivist approaches because it requires intimate knowledge of the meanings and interpretations an individual gives to the situation they find themselves in. In that sense, the specialist knowledge RCC workers possess would be invaluable, because it would provide the situated and local knowledge obtained through long-term sustained everyday activities that is necessary to understand individuals' drive towards solutions.

In this section, I have argued that working from a post-Vygotskian understanding of needs may, in turn, be more apt at countering some of the institutional constructions of 'child as other' identified within the RCC sector.

In the remainder of the chapter, I further examine the pertinence of a post-Vygotskian theoretical framework for developing critical and transformative tools within the discipline of social pedagogy.

7.3.2 Vygotsky and Ilyenkov as Social Pedagogues?

I now turn to Vygotsky's and Ilyenkov's work with children with 'special needs' to illustrate how a dialectical understanding of needs would shape images of children and young people differently to those encountered at Hilltop (Bakhurst & Padden, 1991; e.g. Bottcher & Dammeyer, 2012; Ilyenkov, 2007; Kozulin & Gindis, 2007; Suvorov, 2003; Vygotsky, 1993).

7.3.2.1 Vygotsky and Social Pedagogy

Vygotsky's ideas on educating people with sensory, cognitive or physical impairment is characterised by the "compensatory principle". This principle states that '*any defect creates in a child a drive, a need to overcompensate, but that the origin of the defect is sociocultural*' (Vygotsky, 1993, pp. 52; 62). Indeed, it is by meeting social expectations that require the use of the 'defect' that the person becomes aware of its existence. These assumptions shift the focus on experience, personal meanings and the resources made available by one's environment, and their use in reaching one's goal (Gindis, 1995). It is an understanding that differs greatly from Maslow's caution *against* focusing on the environment and the culture. It fundamentally reframes the discourse on needs currently driving policies in England. Vygotsky calls for educational programmes which hinge on the psychological drive to compensate for a defect or loss by making changes to the environment and the tools available to mediate activity (Vygotsky, 1993, p. 52). The intervention is not medical, nor therapeutic; it is socio-pedagogical because it focuses on creating a learning situation within which the learners gradually become capable of using the resources available in their environment. This is what Vianna (2007; Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011) does in a US children's home and is the point of commonality between post-Vygotskian and social pedagogy: a focus on the transformative potential of learning.

With the limited information available in English publications, several points of convergence between social pedagogy and post-Vygotskian theory emerge. For example, the fact that dialectical thinking is latent in social pedagogy is visible in several ways:

- the German history of social pedagogy goes back to Hegel and his materialist conception of history, whereby education is an activity towards which many social contradictions converge (Kornbeck & Rosendal Jensen, 2009, p. 13).
- social pedagogical thinking developed in parallel with the Industrial Revolution, a historical event which shaped European understandings of the relationship between human beings and the material conditions within which they find themselves. This is highly visible in Natorp's definition of social pedagogy, where he emphasises the internal, dialectical relationship between individual education and the 'organisation of social life' (Natorp, 1899, p. 98 in Kornbeck & Rosendal Jensen, 2009, p. 16).
- I would go further and argue that Natorp was thinking dialectically by conceiving of knowledge as perpetually moving and evolving rather than standing still (Saltzman,

1998) but also by putting community and individuals on an equal ontological footing, whereby the community is necessary for the development of an individual, and vice versa (Saltzman, 1998).

- Hatton's radical understanding of social pedagogy highlights how necessary dialectical thinking is for remaining true to humanistic principles in the face of what he sees as strong institutional oppression at play within social work in Anglo-Saxon and Danish practice (Hatton, 2001a).
- Natorp's interest in social education focused on the will (Natorp, 1899), more precisely on 'volitional education' as the basis for community. I am dependent on translations for both German and Russian; therefore caution is required in linking Natorp to Vygotsky's interest in the development of volitional action through mediation (Sannino, 2015a, 2015b; Sannino & Laitinen, 2015). What is common is a focus on the will, an area of psychology and philosophy that has divided thinkers (Derry, 2004).

Finally, this link between social pedagogy and the post-Vygotskian paradigm would be incomplete without mentioning that Vygotsky was aware of Natorp's work. Indeed, the anti-psychologism and ethical socialism of the Margburg school, to which Natorp belongs (Kim, 2016), was reportedly well-known and influential in early soviet circles (Brandist, 2007, p. 83).

7.3.2.2 Ilyenkov and Social Pedagogy

I highlighted the pertinence of Ilyenkov's work for social pedagogy earlier (see 3.2.1, p. 97) by explaining how his characterisation of the pedagogical relationship in the example of learning to feed with a spoon, encapsulate much of his philosophy of mind. It, I suggest could be expended most fruitfully for social pedagogy.

Almborg's (2021, 2016) work on Ilyenkov's interest in the Zargosk school for deaf- and blind children echoes some of the themes of this thesis: the importance of a Marxist conception of mind, of the human capacity to act in the formation of consciousness and personality and how this can directly counter behaviourist assumptions present in current English practices of care (for example see Stevens (2004)).

Such understandings, of course, call for an acknowledgment of the consequences of differing philosophical positions on consciousness, society and human-being (Hatton, 2001b; Seal & Frost, 2014), which has been marginal in social care so far.

Both Vygotsky and Ilyenkov's writing could be used to support social pedagogy students' awareness of the learning potential of the everyday, as well as refining their critique of the assumptions they bring in their work.

7.3.3 Social Pedagogy in Neoliberal Clothing, or Responsibility and Collective Action?

So far, I have argued that a professional orientation imbued with the values of Malaguzzi's 'image of the rich child' was not viable for addressing the mechanisms of othering at play during the fieldwork, but that post-Vygotskian theory's attention to the relationship between mind and world, may connect the critical attention necessary to understand current RCC practice with possibilities for transformative learning.

I now turn to the RCC workers themselves and their preference for the status-quo in the three months of the fieldwork. This preference can be explained in many ways, such as the short length of the fieldwork, or the limitation (see 3.1.2.4, p. 95) that Change Laboratories may not be the best context for marginalised workers to exert agency. Yet power differentials are made visible in the findings.

Rather, I want to turn to disconnections in Moss and Petrie's (2002, pp. 137–149) assumptions about who social pedagogues are as professionals, and the view of the mind I have adopted to be able to understand how images and representations influence professional practice. While Moss and Petrie pay attention to the impact neoliberal ideas have on how children are thought of, they do not focus on how neoliberal ideology shapes the common-sense understanding of the relationship between mind and body in social pedagogues' responsibility and professional practice.

It is as if the social pedagogue they are thinking of is a Robinson Crusoe professional (Marx, 1973, pp. 83–84), severed from the historically accumulated meanings and politically constructed procedures that they abide by in their everyday work. The potential of a post-Vygotskian framework for understanding how institutional meanings become part of an individual's intentions, for example, was made clear in the description in Section 3, above, when describing motive orientation in institutions 3.1.1.2, p. 87).

Alone on a deserted island, arguably, the social pedagogue Moss and Petrie conjure up could act congruently with their value base at a given point in time. Yet the social workers involved

with the young people in the case study home would have thought very differently of them without the Children Act 1989 mediating their practice, and staff at Hilltop would have focused on other aspects of John's (yp) life should the guidance on radicalisation not have been made reporting suspicious activity mandatory (Great Britain & Home Office, 2011).

Instead, by relying on a theoretical framework based on an image of the human being who is in the most literal sense a ζῷον πολιτικόν¹, not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society (Marx, 1973, p. 84), the data analysis could track how representations of 'child in care as other' operated on many different planes of analysis, thereby linking my findings with other works highlighting the othering of children in care.

By carefully thinking through the implications of a non-essentialist conception of mind, a mind that realises itself through the body and its activity in the material world, and that thinks through acting with others and with 'things' from an ethical and transformative orientation (Stetsenko, 2017), I came to see how the oppressive images described by Hill Collins (2009) or Laurence (1982) are at work in RCC workers' decision-making.

I now explore how this position on the relationship between mind and body may shape views of taking responsibility for the racism and marginalisation I describe in the previous chapter.

When drawing conclusions about the *Becoming Adult* project, Chase & Allsopp (2020, pp. 210–227) argue that vulnerability, or as demonstrated in this thesis, othering, is politically induced. It becomes difficult to attribute sole responsibility for the young people's experiences of being 'other' to the individual staff members working at Hilltop at the time of the fieldwork. Rather, thinking as post-Vygotskian theory does of the human mind as 'beyond the head' (Bakhurst, 1991; Stetsenko, 2017) may lead to the conclusion that responsibility for the internalisation of policy-induced categories and logic lies collectively. What I am saying here is not new (Chomsky et al., 2011; Rose, 2005; Rosen & James, 2018), but bringing in the activity theoretical apparatus is important because it supports pedagogical thinking about this question. To think about responsibility in a way that reflects the shift I am trying to advocate for, it is worth further reading of the publications arising from the *Becoming Adult* project. Indeed, when exploring the issue of 'corporate parenting' for young, separated

¹ Zoon politikon, a political animal.

migrants, Meloni and Humphris draw on a view of the worker's responsibility that considers that a professional has choices to make within interpersonal relationships and that:

their actions are also embedded within wider structures which can produce injustice and inequalities, [where the responsibility of the professional lies with] a personal and collective sense of duty that engages with social structure as the core subject of justice (Meloni & Humphris, 2021, p. 3250).

While this quote refers to professionals of a higher status than RCC workers, the data demonstrate how the constraints imposed by the welfare system and its statutory regulations push Participants to attribute blame to the young people rather than to institutional and statutory practices.

I am thinking more specifically about issues around money, which were central in several situations (Situation 5, 'Attending a Football Match'; Situation 16, 'Resident's Meeting'; Situation 27, 'Shopping with Peryiar (yp)'; Situation 30, 'Young People Asking Staff for Money') and in the image of young people 'involved in manipulation' (see 6.2.7, p. 189). The language chosen by staff at Hilltop is strong: '*swindler*', '*pulling wool over our eyes to get money*'. It betrayed the Participants' sense of powerlessness. The processes young people go through to obtain money and divorce it from institutional rules are complex. If, as suggested by Meloni and Humphries, RCC workers consider the impact of the surveillance they exert on young people from a collective, rather than an individualistic point of view, could the sophisticated processes young people go through to get money be seen as an attempt to recover some privacy? Would it be possible for RCC workers to give a concerted response to this understanding, which mitigates the pressures of accountability to the state, with a view to giving young people an experience of privacy? By the same token, how could RCC workers lessen the invasion of residents' privacy, created by the police presence in their homes and bedrooms after young people have been reported missing?

Much of the literature on social pedagogy available in English does not take this wider, 'remedial' (Meloni & Humphris, 2021, p. 3246) view of responsibility. Despite an abundance of publications on values and ethical orientation within the discipline (Charfe & Gardner, 2020; Corbella & Úcar, 2019; Eischteller, 2010; Newcomb, 2018; M. K. Smith, 2019), neoliberal ideology individualises and shapes how responsibility is thought about in this literature (Cleary, 2020). The theoretical choices I made throughout this thesis were key in navigating around this disconnection, and this is why I have been emphasising the possibility

for social pedagogy and post-Vygotskian theory to be in dialogue (Nissen, 2003, 2003; Remy, 2020; Spatscheck, 2019).

The topics discussed in this chapter are broad, relating to ethics, knowledge and international comparisons of RCC professional practice. Throughout, I have linked the findings with the literature relevant to RCC professional practice and social pedagogy, focusing on the implications of a post-Vygotskian understanding of consciousness, therefore presenting my answer to the question posed in the research question (see 2.3, p. 82): how can a post-Vygotskian formulation of professional practice, learning and change explain the disconnection between current RCC practices in England and visions of the flourishing human being encapsulated by Malaguzzi and early Marxian ideas on the ‘rich child’ and the ‘rich human being’?

8 Conclusion

Petrie et al. (2006) attributed small but important differences in the caring practices of RCC workers in Germany, Denmark and England to the variations in the training and education of those workers and what a ‘good childhood’ appeared to be in a given society. In short, they concluded their comprehensive comparative study of RCC work by saying that the more pedagogically trained the staff were, the more they could work from a positive ‘image of the child’ (P. Petrie et al., 2006, p. 90).

In a similar vein, but focusing on processes of governmentality rather than professional practice, Chase and Allsopp (2020), when reporting on the knowledge created during the *Becoming Adult* project, conclude that the publication:

presented a more nuanced picture of how young people caught up in the vagaries of migratory processes may simultaneously or sequentially be made vulnerable and be agentic. Throughout, we have avoided ideas of vulnerability that are directly linked to particular identities (such as child, migrant child, unaccompanied child) and instead engaged with the idea that vulnerability is politically induced, the result of often deliberate policy structures and systems [...] Notions of inherent vulnerability are intentionally solidified in discourses surrounding young people seeking asylum in Europe – and this is, in itself, a political process (Chase & Allsopp, 2020, pp. 214–215).

In this project, I explored the conclusions reached by those two studies concerning RCC, asking, ‘To what extent can socially and politically constructed values and concepts influence interpersonal relationships between young people and the professionals who work with them in a children’s home?’ In doing so, ‘images’ became a key concept.

Throughout the project, I struggled with the somewhat deterministic undertones of my focus. As Chase and Allsopp highlight, individuals may respond to policies, processes and institutional diktats in creative if constricted ways. Focusing on images, therefore, can be a way to stigmatise and ‘essentialise’ the individuals identified, and self-identifying, as having ‘care experience’.

One may read essentialist qualities of otherness or vulnerability in what I have written, despite my efforts to report on the situated and time-bound qualities of images. This is not my intention; indeed, I attempted to show how images and representations themselves were

contested, for example, how one young person, in particular, actively managed this process and fought against the image of him as sexualised.

The pertinence of understanding how images and representations influence practice was made relevant in more ways than one:

- it highlights the importance of focusing on young people's experiences of the care that is intended for them and how they speak about it, in a way that highlights relational practices.
- it asks us to think through questions of responsibility which, in a neoliberal welfare system, are made to appear individualistic.
- it highlights the importance of what are usually considered philosophical debates about what makes us human, the relationship between body and mind, or enquiring what is consciousness and its relationship with what surrounds us. Are we separate from our surroundings or not? Such questions can have very practical consequences, which is a theme running through the thesis.
- it points to the necessity for RCC workers to reflect and wrestle with ideas, again quite philosophical, about encountering the 'other', of identity and developing an ability to shift focus between individual people and their social circumstances without losing sight of one or the other.

I could go on, but what did those reflections rest on? How can the process I have been writing about be summarised? In this thesis, I asked **'How does a team of RCC workers introduced to social pedagogy use the image of the 'rich child' in their work with children and young people living in a residential children's home in England?'**

The literature review highlighted disconnections in the suggestion Moss and Petrie (2002) made, and the question is therefore subdivided:

- how can a post-Vygotskian formulation of professional practice, learning and change explain the disconnection between current RCC practices in England and visions of the flourishing human being encapsulated by Malaguzzi and early Marx ideas on the 'rich child' and the 'rich human being'? What images of the child guide RCC workers' professional practice?
- what do the findings suggest about changes in the RCC sector in England, the introduction of social pedagogy into English welfare systems and the theory and practice of social pedagogy and RCC?

The simple answer to the main question is that for RCC workers at Hilltop, despite being introduced to social pedagogy, attempts at working from an image of the 'rich child' are thwarted by the invisible mediation of the category 'child in care as other'. This category has historically emerged in law, policy and practice since Victorian times, and at the very least since the royal assent given to the Children Act 1989 and the publication of the UNCRC, also in 1989. This invisible mediation is evident in how RCC workers choose either to ignore or to consider young people's interpretations, meanings and intentions in their account of their work. The logic of needs is used to justify RCC workers' activity when young people's interpretations do not follow the 'image of the child as other'. Built into the image of 'child in care as other' are binaries that symbolically and physically separate young people from the Participants. The metaphor of the nuclear family is used to normalise the experience of young people or how young people's emotions are contrasted to a rational, 'adult' approach. Further, the surveillance that is statutorily imposed remains unspoken, yet its effects translate into negative qualities attributed to young people being described as 'liars', 'swindlers' or 'demanding'. All this happens tacitly, without really reaching conscious awareness.

To operationalise images and explore how Malaguzzi's ideas could be applicable to RCC, I described the links between social pedagogy and post-Vygotskian theory, more specifically between pedagogical activity and Vygotsky's genetic law of cultural development. I drew on post-Vygotskian theory to understand the dialectical relationship between material and ideal planes of activity. Drawing on Ilyenkov, Leontiev and Engeström's work, I proposed that the change in laboratory methodology may be a possibility for working dialectically and kickstarting cycles of expansive learning within an RCC worker's staff team to be able to infer the images of young people in their interpretation of their everyday professional practice.

I then carried out the proposed fieldwork, which produced data I coded into 31 'situations', where the interpretations of the staff and the young people living at Hilltop were considered together with my own. This juxtaposition of different interpretations highlighted boundaries and determinations of the concept of the 'young people' concerned. Taken broadly, those could be interpreted into representations of 'young people as separated', 'decontextualised', 'in need of guidance', and 'involved in manipulation'. Looking into the sociological literature on 'othering', what was striking in the analysis undertaken for the thesis, is the frequency of representations of the young people as 'other'. I was struck by the fact that this highlighted

was how ideas about young people were shaped by three mechanisms of othering: the physical and symbolic separation of the young people and the staff, the ignorance or invisibilisation of young people's cultural practices and interpretations of situations, in addition to a generally negative value judgment of the young people concerned.

To understand how the images of the child relate to RCC workers' situated judgments and the possibility of transforming practice, I then moved my focus away from interpersonal relationships to the different planes of analysis that are nested in the activity setting. Indeed, reading the literature on RCC through an 'othering' lens' shows how widespread this is. Further, and drawing on post-Vygotskian work, the focus on the institutional context of the fieldwork highlighted how certain logic, such as the logic of needs, was internalised by Participants. Looking further at how mediation can operate invisibly in institutions, I concluded that the category of the child as 'other' invisibly mediates interpersonal relationships in the fieldwork setting. This shows how little equipped social pedagogy is to counter the 'bureaucratic capture' and the 'management of needs' that marginalise individuals with care experiences through the welfare system.

Like Green (1998), I have come to a pessimistic conclusion. The focus on images and representations of young people in RCC professional practice strongly suggests that othering is widely and possibly systematically present in how RCC workers think of young people. What this study highlights is how RCC workers have internalised the logic of needs and mechanisms of othering that shape the welfare system. From a post-Vygotskian stance, this is to be expected.

The lack of training (Eenshuistra et al., 2019; Gharabaghi & Phelan, 2011) and emotional containment (Steckley, 2018), that are well documented in the sector, suggest areas for reform. While I started this project with aspirations for change and transformation, the extent of evidence that othering is at play across both geographical contexts and history may explain the resistance to change and reforms that have been attempted in the sector for so long (Montserrat et al., 2022) and the lack of possibilities for change present in the data. The research selected to discuss the presence of othering mechanisms outside of Hilltop further connects to work done on the impact of the stigma associated with total institutions (Deakin et al., 2020; Goffman, 2017; Rose, 2005) on bodies living in it. Those are not new ideas; indeed, Goffman first published *Stigma* in 1963. What makes this thesis relevant is the gradual description of how the nested interpersonal relationships relate in ever-widening

circles to processes of governmentality. In that sense, the importance of bridging disciplines is critical, as seen in the work that stems from the *Becoming Adult* project where migration studies and well-being studies are equally drawn upon (Chase & Allsopp, 2020; Humphris & Sigona, 2019a, 2019b). The paradigm I use in this work, and the use of Hedegaard's planes of analysis to map out the knowledge produced, is another important feature: it attempts to link the psychological, the institutional and the social. While Ilyenkov thinks of ideal images as dialectical and brings a range of theoretical tools to track processes of change in institutions and workplaces, the staff at Hilltop did not use images agentially to subvert the negative constructions of 'child', as Moss and Petrie (2002) suggested.

The emerging critique of child protection systems (Bywaters, 2015; Featherstone et al., 2014; Hood et al., 2020; Krumer-Nevo, 2016; Parton, 2020; Saar-Heiman & Gupta, 2020) is important here because RCC is part of a wider system of state intervention in family lives, influencing the residential sectors' population, its practices and its purpose. This literature makes visible the harm caused by the very systems that are intended to support the welfare of those it targets (Hunter, 2020; Hunter & Wroe, 2022; Wroe, 2022). Again, I want to keep track of my position within the welfare system. I do not attempt here to explain to children and young people who have lived, or are living 'in care' the impact of the 'othering' they are subjected to. Rather, I want to show RCC workers how they are involved in their everyday practice in mechanisms that create unequal power relationships, and how they unknowingly reproduce categories that ascribe a subaltern identity to the children and young people they work with.

Within pedagogical and RCC literature this is very rare (Rosen, 2017), possibly because a structural view of anti-racist and feminist practice relies heavily on sociological theory and Marxism rather than psychology (Kundnani, 2023). Rather than deconstruct relationships, RCC workers and pedagogues act and 'build' them. The question of 'do no harm', as Whittaker et al. (2016) forcefully but uncritically remind us, is crucial. The 'doing' therefore needs to be geared towards the undoing of those categories (Davis et al., 2022, p. 71). Would abolitionist social work, with its main history in the USA, be useful for building on this tendency towards action?

This thesis shows that the staff at Hilltop had little awareness of how they were reproducing state policy and wider mechanisms of marginalisation. This is where it can meet abolitionist

thinking, together with an understanding that collective responsibility needs to be understood at an everyday level.

I showed how staff working at Hilltop relied on fixed representations of the Western Christian nuclear family to justify some of their caring practices. The logic of needs also operated tacitly there. Rather than resort to a given logic that is prone to reflect the interests of one particular social group, part of the critical work required to train RCC workers needs to understand how multifaceted and political the concepts of family and needs are (Brannen et al., 2000; N. Fraser, 1987, 1989), especially when state intervention is being enacted in individual relationships.

Therefore, if one is taking a position towards abolitionist social work in institutional forms of care for children, the argument needs to extend beyond Western forms of care towards including non-Western and non-patriarchal, heteronormative forms of care. Much of this remains to be formulated.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 includes anonymised material produced to obtain formal consent to carry out the fieldwork

Embedding socio-pedagogical intentions in practice

Cécile Remy

What I'm doing

A PhD at the UCL Institute of Education supervised by Prof. C. Cameron and Prof. P. Petrie

Why I am doing it?

To understand the relationship between a professional's intention (*Haltung*) to work socio-pedagogically and actual practice

How am I doing it?

By facilitating a series of workshops and interviews with children, young people and practitioners.

Intended benefits for participants:

- Further embed children and young people's participation in practice;
- Free sessions that support staff members' Continuous Professional Development by reflecting on dilemmas in everyday practice.

Social pedagogy calls for a more equal relationship between adults and children or young people. It does so by promoting a positive image of the child, which is sometimes related to the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia and its 'image of the rich child'. In practice, I've heard practitioners referring to a 'strength-based approach' or looking at the resilience of the child.

I am interested in the process through which this positive image of the child is implemented in practice, and especially the contradictions that arise with other ways children are thought about (think for example of what is implied about children's abilities when looking at risk management in schools in England compared to Bolivia's decision to lower to 10 years old the legal age limit for child labor)

To understand this process better, I have set-up a series of workshops where participants (both children and young people and the adults that work with them) can become more aware of the incongruences between the intention they have in their work (such as promoting the voice of the children or young people) and the reality of their practice guided by policies, traditions or financial constraints.

Using a learning model drawn from Paulo Freire and Vygotsky, those workshops can support professionals to find new ways of overcoming those contradictions in practice.



From 2000 to 2008 I worked as a teacher and residential care worker in Camphill Schools, Aberdeen.

I then moved to Kent, where I set up a small independent special school on the grounds of the Canterbury Steiner School, teaching primary aged children who found it difficult to integrate within the main school. Social pedagogy, which I experienced in Camphill, became an essential framework to articulate the pedagogical vision for the school. The project did not attract sufficient funding and one of the reasons I believe this is so is due to the differences in values and meanings attached to children within English society and in continental Europe, where social pedagogy originated. I was also intently aware of the lack of theorization of learning within social pedagogy. This prompted me to start a PhD.

I come to XXX to listen to you, to try and understand what's important to you, and I work with you and the staff to see what's possible.

But things will be a bit different when I come on Mondays from today, the 27th of November, until the 15th of January



Phone number

Email address



What I **always** do in XXX



Lifeskills



Listen to what's important to you
and work with you and
the staff to see what's possible

What I do between the 27th of November and the 15th of January

Find out from you what's its like at XXX .

Run a workshop with the staff on Wednesdays
where they think about your ideas and see what could be done
differently.

There are a few things I want you to know:

You can say no if you don't want to take part.

If you're OK to participate, I will write down and or record what
you say.

I will write up what I do for university, so other people can read
this, but they will not be able to identify you.

Your social worker knows this is happening.

CONSENT FORM [REDACTED]

Title of Study: Embedding socio-pedagogical intentions in practice.

Department: Thomas Coram Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education

Name and Contact Details of the Researcher(s): Cecile Remy [REDACTED]

Academic Supervisors: Prof C. Cameron and Prof P. Petrie.

Name and Contact Details of the UCL Data Protection Officer: [REDACTED]

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee: Project ID number: [REDACTED]

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

	Tick Box
I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study. I have had an opportunity to consider the information and what will be expected of me. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction	
I understand that should a Participant disclose information relating to a child or young person being at risk of significant harm as defined by S. 47 of the Children's Act 1988 Cecile has a duty to notify the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Board	
I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data at anytime by contacting Cecile	
I consent to the processing of my contributions to the workshops and of any separate interviews for the purposes explained to me. I am aware that they will be video and audio recorded. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with all applicable data protection legislation.	
I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure I cannot be identified when information shared outside of the home.	

I understand that my data gathered in this study will be stored anonymously and securely. It will not be possible to identify me in any publications	
I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the University (to include sponsors and funders) for monitoring and audit purposes.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. I understand that if I decide to withdraw, I will discuss this with Cecile.	
I have been explained the potential distress that participating in the workshops may cause and I have been given information about where to seek emotional support.	
I understand the direct/indirect benefits of participating.	
I understand that the data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher(s) undertaking this study.	
I understand that I will not benefit financially from this study or from any possible outcome it may result in in the future.	
I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and I wish to receive a copy of it. Yes/No I wish to be given verbal feedback. Yes/No	
I consent to my contribution to the workshop and any interview being audio/video recorded and understand that the recordings will be stored anonymously, using password-protected software until completion of Cecile's PhD.	
██████████ if I wish to lodge a complaint.	
I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.	

Name of Participant Date Signature

Researcher Date Signature

Appendix 2

Workshops planning sessions.

Overall original plan

22nd November

29th November

6th December

13th December

Overall plan for revised sessions after break

10th January

17th January

24th January

Interview Prompt Sheet

Original plan as of 22nd November

Session	Content	Relation within the expensive learning cycle.
22 nd November	Parameters of the laboratory. Questioning/ Training in Data gathering. Outline of two main areas of dilemma/disturbances	Questioning
29 th November	Historical analysis (river drawing?) using artefacts collected during previous weeks)	Questioning/Analysing
6 th December	Practical empirical analysis (disturbance diaries using triangle categories as analysis) Difference between Object of activity and outcome	Questioning Analysing
13 th December	Modelling the new object of activity: use of image theatre techniques	Modelling the new object
20 th December	Modelling the new object of activity image theatre techniques: what tools are necessary to implement new model? May be use Jyrlama's modalities of agency in Daniels, Edwards, Engstrom et al,2010. P.55	Modelling the new object. Implement
3 rd January	Deciding on practical steps to implementation, and ways to gather data to use as a mirror to support the implementation	Implement
10 th January	Review of the mirror data and decisions about implementation	Reflect/consolidate
17 th January	Review of the whole process, next steps.	Review, question the implementation.

Session plans as prepared for each session
 Session 1 22nd November

To do list:			
Main purpose of session within the cycle of expansive learning: Questioning			
Time	Theme/ aim	Outline of activity	Tools, mirror, stimuli
12-00	Intro	Consent Change Laboratory Group process	Consent forms to sign.
12-10	Current situation	Interview colleagues about what's a good day/ what's a bad day they've had recently, i.e an actual day not a generic one. This is because it will be useful to gather other data, i.e. clear care, young people's accounts, incident reports, etc... Emphasis on listening and transforming what is being said, not just left as a feel good activity through sympathy. Pair chosen through connecting jigsaw pieces	Print out of the main questions Tube map jigsaw with matching number of pieces to Participants.
12-20		Each pair represents it either drawing, acting out, paying attention to what they did, what was used to reach your goal, what they were trying to achieve, what rules they followed, how you shared the work	Print out follow up questions
12-40		Assign a note taker. Each pair shares their good day/bad day	Notes taken on flip chart.
12-50		What are the main themes? Group discussion.	
12-55		Presentation of mirror data. Importance of this being a transcript: from casual discussion to tangible document. Discuss emotional reaction to it.	Print out of some of the interviews extracts (engaging in activity)
13-05	To gather information about people's ways of coping.	Panic buttons	Print out learning zone
13-10	Task for next week	Events diary Agree on what info I gather from the young people What's the best way to remember doing it?	Print out of the time line post box for it.
Participants' tasks for the next session: Write their history at fieldwork setting. People whom I have interviewed, your job is to make sure the others are doing it!			

Session 2 29th November

To do list: Print outs/ sweets for team allocations			
Resident's meeting books			
Handovers			
Activity planners			
Disturbance diaries			
Main purpose of session within the cycle of expansive learning: Questioning/ empirical and start historical analysis			
Time	Theme/ aim	Outline of activity	Tools, mirror, stimuli
12-00	Recap from previous session	Ethics. Main themes from last week. Remind all of the learning zones/panic button	Ethics forms Transcript + Change lab folder.
12.05		Presentation of mirror data Use of the 4 elements of analysis aim, what we're trying to achieve tools relationships with other people/division of labour rules and regulations	Displayed in the room prior to start: -Participation principles from young people: "our choice is not a choice". -info collected from young people on Monday. -Disturbance diaries.
12.10	Data gathering, investigating work around 3 situations where communication is involved: -resident's meeting -habits and rules -engagement in activities	Group work 1 Timeline of changes of resident's meeting since beginning of July. As well as the themes for discussion.	Minutes from young people's meeting. Task sheet Young people's feedback on meeting a few weeks ago. Disturbance diaries
		Group work 2 makes a list of all the habits/ rules in the home	Mirror data from interviews Find situations over the last week where there were contact between staff and young people around rules. Look at key-working sessions and see how that was addressed (also in the last week). Disturbance diaries
		Group work (can be given as task for next week, depending on number): 1 group looks at young people's engagement in activities	Mirror data from interviews, activity planners Disturbance diaries Keyworking sessions
12.40	Identify links amongst those different situations in which communication is at play	Each group presents what they have done. General discussion about it, note taker instructed about the past/present/future distinction.	Flip chart. Divide into: Past present future
13.00	Give feedback on the process	5 fingered feedback	Flip chart Paper/pen
13.10	Assign tasks for next session	Gathering historical data on how main themes are being played out for each young person in the home	Flip chart
Participants' tasks for the next session: Time line for each young person.			

Session 3 6th December

To do list:			
Main purpose of session within the cycle of expansive learning: Questioning			
Time	Theme/ aim	Outline of activity	Tools, mirror, stimuli
12-00	Recap and discuss what has been useful, what has not been useful and what remains to be done + to practice observation and indirect communication.	What has been trialled out this week? 1-plan loss of money into overall cost when planning activities 2-Basic page on how it's easiest to communicate for each young person: VAK/MI tests 3-Find more opportunities in all aspects of the home to increase choice: sitting in the hallway when they come in, + snacks 4-Ladder of participation, what control we give them (for example, awareness that budgets are set through contract with LA, need to gain more clarity)	VAK/MI test, Hart's ladder of participation Sheet for each young person (
12-15	Elicit practical situation with young people when communication was difficult	Ask Participants to write professionals on small pieces of paper as well as categories of young people coming to the home The revelation of St Theresa	Small papers with professionals and young people
12-30	difficult	Take 5 minutes to think through a situation where communication was difficult with a young person	Pilot/co-pilot sheet
12-35		Sculpt the situation, then reshape it to an ideal situation. The rest of the Participants then use MI/VAK and Hart's ladder to work towards the ideal situation	Each other MI/VAK and Hart's ladder.
13-05	Prepare for next session about motives	Use a couple of the situations acted out and map them out on the triangle of activity, starting from the real situation and move onto the steps towards the ideal situation.	Flip chart with triangle of activity.
Participants' tasks for the next session:			

Session 4 13th December

To do list:			
Main purpose of session within the cycle of expansive learning: Questioning around communication			
Time	Theme/ aim	Outline of activity	Tools, mirror, stimuli
12-00	Prep	Ask Participants to write on small pieces of paper professionals as well as categories of young people coming to the home	2 kind of coloured paper (one professionals, one young people), pen
12-15	Put people at ease	Bear of Poitier (Boal's exercise	
12-30	Elicit practical situations between young people and staff when communication was difficult	The revelations of St Theresa	Pieces of paper produced during prep
12-35		Take 5 mins to think through a situation where communication was difficult with a young person/a colleague	Pilot/cop pilot sheets
13-05		Sculpt the situation, then reshape it to an ideal situation. The rest of the participants then use colleagues' input to work towards the ideal situation. Use reflective models they are familiar with (MI VAK or Hart's ladder if necessary	
13-20	Reflection/deepen analysis	General discussion	Flip chart/refer back to categories of triangle of activity if necessary
13-30	Feedback and taking stock of sessions so far	Discuss how things are so far and suggest a break if this helps	5 fingered feedback
Participants' tasks for the next session: Decide by Friday if they want to have a break			

Changed plan after break decided by Participants on 13th December (until 10th of January) and after their feedback (all asking to be more aware of the aim of the process)

	10 th of January	17 th of January	24 th of January	31 st of January
Theme	Participants own perception of childhood/ "Benchmarking" between this and young people in the setting	Looking for the rich child, modelling it.	Communicating this image to the young people	Communicating this image to the young people
Ascending from the Abstract to the Concrete	Current perceptions	model	How the young people respond to this/ confronting with reality	How Participants have used the rich child, plans for the future.
outline	Write down own teenage history history, and project into the future Do this for some of the young people	Continue making individual histories for each young person, I.e their gift to them about how they imagine them in the future Future	Past Compare situations how they're being analysed and with traditional rich child Use situations highlighted in first 4 sessions	Making individual stories of each young person, how they have touched and relate to that member of staff. Present
Task	Find how own experience and see if it matches things that have been recognised by other young people	Match recollections of events, records from clearcare/YP's written records to extracts from Malaguzzi's speeches	Work on the boxes and find ways of sharing them with young people	Characteristics of the rich child

Session 5 10th January

To do list:			
Main purpose of session within the cycle of expansive learning: Questioning We're all have a rich human being within us			
Time	Theme/ aim	Outline of activity	Tools, mirror, stimuli
12-00	Presentation of main aim of next 4 sessions	The next 4 sessions will be more directed towards finding the Rich child in the young people ■	Outline of 4 next sessions Definitions of the Rich child Triangle of activity
12-05	Relate Rich child to own experience	Think back on own teenage. early adult years and find situations where you felt: Competent Powerful Knowledgeable Motivated to communicate and engage in society Explore complex and abstract ideas Who helped you in this? Tell somebody else how to represent this using modelling clay/ drawing/etc...	Personal time line Felt tip pens/modelling clay
12-35	Analyse with triangle of activity	A couple of volunteers to talk about their own experiences using triangle The individual talks about their own aim, and their community and the rest of the group deduces rules/ division of labour/tools	Flip chart paper Triangle of activity
12-45	The young people's Rich Child	Record examples of times when each young person showed Competence Power Knowledge Motivation to communicate and engage in society Explore complex and abstract ideas	Flip chart paper with each young person's name Post it notes
12-55	Point out the commonalities between own experiences and that of the young people	Discussion	This session's work Note taker
13-10	Let's feel good about ourselves	Neighbour writes 1 thing you admire about the person who's paper you happen to have. Pass it on.	1 piece of paper per Participant with name written at the bottom of the page
Participants' tasks for the next session: Think for next week how they envisage the young people will be competent powerful, knowlegable etc....in 20 years time			

Session 6 17th January

To do list:			
Our aspirations for the future and young people's aspirations			
Time	Theme/ aim	Outline of activity	Tools, mirror, stimuli
12-00	Presentation of main aim of next 4 sessions Define the Rich child	The next 4 sessions will be more directed towards finding the Rich child in the young people at. Present what we have done last week.	Outline of 4 next sessions Definitions of the Rich child Boxes and pictures of the YP. Last week's work on A. and G.
12-05	Personal /professional aspirations	Write down own aspirations for the next 10. 20 years Make it clear that only one will be shared with the group	Paper/pens
12-20	Different kinds of agency: what can you change	How have our aspirations changed from being teenagers, what do we find useful in realising our aspirations? What gives us the power of making it happen?	Minute taker/flip chart/ Modalities of agency print out
12-40	Differences between personal aspirations and how this is articulated in practice	Split the Participants into 3. Group 1: Write down what you know of the young people's aspirations for the future Group 2: Go to the office to find out in Key-working sessions/monthly reports what is being written about planning for the future (short term/long term) Group 3: Continue working on the rich human being for each young person.	Post it notes/ flip chart paper from last week+ for each young person Print outs (Group 2)
13-10	Group discussion	Each group briefly reports on what they've done Ask the following questions: What are the similarities and differences between your aspirations and the young people's? Can you use the same model for the young people's aspirations that you used for your own?	Print out of the different aspects of agency
13-20	Let's feel good about ourselves	Neighbour writes 1 characteristic of the "rich human being" relating to the person the person who's paper you happen to have. Pass it on.	1 piece of paper per Participant with name written at the bottom of the page
13-25	Prep for next time	How do you want to represent the images of the rich young people we've created?	Show boxes and flip charts:
Participants' tasks for the next session: Ask the young people how they see themselves in 20 years' time.			

Session 7 24th January

<p>To do list: Get modelling clay Glue Felt tip pens Scissors Boxes magazines</p>			
<p>Our aspirations for the future and young people's aspirations</p>			
Time	Theme/ aim	Outline of activity	Tools, mirror, stimuli
12-00	Recap what has been done so far	Explain what has been done so far Look at the different images we have for the young people at the moment.	Flip chart papers
12-05	Understand the concept of agency/untested feasibility	Look at the situation when you worked out how XX wanted to be doing XXX when an adult. Give an example with G. talking to me about working in real estate. Spend a few minutes thinking about it individually, then share with the group	Last week's print out: untested feasibility.
12-20	Make the boxes	Create three things for each young person to put into their boxes 1-Make something representing how you see them in the future, i.e. a microphone/television for a politician, Football for footballer, etc... 2- make collage of times when they were powerful, connected, etc... to show the skills that they already have towards their future goal 3- any other experience/ the story so far: collect pictures/memories of things that they have done	Modelling clay Boxes Paper Glue Scissors
13-00	Share each young people's image	Put in parallel images we've created, how a young person is spoken about in their placement plan and the modalities of agency that were done at the beginning of the session Questions: -what are the things that work? -the things that don't work? -and can we see a way forward?	Flip chart paper Divided into 3 columns,
13-25	Wrap up/finish	Finish with a story Pygmalion	

Interview schedule

Introduction

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed, as part of the work you've kindly agreed to do in Hilltop. The theories I'm working with call the process of change and reflection the team will engage in a 'change laboratory'. It's a process that supports professionals to reflect and change their practice in a way that you think is suitable.

At present: I'm gathering information about the way things are done here in the home, so that I can plan the reflective sessions. Some of this might be used during the sessions as a 'mirror' to help the team understand more fully what is happening here. If you don't feel comfortable with the team knowing you raised a specific question, I will work with you to present it in a way that preserves your anonymity. If you want to stop at any point, just let me know...

If I'm writing, it's to remember things to ask rather than interrupt you (show writing for transparency)

Show the audio recording.

Questions. History and wider society

- Can you give me some history of your work in Hilltop?
- What do you know of the history before you started to work here?
- Personally, what motivates you to do this work?
- What's the purpose of the home?
- What does society expect around the work done here in Hilltop?
- Have you noticed any changes since you started working here? Personally and more broadly? How does that affect your work?
- Describe the team, and professionals involved in your work.
- What do the young people offer and contribute. Have you noticed any changes?
- What are the needs of the young people? Any changes?

Current events and daily life

- What is a good day and a bad day?
- Can you think of any situations that illustrate this?
- Are there any theories and ideas about the best way to carry your work? How does that translate practically?
- Describes official and unofficial rules that you're aware of
- What are the internal debates you're having amongst members of the team? What about the young people and other people not part of the fieldwork setting?
- What are your hopes for the future? Anything that can support or threaten this?

Appendix 3.

Appendix 3 consists of notes made directly about each situation found in the data, The notes follow the format described in 6.1, p. 173

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1) 26th November Mithum (yp) Vikam (p)

Reference to data:

Transcript session 3 6th December

Summary session 3

Mithum (yp) Placement Plan

Narrative description of the discussion:

Vikam (p) talks about an episode when he found communication with the young people difficult. This is a descriptive recall of the situation, the only problematisation is through the choice Vikam (p) makes to call this an illustrative example of difficult communication and the information gained in Mithum (yp)'s placement plan.

“Well mine is 26th of November with Mithum (yp), I tried to tell him about to remind him actually about the Rosetta programme the it's a programme enhancing their language their English. Eh the thing is that he couldn't understand what I was trying to talk about actually, yeah so we we couldn't the tension was that we didn't have communication eh, it was just eh him yeah, Mithum (yp) and I, eh, it took place in his bedroom, eh so what do I see, yeah, we were just standing there trying to see communication, I was trying to, you know, really talk slowly with him and try to just to just to show him what the Rosetta programme is, but, still it was a bit hard. And, eh I remember I can smell the deodorant spray that he had just put it on (laughter) and eh the sound I remember hearing the sound of the fan. From the floor, it was too hot in his bedroom. And yeah, I'm quite relaxed and calm.”

Transcript Session 3 Change Lab 6th December . From 00'58''53 til 01'00''14 Mithum (yp) Placement's Plan reports that although he has been told about the Rosetta programme, provided by the Virtual School¹ Mithum (yp) '*studies English on his own usually at weekends*' and that he '*prefers using books for studying English*' rather than the online programme.

Concepts at play:

Communication is equated to understanding of the words, it doesn't consider Mithum (yp)'s motivation or his contextual understanding. Yet it is clear that Mithum (yp) wants to learn English, but that there is no exploration of how he envisions doing this. In that sense, the fact that the Rosetta Programme is provided by the Virtual School is important information as to why Vikam (p) find that communication difficult: he needs to show external agencies that he is fulfilling his professional duties through interagency working and reporting how Mithum (yp) responded to the programme is one way to demonstrate that. In this instance, I wonder how much Vikam (p) assimilates the professional duty of accountability within his interaction.

Images/representations:

receptacle, object of communication

¹ Virtual schools are local authority departments whose responsibility is to promote the education of looked-after children in that area. This is compulsory in England since 2008 (C. Cameron et al., 2015, pp. 34–35)

2) 28th of November Sitting on the bench

Reference to data:

Transcript session 2 29th November

Narrative description of the discussion:

Participants are looking at what made it possible to have good attendance at an activity planned (a football match at a famous stadium). Cicely (p) identified the bench and stairs as ideal places to talk to the young people, putting herself in the way of the young people as “*they’ve got to go past you to get upstairs*” they will talk to you.

Concepts at play:

There is an implicit notion that young people do not initiate activities, and if it weren’t for Participants’ strategic positioning in the way of the young people there would be no engagement in activity

Images/representations:

difficult to catch
separate from adults.

3) Age assessment

Reference to data:

Transcript session 4 13th December

Narrative description of the discussion:

The Participants are acting short skits improvising situations they are likely to encounter in their work context. In this case, Josephine (p) and Rex (p) are taking the role of a social worker and a young unaccompanied asylum seeker respectively. The young man hasn't had his age assessment yet, and so they are meeting at the social services' office at 2pm on a Thursday afternoon. Rex (p)'s first reaction when seeing the topic of 'age assessment' is to laugh nervously, yet Josephine (p) argues that this is important to determine whether or not young people can be placed in the home or not, and whether they access education.

At first Josephine (p)- as a social worker- explains what the process of age assessment is. Then Rex (p)- as a UASC- questions this, so Josephine (p) justifies the necessity of the assessment by saying this is something that is done to all UASC (which is not accurately factual¹). Rex (p) explains that he told his social worker he is 14 years old. When asked to do something out of the ordinary, Josephine (p) tells the UASC honestly her belief about his age, which is well above the cut-off point of 18 years old. The implication here is that the person would then need to be going through the asylum system as an adult, with very limited support (York & Warren, 2019, p. 50). At the end of the skit, two other Participants give feedback that shows how out of the ordinary it is for a professional to be speaking honestly and be authentic, by remarking '*something different, never heard that in social services*' (Session 4 13th of December 00'54''25).

When pushed further to continue with acting 'out of the ordinary', Rex (p) exaggerate the demands of the UASC by asking for his own flat, and Josephine (p) talks him out of the idea by using a threshold in the system (you've got to be over 16 to get your own flat, again this is not strictly accurate²) to demonstrate the need for assessment (whether of age or of capacity to live independently). Rex (p) justifies his capacity again, which hints at the fact that he interprets the assessment as disbelief of his abilities.

In order to act professionally and carry out the duties she is set, Josephine (p) makes a distinction between her own belief and that of a group, 'we' which is likely to be her team and local authority: '*Oh well **I** believe that you can but **we** need to just make sure that you can*' (Session 4 13th of December 00'53''56) thus exposing that no matter what her personal beliefs are, the disbelief in the young person's capacity is embedded in the duties she has to perform.

There is a lot of laughter and tension in the room during the skit, which is partly due to the fact that some Participants are not comfortable with the role play, but also to their feelings towards the subject of age assessment.

¹Indeed Home Office Policy states that it is only if the person's 'physical appearance or demeanour '*very strongly suggests that they are significantly over 18 years of age*' [...] *All other applicants should be afforded the benefit of the doubt and treated as children*' (Dorling et al., 2017, p. 62)

This is also clearly stated in Guidance for social workers (Association of Directors of Children's Services, 2015, p. 5). In practice, only c. 11% of UASC's claim is age disputed. Indeed, in , the year of the fieldwork, there were 712 age disputes raised out of 6 321 asylum claims of individuals under 18 of age (Home Office, 2018b).

² While this may strictly be legally possible, it is highly improbable that this will happen as Volume 2 of the CA89 Guidance and Regulation (Department for Education, 2015b, pp. 128–129) states that an assessment of the young person's support needs towards independence should start after their 16th birthday

Concepts at play:

What is out of the ordinary for Josephine (p) is the fact that a professional is speaking honestly to a young person, showing their personal beliefs rather than the institutional point of view. The other Participants comment on this, as something that has never been done before. This highlights how aware Participants are of the fact that professional duties can be at odds with personal belief.

There is an element of dissociation in Josephine (p)'s response to the moral dilemma she faces, and she deals with it by differentiating her own beliefs with that of the group of professionals she belongs to.

The demands that a young person makes can easily be discarded and overridden because of the young people's assumed lack of knowledge of the system, there is an implication that Josephine (p) as a SW can manipulate Rex (p). This reasoning overrides the possible damage to the trust in the relationship between Josephine (p) and Rex (p).

Images/representations:

a liar

without knowledge of the system

can be manipulated

4) ASI Ron (yp) and Kelly (p)

Reference to data:

Interview Cicely (p) 10th November

Transcript session 4 13th December

Narrative description of the discussion:

Participants are asked to think of a young person they worked with, and what generic terms or diagnosis were used to describe them. Rex (p) and Cicely (p) are discussing Kelly (p)'s Attachment Style Interview (ASI) (Bifulco et al., 2017) with Ron (yp) as an example of this. They are specifically talking about the positives and negatives of using a diagnostic tool for their work, and how it impacts on relationship building with Ron (yp). Rex (p) is arguing that knowledge coming from the process of diagnosis of the ASI is not useful to him because it cannot be decontextualized from the relationship between Kelly (p) and Ron (yp). Rex (p) refers to a moral imperative to start from scratch and build his relationship with Ron (yp). Cicely (p) agrees and adds to this that it's been really difficult to build relationships with Ron (yp). This is a subject she often talks about, and she explains during her interview how she knows that Ron (yp) and Kelly (p)'s relationship is different from others: Ron (yp) for example does not insult Kelly (p), which Cicely (p) interprets as a sort of allegiance. If Ron (yp) is angry at Kelly (p), it's because of the anxiety of separation coming from his attachment to her.

Concepts at play:

The questionnaire for the ASI is debated, as either helpful to build relationships or not. It is important to be situational, i.e. who's done the questionnaire with the young person as that becomes their own relational history. Morally it is wrong to draw on this to build a relationship on that information.

There are some specific nuances to how Cicely (p) perceives the way Ron (yp) builds his relationships, how he chooses specific people like Kelly (p) which are understood through descriptions of Attachment style.

Images/representations:

individual image that is very situated to Ron(yp) and his relationship with Kelly(p) has a special bond.

has specific attachment style.

with rights to privacy and intimacy with chosen people.

5) *Attending a football match*

Reference to data:

Transcript Change Lab session 2 29th nov

Summary of session 2

Planning for session 2

Print out for session 2

Narrative description of the discussion:

Participants are using the memory of a trip to a football match as an example of successful activity with young people. This was part of a workshop set up to address Participants' concerns about the fact that the activities on offer in the home are often not well attended. When reporting to the group about their understanding of the mirror data available during that workshop, Alexis (p), Eunice (p) and Rex (p) take into account the fact that communication within the team and with the young people went well when organising attending the match. Communication with young people is verbal, and characterised as "*in advance, at an appropriate time and place*". The young people have to be "*caught*", using careful staff positioning within the environment of the home. There is a lot of effort to make this casual and light hearted so that it is more appealing to young people. This is markedly different to how Participants consider communicating with each other. Communication amongst the team is described as prone to break down (i.e. there is no continuity of intention between different members of the team and the question of who's responsible for that is asked); using emails. Financial concerns around activities are also linked to this conversation. This translates in the staff expecting the young people to commit to attend the activities. During that conversation, Eunice (p) asks why there was no residential trip during the past summer school break (which is seen as good practice in the sector). Cicely (p) explains that '*Initially [the young people] asked if they could go, but then they wouldn't make a commitment to it. We weren't gonna book. They kept saying things like yeah, I'll let you know. It got to the stage where it was kind of a we can't because if we book it, we gonna loose it. Would have been up to 2 grants to book [...]. So nothing was booked and instead the day trips were planned based on what they said they wanted to do, but they were really underused as well, weren't they?*' (Cicely Session 2 29th of November 01'11''37 til 01'12''07).

This needs for commitment from young people is a result of budgetary constraints but the focus is on the refusal from the young people to commit. This comes through a bit later during same session when Cicely (yp) looks at the topics discussed during the young people's meetings.

"activities, always on the agenda, young people lack of motivation, and not willing to commit. Although they might say yes that sounds good, they won't commit to it.

When I first asked them for the football, eh, they all said yes, and then I said OK if you won't go you will pay for your ticket. Oh well no I won't go then."

(Cicely Session 2 29th of November 01'13''54 til 01'15''03).

The role of and implications of keeping to the agreed activity budget is further explored when Rex (p) remarks that the control and choices young people are given can be quite tokenistic. He goes on to ask what other control could be handed over to the young people, and whether involving young people in budgeting for the activities is one area where that could happen. From past experience, this is not feasible: the home last year lost a lot of money (£ 500) in unattended activities. In order to avoid this recurring, the young people are being asked to pay for their own tickets if they don't go to the match. This concern about the budget for the home, which leads to a long discussion where Eunice (p) clarifies her position about money:

“to be clear, we are stuck to a contract. We don’t have control over money.” She then likens this to an ideal family’s budgeting experience with young people of the same age. Her expectation is for young people to be more aware of financial limitations, and to remedy shortfall in income by finding work. Josephine (p) then suggests fundraising for activities¹.

Concepts at play:

A separation between the adults and the young people is made, in differentiating the type of communication that is needed to interact with them: with young people, it needs to be casual and light-hearted. The young people need to be ‘caught’, and strategic physical positioning in the way of the young people is highlighted as important.

The light-hearted communication with young people contrasts with expectations to commit to the activity however: the Participants express their frustration at the fact that despite expressing interest in activities offered, young people seldom join what is on offer.

This non-engagement in activities offered in the home is expressed in terms of ‘lack of motivation’. There is therefore a collapsing of the lifeworld of the young people into the lifeworld of the home, because this ignore the other spheres of life young people can be motivated in.

The link between participation in activities and conforming to the constraints of the budget is very revealing as well: by asking for a commitment the staff is asking young people to comply with constraints from their lifeworld, but young people reject that. There is no recognition in this chain of assumptions that young people may work under other financial rules (which is visible in shopping with Peryiar for example). The young people’s relationship with finances is assumed to be inexistant unless it obeys the constraints and rules imposed by statutory guidance and institutional practices. In likening the young people’s situation with that of a young person in a mainstream family, Eunice (p) is doing just this: only one of the young people in the home have had any experience of living in a mainstream family in England, two have lived in foster families, but their experiences are eclipsed by an unarticulated ideal of the mainstream family in western society.

Images/representations:

separate from adults; separate from traditional families
lacking in motivation and commitment
a-financial
a-cultural

¹ After checking with their immigration status, 4 out of the 7 young people living in the home could legally work

6) Making the boxes

Reference to data:

Transcript Change Lab session 5 10th January
Transcript Change Lab session 6 17th January
Transcript Change Lab session 7 24th January
Observation Notes 29th January

Narrative description of the discussion:

When I first introduce the idea of discussing their futures with the young people, Alexis (p) expressed that she '*will find that really hard to do*' (Transcript Change Lab session 5 10th January), especially with the young person she is responsible for as keyworker.

In the following session I propose a practical way to start the discussion with young people inspired by interviews and my observations the home. The participants in the workshop could create a box for each young person, and each box will contain references to the qualities the staff sees in young people following our discussions around 'the rich child'. The Participants ask questions to understand the purpose of those boxes: each box will contain the potential futures of young people, Josephine cuts in and says: '*I kind of think that the young person would need to be involve in this. It's very pretentious of us to be saying oh in twenty years' time Periyar(yp) is going to be and then give him that, you know.*' I reply by explaining that my focus here is on '*what we see in [the young people] now*', about the fact that '*in any kind of relationship you kind of offer feedback about, that's how I see you*'.

Laura (p) takes this up and focuses on 'showing the facts behind that position, what we've been doing now here, i.e. you seem to be very sociable, you know, you are very good at math, money'. As this is already done in keywork sessions, Alexis (p) suggests keywork sessions could be added to the box, with certificates of achievement, or clay objects that represent aspects of this. Laura (p) picks up on the malleability of clay to build on the exchange between staff and young people, but this may create tension for those that may be too attached to what they have modelled rather than the representation of the quality the adult wants to emphasise with the young people. She then suggests dream boards, which were useful to her when she was undecided about her future to collect interesting possibilities. Alexis then recalls an experience in another home where young people and staff did life-story work and created their life stories onto canvasses.

The discussion then moves on to the practicality on putting a large canvas into the small sized boxes I bought for the session, but Laura (p) corrects others that she means a metaphorical box, because it is '*an emblem or a something [...] so it's not supposed to actually fit in there.*'

In later sessions, Participants that are new to the idea ask clarifying questions about the physical boxes, how they are going to be made/ and given to the young people. The recording for the last 20 mins, where Participants made the boxes, were lost.

Concepts at play:

The relational aspect of future aspirations for young people is not immediate to Josephine (p), for her it is pretentious for staff to cross the line of imagined futures without the young people's invitation. Both Alexis (p) and Laura (p) describe the practicalities of the process to her. In Josephine's mind, at first potential futures is something that is exclusively the young people's.

Laura links potential futures to already existing qualities in the young people.
The Participants also try to clarify the relationship between the physical object and the metaphor of the young people's potential.

Images/representations:

separated from adults.

it is hard to envisage the young people's future

young people as already enacting their future

7) *Giving the boxes to the young people*

Reference to data:

Transcript Change Lab session 7 24th January

Observation notes 5th February

Observation notes 29th January

Narrative description of the discussion:

While we had discussed in several sessions how young people would be made aware of the boxes and the intention behind the exercise, I am not aware of any Participants discussing those with young people. When I was in the home, Participants stepped back and deferred this to me, preferring not to get involved.

During Session 7, while I recap some of what was decided in previous sessions regarding the boxes, Ram (p) clarifies what will happen when giving the boxes to the young people. He wonders if the young people will be able to infer the intention behind the content of the boxes. Cicely (p) and I continue to explain how the content of the boxes will gradually be built up. Ram wants to know when will the boxes be given to the young people, and Eunice (p) explains that this depends on how much is done during session 7.

The young people's reactions to being given the boxes varied, but they are not indifferent to them. On the last observation visit, I left them in the kitchen, within easy access to both staff and young people. Ron (yp) had a look at his when I wasn't there but was stopped from exploring further by a Participant asking him to wait for me. He listened to some of my explanations but said he would look at it later and left.

Luis (yp) left the room rather than receive the box. Ishwar (yp) disagreed with my statement that the staff in the home had been thinking about his and the other residents' qualities. My notes read: "*He said Josephine (p) doesn't do that, they don't do that here.*" It's not clear if his wish to put a complaint is linked to that or not, but he asks to do so in the same conversation.

Peryiar (p) said this is important and enacted this by stopping a conversation with another young person to focus on his box. He linked possible job prospects with his immigration status, saying 'ID' is very important. He dismissed some career prospects (being a politician) because it meant too much education.

He also used the modelling clay to make a belt buckle (which is a very important accessory for him).

Concepts at play:

There is a number of ways in which the young people are separated from the adults:

-in Ram (p)'s question about the possibility for shared understandings between staff and young people

-in Ishwar(p)'s own image of the staff, who are unable to see the qualities of the young people.

Images/representations:

separated

staff as unable to see young people's qualities

8) Cinema Outing

Reference to data:

Transcript session 2 29th November

Narrative description of the discussion:

Rex (p) illustrates a point he is trying to make: that young people's communication doesn't have much common ground with adult communication. He gives the example of a remark Peryiar (yp) makes about going to the cinema with him. In that conversation Rex (p) brought educational, planning elements such as researching what movie to watch, how to get there, etc...that were not part of Peryiar (yp) assumptions in the conversation.

The underlying assumption there is that while young people are spontaneous ("oh let's just go") adults need to plan and bring in some learning element to it (although this is not emphasised by Rex (p) as learning). Rex (p) interprets this as Peryiar (yp) putting the responsibility of the cinema outing back onto him, but Eunice (p) interjects and takes the conversation back towards modes of communication, and what a computer might mean for Peryiar (yp). Josephine (p) relates it to her mum's idea of the computer as "the nuke in the corner" an object that's very scary to use.

The team then starts thinking about ways in which they can overcome this reluctance to use technology and how they could bring the information in a format that was more accessible for Peryiar (yp). This was taken up and Rex (p) changed the format of the young people's meeting (observation visit 4th of December) following that conversation.

Concepts at play:

The separation between adults and young people is present, and both are portrayed differently in their performance of communication: young people can be spontaneous and rely on adults for making things happen. Adults on the other hand plan activities and are responsible for making it happen. But this separation is contested by Eunice (p) who questions the fact that there may be other reasons for Peryiar (yp) to give up because some element of planning is introduced in the cinema trip. This leads to a long discussion about the reasons why one mode of communication can be preferred as opposed to others.

Images/representations:

reliant on adults' help.

separate from adults, spontaneous while adults plan

shaped by their experiences and environments

9) *Ex-resident's visit*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 23rd October

Narrative description of the discussion:

This is not problematised by the Participants, however as a contrast to other images arising from Participants' problematisation I believe it is important to ensure those observations are considered.

I single out the episode of the ex-resident coming to visit and the obvious positive feelings that all shared and their connections (with current residents being the key link between staff and previous residents).

Concepts at play:

My overall negative feeling towards the fieldwork setting is at odd with Mary, John (yp) and the ex-resident's experience: the connection they are sharing is obvious and this is a short, positive experience

Images/representations:

surprisingly connected
sharing positive experiences

10) *Eid Celebration*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 13th November
Ishwar (yp) Placement Plan
Transcript Session 7 24th January
Summary of session 7 24th January

Narrative description of the discussion:

The Participants are thinking of instances when Ishwar (yp) is powerful. The example refers to how Ishwar (yp) cooked daily for Iftar (the meal that breaks the fast) during the month of Ramadan, which they see as an example of his leadership. The emphasis is on cooking the food for himself and for others. To the Participants, this shows responsibility, and this wording is replicated in Ishwar (yp)'s placement plan. What Participants mean by 'leadership' is not explained, but the discussion continues in finding examples of the times when Ishwar (yp) has been cooking for himself and his peers, and how he's fixed things around the house. Ram (p) is surprised by the care Ishwar (yp) shows towards another young person who finds it difficult to eat. He remarks that Ishwar (yp) is 'maternal'. Cicely (p) questions the term maternal, so Chris (p) offers paternal, parental as an alternative. What the Participants take into account is the caring relationship that Ishwar (yp) has with other young people, and how this is unexpected.

Concepts at play:

There is conceptual overlap between being competent, powerful, responsible and a leader as the Participants switch between the concepts seemingly interchangeably, but it is difficult to interpret further because this is not the focus of the discussion.

The discussion highlights the competency of cooking, with a strong emphasis on the care Ishwar (yp) gives to other residents. This jars with Ram (p)'s idea of what young people do ('*yeah 'cause it seems strange that a like a young person who want to look after another young person*'); and in turn with Cicely (p)'s understanding of gendering: she questions the term, so Chris (p) suggests '*paternal/parental*' to reflect the discussion.

Ram (p)'s remarks also hint at his understanding of the general category of young people wherein the quality of being 'caring' doesn't feature.

This is to be contrasted with

- my observation on the 13th of November, where John (Yp) offers me food because I'm the only one not to have any, and seeing other young people sharing their take away with each other on another occasions; and of the 6th of November, when Ishwar (yp) and Ron(yp) are sharing food with each other;

- the absence of surprise expressed when Mithum (Yp) and Ralph (yp) are described as looking after each other in that same session (Transcript Session 7, 24th of January). One difference here that I can see is that Ishwar (yp), an unaccompanied asylum seeker, looks after Ron (yp), a White British young man.

Finally, it seems that Ishwar (Yp)'s motivation to act may have been made invisible or misunderstood because of the cultural lens with which the Participants interpret this. Indeed, the act of giving and feeding is very important for Iftar. This is expressed culturally through the sharing of communal meals, and in Islamic holy writings is it said that forgiveness is given to those who feed other Muslims breaking the fast (Muslim Hands, 2019). This is conjecture, but Ishwar (yp) shows how careful he is to appear as observing his religion in other situations (Session 4 13th December 01'10''18 til 01'10''34). This adds to the

importance of Islamic culture and meanings in interpreting this situation. Yet this wasn't part of our discussion at the time.

Images/representations:

competent at cooking

breaking racial and gendered boundaries

a-cultural

caring

11) *Ishwar (yp) Shop-lifting*

Reference to data:

Interview Cicely (p) 10th November
Ishwar (yp) Placement Plan

Narrative description of the discussion:

During the interview, Cicely (p) uses the example of the work she's done with Ishwar (yp) to illustrate how society places expectations on what happens at Hilltop that are at odds with hers and her colleagues. She explains how she is supporting Ishwar (yp) dealing with the consequences of having shoplifted (for £10 worth of goods). Her priorities in her work are safeguarding and welfare, while she sees society's priorities to be that young people fit in and don't commit crime against members of the public.

Cicely (p) has carried out keywork sessions with Ishwar (yp), where he has indicated that he understands how serious that is. Despite the police closing the matter with No Further Action (NFA) and the incident being on his record, the fear is that this may affect the overall decision made about his immigration status (Dorling et al., , pp. 106–110). Further, he received a letter from the 'recovery people' asking for £149 compensation but has not done anything about it. Cicely (p) wrote a letter back to explain what has already been done and is hoping that the matter will be dropped as she wants to avoid criminalisation. There is also an element of her teaching the authors of the letter about Ishwar (yp)'s situation as a looked-after child, as this impacts on his ability to comply with the request.

Concepts at play:

Different expectations are placed on Ishwar (yp):

- for the 'recovery people', this is framed in terms of learning the consequences of his actions, as well as the fact that money is something that can only be gained through sacrifice, -whereas for Cicely (p) it's that Ishwar (yp)'s inaction comes from a lack of understanding, as well as that her role is to guide Ishwar (yp) in this situation.

There is an underlying theme in Cicely(p)'s account that Ishwar (yp)'s situation is different from the assumptions the authors of the letter have on him: he will not be able to pay the money back as his pocket-money is ringfenced and sanctions can only be applied on a portion of his pocket money as per statutory legislation (The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, 2015 Reg 19(2)f)¹, and this may impact his asylum claim.

There is also an underlying assumption around key-working: it is a tool to pass on ideas and information to young people and to understand what they are thinking. Scrutiny from other professionals is also implied as Cicely (p) pre-empts future questions by explaining in Ishwar (yp)'s care plan how she will address future/continued criminal behaviour.

Images/representations:

needs to be taught the consequence of their action and the value of money

¹ As per my knowledge of the home it would take Ishwar (yp) 30 weeks to repay the £149. This is calculated on the fact that young people receive £10 per week pocket money and only half of this can be 'sanctioned'. If Ishwar (yp) doesn't have any ongoing financial sanctions, he would have paid the sum 6 months after the beginning of the sanction. It is likely that the home would pay the fine and take the money off from Ishwar (yp)'s weekly pocket money until the full amount is reimbursed.

misunderstood, facing systemic difficulties
an adult of tomorrow
in need of cultural guidance
at risk of criminalisation

12) *John (yp) Abigail Kitchen*

Reference to data:

Transcript Change Laboratory Session 1 22nd November
Summary of Session 1 22nd of November

Narrative description of the discussion:

Participants were asked to describe a good day/ bad day. Vikan (p) has one example he describes as a bad turned into a good day. In that example, John (yp) is in the kitchen, laughing at Abigail (s) the cook behind her back.

Vikan (p) asks John (yp) to step away and reflect on his behaviour, with the aim of “achieving calm and some respect towards other people”. Vikan (p) hopes the young person will process the information and choose a different approach. Vikan (p)’s emphasis is on ‘putting seeds into the mind of a young person’, as it’s impossible to change the situation that’s currently happening but this may make it easier to approach it later on. It’s about giving the young person another perspective; about expecting them to reflect on their behaviour to have second thoughts, give them feedback.

Concepts at play:

There is a clear distinction between the present and the future: At the moment, John’s emotions are to the fore, and thinking is impossible without scaffolding (moving away and feedback, thinking back about behaviour).

Intervention is for the future, as “it’s impossible” to do something to affect the situation in the present.

There are two aspects that Vikan (p) does not consider because of the negation of the present: how would Abigail (s) deal with the situation (it is likely Vikan (p) wants to spare her feelings in that instance, although this is conjecture). Vikan (p) works on the understanding that this is more complex and historical than this instance (see for example interview Eunice (p) 0’24’’16 to 0’26’’40, Observation visit 18 December); and what John (yp)’s intentions are, what is he thinking?

Images/representations:

decontextualised

caught up in emotions

in need of education to reflect and change

future person capable of respect

13) John (yp) Communal Meals

Reference to data:

Observation visit 1st January

Transcript Change Laboratory Session 1 22nd November

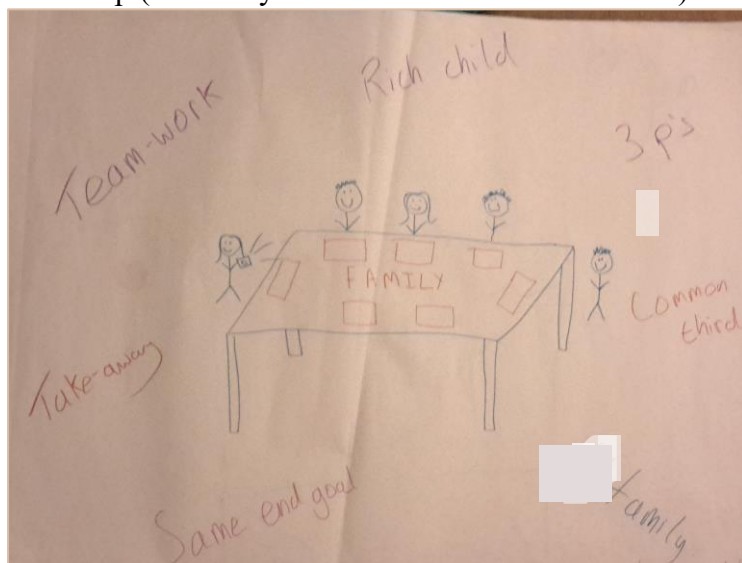
Summary of Session 1 22nd of November

Narrative description of the discussion:

This is not problematised by the Participants, however as a contrast to other images arising from Participants' problematisation I believe it is important to ensure a broader situated judgment can be considered. Eunice (p) had asked me for input around the lifespace of the home, and I used this example to feedback to her how she could bring in the young people's experience more.

After the take-away had been bought, Mary (p) and myself noticed that John (yp) is eating his take away standing up. We invite him to sit down at the table, which he does but he still looks uncomfortable (sitting cross-legged on his chair) so I ask him if he would get rid of the chair: "he said yes, 3 sitting against the wall (we were on the street side of the kitchen table) he showed the walls, and 3 facing them. Eating on the floor, sitting on carpets and with big dishes for all, not individual."

On the other hand, I want to contrast this with the underlying expectation about family dinners expressed through Josephine (p) and Kelly (p)'s example of a good day in the first workshop (Summary of Session 1 22nd of November)



This is the explanation Kelly (p) and Josephine (p) gave of their drawing:

Josephine (p)	Ok. I'll start with mine. My very happy good day at work. (shows flipchart paper with drawing see picture Josephine (p) Kelly (p) good day) It was a very very simple day, and it was, first time I've seen so many young people and staff all sit around the table for a takeaway, just sitting down discussing the day, having a laugh, talking about their futures, it was just. It wasn't anything major, but to me it just felt like yeah it was good.
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Cecile	Can you think, so, so in terms of what you were
Cicely (p)	What I would say on that, it wasn't like it wasn't awful at the start, was it?
Josephine (p)	No. the only reason. Rex (p) took a photo because we were both like so shocked that how
Cicely (p)	Oh I know
Josephine (p)	Oh, my god, they're all here.
Kelly (p)	<i>Points to drawing</i> This is Rex (p) taking the photo
All	Laughter
Cecile	So what were you trying to achieve?
Kelly (p)	Just a positive like experience, like stress free take away and went like oh yeah, (<i>unclear</i>) sit together, like family unit, obviously, the common goal is that everyone has takeaway (<i>laughter</i>) all staff worked together, let everyone's presence to make sure, like everyone has a nice evening, without any incident.
Josephine (p)	And nobody was pressurised into being there, it was their own choice. All the young people, it was their own choice to actually be there. So that's what made it even nicer. To sit there and talk about their aspirations in life and just, you know, just like you would in any other family home.
Cecile	OK. What helped? To achieve that. What did you use to make that happen?
Josephine (p)	McDonald's (<i>all laugh</i>) em, just, it was just one of them days, just, everybody was very calm,
Cecile	So it just happened? There wasn't any planning behind it?
Josephine (p)	No, I can't say there was. It was just, it was one of them, really fluke [...] days And then, in terms of rules and regulations, what was operating there? Well the rules are you're meant to eat your food at the kitchen table, but we didn't really enforce rules as such, we let the young people decide what they kind of wanted to do. [...] It was very relaxed, so. Yeah. They attended the meeting that would have been one of the rules.
Cecile	What about like, bigger rules, like statutory rules
Josephine (p)	Kids have to eat. It's a statutory rule. (<i>laughter</i>)
Josephine (p)	We've are not allowed to starve the kids, it's a statutory rule.
Cecile	You wanted to say something, Kelly (p)
Kelly (p)	No I was gonna say like, basically, the right to food.

Transcript session 1 22nd of November. 00'39''39 to 00'42''54

There are other instances where the family dinner is highlighted by Participants in the data, which is re-enforced statutorily: indeed, the Guide to the Children's Homes Regs (Department for Education, 2015. p.15) stipulates that "*where appropriate, children should be involved in choosing and preparing meals and opportunities to sit together and eat should be promoted*".

Concepts at play:

The strong normative aspects of the ideal family dinner, with individual places set, is highlighted by the slightly irritated tone Participants answer my prompts and the laughs this generates. This is likely a symptom of the obvious and tacit nature of the practice for the

staff team. This same practice is however uncomfortable for John (yp), but that doesn't come into the discussion amongst staff members.

In their drawing of their 'good day', Kelly (p) and Josephine (p) write "*same end goal*". While I believe they meant that both staff and young people were sharing the easiness of that specific moment together. While both John (yp) and the Participants both talk of a communal meal, the practices to achieve this 'end goal' are embodied with stark cultural differences.

The last boundary between the concepts present lies in the ways in which the food is shared: the importance of individual plates (the home makes use of place mats and later on in the discussion Josephine explains that this is intentionally used) is in direct contrast with John's insistence on using a '*big dish for all, not individual*'. Again, this boundary can be explained by cultural practices.

Images/representations:

separated from adults

a-cultural

14) John (yp) Eunice (p) College

Reference to data:

Transcript Session 3 Change Lab 6th December
Summary of Session 3 Change Lab 6th December

Narrative description of the discussion:

Participants were asked to think of a situation in their work where communication was difficult. Eunice (p) recounts an episode talking to John (yp) about college attendance.

“Mine was what happened this morning with John (yp) about college and all of that and the tension was between me needing a genuine response and a plan from him with me and his sort of saying what he thinks he like oh yeah we gonna do this, we gonna do this I come back later we do this, I’m like ok I really want to trust that, I really wanna work with you, but do we know that, when he was saying things like he’s still saying he’s still enrolled in college and I don’t think you are, [...] no, this is not the case and eh so I guess that’s the tension between needing a bit more of that honesty with him so who was there, it was me and eh John (yp) and I, it was in the home, I was just very focused on John (yp) I think I remember seeing the chair and that’s pretty much it, John (yp) and the chair he was sitting on, ehm I could just smell the house smells and I could just see John (yp) and I was relaxed but still yeah..”

Concepts at play:

Eunice (p) is talking about a felt sense of the pre-conditions of work with a young person, and of the importance of honesty in John (yp) so she can start supporting/helping/working with John (yp). She expects John (yp) to engage in the process genuinely.

Images/representations:

object of support/help
a puzzle
hard to trust

15) *Luis (yp) moving to his foster carers*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 29th January
Luis (yp) Placement Plan

Narrative description of the discussion:

This is not problematised by staff during the workshops. However, I believe it is important to ensure those observations are considered as a contrast to other images arising from Participants' problematisation

Luis(yp)'s placement plan states that:

'[he] had a sudden upheaval from his long term placement in XXX. The plan is still for him to move in with his old foster carers, originally it was planned to be for this month, but nothing can be guaranteed until the assessment has taken place. He continues to express anxiety around this being a smooth transition and he is nervous about delays. Team and keyworker need to continue to be aware of the anxiety Luis(yp) may feel at times and offer his regular opportunities to discuss what is going on for him. When a final decision is made between [the local authority] and the foster carers a transition plan needs to be put in place to ensure Luis (yp) is supported through this transition'

The plan was for Luis(yp) to only stay a few weeks at the home. The placement plan (dated 04-01-18) draws attention to the fact that once a date will have been set, a smooth transition plan to his foster carer should be planned, and that in the meantime Luis (yp) is to be offered regular opportunities to discuss what is going on.

On the 29th of January, nearly 2 months after moving in, I have a long discussion with Luis (yp) about this, which I report in my notes. (Observation visit 29th of January).

"He is trying to get the system to help him with his long-term aim: move with foster carers as he doesn't want to live in an institution and his 'unit/school' is also an institution. He feels he has to be 'the adult' with his social worker as she doesn't fulfil her part of the bargain. For the viability assessment at his foster carer's home so that he can move on and be in a setting where he can feel supported and normal in a family home, not in an institution. Explained he has done all that he was asked to do, knows what's right and wrong but social worker doesn't do it. I asked if it was written down in his care plan: No, there is always a loophole and his advocate has said everything should be in writing. Luis (yp) said he didn't speak to people for 2 days because he wanted them to know how he feels all the time and even if he engages in French, piano, he actually feels like that all the time. He refuses to engage at school because he is with people that fight/attack, need to be restrained and with fobs all the time: his movements are restricted, and he doesn't want that. He is called Mahatma Gandhi at school because he walks about refusing to engage as a protest".

Concepts at play:

Luis (yp)' agency is overshadowed by the logic of needs in the care plan: he is to receive interventions and emotional support from the staff to meet his emotional needs.

The lens of the care plan brings the logic of needs forward and ignores more proactive work. For example, Luis(yp) talks about his advocate, but the care plan doesn't.

The dynamic between Luis (yp) and his social worker is central to Luis'(yp) understanding of his situation, but remains hidden in the care plan. The data on the situation is limited here, I am aware that more work was done to put pressure on the local authority to make the move happen, but this remains hidden.

Images/representations:

agentially and politically invisible
object of intervention

16) Resident's Meeting

Reference to data:

Observation visit 2nd of October
Observation visit 23rd of October
Observation visit 30th of October
Observation visit 6th of November
Observation visit 11th of December
Observation visit 18th of December
Observation visit 1st of January
Observation visit 8th of January
John (yp)'s placement plan
Luis (yp) Placement plan
Resident's meeting feedback
Transcript session 1 22nd November
Transcript session 2 29th November
Summary of session 1 22nd of November
Summary of session 2 29th of November

Narrative description of the discussion:

As the residents' meeting took place during my observation visit on a Monday, there is a lot of data related to it. Further, the team chose this as a practical example where they could improve communication with the young people. Due to the amount of data available on the subject, I have organised it in themes rather than report the workshop discussions.

Residents' meetings took place on the same day after 5pm. At the beginning of the fieldwork meetings were incentivised with a take-away, in that only once the meeting had taken place, the meals would be bought for the young people who attended the meeting. The team made a concerted effort to change this, thinking of the learning styles of the young people and including different modes of communication. They also ensured that take away was not a direct incentive to attend the meeting, by ordering food before the meeting took place.

During December there were several positive meetings with young people contributing in different ways, however over a longer period the 'professional meeting' with an agenda, a chair and minutes prevailed and continued well after the end of the fieldwork.

The way in which the resident's meeting was problematised around contradictory themes in turn, which each section presenting the relevant data:

Freedom to speak up
The trope of the family dinner
Fighting for control
Who's responsible

1. Freedom to speak up

Participants were asked to create a timeline about the changes to the resident's meeting, as one of the themes wanted to explore was difficulties in communication. Within the Organisation, the meeting is seen as key to young people expressing their views. This is how Alexis (p) and Vikam (p) describe the resident's meeting.

Cecile	[...] Why do we have the meeting?
Alexis (p)	Participation

Cecile	What do you mean by participation?
Alexis (p)	For the young people to participate. It's their choice to participate in the meeting. But, you know that's where you know, we discuss things about the house, and you know that's when they get to make their choices. If that makes sense.
Josephine (p)	Yeah it's their time for them to advocate for themselves
Alexis (p)	Yeah
Vikam (p)	So you promote equality as well
Alexis (p)	Mm
Cecile	In that meeting
Vikam (p)	Yeah in that meeting. You show you show them that, you know, the word of a staff member, might be in, you know, is equal to the young person's. a young person's words. Rega, yeah regarding mainly their requests about the house, or their needs.
Cecile	Mm Do you think the young people perceive it like that? That's their word is the is equal as that of a staff member
Vikam (p)	No I don't think so. I don't think they hear they all have this perception

Session 1 22nd November from 00'58''11 to 00'59''17

The meeting as an opportunity for 'participation' and a space for young people to express their views and wishes is also referred to in this way in most of the young people's placement plans.

During the following session, the Participants identified what themes were discussed during the meeting (Summary of session 2):

Resources: Resident's meetings minutes, young people's feedback about the meeting, handover sheets, disturbance diaries

Information gathering process:

1. Photocopy resident's minutes meeting since the beginning of July.
2. Do a tally of the themes discussed during the meeting

Theme	Number of times discussed	Comments
ACTIVITIES	IIII IIII IIII II ✘	ALWAYS ON THE AGENDA YP LACK MOTIVATION
MONEY	IIII II	ONGOING IN/OUTSIDE OF MTG LINKED TO SEMI-DEPENDANCE
FOOD	IIII IIII IIII II ✘	ALWAYS ON THE AGENDA USUALLY SAME FOOD DISCUSSED
STAFFING	IIII I	USED TO DISCUSS INCOMING/OUTGOING STAFF - MANY CHANGES SINCE JULY.
EDUCATION	IIII	WORKSHOPS/OUTSIDE AGENCIES
SECURITY	IIII IIII I	ONGOING - LINKED TO BEHAVIOUR.
BEHAVIOUR	IIII IIII II	IN RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS
LAUNDRY	IIII	SUCCESSFUL DUE TO NEW ROTA + DISCUSSION IN YP MTG/ALLOCATION OF DUTY.
STAFF MTG	II	YP ASKED FOR POINTS FOR STAFF MEETING.
YP ON AIRE	I	

What comes out of the discussion is that all themes but one (Money) are staff-led (Transcript session 2 29th November 01'13''54), which limits considerably the scope of the young

people's input. Further, it transpires that while the young people appreciate the opportunity to talk about the food (Resident's meeting feedback) they also use repetition in the type of dishes they ask for to shape the discussion (Transcript session 2 01'13''54 to 01'14''15). Peryiar (yp) provides a reason for this: "there is no point asking because he doesn't get the food that he wants: Abigail can't cook what he wants" (Observation visit 18th December). John also talks about the reasons why they always ask for the same foods (Session 1 22nd of November 00'51''38 til 00'52''33)

The Participants also experience this situation as stuck and exasperating 'we're never going to get it spot on'. Josephine is rather exasperated when I report a discussion I had with young people about the reason why they always ask for the same foods, and she concludes by saying "the young people, they're more than welcome to tell us what they want in the house meeting on [...]day. If they're not gonna engage on [...]day then they're not gonna obviously get the thing that they feel aren't [right? Unclear] (Josephine Session 1 22nd of November 00'52''33 til 00'53''17).

Overall, this shows that while the meetings are thought of as the place to express ones' wishes and feelings, in practice the choice of themes is very narrow and young people do not feel free to use the meetings for that purpose.

2. The trope of the family dinner

The Participants also associate the take away meal to the meeting, set up as a 'family dinner' that Josephine (p) and Kelly (p) describe during what constitutes for them a 'good day' (Summary Session 1 22nd of November)

What is important is that this sitting around the table is a rare occurrence: when that happened, the Participants were so 'shocked [...] oh my god, they're all there' (transcript session 1 22nd November Josephine (p). 00'40'' 30) they took a photograph of it and represented it in the picture. Josephine (p) also emphasises that young people chose to be there, which is true in the sense that they could have decided- as they do on other evenings- to have their take-away in different rooms and at different times.

However, when prompted, there were a few rules and norms that underpin this 'fluke [...]day' as Josephine (p) describes it: only young people who attend the meeting can get their take away, and the norm to sit around the table with the places set as an invitation to partake in a family meal, which does not fit the model for the ideal meal for young people (see Situation 13, John Communal Meals).

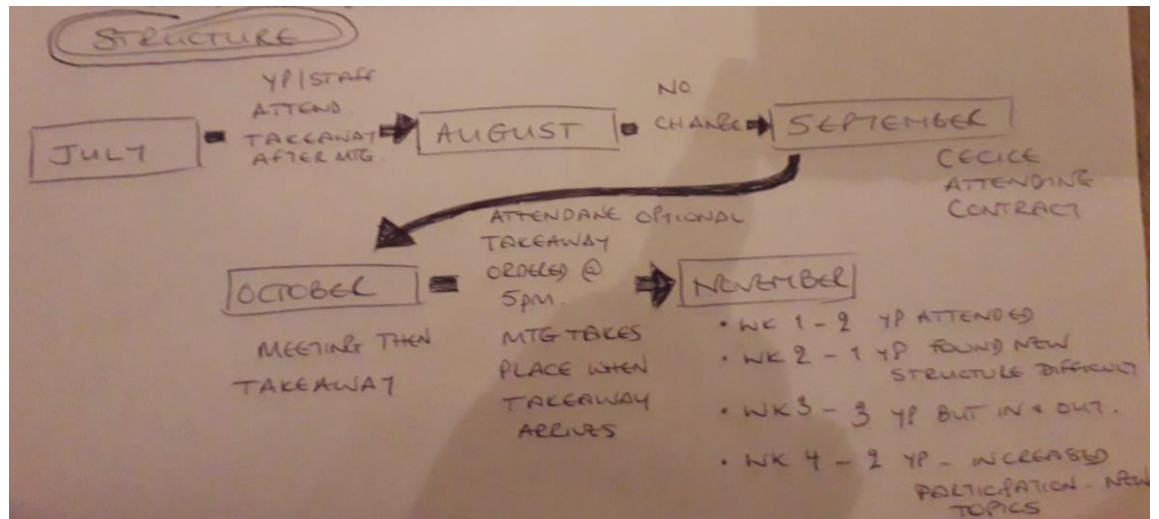
The discussion following the good day/ bad day exercise emphasises that enacting the ideal of the western family meal needs to happen 'subconsciously, [...]like proxy use' (Josephine (p) transcript session 1 22nd of November 0'56''44). The fact that the take away is an incentive creates a norm for behaving in the home and highlight the mechanisms by which specific tropes become part of the tacit lifespace of the adults.

3. Fighting for control

The motivation to change the meeting and stop using the takeaway as an incentive transpired through previous discussions amongst the team. Participants told me this was decided in the middle of October, however on the 6th of November only did Participants start to implement their decision by carrying out the meeting after the take-aways were ordered (Observation Visit 6th of November).

This is how Cicely (p) and Josephine (p) describe the timeline of change for the meetings:

Cicely (p)	[...] In terms of how the meeting's changed, ehm, the time line is in July, (<i>shows her drawing of the timeline</i>) it's really small sorry,
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The young people and staff attended the meeting and the takeaway was bought afterwards, and that kind of stayed the same until September, so right through July, August, September, things remained the same, In September, Cecile started attending the meetings, ehm there was, a contract was drawn at one of the meetings

Josephine (p)

Yeah, we did that just before Cecile arrived.

Cicely (p)

That's right

Josephine (p)

Myself and Abby sat down what what would be a good meeting, what would you expect if you went into a professional meeting, would you have your phones turned off and we got to sign a contract saying that, be there on time, turn off the con the phones, turn off the TV stuff like that

Cicely (p)

That was in September, eh in October we started as a staff team started to talk about the young people's meeting how it wasn't very satisfactory, ehm it was still the meeting and then the takeaway, however in between October and November it changed, attendance became optional, the takeaway would be ordered at 5 O'clock, the meeting takes place when the takeaway arrives, and young people can stay for the meeting, or if they don't want to, they can they it's it's not conditional as they're attending the meeting. And we've had some interesting results, week one, two young people attended and were very confused. About what had gone on. (Cecile laughs) they said they understood what was being said to them but I don't think they did (laughter). Week 2, eh one young person found the structure extremely difficult and successfully managed to create a situation which pulled the meeting back to what it was like here. Ehm and that was very difficult for him he felt that we we were taking over the meeting because it was saying you don't have to be here. He didn't really find that really

Josephine (p)

Didn't like the change

Cicely (p)

Didn't like the change at all.

[...]

Cicely (p)

[...] Week three, three young people attended but it was kind of in and out, rather than being in there and sitting, week four which was this week just gone, two young people attended and there was increased participation with new topics. I have to say as well for

	week 1, when only two young people it was kind of sitting in the hallway, and just people passing through and, sometimes sitting down and sometimes walking through. For that week, they didn't choose any menu items, and they kind of, they didn't have any of their own choices for that one week. Abigail has asked that we never do that again. (<i>laughs</i>) because it was eh, there was something it was fajitas on the menu and she was like, this takes forever and I
Josephine (p)	Yeah
Cicely (p)	Just can't do it. So, you punished the children, but you punished me as well. (<i>laughs</i>)
Eunice (p)	(unclear)
Cicely (p)	Because she had to do two lots of obviously Halal/non-halal and there was rice and various other like you said and
Eunice (p)	She should have skipped mushroom rice.
Rex (p)	Yeah
Cicely (p)	She could have skipped mushroom rice. She was in the rice forever (<i>unclear</i>)
Eunice (p)	Eh so the fourth week, how many came?
Cicely (p)	Fourth week was two. So there has been change in the way the meeting is, and I do believe that if we keep if we persist with it, it will get to the point where the young people will participate. You've got, we've got a new young person coming in and the hope is I hope that he, he certainly asked about activities already
Eunice (p)	Yeah
Cicely (p)	So I'm hoping that in that sense, he will kind of a motivator, in the young people's meeting

Session 2 29th of November 01'14''16 to 01'20''14 and Summary of session 2

In the discussion, the Participants express their awareness that the dialogue between them and the young people is compromised, however their understanding of the reasons for this are only partial. The conversation offers some hints as to how Participants see solutions to this: they hope to see change from new residents joining in, who may be 'role modelling' participation in meetings. It is clear from Josephine (yp)'s description of the changes that the ideal meeting staff has in mind is that of a professional meeting, which is illustrated by the explanations relating to the contract.

While both young people and Participants acknowledge the communication difficulties in the resident's meeting, the possibilities for change are thought of as within individuals rather than in the practice themselves. However, three structural elements can be identified affecting true participation of children and young people in the meeting:

Managing difficult relationships between colleagues and young people;

The operationalisation of regulations, in that the boundary between practices and actual regulatory requirement is not well understood;

Lack of clarity of purpose of the meeting for all.

Those elements may be underlying reasons why both young people and the staff teams are struggling to control the meeting in a way that suits their agendas.

The first elements that come into play about this attempt at gaining control of the meeting is the necessity for the staff team to manage the relationship between Abigail, the cook, and the

young people. Indeed, she is fearful of the young people because of previous allegations made against her, and the young people feel it is useless to ask for the food they want because she cannot cook it (Observation visit 18th December). The team also needs to mediate between Abigail and the young people by asking young people what they want on the menu, rather than Abigail doing it herself. ‘Doing the menu’ is an important purpose of the meeting for the Participants and this is illustrated by a reflection from Abigail reported by Josephine, whereby one week no young people gave suggestions for the menu and she said: ‘You punished the children, but you punished me!’ (Session 2 29th November 01’18’41 til 01’19’46). There were no attempts from the team to look for different ways to get the young people’s input on the menu.

I suspect that institutional pressures are a second important element in this process to ‘gain control’ of the meeting and the emphasis on formal and adults’ centred processes. The link between meal-times and ensuring that young people have an input in the menu is a good illustration of this. Indeed, the Organisation’s Children’s Home Procedures Manual devotes 11 pages to ‘the Provision and Preparation of Meals’ and relates it to 7 of the regulations in the children’s homes regulations 2015, respectively:

- the quality and purpose of care standard
- the children’s views, wishes and feelings standard
- the health and well-being standard
- behaviour management and discipline
- privacy and access
- fire precautions

The fact that the children’s homes regulations do not mention the provision of meals shows that there is some flexibility at provider’s level to adapt mealtimes to match the young people’s experiences and own practices. Eunice (p)’s question about adapting the lifespace of the home is relevant there, however the work necessary to intervene in that aspect of the everyday life of the home lasted well after the end of the data gathering process. Further, the fact that there is no clearly defined link in the regulations between residents’ meetings, involvement of young people in designing the menu and evidencing to OFSTED how the children’s views, wishes and feelings are listened to (Department for Education, 2015a, pp. 20–25) shows that it is the way the rules are being applied rather than the rules themselves that are creating this pressure.

A third element of this power play is the lack of clarity in expectations about the meeting and its purpose for all parties involved. Ron (yp), on two occasions, also speaks about the double standards in the rules for the meeting noted during the

Observation visit 13th November: “Cicely (p) was chairing the meeting, this made Ron (yp) talk about double standard [sic] as there was lots of different rules which were confused, TV on or TV off.

Observation visit 20th November: There is a discussion with the young people about inconsistency of rules, and Ron (yp) gives the example of the double standards with meetings.

Luis, more generally, also talks about inconsistency of rules (Observation visit 1st January).

While Ron (yp)'s comments relate situationally to Abby and Josephine (p)'s drawing a contract between staff and young people about the meeting, the overall theme here is about control. Indeed, while young people want to talk about money or the way they understand the rules, they cannot do so freely as the adults keep on imposing their own agenda, food planning being a top priority. Further, Cicely (p)'s and Josephine (p) interpret Ron (yp)'s intentions during the meeting of the 13th of November (Observation visit 13th of November, Transcript of session 2 01'16''29 to 01'18''41) as control.

To add a view from the young people's life space about difficulties around communication, the young people, on the other hand, spoke about translation on three different instances in the 'Resident's feedback' meeting document. This shows their motivation to participate in the meeting may be dampened because they are facing language barriers. The Participants chose not to refer to this document during their discussion even if they had access to it.

<p>It takes a long time when Cecile translates in French but when Ishwar (yp) does in Arabic it's quick</p> <p>يستغرق وقتا طويلا عندما يترجم سيسيل باللغة الفرنسية ولكن عندما أكرم يفعل ذلك في اللغة العربية انها سريعة</p> <p>دا په اوږده وخت کې د سيسيل ژباړه په فرانسې کې ليردوي مگر کله چې اكرم په عربي کې ترسره کوي دا چټکه ده</p>
<p>No translation (somebody said it would be good if Ishwar (yp) could be there to translate</p> <p>لا ترجمة (قال أحدهم أنه سيكون من الجيد إذا أكرم يمكن أن يكون هناك لترجمة)</p> <p>هيڅ ژباړه (ځينې يې ويل چې دا به ښه وي که اكرم د ژباړې لپاره شتون ولري)</p>
<p>Not being able to understand</p> <p>ليس على وشك أن نفهم</p> <p>د پوهيدو په اړه نه</p>

4. Who's responsible

The last theme that came out from the data about the resident's meeting relates to taking responsibility for implementing what has been decided.

Both Rex (p) and Manmohan (yp) describe this precisely:

Cecile	So, ehm do you think, in terms of communication, is there any common ground between how you communicate with the young people around their activities, and the young people's meeting
Alexis (p)	The planning.
Rex (p)	Pff
Cecile	What about the planning
Alexis (p)	The communication of the planning. Of both.
Rex (p)	No I disagree, I don't think there is much common ground, I think it's I think the young people have an expectation that they say something, eh and then it's up to us to implement it, and if it doesn't happen then it's our fault. That's kind of how I feel it is. And when, when you kind of ask questions about, you you know, would you like to do this with me, could we plan something together, it, there is a feeling of, no, that that's not my job, that's you do it (Cicely (p) and Josephine (p) whisper/look out of the window). Ehm, for example I was like, I mean I don't think he was serious about going to the

	cinema, but Peryiar (yp) was saying to me, come on Rex (p), let's go to the cinema. I'm saying great, let's go. So we need to know what cinema we're going to, what film, what time, can you can you let me know these things? He was like no, come on lets just go and I said well, I don't know. Where? And then, and when I said to him, come on, let's look on the computer together, look at times, then he was just like oh, no, you know, let it (<i>started unclear</i>) became frustrated
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[...]

Cecile	Have you noticed that in other young people as well, this kind of... The plan I mean, the example with Peryiar (yp) was quite good, ehm, Manmohan (yp) was very clear, when I asked him about the cooking and the choosing of the menus well, that's not my problem, you do, you decide. That's a. so I can recognise that. ehm I don't know what's the communication you know, thing that would help that.
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Transcript Session 2 29th November 01'20''59 to 01'25''06

What is important here is the different expectations that are attached to decisions whereby staff sees young people taking responsibility to implement ideas as a mark of success for their work. This is highlighted in Situation 8 Cinema Outing.

On a couple of other occasions, Manmohan (yp) is really clear that he doesn't have any responsibilities (Observation visits 27th November; 4th December).

Peryiar(yp), during a resident's meeting, gives an example of how he sees responsibility. In order to avoid conflicts around availability of snacks during the week, the team trialled a new system: young people have a budget of £2.50 per week each with which to buy snacks. They ask during the resident's meeting what they want and can collect this from the office once the weekly shopping comes.

'It's much better, I ate it all in one day, but it's OK, it's my choice, my responsibility' (Observation visit 11th December)

This shows two different understandings of responsibility for staff and young people.

Concepts at play:

There are differing assumptions behind the meeting: for staff it's a space where young people can express their wishes and advocate for themselves, while for young people there is no point in asking for what they want (in the example regarding food) because they don't expect their wishes to be implemented. There is also a language barrier that is not acknowledged.

Another difference in understanding the concepts that play in this situation lies with assumptions around rules: for the staff they are tacit and assumed, obvious, or they come from higher up in the organisational and sector hierarchy through statutory regulation. It is important to note that there are several instances in the data where it was difficult for Participants to explain what the rules and/ or norms are (Interview Cicely(p) and Interview Josephine(p); but also Transcript Session 1 22nd of November 00'52''33 til 00'53''17).

There is no distinction between how statutory rules are being implemented in practice and the actual regulations, despite clear differences between the two. On the other hand, for young people, rules are inconsistent, and they cannot rely on them to navigate the life space of the home.

A fourth difference is in the ideal conceptualisations of meetings and meals: for adults, meetings are modelled on their experience of professionals' meetings. There is no data to situate this assumption with the young people's own vision for meetings.

On the other hand, the difference in ideal conceptualisations of meals is visible in Situation 13, John (yp) Communal Meals.

A final difference lies in how staff and young people's understand 'responsibility': for adults, this is when young people take steps to realise ideas and activities that have been spoken about and that being brave, trying something new is part of the process.

For young people, they see their responsibility as making decisions free from interferences by staff in the space circumscribed by the limits set by adults: they are given a budget for weekly snacks, and within this they are free to do as they see fit.

Images/representations:

separate

non-engaging

refusing responsibility

to be introduced to adult and professional practices of meetings

a-cultural

disregarding of the rules

17) Manmohan (yp)/Mithum (yp) playing Xbox

Reference to data:

Observation visit 20th of November

Observation visit 4th of December

Narrative description of the discussion:

This is not problematised by the Participants, however as a contrast to other images arising from Participants' problematisation I believe it is important to ensure those observations are considered.

I comment in my notes after the visit:

“Manmohan (yp) while playing on the Xbox with Mithum (yp): DETERMINATION. He lost 3 or 4 games, yet continued. There was some demonstration of anger at goals scored for other teams, but he kept going, then onto practice.

The feeling I got from this is sheer determination, not talking about it, real grit. But: this made him an easy target.

Mithum was the opposite.”

Then a few weeks later:

Mithum (yp)/Man. Played FIFA. Manmohan (yp) won 1 game

Concepts at play:

The observation of Manmohan (yp)'s attitude towards winning and practicing FIFA is contrasted to the social order in the home, and the worry of a pecking order, or of bullying is assumed.

There is a recognition of a competitive atmosphere in the home, but no attempt is being made at finding other instances where both young people relate to each other: how much can this be generalised?

Images/representations:

part of a pecking order

18) *Peryiar (yp) Birthday*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 1st January

Narrative description of the discussion:

This is not problematised by the Participants, however as a contrast to other images arising from Participants' problematisation I believe it is important to ensure those observations are considered.

Peryiar (yp) and I discuss the meaning of birthdays, and their differences between the UK and his country of origin. I explain that birthdays here are about recognition and the heart rather than money and presents, because that is what he is expecting today. Peryiar (yp) tried to explain how different it is in his country of origin, that Islam forbids birthdays. He doesn't really know how to explain.

After some research I learnt that as conflicts decimated the administration of Peryiar's home country, birth registrations are often overlooked, resulting in his generation choosing the 1st of January as birthday¹. This is compounded by the fact that administrative dates are required in the Georgian calendar, for Home Office requirements. Peryiar (yp) would have been likely to use a different calendar to reminisce about his birth with his family of origin.

Later on, Peryiar (yp) is keen to participate in the ritual of the birthday, he remembers last year's and has kept the card and badge he was given then. The blowing of candles, singing of songs and taking of pictures is something he actively seeks.

Concepts at play:

There is a corrective element in my answer, where I minimise the material aspect of the birthday Peryiar (yp) alludes to for a more caring, relational aspect. This ignores the fact that the amount of money young people in care are given (Devon County Council, 2022; London Borough of Hounslow, 2022) is clearly stated in policies and this will have been the basis of what Peryiar (yp) has been told about birthdays.

My ignorance of the socio-political impact of conflict on everyday lives, and of the use of alternatives to the Georgian calendar, is also highlighted.

Images/representations:

willingly initiated into the repertoire of british traditions
materialistic
a-cultural

¹ No reference is given to preserve anyonymity of Peryiar's birth country.

19) *Peryiar (yp) calls doctor*

Reference to data:

Transcript Session 5 10th of January

Narrative description of the discussion:

Participants were asked to find examples of how Peryiar (yp) embodies the ‘rich child’. Josephine (p) volunteers how proud she is of Peryiar (yp) who called the doctor the day before. This is important enough to be spoken about during handover, as Alexis (p) heard of it. This is how Josephine (p) describes the situation.

“He was so polite, he was so kind. (singsong voice) He was, oh Josephine (p), you make the appointment. No no no no, you make the appointment. And he goes will you tell me what to say, (normal voice) it was actually, I was really impressed with him to be fair, it’s bonus (unclear)”

Josephine (p), Transcript session 5, 10th January 00’59’’30 to 00’59’’45

Concepts at play:

The attitude of politeness and kindness Josephine (p) sees in Peryiar (yp) is something Josephine (p) is proud of, however Peryiar (yp)’s hesitation to do this can be inferred from the discussion. It is difficult to ascertain his take on the situation; however, the tone of Josephine’s (p) voice, and the use of “actually” imply a mismatch between what she says and what she believed. The fact that Peryiar (yp) complies with what is expected of him seems more likely to be what Josephine (p) is proud of.

Images/representations:

compliant to the adult’s expectation

20) Peryiar (yp) Cannabis smoking meeting

Reference to data:

Summary of Session 5
 Peryiar (yp) Placement Plan
 Transcript Session 5 10th of January
 Transcript Session 6 17th of January
 Interview Josephine (p)
 Interview Eunice (p)
 Interview Josephine (p)

Narrative description of the discussion:

Alexis (p) uses the example of Peryiar (yp)'s cannabis use to show how competent he is at justifying his choices. She specifically describes meetings that took place with Peryiar (yp) and other professionals to discuss this. In the following workshop, Laura (p) questions whether this is a choice or an addiction, and Josephine (p), Eunice (p) and Cicely (p) identify cannabis smoking as an issue for Peryiar (yp) (Interview Josephine (p) 00'40''13 to 00'41''32; Interview Cicely (p) 00'56''40 to 00'58''09; interview Eunice (p) 00'37''30 to 00'37''58). Cicely (p) is the only one to emphasise the stress that the immigration process is putting on Peryiar (yp), but doesn't link it directly with cannabis use.

Peryiar (yp)'s care plan also highlights that smoking can trigger significant underlying health concerns, and how the team has been trying to use "cash in hand" as an incentive to prompt Peryiar (yp) not to buy and smoke cannabis.

The discussion moves onto motivation, and builds a tentative link between Peryiar' s (yp) lack of motivation for education and smoking cannabis.

Alexis (p)	To be fair, I think like for me, I've been quite quite slack with with AQAs ¹ with him. Because he's done a fair bit to be fair he could get AQAs for. ehm but I think I just need to sort look into that a bit more. Maybe I'll do that today. <i>Writes on a piece of post it, I make a note. laughs</i>
Cecile	So with with him it seems to be like it's kind of like, the this kind of first step? that seems to be a bit difficult and how to, this kind of, a bit too scary for him to to get it
Josephine (p)	I know it's not what he wants either because at the week-end I turn around and say so, Periyar, it's the weekend, and he go Josephine (p), every day is the weekend. And I was like oh. He said it in a really down way, he didn't say it like oh everyday is the weekend,
Alexis (p)	After he was at school after he finished there, and at that, that it was the summer holidays then and then he was to enroll at college and during that, say that period of the summer holidays he admitted to just becoming lazy, and that's why he wants to do. And that was in another education review, with me and Kelly (p), and he was very honest about it, it's like this whole cannabis smoking thing he said that, you know if he didn't want to smoke he wouldn't. it's his choice.
Laura (p)	But is it?
Alexis (p)	Don't know
Laura (p)	that's a like addiction (<i>unclear</i>)you know, you don't really

¹ AQAs in this context is referring to the Unit Award Scheme the organisation subscribes to. This is a scheme recording young people's achievements through internally moderated units accredited by AQA. See <https://www.aqa.org.uk/programmes/unit-award-scheme>

Alexis (p)	He said he's not addicted to it, like he can go without it, but when he just wants to chill, and the others are doing it, that he will just do it if it's there. If it's not, it's not. He said it's not something he is addicted to but he he does like it. 'cause he said lots of time in, like his LAC review, he said, oh yeah, you know, professionals have sat there, [...] and said you know we can help you stop smoking this that and the other and Periyar is like yeah yeah yeah you know, that'd be really good for me. But actually, he doesn't he doesn't see it the cannabis use as being he doesn't see it as a problem. <i>Josephine (p) gets up, goes towards food.</i>
Laura (p)	But isn't that a sign of addiction? <i>Josephine (p) leaves the room.</i>
Alexis (p)	Yeah yeah he can take it or leave it. Basically. But he's telling professionals that yes I wanna give up, and now I wanna do this but actually, like like in front of us, he's like oh no, don't have an addiction. But. You know, if it's there, it's there. But he's very honest with us and I think that's because of the relationship we've built with him now. Ehm because before, as well, before I come on this sort of scene, he was very withdrawn, like, always out, but now he's more
Laura (p)	Yeah like he's more here isn't he.
Alexis (p)	So we're getting more out of him now. So shrugs her shoulders; <i>Josephine (p) comes back into the room and walks towards food</i>

Transcript Session 6 17th January 01'25''19 to 01'28''12

Concepts at play:

By putting the emphasis back on the fact that Peryiar (yp) talks about smoking as his choice and doesn't see it as a problem, Alexis (p) negates the complexity of the issue. Indeed, the team uses financial incentives (Peryiar (yp) Placement Plan), police intervention (Josephine Interview) as well window restrictors (Transcript Session 5 10th January 01'03''06 to 01'03''40) together with the official space of meetings to talk to Peryiar (yp) about his smoking, and 'offer' help to quit. In the extract above, Josephine (p) offers a tentative explanation as cannabis smoking being there to fill a void in his life but this is formulated in terms of Peryiar (yp) admitting to becoming lazy, therefore putting the onus of college attendance back onto him.

There is a separation of Peryiar (yp)' opinion from his motivation, through the emphasis on smoking being Peryiar (yp)'s choice yet Alexis (p) poses this as passive: "*we're getting more out of him now*". This presents Peryiar (yp)'s voice as disconnected from his actions. This dissociation between Peryiar (yp)'s justifications and the complex reality of his situation (his uncertain immigration status, the fact that there are suspicions of ethnic bullying from another young person in the home (Peryiar (yp) placement plan, the relevance of college courses for his aspirations) is reinforced by Alexis (p)' insistence on Peryiar (yp)'s competency in arguing himself out of a situation. This 'competency in knowing' that Alexis (p) points towards is quite narrow because it only pertains to the home. There is an assumption that by saying the right thing Peryiar (yp) limits her range of actions. The competency Alexis (p) speaks about is verbal, whereas the Oxford English Dictionary definition of competent emphasises action and doing.

Due to the illegal nature of cannabis use, this situation touches on what is admissible and what's not between adults and young people, possibly characterised by Peryiar (yp)'s indecisiveness. Further, the difference of opinions in the team about the ways to address such situation is exemplified by the contrast between how Josephine (p) and Eunice (p) address the issue in their respective interviews, one being punitive, and the other understanding cannabis use in terms of needs.

Images/representations:

to be controlled

separated, between voice and body

competent

with regrets, dissatisfied

does not choose to use the opportunities that are given to him

21) *Political Conversations*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 13th November
Observation visit 1st January
Observation visit 22nd January
Interview Cicely 10th November
John Placement plan

Narrative description of the discussion:

This is not problematised by the Participants, however as a contrast to other images arising from Participants' problematisation I believe it is important to ensure those observations are considered.

13th November

John (yp) talks about Hitler being a Jew and the information he got on Wikipedia: I ask him questions about the way Wikipedia is written as well as trying to bring historical accuracy in his reasoning (historically inaccurate that CIA could know what was happening in Hitler's head before he committed suicide)

In my notes I write: "John (yp) is really funny, interested in politics and likes to be noticed. Mary would have liked me to ignore him".

1st January:

John (yp) is in the lounge, watching Aljazeera with news of North Korea, and Iranian anti-government protests at the time (*Al Jazeera English Live News Today 1 January Full News Today*,). I try to start a discussion with him about this, but he repeats that the Turkish population likes their government and does not follow me in going deeper into the conversation.

My intention was to find about radical/extremist views, an issue that was raised by Cicely(p) and Eunice (p) as something they are 'monitoring' during their interview. His placement plan doesn't mention this concern by name, rather it alludes to it by framing it positively, saying that John '*enjoys debating religion and lifestyle choices*', and that he is '*interested in the news*'. The fact that his placement plan specifically mentions this is noteworthy because it steps away from the formulaic text within placement plans. None of the other young people, despite clearly being interested by cultural differences, religion, politics and current affairs, are described in such a way, which is some evidence to the fact that staff wants to raise their suspicions of John's (yp) alleged radicalisation indirectly.

22nd of January

Rex(p), at the beginning of my visit, asked for support to repair the relationship between Ralph (yp) and Luis (yp), who had a fall out that was understood racially. As Ralph(yp) wasn't in the communal area of the home, I

"Had take-away with Manmohan (yp) and Luis (yp). Both are talking about being anti-American (and referred to South Park: The Movie (Parker, 1999)). Manmohan (yp) told Luis (yp) not to joke about the massacre the Americans did in Iraq as millions of people died. Luis (yp) and Manmohan (yp) have a conversation about this, about the effect of an American invasion on his country of origin. Both were asking questions about the beginning of the war (so I told them about 9/11, because neither was born then). Luis (yp) wanted to know whether

Manmohan (yp) had known peace at all during his childhood. I had a conversation with Luis (yp) about the incident with Ralph (yp). He wasn't quite willing to apologise but through this discussion he is aware that his humour may be misunderstood."

Concepts at play:

While young people have political discussions amongst themselves, and are clearly interested in how current affairs impact on their everyday lives, adults ignore this in their recollection of events within the home. When it appears in the data produced by Participants, it is framed by looking for extremist views. If it is recorded in relation to the young people, this is done only indirectly and stands out because of it being omitted in the other young people's placement plans. This may be because of a motivation to protect young people from the consequences of mandatory reporting, but also because of the discomfort they experience talking about this with young people.

Images/representations:

at risk of radicalisation
a-political
discomfort with the theme

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22) *Ralph (yp) Sharing sofa 16th october*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 16th October

Observation visit 23rd October

Interview Eunice (p)

Interview Cicely (p)

Ralph (yp) placement plan

Narrative description of the discussion:

This is not problematised by the Participants, however as a contrast to other images arising from Participants' problematisation I believe it is important to ensure those observations are considered.

During the young people's meeting, Ralph (yp) is prevented to sit next to ex-resident 4 (a female): she stretches her leg out and Mary asks him not to share a sofa. Ralph (yp) leaves the room shortly afterwards, and as I go up to see him, he tells me he is thinking of running away from the home, as it is not good for him. When I ask the staff about this they describe Ralph (yp) as '*very sexualised*' (Observation visit 16th of October).

It takes a few weeks to find out that an incident 'of a sexualised nature' towards a female member of staff took place. I have not used my access to records as a staff member to find out anything apart from the documents and accounts provided by the Participants, which means the chronology may be incomplete.

It is likely that in response to the incident the manager of the home called for a multi-agency strategy discussion as per the 'Working together to safeguard children' (Department for Education, 2015c, p. 31) including the young person's social worker, the police¹ and mental health services. As a result of this, extra funding to provide one to one support is put in place², and input from mental health services is provided.

Eunice (p) and Cicely (p) mention this in their interviews.

Ralph (yp), supported by Mithum (yp), reacts against the measures put in place: he talks about leaving the house, by reporting suicidal thoughts and engaging with mental health services but refusing medication. He also goes on hunger strike (Interview Cicely (p); Ralph (yp) placement plan). What is significant is that there is continued dialogue between Ralph (yp) and the staff.

After a few weeks, the one to one staffing is stopped, and there are no more references to this: Eunice (p) and Josephine (p) were interviewed on the 10th of November they both speak of the incident in the past.

Concepts at play:

The concept of 'risk management' is invisibly present in all the resources put in place in response to the incident: indeed, Cicely (p) emphasises that the team must work blind, they

¹ As per the Children's home manual for the Organisation, the duty of the Organisation to promote the welfare of the child need to be balanced with the right of staff not to be subjected to aggression in the course of their duties. Further, each individual involved in the home (whether young person or staff members) has the right to involve the police.

² This is a significant expense that goes above the contractual agreement with the placing authority. If one assumes the cover in place is during the day between 8 am and 22pm, this amounts to 28 shifts for 2 full weeks

do not know Ralph (yp)'s history and possible antecedents for his behaviour. This is a puzzle they must solve.

There seems to be a causal relationship between the sexualised nature of the incident and actions being taken. The duty to work under the *Working Together* guidance triggers a series of risk assessments that are implied but not spoken about, and the multi-agency nature of the response has a visible impact on Ralph (yp)'s life.

The fact that Eunice (p) and Cicely (p) talk about the incident in the past means that the concerns are not ongoing and listening to Ralph (yp)'s protest seems to be important in the response being short lived.

The concept of confidentiality is also enacted in this situation, as I am not being made aware of the incident despite this happening on other occasions (see Observation visit 4th December for example). I suspect this is because of the nature of the incident as well as the fact that a staff member is involved in it.

There is a strong gender norm at work here, as the victim of the incident was a female staff member, and this trickled down to the female resident as Ralph (yp) is not allowed to share a sofa with her. In that case, the gender boundary trumps that between staff and young people. Finally, the ways in which Ralph (yp) responds to the situation is very strong: he clearly shows his opposition to it through refusing: to eat, to take medications but to continue talking. This is important for Ralph but not emphasised in the records and the ways in which Participants talk about this situation. However, the meaning of 'hunger strike' is important to Ralph (yp), who uses this strategy in Situation 23 Ralph (yp) 22nd of January not eating.

Images/representations:

recipient of interventions

'at risk'

a puzzle

gendered as male (assumptions of sexual predator)

with a right to privacy

23) *Ralph (yp) 22nd of January Not eating*

Reference to data:

Observation Visit 22nd of January
Transcript session 7 24th of January
Summary of session 7 24th of January
Interview Cicely (p)
Interview Eunice (p)

Narrative description of the discussion:

When thinking about the ways in which Ralph (yp) is powerful (Transcript session 7 24th of January), I suggest that Ralph (yp) derives some of his power by refusing to eat. Rex (p) agrees with me and suggests: “strong sense of justice”. A few minutes later, Ram (p), Cicely (p) and Chris (p) are talking about the ways in which Ralph (yp) and Mithum (yp) are caring for each other. They put the emphasis on Ralph (yp) being the one who supports Mithum (yp), and Rex (p) explains how the caring relationship is a mutual one. Indeed, the previous residents’ meeting Rex (p) had brought a take-away meal to Ralph (yp) up to his room (which is on the top floor, somewhere staff members go up to rarely because of the effort it involves) even though Ralph (yp) had spoken about his refusal to eat. Mithum (yp) seems to be encouraging Ralph (yp) to eat, and this is the point that Rex (p) is trying to make. He also speaks of the fact that Ralph (yp) made the effort to come down to return the take away, as he had expressed his refusal to eat it.

When Cicely (p) refers to the other instance in which Ralph (yp) refused to eat (for more context this is related to the Situation 22 Ralph (yp) sharing sofa 16th of October), she makes the same distinction between what Ralph (yp) says “*he said he was going on hunger strike*” and puts emphasis on his needs for food: she relays the opinion that the staff teams thinks Mithum (yp) did sneak some food up to Ralph (yp) room.

The background information that is available to me to try and understand Ralph (yp)’s motivation to go on hunger strike is as follow:

For the first episode, he was protesting the increased surveillance that was put around him following the incident considered in Situation 22 Ralph (yp) sharing sofa 16th of October. For the second episode, I suspect that he was protesting the fact that Luis (yp) had implied he was racist. Indeed, both boys and Rex (p) had organised a cinema trip, but at the time of the trip Ralph (yp) had changed his mind and was not up to it. Upon hearing this, Luis (yp) asked: “Is this because I’m white? ”, which made Ralph (yp) really angry, and prompted him to refuse to eat and to speak with staff for several days.

Concepts at play:

In both instances, there is a foregrounding of the logic of need (either by bringing food up to Ralph (yp), or by clarifying the fact that he did not actually stop eating but got food sneaked up to his room) together with a dismissal of the claims that Ralph (yp) is trying to make. One of the reasons why the Participants may have chosen to emphasise Ralph (yp)’s need for food as opposed to the meaning of his hunger strike is that they are bound by the organisation’s policies and statutory regulations. Indeed, the Organisation’s Children’s Home Procedures Manual stipulates that “*Medical advice must be sought if children consistently refuse to eat and for those who overeat or have other eating disorders, any*

strategies must be agreed with the Social Worker and outlined in the child's Placement Plans [as per the Children's Home Regulations (2015) Schedule 3 para. 26]

While no mention of this is made on the placement plan I have access to, the prospect of the Reg 44 or OFSTED inspectors asking for clarifications about the ways in which this was addressed may have influenced the Participants thinking, and conversations with the social worker are likely to have taken place.

The caring relationship between Mithum (yp) and Ralph (yp) is mentioned here as well, as Rex(p) reports how Mithum (yp) encourages his friend to eat. This is not the first time this relationship is described, but Rex (p) corrects the assumption that it is asymmetrical (Mithum (yp) being younger it is assumed that he is the one looked after by Ralph (yp) when Eunice's (p)'s interview clearly shows this is not the case. What is interesting in Eunices' (p) interview is the suggestion that caring may be detrimental to Mithum's (yp) well-being if the situation is too intense.

The issue Ralph (yp) raises around racism is also not addressed directly.

Images/representations:

cared for and connected

separate (the meaning of the caring relationship between mithum (yp) and ralph (yp); ishwar (yp) and ron (yp) is different, and one of the obvious differences is the fact that ron (yp) and ishwar (yp) have different ethnic background, ron (yp) being white english)

disembodied/ irrelevant voice

a-political

24) Ron (yp) during first session

Reference to data:

Transcript Session 1 22 November

Narrative description of the discussion:

As I set up to deliver the first workshop and the staff team comes in the lounge, Ron (yp) joins us and refuses to leave. The team decides that the meeting will therefore be moved to a smaller room on the same floor. As we leave, Ron (yp) switches the TV on, but the electricity is switched off in the lounge to stop him from continuing to do so: indeed, it is midday, and he should therefore be ‘doing education’ rather than watch TV. After about 40 minutes, noises of broken crockery can be heard from the kitchen, and the team interrupts the flow of the workshop to decide how to respond to this. As we leave the workshop, Ron (yp) is sitting in the hall talking to Kelly (p). When I speak with her about the situation, she tells me she believes Ron (yp) was unhappy because he could not watch TV. In my notes about the workshop, I write: “*I feel guilty because I didn’t explain to him I would be coming*”. Indeed, while I had distributed the leaflets and spoken about the fact that I was running workshops with the staff team, I did not have a specific conversation with Ron (yp) on my Observation Visit 20 November about my coming to the following ‘team meeting’, which may have been a reason why he joined us in the lounge at the beginning.

For the remainders of the workshops, Kelly (p) didn’t join and, even though this was not communicated directly to me, I believe this was a conscious decision to manage the change of circumstances of the ‘team meeting’ due to the fieldwork.

What the team considers during this situation is their responses to the ‘behaviour’ of a young person. Despite the fact that Cicely (p) attempts to empathise with Ron (yp) feeling left-out, there is an emphasis on distancing Ron (yp)’s individual experience as opposed to that of the team, and justify why it is important to keep going while managing Ron (yp)’s emotions.

Here are the snippets of relevant conversation within the workshop:

Alexis (p)	So that’s what I was trying to achieve. (<i>noise of broken crockery</i>) Ehm what actually happened?
Josephine (p)	Should I go out there?
Kelly (p)	I’ll go out It’s Ron (yp) (<i>unclear</i>) Kelly (p) goes out
Cicely (p)	This is ‘cause we’re all here
Josephine (p)	He doesn’t like change, even though it’s our meeting that’s being changed.
Cicely (p)	No. Yeah but it’s because we’re everybody is in here and nobody is out there with him
Josephine (p)	We gonna (<i>unclear</i>) out of plastic cups now as well. (<i>banging in the kitchen</i>) Just go away
Cecile	OK, can we go back to
Alexis (p)	Yeah
Cecile	Your bad day

Transcript Session 1 22 November from 0’43’’33 to 0’44’’03

VIKAM (P)	[...] a while is ehm happened (noise of broken glass/crockery outside)
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Cecile	(<i>silence, all can hear noises outside</i>) Do you want to go and help Kelly (p) or...
Josephine (p)	There's two of them out there, I reckon if we put some more people on the floor he'll act out even more. (<i>banging and broken glass noises continue</i>).
Cecile	OK. Sorry.
VIKAM (P)	Yeah it's all right.
Cecile	So it's very much about ehm, [...]

Transcript Session 1 22 November from 0'47''10 to 0'48''54

Cicely (p)	[...] you said that that was the bad day (<i>noises of broken crockery outside</i>) 'cause it was a lack of respect? Is that right? It was a lack of respect for his,
VIKAM (P)	Yeah
Cicely (p)	so that would go here, wouldn't it?
Eunice (p)	<i>Gets up and goes to the door</i> , whispers: I'll just got to the office and just check. I'll just go like as if I'm walking to the office
Josephine (p)	And just see if she needs help (<i>Eunice (p) goes out</i>)
Cecile	So. Lack of respect, ok.

Transcript Session 1 22 November from 0'49''33 to 0'49''58

Cicely (p)	[...] and we had no computers (<i>noises of broken crockery outside</i>)
Josephine (p)	<i>Eunice (p) comes back in</i> . Do you want someone to swap around with you? What about Teresa, is she OK?
Eunice (p)	Yeah, she's fine
Cicely (p)	Ehm, it led to, having no access to emails [...]

Transcript Session 1 22 November from 0'50''12 to 0'50''30

Eunice (p)	Shows, shows a structure, like not, you said the focus on the fact there wasn't any rules or anything necessarily in force, but there was a structure and there was, you know I guess those are those habitual things like, OK we're sitting at the table because it's dinner time and that's what we do.
Josephine (p)	Normal seems
Eunice (p)	And the fact that mainly doesn't, it's not about necessarily imposing the norms but just, continuing those norms?
Alexis (p)	Yeah
Eunice (p)	Like, we are right now. Like, if we all stopped this meeting we're breaking that norm of the team meeting and not really taking the time to reflect as a team. So, creating that structure and that habit.

Transcript Session 1 22 November from 0'55''55 to 0'56''20

Laura (p)	Mm ehm, eh, what Josephine (p) was saying, the idea of creating habits, I think that's great, and this kind of eh, what I call hovering, (<i>Eunice (p) back in</i>) or you know like you guys are in place but actually, you know that's your, you've got this kind of dance or whatever it is, that you don't
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	, you know like if there is something going on out there, then you don't all go vreeuh, ehm but you sort of nip in as if you're pretending to do something you know, like you just said earlier, I'm just gonna pretend I'm going to do something and then check the situation, eh and then I think this, that seems to work, eh with the kids, that there is this kind of structure, but not no structure from the, I guess their point of view. Because you guys seem to still know exactly what you're doing, you know, maneuvering eh around the situation, eh yeah. What else . I'm not sure what what you wanted me to do, what the question was just, but ehm
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Transcript Session 1 22 November from 0'59''17 to 01'00''32

Concepts at play:

At the beginning, the special relationship between Ron (YP) and Kelly (p) is the justification for Kelly (p) stepping out, which hints at the fact that relationships are seen as a way to manage behaviours. There is also an explanation that the behaviour is attention-seeking, which stems from a reading of the need for connection that RON (YP) is trying to express. There is an unspoken norm around this that attention should not be given to a young person when they are demanding. Alexis (p) alludes to disagreements with Teresa (who initially stayed out of the workshop to be available should Ron (YP) needs anything) with regard to giving in the demands of young people in a later workshop.

“And like because they're like Mithum (yp) is like because they are very demanding boys, like she would, she would bow to that, if that makes sense? And there were a few times that like, they was like a few of us had to like pull her aside and was like: no you can't be like this with them and yeah. Because otherwise they just got their own way.”

Transcript Workshop 6 17 January 00'53''19 to 00'54''04

Another idea that is coming through when the Participants reflect on what just happened, which they justify as Ron (Yp)'s need for structure. Despite the fact that emotions are high, it is important to the team to balance Ron (Yp)'s need for connection with the Participants' needs in the home. That is why Eunice (p) clarifies the collective decision to continue with the workshop at the same time as supporting Ron (Yp) with his anger. What is interesting is that Laura (p) further refines the idea when she talks about the 'dance' that Participants do to intervene 'when something is going on out there' by providing a structure that is not- or so it seems- visible from the young people's point of view. This could be interpreted as the inculcation of good habits through implicit messages. What is interesting as well is the use of the word 'structure', which is related I believe to the use of time, through the repetition of staff meetings on a given day around lunchtime as well as the fact that weekdays until 3pm are dedicated to education for young people. There is an other, important message that is being delivered as well, despite not being spoken about: the fact that the balance between Ron (yp)'s individual experience and the remainder of the household needs to be balanced.

The idea of separation is also present when Laura (p) implies two different spaces: the one of the meeting and the one 'out there' where incidents happen. This is a manifestation of the separation between adults and young people.

Finally, the disregard that I and the rest of the team pay to the fact that Ron (yp) may have been interested to find out the reason for the different set up of the meeting. Involving him would have been possible but required some adaptation to the workshop, and while I was aware this may be a possibility the prospect of having to challenge the Participants' views

(expressed by Josephine (p) Transcript Session 1 22 November from 0'43''33 to 0'44''03)
on the division of labour between young people and staff in the meeting made me very
reluctant to invite Ron(YP), as well as not making the extra effort to warn Ron (YP) that I
would be coming outside of my observation visits, which is a change of routine I was aware
he would notice.

Images/representations:

separate

attention seeker

expandable, as it takes extra effort to consult with ron (yp).

somebody to whom adults need to hide their intentions from

somebody to whom good habits needs to be inculcated by stealth

25) *Ron (yp) engaging in education*

Reference to data:

Ron (yp) Keyworking
Ron (yp) placement plan
Transcript Session 3 6th December
Summary Session 3 6th December
Transcript Session 7 24th January
Summary Session 7 24th January

Narrative description of the discussion:

Rex (p) is giving an example where communication is difficult. He takes the example of an exchange where Ron (yp) refuses to engage in conversation. The other is prompted by me trying to exemplify how to use of the ‘modalities of agency’/ ‘untested feasibility’ model thinking about Ron’s education¹. This makes Ram (p) talk about the context in which mechanics skills can be used, which he perceives as difficult because he sees it .‘*with young people that might steal motorbikes*’ of which Ron (yp) may be. Cicely reinforces the importance of having the skills Ram (p) mentions by reminiscing about a Royal Navy TV commercial linking the ability to fixing a bike to that of fixing a radar system as an engineer (Royal Navy Recruitment, 2015). But Rex (p) puts emphasis on another barrier for Ron (yp) to engage in education: that of choosing between easy money from selling cannabis to the fact that the minimum wage for children of his age is very low as well as ‘*how much stake you think you have in your community, society* (Rex Session 7 24th of January 01’00’’29)’. Other Participants pick up this aspect of Ron (yp)’s modalities of agency and expand on it, so that Rex (p) says that he ‘*wan[t] to prove to him that the outside world is worth investing in*’ (Rex Session 7 24th of January 2014. 01’01’’49).

Participants believe that Ron (yp)’s self-doubt and fear of judgement, his feeling of inferiority are the reasons why he is refusing to have the work he’s done marked and assessed, and why he refuses to engage with the tutors.

On the other hand, Ron (yp) is a keen and very able footballer, and as this is an activity where he feels confident, the team reflects on what else could be done to encourage to join the Charity’s team more consistently. The conversation then turns back to his refusal to attend his private tuition sessions, and the attitude the team needs to take towards it, as his refusal is very consistent. Another possibility would be for Ron (yp) to start an apprenticeship, but Rex (p) believes that while apprenticeships have good aspects to it, the barrier for Ron (yp) is the compulsory functional skills.

Concepts at play:

In that discussion, there is a clear distinction between Ron (yp)’s abilities, which are emphasised by staff both in the discussion and in his placement plan, and the decisions he makes about his future. The Participants name this his ‘mindset’; whereby training possibilities that are offered to him are work-based and paid only minimally, but Ron (yp) doesn’t want to work for free. This idea of choice comes from deciding whether the money

¹ The model is suggested by Engestrom and Nummijoki (Engeström & Nummijoki, 2010, pp. 54–56) as a tentative way to understand agency beyond functional capacity. It looks at 6 ‘modalities’ that support activity, such as ability, knowledge, contextual appreciation for, practical possibility to carry out the specific activity.

he has is coming from legal, badly paid jobs ¹ or from illegal activity. It is this difference between legal and illegal activity that is difficult for Participants to negotiate: indeed, Ram(p) hesitates to use the example of using mechanics knowledge when stealing a bike (*'I don't know if it sounds negative'* Ram Session 7 24th of January 00'58''32).

Images/representations:

competent at making his own choices
outcast, at risk
to be reasoned with
isolated
in control

¹ At the time of the fieldwork , the Minimum Wage rate for young people of Ron (yp)'s age was %58 of adult wage (Low Pay Commission, 2019, p. 10).

26) Ron (yp) participating in Annual Reviews

Reference to data:

Transcript Session 4 13th December

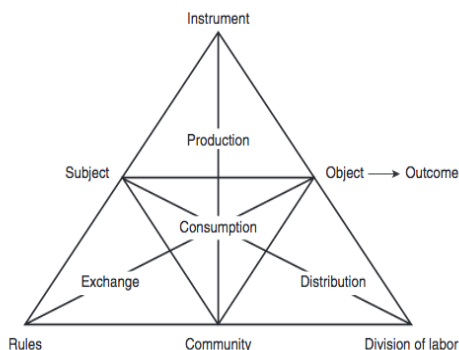
Summary Session 4 13th December

Narrative description of the discussion:

As Participants are not keen to continue using Theatre of the Oppressed techniques I suggest we continue thinking around different ‘categories’ of young people and professionals given through the first activity (see appendix 3 Workshop planning sessions). The situation is therefore: ‘what would happen if an IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer¹) meets somebody with a dual style of attachment of Angry-Dismissive (Angry Bear) and Fearful (Frightened Deer) (Bifulco et al., 2008, pp. 37–38). At first Cicely (p) explain that it is not an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)’s role to manage the angry behaviour of a young person, and she predicts they would therefore stop the meeting and/or leave.

I then re-direct the conversation towards what support would Participants give a young person to attend their annual review. Rex (p)’s body language is negative, *with a look of defeat on his face* (Change lab session 4 13th December 01’01’’54).

He thinks about his role as sharing information so the young person can make their own decision. He also makes a distinction between professionals such as the IRO or the Social Worker expecting timely meetings because they’re bound by statutory duties and young people’s who have ‘*no reason to care about those deadlines*’. Rex (p) adds that on top of the demands of the ‘*system [...] you also want them [the young people] to feel like there’s genuine affection and care involved as well*’ (Change lab session 4 13th December 01’03’’25 til 01’03’42).



Engeström's Activity System (Engeström, 2014. pp. 64)

In order for the Participants to think through the situation, I ask them questions around Engeström’ triangle of activity model. During the discussion, there is a tendency for Rex (p) to think of ways to change the system (suggesting for example that young people should lead on timings for AR and that SW should follow that, or that statutory duties should be only one aspect of the relationship between young people and professionals) whereas Cicely (p) talks about rules as constraints that cannot be changed, such as the frequency of AR being set in law.

Subject: Residential care workers.

At the end of the conversation, Rex (p) suggests that staff should play with Ron (yp) football unconditionally, and that he should be respected in his choice not to attend his AR, which makes him part of the group of ‘subjects’. Cicely (p) explains that she doesn’t want to be in a situation where Ron(yp) would be manipulating staff to ‘*play a game, a manipulative game*

¹ The IRO chairs the young person in care’s annual review and is ensuring there is continuity in the care of the young person, as well as ensure the young person is consulted when important decisions are made as per Article 12 of the UNCRC. See (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010) for a detailed understanding of the IRO role

[...] because Ron(yp) would call out the fact that the staff have a double objective when playing football with him. The assumption here is that he would stop playing.

Object of activity: There is some disagreement about this. Cicely (p) says ‘for the young people to attend and participate in the meeting but for Rex (p) ‘I’m not bothered about whether they attend or not, I just want the young person to understand what the meeting is about and what’s in it for them, and let them come to an informed decision about what they do

(Rex (p) gives example to show how that looks like for him.

Towards the end of the conversation Rex (p) disagrees with Josephine (p) about Ron’s (yp) perception of the object of activity if football was being used as a tool to get his views¹ for the AR. Rex (p) thinks if football is used as a mean towards something Ron (yp) would feel manipulated by activities that staff would qualify as ‘*trying to engage him and being creative*’. Rex (p)’s solution is that staff in the home should play football *unconditionally* with him. Cicely (p) gives reasons to this course of action for Ron (yp): he understands not only his and other professionals’ role within the context of the AR, but also its purpose. With this, Ron(yp) becomes a Subject of activity and Cicely (p) describes how this change of status is negotiated with him.

Tools: Cicely (p) lists several ways to support the young people’s participation to AR: attendance at the review can be through an advocate who speaks ‘*unconditionally*’ for the young person.

‘go through/inform the young person what’s said in their report so there are no surprises and invite them to make comments

complete the consultation form.

Changing the format of the meeting

For Rex (p), this is to:

advocate on [young person’s] behalf;

postpone the meeting if young person asks for an interpreter

Division of labour when linked with finances, such as getting an interpreter, Interestingly the Participants do not refer to the home’s registered manager, they seem to feel confident in owning all aspects of the task, and rather see other professionals as “tools”.

Rules: Reg 7 of the Children’s Homes Regulation. Consult young person

Assumption that this is led by a social services’ agenda (in terms of timings) Rex (p) speaks about using timings and asking the ‘*young person to decide where and when it takes place, and which member of staff they’d like to be there*’

Community;

Whether or not Participants are Muslim affects a young person’s willingness to participate in the meeting: the young person doesn’t want other Muslims know they are doing things forbidden by Islam.

Timings, etc... are social service department’s led and this clashes with young people’s agendas. This is not young person led. Thinking about reversing this, i.e. social workers having to submit to young people’s timings makes Rex (p) chuckle.

¹ This is used as a technical term to fulfil duties relating to consulting young people about decisions that affect them.

Josephine (p) makes a distinction between ‘*motivated young people who engage*’ and ‘*somebody like Ron who wouldn’t have had a review for years*’. There is a discussion between her and Rex about the type of tool/response they would use depending which category they associate with the young person taking Ron (yp) as an example.

Rex (p) talks about his perception of Ron (yp)’s perspective as ‘to engage at all is to accept the system and it’s kind of a really difficult one for him because he’s got no choice but the accept the system ‘cause that’s what he’s in. He can’t move away from it really or he could but the reality of the alternative is very dire so [interrupted].

Concepts at play:

Cicely’(p)s reaction to a possible meeting between a young person with an angry dismissive and fearful attachment pattern and an IRO was shaped by her belief that it isn’t the role of the IRO to deal with the behaviour of the young person. The implication is that when angry, young people can only be ‘dealt with’ by people with specific roles. This highlights a strong division of labour in dealing with aspects of a young person’s life.

Rex (p) thinks of young people as separate from professionals as they have different deadlines and use of time to the professionals working with them (by which he means social workers). He expands this and plays on the term often used ‘child led’ with ‘social service led’ to describe the annual reviews and describe how he would like the timings to be ‘child led instead, but Cicely (p) distinguishes two types of young people (those that engage and those that don’t) to show that this is an answer for every young person. The conceptual category there is that of engagement, and two young people are referred to to exemplify those that engage (Ishwar (yp)) and those that don’t (Ron (yp)). There are several points of interest here:

both young people that engage and those that don’t are coming alongside the Participants as subjects into the activity.

This is only possible if the Participants are willing to allow the young people doing this. The processes to negotiate this is for Ron (yp) to manipulate, play a game, and ultimately stop engaging (which is an unspoken assumption). Despite some disagreement with Josephine (p), both Rex (p) and Cicely (p) recognise his refusal to engage with the ‘system’ and despite this, they attempt building connections with him by sharing in his interest ‘unconditionally’.

For Ishwar (yp), this shift towards taking an active role in shaping the meeting is dependent on Cicely(p)’s acknowledgment that he belongs to different communities (being Muslim and care-experienced). She uses her role as ‘subject’ and professional to adapt the timings and structures of the meeting so that Ishwar (p) can navigate the two aspects of his identity more comfortably. This shows how a young person needs the power and influence of an adult to shape their situation.

There is an assumption that it is common for staff to have an ‘hidden agenda’, as for example playing football with Ron (yp) while at the same time finding out what is needed to carry out the AR. Whether or not young people accept that is one of the way to distinguish their levels of ‘engagement’ with adults’ activities.

Images/representations:

object of work

separate from professionals

disengaged from the system and at the same time a subject that could manipulate it

able to navigate a complex identity through an adult’s power and influence

27) *Shopping with Peryiar (yp)*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 1st January

Transcript Session 5 10th January

Summary of session 5

Narrative description of the discussion:

During the workshop, the Participants are trying to find examples of situations when Peryiar (yp) embodies some of the qualities of the 'rich child'. I give an example of him exploring complex and abstract ideas.

Recalling the visit to the shop I had done on the 1st of January with Peryiar (yp), I suggest that the haggling he does with the shop keeper, as well as his awareness that his behaviour needs to be adjusted depending on the shop he goes to is culturally aware and therefore complex and abstract.

Alexis (p) doesn't see this, and changes it to Peryiar (yp) being "quite entrepreneurial, business minded". A couple of minutes prior to that Josephine (p) had been talking about Peryiar (yp) and how he swindles staff and get a sense of power from this. She then goes on to explain that Peryiar (yp) uses the haggling and the possibility to exchange items bought in the local shop we went to on the 1st of January to obtain money that is not bound by the rule of the home to provide receipts: by buying something with money from the home, where he has to bring the receipt back, and later on exchanging the bought item back to another sum of money, he can then use the money as he pleases without having to justify his purchase with a receipt.

Concepts at play:

The cultural awareness of Peryiar (yp) is negated by the Participant's sense of being played because of Peryiar (yp)'s methods of obtaining money that he doesn't have to justify the use of.

By comparison with Participants' own life stories (in the same session), there is a clear implicit contrast between Participants' exercise of responsibility and agency during their teenage years (Josephine (p) insists on the fact that she chose to work, to make money and to contribute to her household) and Peryiar (yp) who cannot work due to his immigration status.

Images/representations:

a swindler, entrepreneurial.

separate from participants' own teenage experience.

a-cultural

28) *Sunday Homework*

Reference to data:

Interview Cicely 10th November

Transcript Session 7 24th of January

Narrative description of the discussion:

During her interview, Cicely (p) gives an example of a good day.

“ if I give an example of last Sunday, eh last Sunday was lovely, it was so relaxed, it was like, it was like a family. Family day, which I think Sunday should be really. E there were two staff doing cooking dinner, there's myself and Irena cooking or preparing Sunday, Sunday lunch, Manmohan (yp) was at the table doing his homework, and asking for help, can you read this for me, what does this say, what does this mean? ehm Agency staff was doing ehm domestic duties out here, and do, he's going to do a bit of shopping, he then came and joined us so we were all preparing lunch, every young person that came into the kitchen respected the fact that Manmohan (yp) was cooking, ehm sorry, respected the fact that Manmohan (yp) was working, and they would look over his shoulder, and just kind of m, then make themselves breakfast, sit at the table, nobody disturbed him, nobody told him to stop doing his work or distracted him, ehm Ishwar came downstairs and I'd brought a coffee machine in for Ishwar (yp) because he lived in Italy for two years, and he loves Italian coffee, so I brought an Italian coffee machine in with some coffee, and was he made himself a cup of coffee and poured me a cup of coffee out, and he sat at the table and chatted for a little while, it was SO lovely, around all of that, we still got, you know all the jobs that we needed to do were done and it was just a lovely atmosphere and it felt like a family day, which is how Sunday should be I think with everybody in, around the house. It was positive, it was lovely, it was a lovely atmosphere, I went home feeling as if I haven't been to work. It was kind of, it didn't feel like hard work. ehm, it was, yeah that was a good day” .

Interview Cicely 01'06''36 til 01'08''21

Manmohan (yp)'s commitment to his homework is also commented upon by Ram (p), Cicely (p) and Eunice (p) during Session 7 24th of January as an example of how Manmohan (yp) is motivated by his own self-development.

Concepts at play:

The justifications Cicely (p) uses to demonstrate this is a good day are: the fact that the atmosphere is relaxed, that both staff and young people are sharing the same space, mingling in the same space but with different purposes (having breakfast, doing homework, cooking Sunday lunch, having coffee) and that all are respectful of each other's activities, that she has common interests (Italian Coffee) with one of the young people. What all those positive things amount to for Cicely (p) is that the relaxed atmosphere fits with her assumptions (*which show Sunday should be I think'*) around Christian, western family norms where Sundays are marked with a special lunch, and a day of rest (*'I went home feeling as if I haven't been to work; Sunday should be I think with everybody in, around the house*). There is a sense of enjoyment, of surprise even at the atmosphere of the day in that the activities undertaken are very mundane and are carried out in peace despite the expectation young people could disrupt this at any moment. I have observed on many occasions how young people have different pursuits in the same space, yet what is highlighted here is the sharing of space and interests between staff and young people. This highlights the importance attached to respectful interaction between young people and adults.

Images/representations:

can conform to christian traditions of sunday rest

living in the home can be like living in a family

connected with staff and other young people through sharing space

connected with staff and other young people through sharing interests

29) *Visit to Houses of Parliament*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 29th January

Transcript Session 7 24th of January

Narrative description of the discussion:

As we are thinking through the ways in which young people at Hilltop are competent, powerful, knowledgeable, motivated to communicate and engage in society, explore complex and abstract ideas, Ram (p), Chris (p) and Rex (p) are talking about the relationship between Mithum (yp) and Ralph (yp) as ‘connected’. I suggest they also like going on outings, visiting museums, as an example of their connections, knowledge and exploration of complex ideas.

Cecile	But, don't they also like go like a museum outings and things like that, go and visit
Chris (p)	Yeah. House of Commons
Cecile	Did they? Cool. That's really nice
Chris(p)	Mm. Not only them, they were 5? To Rex You took them?
Rex(p)	Yeah yeah
Cecile	Who was there?
Rex(p)	So say that again?
Ram(p)	Who went to the Houses of Parliament?
Rex(p)	Oh eh, John, Periyar, Monmahan, Ralph and Mithum (yps).
Cecile	That's a strength (puts post it down and walks across camera frame)
Rex(p) /Chris (p)	Yeah
Ram(p)	That must have been great for them, they probably really enjoyed that
Rex(p)	Oh there was, do you know what, it was incredible, because they were, it was, I mean, it was quite a wordy tour, and it was quite serious, they were like, and the person doing it was quite serious, and they went into quite a lot of, like, unnecessary deep history, but that definitively flew over their heads, but you could see them like, I've never seen them try to pay attention more, than they were like
Ram(p)	Yeah yeah. This is the Houses of Parliament, as far as they come here, and this
Chris(p)	So basically takes proper British culture for them also
Cecile	And it's also the place where they decide kind of where they can stay or
Ram(p)	Yes this place is responsible for where their destination should be for the rest of their lives.
Rex(p)	Yea yes
Rex(p)	And it's quite it's quite funny, in the evening, after that, ship, that, trip, I was showing, I was explaining to them about the opening of parliament 'cause they were talking about what, you know how weird and ceremonial it is, like the queen back banging on the door, yeah ok, so they talked just through all of that and they were like, what is that, so I was showing them on Youtube and they were like laughing (all laugh)
Chris(p)	Yeah it is like it's always they're evident at 12 o'clock for the Prime Minsiter
Ram(p)	Yeah yeah

Transcript Session 7 24th of January 00'37''48 til 00'39''44

On my following visit, I asked Mithum (yp) and Ralph (yp) about their trip while eating take away: they talked about the guide, and the age of the building.

Concepts at play:

In this event the young people's relationship with a British institution is described: they are a bit daunted, very interested (*I've never seen them try to pay attention more*) and the Participants think of several ways the house of commons has an impact on the young people's lives. At the same time the processes of the institution are out of place with the young people's lives and this puts them on the same footing as Participants who also find the pageantry of parliament laughable.

Images/representations:

to be introduced to british culture and history
subject to the power of institution
equally disconnected with the pageantry of parliament

30) *Young people asking staff for money*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 16th October
Observation visit 13th of October
Observation visit 13th of November
Observation visit 4th December
Observation visit 11th December
Observation visit 8th January
Interview Cicely (p) and Eunice(p) 10th November
Interview Josephine (p) 31st October
Ishwar(yp) Placement Plan
Ralph(yp) Placemen Plan
Ron(yp) Placemen Plan
Manmohan (yp) Key-working session
Mithum (yp) Key-working session
Ron (yp) Key-working session
Summary of Session 2 29th of November
Transcript Session 2, 29th of November
Transcript Session 5, 10th of January
Transcript Session 6, 17th of January
Transcript Session 7, 24th of January

Narrative description of the discussion:

The situations where young people asked staff for money are recurring throughout the data, and the themes emerging from this can be grouped under the following headings: Conflictual relationships, Education, Adherence to accounting procedures, Preparation for adulthood, and '*Earning trust*'. I describe the data under each of those headings.

1. Conflictual Relationships

Tension between staff and young people manifests repeatedly when young people ask for money. Cicely, when giving a pen picture of Ralph(yp) says: '*He comes down with a big smile until it's time to get money and then he becomes demanding. But that's because he's seen the others do that*', (Interview Cicely 00'51''11). She acknowledges here both the transmission between young people of an entitlement to money, and the restrictions within which she operates. Peryiar (yp)'s placement plan also describes him as *very demanding and rude with staff when unable to get money in hand*. 'cash in hand' is the expression used in the home to speak of the 'privilege some young people have to be given their pocket money, incentive or other allowances (see 5.2.3, p.161). During the fieldwork, Peryiar (yp) and Ron (yp) were not allowed cash in hand because of concerns around their cannabis smoking (in their bedrooms) and their involvement in selling drugs.

The justifications given by Participants throughout the data are ignoring young people's own purpose and meanings of the ways they use money.

It is noteworthy that I have little data about the young people's own views and interpretations of what they gain through demanding this money, yet it is clearly a very important aspect of their lives. Indeed, this is the only topic that is consistently brought by young people themselves during the resident's meeting (Transcript session 2 29th of November, 0'13''35 til 01'14''01, and Summary of Session 2 29th of November).

Spatially, these demands for money often happens at the office's threshold (see 5.2.2, p.157) because this is where the safe and the money are being kept.

There are times when it is possible to distract young people from bringing their frustration to that spot, for example when Peryiar (yp) accepts to drink one brand of fizzy drink instead of the one he would have preferred the staff member buying the takeaway to get him. In doing this, Peryiar (yp) stops himself from going to the door of the office and to ask 'cash in hand' (Observation session 4th December).

There are other times when the tension manifests through negotiations about the adherence to the accounting procedures in place in the home, where young people try to use money assigned for a specific purpose to another one of their choice. For example, Manmohan (yp) suggests he could use the 'activity money' to meet with his friends, whereas the money is dedicated to paying for group activities such as outings to Thorpe Park, the cinema, a panto, for all at Hilltop. While this instance did not conclude in an angry or physical outburst, the tension was present, but latent and diffuse. (Observation session 11th of December)

Finally, the severity of the tension around money is visible during an incident that could have compromised the physical safety of some young people and staff members during my observation visit on the 13th of November.

As I arrived, Ron (yp) was smoking inside the lounge, and Enice (p), the manager, was trying to dissuade the team from sanctioning Ron (yp) for this misbehaviour by revoking his take away. Eunice (p) suggested Ron (yp) was told he would get his take away when staff would be able to go and get it, once the situation was 'safe'. Cicely (p) started the resident's meeting to try and diffuse the situation, which Ron (yp) sat through, talking about the 'double standards' in operation (see Situation 16, Resident's meeting). To diffuse the tension again, Cicely (p) went into the kitchen to make herself a cup of tea but Ron (yp) took the already boiled kettle and poured the water on the hallways' carpet, away from himself and others, to prevent Cicely (p) from having a cup of tea. This is where the interpretations of the events change, as my notes record that '*Ron (yp) had suggested he'd go to get the take away himself so that he could be outside*' (Observation visit 13th of November), with the implication that smoking outside was complying with the rules. Cicely(p) and Josephine (p) interpretations of the event shift the focus away from Ron(yp)'s ability to suggest a resolution. Rather, they focus on the fact that he was asking for money, cash in hand, to get his take away. However, they could not give Ron(yp) cash in hand and Josephine (p) would therefore need to accompany him. Ron (yp) showed his disapproval by ignoring her and pretending he was travelling alone when using public transport. Josephine (p) concluded that '*the thing was more like slap and cheek kind thing, to say, I'll go, give me the money, just tongue in cheek. More so than actually giving us a solution, I think, just kind of wrangle something*'. (see transcript session 2, 29th of November 01'18''19 to 01'18''41).

Cicely (p) and Josephine (p) did not accept my attempts at reframing the situation, as the emphasis for them was the observance to procedures that prevented Ron (yp) to use the money to allegedly buy cannabis. They clearly rely on behaviourist thinking to ensure Ron (yp) behaves more in line with their expectations, and what the technico-rationale logic of safeguarding requires them to do. I lack data about the way inter-agency work between Ron(yp)'s social worker and Hilltop addressed this issue.

2. Education

The theme around education is associated with a behaviourist approach to care in the data, as well as unease on how to deal with young people engaging in illegal activity.

There are some positive ways to ensure young people's demand for money are satisfied. Indeed, Peryiar (yp) tells me that the new way he can get his weekly snacks is *'much better, I ate it all in one day, but it's OK, it's my choice, my responsibility'* (Observation visit 11th of December). Recently, the weekly shop started to include £3 allowance for each young person to buy snacks of their choice. Once the shopping is delivered, each young person is given what they ordered and they can keep this in their room. In this procedure, no cash is exchanged between young people and staff, as the shopping is paid for electronically, in bulk for the whole household. But what Peryiar (yp) emphasises is how he can decide what to do without adult interference, and how he can be responsible, just as the staff believes he needs to learn to be able to cope as an adult.

Indeed, throughout the young people's placement plans, there is an assumption young people do not know how to budget properly and they are being *'dissuaded from costly activities that will impede on his budget, to encourage healthy, prudent spending habits'* (Ishwar (yp) Placement Plan, Mithum (yp) Placement Plan specifically, but reference to spending money wisely is present in all young people's placement plans).

Yet, during Rex (p) explains how both Luis (yp) and Ron (yp) excel at playing FIFA Ultimate Team. It is an online economy associated with the famous football game where players earn coins for games, which can be used to buy players, much as football players are sold and bought by professional teams. What Rex (p) emphasises is the skills that the boys display when playing there, and contrasts this with their very poor educational performance and experience at math: *they're never gonna be short of money, they're never gonna be ripped off by someone else'* (Transcript session 7, 24th of January 00'45''53 til 00'47''09).

Another example of the denial of the young people's financial knowledge is expressed by Alexis (p) who prefers to focus on Peryiar (yp) being *'entrepreneurial'* when I describe his awareness of haggling as an example of him being knowledgeable and able to deal with complex ideas (see [Situation 27. Shopping with Peryiar \(yp\)](#)). Again it is the fact that Peryiar is laundering money away from the accounting procedures in place in the home, and her and her colleagues' inability to stop this that Alexis (p) is highlighting.

These two previous examples show that staff are aware of the young people's financial shrewdness, yet the focus on financial education is basic (such as using pocket money as an incentive to tidy one's room or do chores around the house, or compliance with accounting procedures). It also is important to highlight the disempowered position of the staff who cannot change the accounting system.

In contrast, during session 5, Participants look at their own relationship with money as teenagers. Josephine, in particular *'felt very proud of [herself. She] was really happy to think that I could help [her] mum with rent, helping out around the house and helping with our things so yeah made me feel kind of empowered. And anything then [she] worked for and [she] bought [her]self [she] really appreciated 'cause [she] worked so hard for it, it wasn't handed to [her]. So you have a lot more respect for your belongings'* (transcript session 5 10th January 00'49''30 to 00'50''25). Eunice (p), as well, expresses frustration at the discrepancy between what happens at Hilltop and 'real life', because the reality is that Hilltop *'is stuck to a contract, we're all stuck to a contract. No that is the reality, you know. And even if we're having personal budgets at home, if you decide you want to spend £2000 you need to save you need to work for it. You need to do your overtime. If that's what you wanna do. So, bring it back to real life, in a family you need to give me my pocket money, you know, mum and dad*

would be like, I only earn so much, I have food, I have rent, I have that, this is what I give you because this is what I can afford. (transcript session 2 29th of November, 01'44'21 til 01'45'' 21).

3. Adherence to accounting procedures for the money circulating through the home

This theme is intimately linked to the two previous ones, for example through the meanings associated with 'cash in hand' or of the many different types of allowances and incentives the young people are receiving at Hilltop (see 5.2.3, p.161).

The Participants are highly aware of the artificiality of these procedures, involving signing records for every spend, the awkward ask for a receipt for ALL purchases, or the presence of a staff member during all purchases, with variations as to what happens (some staff allow for young people to have the money and hand in discreetly once the purchase is done, while others complete the purchase themselves, with the young person following) both practices socially signalling deviation from the norm.

Josephine qualifies those practices as '*sad*' and compares them to differing practices in the 'family' (Josephine Interview 00'28''07 til 00'29'58), in the same way as referred to in the previous themes.

While the young people generally demonstrate a good awareness of the array of categories and types of allowances they are entitled to, as well as the ways in which they are to comply with the accountability that is built into the system through receipt (only novelty to the situation or language barriers appear to be hindering this, (see Mithum(y) Placement Plan, Mithum (yp) Key-Working Session, Manmohan(y) Placement Plan for example), and the young people themselves seek to understand the system (Transcript Session 7 24th January, 00'42''45 til 00'43''10); what Participants focus about are situations where the young people do not comply with those procedures (see above, but also Manmohan(y) Key-Working Session).

When Participants refer to young people 'earning trust', what they refer to is compliance with those procedures, rather than the way trust is spoken about in other contexts (Warming, 2013). For example, Manmohan (yp) brought back a receipt for less than £50, assuming that he could get the money back, but because that hadn't been pre-arranged and he didn't claim the money for the right allowance, he couldn't get the money back. The key-working session Josephine (p) carries out to discuss this situation involved spending money for what she calls '*chicken therapy*'. The amounts of money for both instances are between £20 and £50, which are not negligible for young people, but it appears that money is spent following staff-led agendas rather than young people's. (See Manmohan (yp) Key-Working Session)

4. Preparation for adulthood.

During the period of the fieldwork, Ishwar (yp) was given a food budget to encourage semi-independence. The term 'semi-independence' here refers to semi-independent settings (Hart et al., 2015, p. 27), which is the next step for Ishwar (yp) on his path towards obtaining social housing as a care-experienced young adult.

This food budget is set up with the intention to give Ishwar (yp) responsibility for handling funds and purchasing his own food. This placement plan (Ishwar (yp) Placement Plan) however explains that this has been stopped because he has been misusing the budget, in line with accounting procedures detailed above.

A similar logic is used with Ralph (yp) (Ralph (yp) Placement Plan) who asks for more financial independence.

However, the young people's own views on their future use of money are rather different to this very basic teaching situation. Some reference to this was also made earlier when Rex describes Luis(yp) and Ron (yp)'s knowledge of FIFA Ultimate Team (see Transcript session 7, 24th of January 00'45''53 til 00'47''09)

For example, Ron (yp) wants to invest on the stock market a sum of money the group of young people at Hilltop can access through a local fund. The criteria for applying to the fund is to use the money towards chosen professional aspirations. But Ron (yp) wants to access funds quickly, and becomes disinterested when I explain that those funds could only be accessed once he turns 18¹, which was at the time legally true for young people with his care status.

Some time later, Ron (yp) is discussing his involvement in selling drugs with Kelly (p) (Ron (yp) key working session). Kelly (p) is gently trying to dissuade him from this, with the likely purpose of being non-judgmental and to encourage Ron (yp) to continue confiding in her. She questions the '*sustainability*' of selling drugs as an adult and a father. Ron (yp) answer is that he will get a proper job, but he cannot continue the conversation when Kelly (p) confronts him with his patchy educational attendance.

This demonstrates Ron(yp)'s awareness of a duty of care towards children, and of his awareness of morality beyond the confines of crude legality.

Another example of how young people view their financial future is expressed by Eunice (yp) who sees Luis (yp) as an estate agent or a sales' person (transcript session 6 17th of January), which I also observe on my Observation visit 8th January: Luis (yp) suggests I use sales' pitching techniques when he doesn't like the way I'm suggesting I could interview him.

5. Earning Trust.

Josephine (p), in her interview, explains the logic behind earning the trust of receiving *cash in hand*:

'What is that? Because it's gonna be spent on drugs, it's gonna.. but then we will get them the opportunity like right, we're not gonna give you the whole £58 clothing money, but we will give you a tenner, so if you go and get T-shirt you said that you wanted and you bring us back the receipt, then you can start earning trust, then we can start giving you larger amounts. So we do make rules, but then we do, we will try to find a common ground of, you know, is it safe to do this, why would it not be safe to do this, you know, so yeah, I think we're I don't think we're too strict at all, to be honest, I don't, but then I do feel like, in some things we should be a lot more stricter, because it's also important to have boundaries and to understand that there are boundaries and not everything in life is gonna be your hand and is gonna be there I'd say pocket money there are 3 o'clock , you know what I mean.'

(See Interview Josephine 00'38''15 til 00'39''28)

Both before and after explaining how young people can 'earn the trust' of staff with money when complying with accounting procedures, she hints at the guilt arising from the dilemma

¹ This limit placed to the possible ways young people could use the money available to them was discussed with the staff team at Hilltop due to the safeguarding concerns around Ron(yp)'s history of selling drugs. I relied here on the teams' judgment, as they knew more of the circumstances of Ron (yp)'s circumstances.

she is in: the professional need to comply with procedures that are clearly a barrier to being more in tune with the young people's feelings, aspirations and interpretations of the situations they find themselves in.

This same logic is recorded in Peryiar (yp)'s and Ishwar's paperwork (see Ishwar (yp)'s Placement Plan, Peryiar (yp)'s Placement Plan), where both need to earn back the trust of the staff team to be given cash in hand. Peryiar (yp) and Ishwar (yp) should abstain from smoking cannabis for 2 weeks to regain their privilege.

Concepts at play:

The young people are seen as demanding because they do not comply with the accounting procedures the home is contracted to follow. The fear that young people will use the money for buying cannabis, or, in the case of Ron (yp) for more serious drug trafficking pushes Participants to use a behaviouristic approach through the reward of '*cash in hand*'. Together with key-working sessions, those are the two only tools that are recorded being used by Participants to address the complexity of the situation several young people in the home are involved in. There is clear resentment at the young people's non-compliance, but also a clear lack of understanding of the meanings, aspirations and interpretation young people have of these conflicts.

Another important contrast of concepts is that of young people's need for financial education. Despite their knowledge that young people are financially shrewd, the financial education in place to support young people towards independence is very basic, consisting of snacking budgets or semi-independent food budgets. This is relatively successful, and some young people comment positively on these. The Participants' scope of action is however restricted by the accounting procedures in place.

Another set of contrasting concepts lies in the difference between the residential context and the 'family' trope. As a teenager working, Josephine (p) felt empowered by *earning money, it wasn't handed down*. This is in sharp contrast with the young people situation, whose ability to work is greatly restricted, either by their immigration status, and/ or their possible engagement in illegal activity. Yet the Participants continue comparing what young people do with the trope of the 'family', as a way to educate them and prepare them for adulthood.

Images/representations:

non-compliant, playing the system
demanding
lacking in financial knowledge
separate from other children
separate from adults

31) *Youth Club Mithum (yp)*

Reference to data:

Observation visit 6th of November
Observation visit 13th of November
Mithum (yp) Placement Plan

Narrative description of the discussion:

This situation is spoken about by Participants during the workshops, however it arises during an observation visit and several understandings of it come to play as both Marie (s), Mithum (yp), Ralph (yp) and myself are involved in it.

On the 6th of November, I agreed with Mithum (yp) to go to a youth club on the following day. We had a discussion in the lounge based on a poster advertising the club, where learning English and making friends were two things he said he wanted to do. The level of communication in English was very minimal due to his grasp of the language but the use of pictures made me a bit more confident he had understood. I arranged with the team for this to be possible administratively.

The next day I went to the home in time to travel to the youth club, but Mithum (yp) looked surprised to see me, he said he had a headache. At the time Mithum(yp)'s schooling was not yet arranged and he had nothing planned outside of the home on that day. I asked him if he could go and tell Ralph (yp) about this. Mithum (yp) agreed but didn't do it. About 20 mins later I went upstairs with Marie, another member of staff, to talk to the two boys about what youth club entails (language barrier was quite evident in this situation). Ralph (yp) was explained that this is an opportunity to meet other young people, some of them would be from his own country. *Ralph (yp) reacted really strongly to this, saying no and walking off to his room. Mithum (yp) stayed and sat down. He discussed further and said [he would go] next week.* Marie, another member of staff, continued to discuss this, suggesting I take photographs to show Mithum (yp) so he gets a better idea of what this could be. Mithum (yp) didn't want to, but relented after further discussions from Marie.

My notes continue to report further discussion about the situation away from the young people. Marie suggests that it would help if it was a male member of staff that could accompany them, but Kelly (p) disagree.

Concepts at play:

The situation is difficult to understand in great detail because of the language barrier for Ralph (yp) and Mithum (yp).

The motivation for Ralph (yp)'s reaction is ignored throughout, rather the focus is on talking about the benefits of youth club from the point of view of staff, and of overcoming language barrier by using photos).

There is an attempt at giving a cultural explanation to the fact that both boys refused to go, but there is disagreement amongst the team and there is nothing in the young people's reactions that supports this gendered interpretation.

Images/representations:

separate because of language and cultural belonging
decontextualised