

Celebration of the life and work of Professor Berry Mayall 1936-2021



The celebration was held in-person and online on 4th April 2023 in the Jeremy Bentham Room, University College London. The event was chaired by Dr Kirrily Pells and Dr Ginny Morrow. Dr Rosa Mendizabal-Espinosa organised the booking and online support. Among those who attended were members of Berry's family and 30 students on the MA course Childhood Studies and Children's Rights, co-founded by Berry in 2003. Professor Priscilla Alderson edited this report.

The meeting began with music from a favourite of Berry's, Handel's opera *Julius Caesar*.

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Remembering Berry Mayall

Professor Ann Oakley, Founder Director of the Social Science Research Unit,
Social Research Institute UCL



Photo by Ann Oakley's grandson, Reuben Oakley-Brown

I had the privilege of knowing Berry Mayall for nearly 40 years. Over that time, we worked together as academic colleagues. We discussed ideas about research, universities, the education system, politics, gardening, grandchildren and almost everything else together. Berry was an extremely clear and able thinker; her ideas about everything were always worth listening to, and she was an excellent communicator (which is more than can be said for some academics today). Berry had an unassailable view of right and wrong, and a strongly held view (which I share, as do, I imagine, many of you here today) that the point of academic work is not to service academic institutions but to have some kind of beneficial impact on the world beyond.

She was a pioneer in her field. Her research, writing and teaching in childhood studies were foundational to the Institute of Education's enterprise in situating education fully in its social context. For close to 50 years Berry developed, researched and taught childhood studies; she was there at the very beginning of childhood studies when they hardly existed, children being invisible in the adult-centric universe of academics and policymakers. She listened to children; she was steadfast in her championing of children's rights. The core of her work was a simple concern for children as a misunderstood and neglected social group. In this she was a trailblazer, someone who resolutely and quietly stuck to the main point while others might have a tendency to deviate into blind alleys of obscure academic debate.

I first met Berry in 1985 when I joined the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education. While most of the staff in TCRU were working on education projects, Berry and I shared an interest in the way health care systems treated minority groups such as children and women. She and I worked together especially closely when I left TCRU in 1990 to set up a new research unit, the Social Science Research Unit. My departure from TCRU to do this was somewhat hasty, and I well remember Berry coming to my room, literally just as I was about to leave, and saying, in that understated tone of voice of hers, 'well, I suppose I'd better come with you'. We were given some empty attics in Gordon Square where we moved together with 5 other colleagues, 2 old computers and 3 filing cabinets. Everything else had to be argued for. I think Berry enjoyed the pioneering spirit – it gave her an opportunity to complain a lot, and complaining was something she was very good at. She

was SSRU's Assistant Director and eventually (after more complaining and some difficult persuasive work) Professor of Childhood Studies.

SSRU would never have grown and prospered without Berry's support. In the early years we took on every research grant we could get in order to keep the Unit afloat, and some of what we took on didn't make a lot of sense. The example that stands out was a research grant called the Look-After-Your-Heart Regionalisation Project which we embarked on in the early 1990s for what was probably then still called the Health Education Council. Berry's heart wasn't in it (so to speak, and neither was mine) but she got on with it anyway. I also vividly remember a fundraising trip we made together to Billund in Denmark, the site of the famous Lego factory. Berry thought that, given their concern to enrich children's lives with coloured bricks, the Lego enterprise ought to fund her work on childhood. We enjoyed our brief sojourn in the Lego factory but sadly we weren't able to persuade them to give Berry any money.

To her work at the Institute Berry brought an unusually broad background, which included both teaching English in secondary schools and holding qualifications and positions as a medical social worker. She was extremely erudite about English literature; her favourite author was Charles Dickens, whose books she read over and over again. I think the affinity with Dickens' view of the world had to do with the fuzzy boundary between fiction-writing and qualitative research: the requirement for a keen observational eye and an ability to document sometimes unsavoury facts.

Berry was a good friend, a truly collegiate person, an inspiring teacher, and a supportive mentor to many younger researchers. She was very skilled at working with other people, designing research or teaching programmes with them, writing or editing books with them, and working out new ways of broadcasting a child-centred view of children. She was a great networker, reaching out to others beyond the UK who shared her concern to create a lasting sociology of childhood. Her work was much appreciated in other countries, particularly in Scandinavia, where she had many friends, and where her sister's family also lived. She did, of course, write many books and chapters and articles and speak at many seminars and conferences. If Berry was in the audience for a seminar you could be sure she would have something very wise to say. I particularly enjoyed all the discussions she and I had about the respective positions of children and women as social minority groups. It wasn't a competition, but if it had been I don't think I would have won. Her last book acknowledged the connection between the interests of women and children: it was called *Visionary Women and Visible Children* and it was an account of children's work at home and in schools in the early twentieth century.

It wasn't supposed to be her last book of course. That was the other thing about Berry – she never gave up. For years and years she talked to me about retiring but there was always another project waiting in the wings to be done or a book that had to be written, or something else demanding her attention. Among the unrealized projects we talked about was one on the history of SSRU. I'm sure she would have done it by now if ill-health hadn't stopped her in her tracks. In the building in Bloomsbury where Berry and I both worked I often used to slip downstairs for a chat in her room. She would clear the papers off a chair – there were always lots of papers everywhere – and she would tell me more things I didn't already know and I would go away thinking the world was a better place because of her. That, I think, will be my abiding memory of her – Berry in her chair, raising her eyes from whatever book she was reading, and smiling that uniquely welcoming smile. I miss these conversations. We all miss the clear, sane perspective she brought to our troubled world.

Children's position in society: remembering Berry Mayall

Ginny Morrow, Visiting Professor, Social Research Institute, UCL

I first met Berry in 1991, at a Resources Within Households Study Group meeting held at TCRU, London, when I was writing up my PhD. Berry invited me to present a paper in 1993 at the Childhood Study Group that she ran at SSRU at the Institute of Education, London. Berry's (1994) edited collection *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced* gathered 10 chapters that focused on the status of children - I contributed a chapter based on analysis of some of the data for my PhD, which had explored children's work in the UK.¹ The book emphasised the importance of understanding children as a social group within social contexts, and the political nature of thinking about children sociologically. Berry was very encouraging to me, and her development of the field of sociology of childhood was vital to my work, and our future collaborations. We worked closely together for seven years, from 2004 to 2011, when I joined IOE as programme leader for the MA Childhood Studies (later renamed Sociology of Childhood & Children's Rights at the suggestion of students in 2006, not least in respect of Berry's contribution to the content of the teaching).

We collaborated in writing in three main areas: (a) a critique of the uses and abuses of the notion of 'well-being' in contemporary policy debates about children and childhood, (b) working with Bourdieu's theoretical concepts to understand children's social position, and (c) social history, exploring changing constructions of childhood during the 20th century, looking at children as contributors over time, gender and generation. My presentation focuses on the latter.

(a) Children's well-being - Berry's work on children's health in primary schools in the 1980s recognised children's agency in how they understood and experienced their own health at home, school and in neighbourhoods.² We both felt that a highly-publicised UNICEF report card³ published in 2007 deserved some critical consideration, and we wrote a paper together that explored some of the pitfalls of using well-being as a research concept as well as attempting to use a rights-based framework to make claims about children and young people.⁴

(b) Theorising childhood - Berry always emphasised the importance of social theory in relation to children and childhood in ways that pushed beyond a descriptive paradigm for the study of childhood. She developed strong links with European sociologists, especially Leena Alanen in Finland,⁵ and Helga Zeiher in Germany, and together with Leena, drew on the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to think theoretically about children and childhood.⁶ I found the meetings and development of ideas related to this work

¹ Morrow V. (1994) Responsible children? Aspects of children's work and employment outside school in contemporary UK. In Mayall B. (ed) *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced*. London: Falmer Press.

² Mayall B, Bendelow G, Barker S, Veltman M. (1996) *Children's Health In Primary Schools*. London: Falmer Press.

³ UNICEF. (2007) *Child Poverty In Perspective: An Overview Of Child Well-Being In Rich Countries*. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Office of Research.

⁴ Morrow V, Mayall B. (2009) What is wrong with children's well-being in the UK? Questions of meaning and measurement. *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law* 31(3), 217-229.

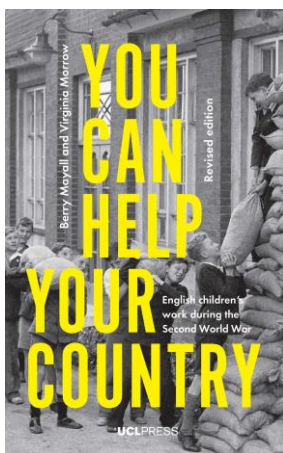
⁵ See Alanen L, Mayall B. (2001) *Conceptualising Child-adult Relations*. London: Falmer Press.

⁶ Alanen L, Brooker L, Mayall B. (eds) (2015) *Childhood with Bourdieu*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

tremendously helpful, and with my colleague Uma Vennam used a Bourdieusian lens to analyse data gathered with children on children's social support and social networks.⁷

(c) Social history

When we were working together as colleagues running the MA, Berry read my PhD thesis⁸. This was a study of children's work in England, both historically and contemporarily, and we agreed to develop it into a book that focused specifically on children's work contributions during the Second World War. Together we wrote *You can help your country: English children's work during the Second World War*,⁹ based on a chapter from my PhD thesis. We were addressing a neglected topic, as well as attempting to challenge the dominant narrative in social history about childhood during the Second World War - the story of evacuation – which has tended to construct children as passive victims of historical circumstances and government policies.



Berry was eager to understand this in the context of changing ideas about children, childhood, and children's roles in the mid-20th century – what children were expected to do – and how this was affected by social class differences, and concepts of service. It was not our intention to glorify war, but simply to acknowledge children as people, and acknowledge what people did. Berry was eager to elaborate a theoretical underpinning for the books, and we used the sociological approach she outlined in her 2002 book *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: thinking from children's lives*, seeing children as members of society, and as experts in their own lives, effectively developing a child standpoint. We were exploring childhood as socially constructed, and looking at children as participants in the division of labour, as workers (albeit historically). We also wanted to look at who counted as a child, and how this varied. This was directly linked to the school leaving age, which was flexible until 1944, when the Education Act fixed the school leaving age without exemptions for children to leave school a year early on the grounds that they were working in 'beneficial employment'.

⁷ Morrow V, Vennam U. (2015) 'Those who are good to us, we call them friends': Social support and social networks for children growing up in poverty in rural Andhra Pradesh, India. In Alanen L, Brooker L, Mayall B. (eds) (2015) *Childhood with Bourdieu*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

⁸ Morrow V. (1992) *A Sociological Study Of The Work Roles Of Children*. PhD Thesis. University of Cambridge.

⁹ Mayall B, Morrow V. (2011, 2020) *You Can Help Your Country: English Children's Work During the Second World War*. 2nd edition, London: UCL Press. Available free online.

We use a number of sources for the book – looking at the history of ideas about childhood, reading commentaries, legislation, and social policies during the first half of the 20th century. This is where Berry came into her element – she relished the actual tasks of doing research. The IOE Library has a collection of about 3000 school histories, and Berry read (and analysed data from) 700 of them. We also gathered data in interviews and writing from 23 individuals recruited through personal contacts, and Berry undertook some of these with great enthusiasm. We also drew on data gathered from an earlier study Berry had undertaken on grandmothers,¹⁰ and we read childhood autobiographies. And we used other documentary sources – the Times Educational Supplement, TUC archives, official publications, BBC schools service archive, Museum of English Rural Life archive. Berry visited the national archives of the Scouts, Guides, and Junior Red Cross to gather data.

We concluded that children’s involvement in work was necessary, valuable, and acknowledged at the time. It was visible, and it was important for propaganda, but it was more than mere ‘morale building’. We documented children’s contribution to agricultural production, especially through school holiday harvest camps. And we argued that work during that period was a normal part of childhood, before, during, and indeed after the war.

The book was revised in 2020 into a free online version, partly because in 2015, the United Nations agreed the global Sustainable Development Goals, to replace the Millennium Development Goals 2000-2015. The Sustainable Development Goals are broad and inclusive, and they aim to encourage governments to tackle inequalities across the world in rich and poor countries, recognising that poverty and inequality are intrinsic features of all societies. Many of these laudable goals relate to aspects of children’s lives, education, health, and poverty.

Sustainable Development Goal 8, Target 8.7, urges governments to

‘Take immediate and effective measure to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 *end child labour in all its forms*’ (UN 2015; emphasis added).

In November 2017, the International Labour Organization (ILO) 4th Global Conference on the sustained eradication of child labour reviewed evidence that child labour is in decline globally, though millions of children still work in what the ILO define as ‘child labour’. Target 8.7 is vital in the fight against exploitation of children and in protecting children from harmful work, but the inclusion of ‘all forms’ of child labour may have unintended consequences.

In the UK, children’s involvement in paid work is indeed in decline. At the end of our book we pondered these questions:

What will be lost, if children no longer work and are formally prohibited from working?

The right to dignity at work is a fundamental human right, so without it, where does this leave children and young people?

Is home just a lodging place for children, from which they set forth to the only valuable site for children: school?

And is school good enough for children?

¹⁰ Mayall B. (2007) *Childhood and Generation Study: End-Of-Project Report To The Nuffield Foundation*. London: SSRU, IOE, University of London.

Finally, is children's sense of responsibility for their family's economic and social well-being a value to be fostered in and by society?

These questions are perhaps more urgent in many countries around the world where, unless they do paid work, children cannot afford to buy food or pay for school fees and uniforms. Our book has important current global relevance.

Berry continued to work on social history and children's central place in the 'adult' world in her book *Visionary Women and Visible Children: England 1900-1920*, published in 2018.

For Berry Mayall

Dr Deniz Arzuk, Research Fellow at ActEarly and Lecturer at UCL Social Research Institute in collaboration with Professor Emeritus Bengt Sandin, Department of Thematic Studies, Unit of Child Studies, University of Linköping, Sweden and Ayşe Çandır, PhD Candidate in Sociology, Kadir Has University.

Unfortunately, I have never had the chance to meet Berry Mayall in person – but she is one of the key people that brought me where I am today. I had got in touch with Berry back in 2017. I had a young baby on my lap, and a new PhD degree under my belt. I had emailed her to ask if she would be interested in supporting my postdoctoral project that I had developed based on my PhD research. She kindly agreed to help, and we put together a Newton International Fellowship application. It was an intense process, taking care of a baby during the day, working through Berry's comments during the night.

At the time, childhood studies in Turkey was very new field, which was mostly dominated by psychological and pedagogical approaches to children and childhood. The few historical works that mentioned children were usually either about their symbolic value, or the role they were assigned in nation building. I was one of the few people in my interdisciplinary institute who were interested in adopting a sociological perspective on children and childhood. Even though I tried to read everything I could find, I was still finding my feet. I was enthusiastic to add children in history, but didn't necessarily have the theoretical tools to be able to do that.

For my postdoctoral research, I had big ideas. My PhD dissertation argued that the 1980s were a turning point in the history of childhood, and I wanted to compare the contexts of Britain and Turkey. In one of her comments, Berry wrote:

'I think you should frame the whole proposal as being a set of questions: As it stands, you tend to suggest that there was indeed a shift in thinking/ideas about children and childhood. Some of us here would argue that childhood has always been contested with shifting and varying definitions, not regarded except by a few (psychologists?) as "a natural life stage shared by all humans". In the UK ideas about childhood have always been stratified by social class and some children have been valued more than others. Children as a social problem, children as vulnerable and childhood as "at risk" are topics that go back at least a century.'

My PhD research was based on archival work on the news coverage about children and childhood in Turkish newspapers, and I wanted to go on to explore how British newspapers approached this. Berry's comment on my methodology was equally critical:

'I don't think that our newspapers are a good source of information about how childhood is regarded. So I suggest you frame your enquiry, again, more as a questioning of what indeed they do provide (do they report on childhood mainly in instance where children are a social problem, or at risk? Do Turkish and UK newspapers differ on this topic?'

All these comments fed into the way I thought about my research, and guided me to reformulate my research questions. Although I was not awarded that Newton fellowship, I

consider myself very lucky for having had the chance to learn from Berry. Eventually, I got a postdoctoral scholarship in Sweden for another project, and while I was there, I continued to work on my original research idea. In 2018, got in touch with Berry again, and she handed me to Rachel Rosen's capable hands, which resulted in the Marie Curie fellowship that brought me to London.

When I was planning my talk about Berry, my initial thought was to pay my respect to Berry's legacy in a more traditional sense, outlining her important role in the history of childhood studies. I went through her own works and my own notes. But then I read many wonderful pieces written about her by her friends and colleagues, and I realised that the piece I was trying to write is already written. So instead of repeating what has been said about the mark she has left on our discipline, I decided to get in touch with different people from different national contexts, and from different stages of their academic careers and ask for their contributions.

First of those is Emeritus Professor Bengt Sandin, who was my academic supervisor and mentor in Linköping Sweden. In one of Berry's last email messages to me, she'd written: 'Deniz, I am delighted to hear you are going to Tema Barn. I spent a very happy six months there in 1996. Bengt is a very friendly supportive person and he has a lovely house. Make sure you get invited.' And I did. Bengt and I have been in touch ever since, and he kindly sent me this:

During the early day of the department of child studies in Linköping in the 1990s we built an academic network that could support our efforts to create a unique research and graduate program focused on critical child/childhood research. Berry spent several months with us during numerous visits. She became a friend and an ally in this academic quest and had a decisive influence on the development of our research. She shared generously her academic network and contacts and was a much-appreciated participant in our weekly seminars and reader of drafts and papers. Her methodological and theoretical insights and comments on the strange ways of the natives in Sweden was at times an eyeopener that led us to see the uniqueness of the Swedish experience and sharpen our arguments. I personally thrived in her company. I only wish she could have been less polite and actually told me that she was vegetarian when I repeatedly served her the best cooked venison I could master. She will always live in my memory and in the annals of the department of child studies. In my garden a deep red 'moss' rose reminds every year of one of her visits, our friendship and discussions.

As we all know, Berry's influence goes beyond western academia, and beyond the 20th Century. That is why the second person I contacted is Ayşe Çandır. Ayşe is a brilliant young PhD candidate from Turkey, and currently she is working on her PhD dissertation on the use of digital media by children in schools in Turkey. As I had been some years ago, she also wants to work for the greater recognition of children in academic literature in Turkey. Here is what she has sent me:

Every time I listen to the song O Children by Nick Cave, which goes 'O children/ Lift up your voice, lift up your voice/ Children/ Rejoice, rejoice', I think of the precious texts I have read about childhood studies that have enriched my world of thought since my undergraduate years - unique texts and studies that teach me that children, as social actors, take their share of all the social changes and transformations.

*Undoubtedly, the books of Berry Mayall, who opened my horizons with her writings, are at the forefront of these texts. When I first read the book *A History of the Sociology of Childhood*¹¹ that she wrote in 2013, I was just an undergraduate student, and I was working on my graduation project. In the years that followed, this masterpiece became a handbook I frequently referred to in my master's thesis.*

*In addition, the chapter "Conversations with children: Working with generational issues"¹² which Mayall penned for the compilation *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices*, has always been a beacon that illuminates my path in this challenging journey as I work on the theoretical and methodological foundations of my doctoral thesis on the use of digital media by children.*

*I have recently read the chapter devoted to Berry Mayall in the book *Key Thinkers in Childhood Studies*,¹³ which I cannot put down. I have realised once again that the reason why a person I have never been physically with me before plays a vital role in my academic career – it is the power of words. While reading Mayall's biography in this part of the book, I also learned she was once an English teacher. This information also revealed the main reason for my solid intellectual bond with her. As a woman born into a working-class family in Izmir and the only doctoral researcher in my family, my teachers, and university professors have constantly enriched my mind throughout my education. Even though I have never been able to come together with Mayall, her work as a teacher and academic has influenced me to become the Ayşe I am today.*

I know that Berry Mayall's writings and thoughts will continue to touch the lives of many more people living in different parts of the world.

I would like to conclude this piece with a message from Berry herself – this little comment that she put down in one of the sections in our fellowship application all those years ago it has stayed with me since, and I have often quoted her to my students. She wrote: 'I always suggest to people that they aim to address questions (para 4) rather than aim to answer them – which suggests that answering may be possible ...' Thank you Berry for raising all those questions, and encouraging us to address them.

¹¹ Mayall B. (2013) *A History of The Sociology of Childhood*. IOE Press.

¹² Mayall B. (2008) Conversations with children: Working with generational issues. In *Research with Children* (pp. 125-140).

¹³ Smith C, Greene S. (2014) *Key Thinkers In Childhood Studies*. Bristol: Policy Press.

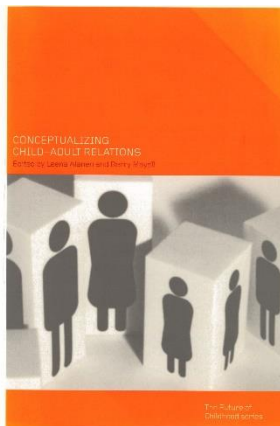
Celebration of the Life and Work of Berry Mayall

E. Kay M. Tisdall, Professor of Childhood Policy
Childhood & Youth Studies, MHSES University of Edinburgh UK

I am delighted to contribute to the celebration of Berry Mayall's life and work. I have so respected her contributions to what I would now call childhood studies.

Berry Mayall's work has permeated my own, from when I really started to explore the 'new' sociology of childhood in the 1990s and started a new job in childhood policy, until my teaching and policy work today. I find her work has been continuously useful over these years and, even more so, in the past two years as colleagues and I sought to construct a textbook on childhood studies¹⁴, that would appeal and be useful to the very diverse student cohorts we teach. Across these activities, I find myself coming back to three aspects of her work, again and again.

First, I look to her collaborative work on intergenerational relations¹⁵. As Samantha Punch has written¹⁶, Mayall's work on intergenerational relations, and the concept more generally, merits considerably more attention than we have given it to date. It has become a central concern, for example, emerging over the years with our cross-national partnerships on children's rights, and now with the International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership¹⁷. Here, intergenerational relations are a key conceptual and practical concern for the Partnership's research agenda, and we go back to Berry Mayall's work regularly as a key touchstone on this.



Second, her explanations on how to understand children as social actors and agency have been immensely helpful in considering the connections -- and differences -- between these two concepts. Over the last 15 years or so in childhood studies, there has been a re-consideration of how childhood studies uses 'agency'. It had been used very often, in

¹⁴ Tisdall EKM, Davis JM, Fry D, Konstantoni K, Kustatscher M, Maternowska MC, Weiner L. (2023) *Critical Childhood Studies: Global Perspectives*. London: Bloomsbury.

¹⁵ For example, Alanen L, Mayall B. (eds) (2001) *Conceptualising Child-Adult Relations*. London: Routledge/Falmer.

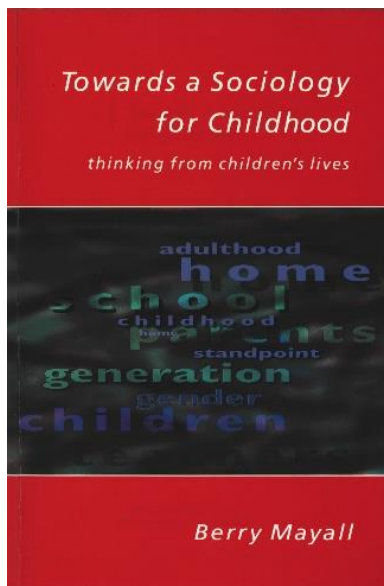
¹⁶ Punch S. (2020) Why have generational orderings been marginalised in the social sciences including childhood studies? *Children's Geographies*, 18(2):128-140.

¹⁷ <https://www.torontomu.ca/international-canadian-child-rights-partnership/>

research study after research study, but often very loosely and generally in a celebratory way. We began to see that there could be problematic issues, such if children's expressions of agency went against (our) social norms¹⁸, how would they be received by the research community as well as in practice. While Berry Mayall's own explanation itself can be contested, I always found it helpful to go back to this key quotation from her 2002 book *Towards a Sociology for Childhood*:

A social actor does something, perhaps something arising from a subjective wish. The term *agent* suggests a further dimension: negotiation with others, with the effect that the interaction makes a difference – to a relationship or to a decision, to the workings of a set of social assumptions or constraints.¹⁹

As one delves into this book, the reader realises that these and other ideas have been developed and filled with findings from her series of research studies on childhood and with children. These studies read as so carefully undertaken and respectfully carried through. To me, this exemplifies how Berry Mayall undertook her research and work.



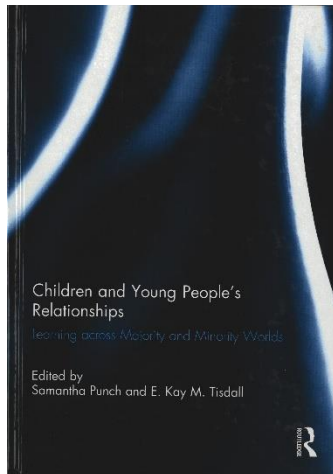
Third, I have found helpful her very pertinent if sharp points about the differences between childhood studies and children's rights.²⁰ As someone who works in both fields, and still finds it quite useful to do so, that is a helpful check and one that provokes thought. So, for example, one can do a childhood studies' analysis of children's rights in practice, as well as international human rights discussions or children's rights studies in academia. Equally, one can do a children's rights analysis of childhood studies. Each of these tasks raise provocative as well as practically impactful conclusions, which I have found useful in writing and policy work.

¹⁸ E.g. see Bordonaro LI, Payne R. (2012) Ambiguous Agency: Critical Perspectives on Social Interventions with Children and Youth in Africa. *Children's Geographies*, 10(4):365-372.

¹⁹ Mayall B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from Children's Lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press, page 21 italics in the original.

²⁰ E.g. Mayall B. (2015) The Sociology of Childhood and Children's Rights, in Vandenhoe W, Desmet E, Reynaert D, Lembrechts S. (eds) *Routledge International Handbook of Children's Rights Studies*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Berry Mayall brought an understanding of childhood studies' developments over the decades, that predated the foundational books in the UK that came out in the 1990s.^{21, 22} Further, I found her understanding of childhood studies' heritage from different parts of Europe and Northern America insightful, and we particularly welcomed this in our special journal issue and then edited book^{23, 24} to expand how we could think about childhood studies and its historical and geographical journeys.



These are but three examples of how Berry Mayall's work has had longstanding implications for my own childhood studies' journey. It is a testament to her life and work that her contributions have stood the test of time and will continue to make such a substantial contribution into the future.

²¹ E.g. James A, Prout A. (eds) (1990) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*, 1st edition. London: Falmer Press.

²² Jenks C. (1996) *Childhood*. Abingdon: Routledge.

²³ Mayall B. (2012) An Afterword: some reflections on a seminar series, *Children's Geographies*, 10(3):347-355;

²⁴ Mayall B. (2014) An Afterword: some reflections on a seminar series, in Punch S, Tisdall EKM. (eds) *Children and Young People's Relationships: learning across majority and minority worlds*. London: Taylor and Francis.

A matter of method: Berry Mayall's Contribution to the Sociology of Childhood in Portugal

Assistant Professor Natália Fernandes and Dr Manuel Jacinto Sarmiento
University of Minho, Portugal

The development of Sociology of Childhood in Portugal owes much to direct interaction with Anglophone and Francophone researchers, which later extended to the Ibero-American world.

Berry Mayall soon became a reference, particularly due to her books *Towards a Sociology for Childhood*²⁵ and *Children's Childhoods Observed and Experienced*.²⁶

The Sociology of Childhood in Portugal emerged at the end of the last century, following the 'discovery' of childhood as an autonomous social condition and the affirmation of its distinct cultures. This was achieved through investigations on the impact of social communication, particularly television, on children's daily lives, classroom interactions, and school organization between teachers and students. These investigations were largely 'invisible' in the mainstream of investigations carried out in the Life Sciences, which focused primarily on areas such as education, intra-family relationships, working-class contexts, or rural areas involving children's work. Therefore, the Sociology of Childhood emerged from ruptures, or developments, in areas of Sociology such as Communication, Education, and Family studies.

In its initial theoretical work, the Sociology of Childhood in Portugal established important scientific exchange relationships with sociologists of childhood affiliated with two of the most significant global sociological organizations - the ISA (International Sociological Association) and the AISLF (Association Internationale de Sociologues de Langue Française). This exchange was particularly facilitated by the Research Center for Child Studies at the University of Minho, of which the authors are members. This double articulation with different theoretical and linguistic spaces allowed the Sociology of Portuguese Childhood to incorporate diversified research agendas and conceptual frameworks with different roots, such as Anglo-Saxon comprehensive sociology and French sociology, which dialogues with philosophy and critical sociology.

Moreover, the sociology of childhood in Portugal has been characterized since its origins over a quarter of a century ago by the diversification of its theoretical sources, a great openness to dialogue with theoretical currents and approaches from different sources, and an interdisciplinary scope. This has been driven by the country's specific characteristics as a European periphery country with the highest inequality indicators on the continent, a late colonial history, and a decolonization process that established new relationships with Portuguese-speaking countries.

In short, the Sociology of Childhood in Portugal has included childhood in situations of greater social vulnerability, including children in child labour, those in poverty, institutionalized children, and the condition of childhood in terms of citizenship and rights.

In addition to its close relationship with research on the sociology of childhood in Brazil and Portuguese-speaking African countries, which has resulted in multiple exchanges and the completion of over a hundred doctoral and postdoctoral studies by Brazilian and African

²⁵ Mayall B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology For Childhood*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

²⁶ Mayall B. (2002) *Children's Childhoods: Observed And Experienced*. London: Falmer Press.

students in Portugal, the Sociology of Childhood in Portugal has incorporated issues such as street children - particularly sensitive in Brazil - and children who perform the role of 'caretakers' of other children - especially prevalent in some African countries such as Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe. Portugal's status as a former colonial country has given great urgency to postcolonial theoretical approaches, leading to the thematization of differentiated processes of generativity and the multiple normalization of childhood.

In the sociology of childhood in Portugal, Berry Mayall's influence has been characterized by a subtle articulation between the structural aspects of childhood and the ontological and empirical condition of concrete children. While she did not solely focus on individual and social practices of children, which is common in some sociology of phenomenological childhood, she analysed the intersections between these practices and their contextual and structural effects. Berry Mayall's work was informed by sociologists like A. Giddens and P. Bourdieu, for instance. Her analyses of children's actions in the intimate space of intra-family relationships and schools is particularly noteworthy. By examining childhood from the perspective of children's lives, she established a dialectical relationship between the structural dimension of the generational condition of childhood and the social action of children. This epistemological orientation is especially evident in her book *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from Children's Lives* published in 2002.

Berry Mayall's influence on the development of research methodologies with articulation at the micro and macro social levels is noteworthy. Mayall's edited book, *Children's Childhoods Observed and Experienced*, played a significant role in introducing Portuguese researchers to Anglo-Saxon researchers working in the emerging field of Sociology of Childhood. It presented a range of ethnographic and interview-based empirical studies that helped define and announce research methodologies that have since undergone extensive development. In particular, Mayall's chapter on intergenerational socialization processes in home and school contexts provided a rigorous methodological framework for giving voice to children and building intergenerational democratic relationships in research. This approach has since become a hallmark of research carried out with Portuguese children.

The recommended method's rigour, which not only gives voice to children in research but also expresses their power in research, to build an intergenerational democratic relationship in research, is a hallmark of the work carried out with Portuguese children. Berry's 'conversations with children' have been echoed in sociological 'conversations' with Portuguese children. This was particularly evident in research with children during the pandemic period, where listening to children, especially those silenced and made invisible during periods of confinement, constituted a powerful way of accessing knowledge about challenged social relationships and institutionalized social practices that were called into question in their routines, particularly at home and at school.

The dialogue with Berry Mayall continues. It is essential to heed her voice, bequeathed in writing to posterity, on topics such as children's rights, public childhood policies, the health and well-being of young children, as well as the theoretical and methodological aspects that constitute the sociology of childhood. Mayall's influence on the Sociology of Childhood in Portugal is ongoing, inspiring researchers to pursue epistemo-methodological perspectives that integrate a humanitarian sense of seeking equality and overcoming intergenerational domination.

Learning from Berry

Priscilla Alderson, Professor Emerita of Childhood Studies,
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I chose this photo of Berry because she looks both sympathetic, and interested in what she is hearing, but also as if she is thinking up a challenging argument about it. She was a critical thinker and was also self-critical and ready to change her views radically.

I'll concentrate on Berry's earlier years in research.

I first met Berry in 1985 after my first year of doing a PhD including fieldwork. (There were no taught PhD courses then and we soon started collecting data.) I was supervised by David Silverman, the eminent ethnomethodologist. It became clear that David and I had very different ideas about how my PhD, on parents' consent to children's heart surgery, should be done. He told me to find another supervisor, and to ask Ann Oakley. Ann said she did not have time and referred me to Berry. Berry read my notes and ideas and with typical candour she said she thought my qualitative research was hopeless. (Fortunately, two other supervisors rescued me, and I passed.) Berry was critical, partly because she thought then that statistics were essential to social research.

I wrote a book about my PhD research.²⁷ Ann Oakley phoned me to say she had read my book and she asked me to join the new Social Science Research Unit. So I next met Berry in 1991, while I was writing another book. It was about my post-doc research on children's consent to surgery.²⁸ Meanwhile Berry had very much developed and changed her ideas on childhood. She transformed my understanding of my own work, and the book I was writing, to see childhood within larger social and political and historical structures.

Feminism was dominant among the sociologists we knew around 1990. And feminism inspires the sociology of childhood – setting models for theories and methods of studying oppressed groups and their emancipation. Yet feminism also constricts childhood studies when children are seen as among the main causes of the oppression and social exclusion of women. Berry knew this, partly through personal experience but, typical Berry, she also challenged this. She showed a very different view in her most recent book, *Visionary Women and Visible Children, England 1900-1920*, on how children were women's allies in their fight for rights.²⁹ However, given the dominance of feminism and adult-centrism, why did Berry and I choose to study childhood sociologically and listen to children in the late

²⁷ Alderson P. (1990) *Choosing for Children: Parents' Consent to Surgery*. Oxford University Press/ (2023, Routledge Revivals).

²⁸ Alderson P. (1993) *Children's Consent to Surgery*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

²⁹ Mayall B. (2018) *Visionary Women and Visible Children, England 1900–1920: Childhood and the Women's Movement*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

1980s when this was so unusual? There are no definite answers to such big choices but looking back it's possible to trace influences.

Berry and I both read English literature for our first degree, Berry at Cambridge with the great FR Leavis. Novels may be seen as ethnographies written long before there were official social researchers. Novels such as Dicken's *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*, Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and Austen's *Mansfield Park* all give thick descriptions. Crucially, many of their chapters are written from children's own disadvantaged viewpoints or, as Berry would say, their standpoints.



John Clare spent years in mental hospital writing over 3,500 poems about his childhood memories of his village and surrounding countryside where he loved roaming as a boy, but which were all lost to the enclosures. He speaks for generations of children increasingly separated from the natural world, or watching its destruction and loss of species caused by climate chaos. It is good that Tim Gill is here at the meeting. Berry greatly admired his work on children and the environment.³⁰

Next, Berry and I were also both schoolteachers for our first careers, reading and discussing literature with many children, encouraging them to write their own poems and stories, and so in close touch with them.

³⁰ Gill T. (2021) *Urban Playground: How Child-Friendly Planning and Design Can Save Cities*. London: RIBA.

Then, like most mothers in the 1960s-70s, we cared for our children fulltime at home at least until they started school. Bowlby's warnings about maternal deprivation dominated policy.³¹ These warnings have been criticised, and adult-centric views about the need for children's day care to free mothers to work have predominated since the 1980s. Yet Bowlby and the Robertsons in their films that took a child's perspective³² widely spread the idea that children's and babies' views and relationships matter very much. In the 1970s-80s, when mothers began to return to their careers, many brought new reforming insights they'd learned from their own children to their care work, teaching, nursing,²⁷ and research with children.³³

After Berry completed a Masters in social work at LSE, Jack Tizard invited her to be a founder member of the Thomas Coram Research Unit at IOE, dedicated to research about children, families, and services for them. Uniquely, Berry was a founder member of both TCRU and SSRU. Jack Tizard believed researchers should raise deeper questions than policy makers tend to ask. They should conduct sustained, long-term, multi-disciplinary research, examine theories, develop methods, and connect basic research to policy-related and applied research. 'It is the experience, knowledge, and way of looking at problems which research workers have, which could be of most use to' government policy making, Tizard believed.³⁴ Berry's decades of sustained research show the value of this advice starting with her PhD on early years services and on keeping children healthy.³⁵

From the late 1980s she began to attend childhood studies meetings and met international colleagues. From 1990 onwards at SSRU, Ann encouraged us all to follow our own interests. Berry and I had both done PhDs about adults' views of children's services, and then we moved on to research how children are central agents in their own lives. Berry researched children's own views about how they actively maintain their everyday health at home and school,³⁶ and at school mealtimes.³⁷ A paediatrician later told me that in 1989 he had advised rejecting my funding application for research with children because 'no one aged under 12 can take part in an interview'. After reading my research report²⁸ he agreed he had been mistaken, but as a children's doctor he showed how new this research approach was. Berry was among the pioneers that disproved this doctor's theory. Here is Chris aged 9 talking to her:

'I go swimming nearly everyday after school. It's fun and it gives you exercise, more than at school, where you don't get any exercise except in the playground. They make you sit down all the time.'³⁶

Berry's reports challenge the view that adults 'know best' and therefore should deny children's contributions, their views and rights and their share in structuring their childhoods. She drew on the sociology of the body and the division of labour, relating these theories to childhood research. In one innovative method, she encouraged children's

³¹ Bowlby J. (1964) *Childcare and the Growth of Love*. Harmondsworth: Pelican.

³² Robertson J, Robertson J. (1989) *Separation and the Very Young*. London: Free Association Books.

³³ Dunn J. (1993) *Young Children's Close Relationships: Beyond Attachment*. London: Sage.

³⁴ Brannen J, Moss P, Owen C, Phoenix A. (2022) Thomas Coram: the life and times of a research unit at the Institute of Education (London). *London Review of Education*, 20 (1), 38.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.20.1.38>

³⁵ Mayall B. (1986) *Keeping Children Healthy*. London: Allen & Unwin.

³⁶ Mayall B. (1994) *Negotiating Health; Children at Home and Primary School*. London: Cassell.

³⁷ Mauthner M, Mayall B, Turner S. (1993) *Children and Food at Primary School*. London: IOE.

confidence by asking if they preferred to be interviewed in friendships pairs rather than on their own. Berry's promotion of children's own views helped many of us to develop this vital aspect of our research. She encouraged us to theorise their autonomy, such as in her edited collection *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced*,³⁸ in which my chapter was on 'Researching children's rights to integrity'.

With colleagues, I've used ideas Berry was developing on child health research. One of our studies is how even premature babies learn from their feelings and 'teach' adults how to care for them sensitively. In doing so, babies have an array of rights including respect for their worth and dignity and their freedom of expression.³⁹ Other research has been on the key right of children's informed consent to healthcare. We've interviewed children on how they manage their daily insulin injections when they have Type 1 diabetes,^{40,41} and on their views about heart surgery, the topic of a current set of papers.⁴²

Berry's critical work is prophetic, such as her concern about oppressive surveillance and monitoring of children. It is appropriate we are meeting in UCL's Jeremy Bentham room, haunted by his panopticon where hidden guards in the central tower observe every movement of the prisoners in the surrounding cages. Surveillance has greatly increased with online surveillance and police patrolling inside schools. This connects to Berry's concern about the scholarisation of childhood turning almost their whole lives and adult-child relationships into teacher-taught relations.



Berry's own account of her work is recorded in the interview for her chapter in Carmel Smith's and Sheila Greene's *Key Thinkers in Childhood Studies*.⁴³ She wanted to see much more attention paid to sociology and childhood studies in the training of all professions concerned with children. Currently they are so dominated by psychology and child

³⁸ Mayall B. (ed) (1994) *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced*. London: Falmer Press.

³⁹ Alderson P, Killen M, Hawthorne J. (2005) The participation rights of premature babies. *International Journal of Children's Rights* 13: 31-50.

⁴⁰ Sutcliffe K, Sutcliffe R, Alderson P. (2004) Can very young children share in their diabetes care? *Paediatric Nursing* 16: 24-26.

⁴¹ Alderson P, Sutcliffe K, Curtis K. (2006) Children's consent to medical treatment. *Hastings Centre Report* 36: 25-34.

⁴² The free open-access reports are listed on the project website <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/social-science-research-unit/consent-and-shared-decision-making-healthcare/childrens-and-parents-consent-heart-surgery>

⁴³ Smith C, Greene S. (2014) *Key Thinkers in Childhood Studies*. Bristol: Policy Press.

development theory. And she hoped to see all sociologists be less adult-centric in order that general texts on sociology no longer ignore children.

In Berry's work, there are so many resounding messages that are always worth repeating and reapplying.^{44,45} These are a few.

Childhood is political, yet treated as if it is apolitical.

Children are part of the social order, which we can only understand if we know about their views and experiences of their needs and rights and contributions.

The many services for children are dominated and often misdirected by adults' concepts, assumptions, priorities and goals. Adults need to be informed by children's own views.

Children are virtually excluded as independent actors from public spaces – not good for them or for society.

Berry reported children's criticisms that although children are active moral agents, adults constantly downgrade their moral status and rights. Berry's 2002 book concluded, 'we need a sociology of childhood...to provide a better account of how the social order works; and to use this knowledge as a basis for righting children's wrongs'.

I wrote a longer appreciation of Berry's work for the *London Review of Education* celebration of IOE's 120th anniversary.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Mayall B. (2000) The sociology of childhood in relation to children's rights. *International Journal of Children's Rights*. 8:243-259.

⁴⁵ Mayall, B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from Children's Lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

⁴⁶ Alderson P. (2022) Berry Mayall and Roy Bhaskar: critical thinkers, *London Review of Education*, 20 (1), 24. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.20.1.24>.

Babies as healthcare actors

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I have been involved in teaching on the MA Sociology of Childhood and Children's Rights since 2020.

I was very fortunate to have Berry as my upgrade examiner for my PhD. This is when I first learned about Berry's work in 2012, when I started my PhD here, at the Institute of Education.

My PhD research was about babies, their parents and their healthcare providers in neonatal intensive care in Mexico.⁴⁷ My aim was to understand why babies born very preterm or very sick in Mexican hospitals were (and still are) separated from their families and subjected to treatments that, many of us, would regard as inhumane and in ways that adults would not be treated.

I wanted to consider and acknowledge babies' experiences of being in hospital and I also wanted to learn more about parents' and staff members' experiences and views, so I designed an ethnographic study.

A first task was to situate children within a theoretical framework that allowed me to understand:

1. How babies might contribute to different aspects of human life even if they are born very preterm or sick,
2. The impact of illness and hospitalisation on their lives and,
3. How their experiences, and parents' experiences, are shaped by the context and culture of the hospital and in the wider context.

The sociological study of childhood seemed to be a viable path so as to consider babies' participation not only in social interactions but also in other domains of human life such as the economic and political. In addition to the social, disciplines of the moral and psychological, as well as the biomedical and neurosciences informed my study.

I spent 11 months observing interactions between medical professionals, parents and babies in the intensive care units of two hospitals in Mexico. I particularly focused on how babies responded to these interactions through subtle, but very meaningful reactions, such as a change in their heart rate or in their breathing, a movement of their arms or their legs, or a relaxation of their muscles.

However, I was clear that these biological responses needed to consider material and relational dimensions. Babies' experiences can hardly be conceived without considering them in the dyadic relationship with their mothers and more extensively in a relationship with both mother and father.

And so, **the concept of intergenerational relations became key**. I understood that childhood needs to be defined as a social status in intergenerational relation to adulthood.

⁴⁷ Mendizabal-Espinosa RM. (2017) *A Critical Realist Study of Neonatal Intensive Care in Mexico*. Doctoral dissertation, University College London.

It is within those relationships, Berry argued,^{48,49} that embodied relations should be studied, because adult-child relations are partly constructed through adult's attention to infants' physical bodies.

Pain relief is a good example. Infant surgery was conducted routinely with minimal or no anaesthesia until the late 1980s, when pain in newborn babies started to be better understood.⁵⁰ In the mid-90s it was still believed that preterm babies did not feel pain. And even though there are scales to identify pain in babies through observation, pain in neonatal care is underestimated and pain-relief techniques, whether pharmacological or not, are only occasionally provided.^{51, 52}

Berry's work **towards a sociology of child health** has been instrumental in acknowledging the value of children's own knowledge; and how this can form the basis for ordering not just their lives, but the lives of people generally.^{53, 54}

Thanks to the innovative work of authors such as Brazelton, Als⁵⁵ and Stern,⁵⁶ among others, babies started to be recognised as active participants able to communicate with others and thus contribute to their own care in the 1970s.

Through detailed observation of babies with their Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale (NBAS), Brazelton and colleagues⁵⁷ showed that babies born at term are able to communicate and engage in complex interactions through different identifiable behavioural states and adapt to the environment through facial and body 'language'. Understanding what these cues mean in terms of babies' strengths and vulnerabilities is important because it enables parents and carers to understand babies' different forms of meaningful interactions.

Als proposed that preterm babies are equally able to interact and communicate, although their cues and communication signs are more subtle and take place within a set of stratified subsystems.^{58, 59,60}

⁴⁸ Mayall B. (1996) *Children, Health and the Social Order*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

⁴⁹ Mayall B. (2015) Understanding inter-generational relations: the case of health maintenance by children. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 37(2), pp.312–324.

⁵⁰ Anand KJ, Hickey PR. (1987) Pain and its effects in the human neonate and fetus. *N Engl J Med*, 317(21), pp.1321-1329.

⁵¹ Roofthoof DW, Simons SH, Anand KJ, Tibboel D, van Dijk M. (2014) Eight years later, are we still hurting newborn infants?. *Neonatology*, 105(3), pp.218-226.

⁵² Cruz MD, Fernandes AM, Oliveira C. (2015) Epidemiology of painful procedures performed in neonates: a systematic review of observational studies. *European Journal of Pain*, 20, pp.489–498.

⁵³ Mayall B. (1998) Towards a sociology of child health. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 20(3), pp.269-288.

⁵⁴ Mayall B. (2000) The sociology of childhood in relation to children's rights. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, (8), pp.243–259.

⁵⁵ Als H. (1999) Reading the premature infant. In E. Goldson, ed. *Developmental Interventions in the Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 18–85.

⁵⁶ Stern D. (1977) *The First Relationship: Infant and Mother*, Fontana.

⁵⁷ Brazelton TB, Nugent JK. (2011) *Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale* 3rd., London: MacKeith Press.

⁵⁸ Als H, Lester BM, Brazelton TB. (1979) Dynamics of the behavioural organization of the premature infant: A theoretical perspective. In S Goldberg & HH Shulman, eds. *Infants Born at Risk*. New York: Spectrum, pp. 173–192.

⁵⁹ Als H. (1986) A synactive model of neonatal behavioural organization: framework for the assessment of neurobehavioural development in the preterm infant and for support of infants and parents in the neonatal intensive care unit in JK Sweeny ed. *Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics*, 6, pp.3–55.

⁶⁰ Als H. (1982) Toward a synactive theory of development: promise for the assessment and support of infant individuality. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 3(4), pp.229–243.

Mother and baby in a Mexican hospital



Paying attention to babies' cues when they need to undergo major medical treatment and incorporating their 'voice' into care plans is today recognised as best practice in neonatal care. Programmes that promote nurturing care for infants from a human rights perspective exist⁶¹, but their implementation has been slow and deficient. These baby-led programmes are more widely implemented in high income countries, where the infrastructure to involve parents in care is more available. However, the health care of sick babies continues to prioritise physical health, often without consideration of their social and emotional needs and those of their family.⁶² This was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is vital that we continue to understand ways in which infants can be recognised as **embodied health-care actors**, where their contributions health services may be enabled and respected no matter how soon or how sick they have been born and to continue to develop methodological innovations to explore wellbeing in neonatal care.

Thank you.

⁶¹ See for example Nurturing care for every newborn: thematic brief - <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240035201>

⁶² Mendizabal-Espinosa RM, Warren I. (2020) Non-evidence-based beliefs increase inequalities in the provision of infant-and family-centred neonatal care. *Acta Paediatrica*, 109(2), pp.314-320.

Research collaboration and friendship

Professor Emerita Sonja Olin Lauritzen, Stockholm University, Sweden, and
Professor Geraldine Brady, Nottingham Trent University, UK

We are delighted to have the privilege of paying our own tribute to Berry Mayall and to acknowledging the influence that she had on our research and on the friendship that we developed over the years. Our paper is a short introduction to the journey that our encounters with Berry took, firstly separately and then together.

1980s – The Early Days – Sonja and Berry

An interest in child health issues brought Berry Mayall and Sonja Olin Lauritzen together in the late 1980's when Sonja was writing up her PhD thesis on encounters between the Swedish Child Health Services and migrant mothers of young children, *Preventive health care – routine or relation. Intercultural encounters within Swedish maternity and child health services*.⁶³ Berry, more or less by accident, became aware of Sonja's research after having visited a conference in Berlin where a paper that 'fascinated' Berry was to be presented, but the presenter did not turn up. Typical of Berry, she did not give up but wrote a letter (which we did in those days, no texts or emails) to the co-author of the paper who responded and told Berry that the parts of the paper she thought were 'fascinating' were actually a more or less direct translation of work done by Sonja Olin Lauritzen (who was not mentioned in the paper). In her letter to the co-author Berry (also typical) enclosed a copy of the paper with her comments on the English grammar that could be 'useful'. Berry then wrote to Sonja and told her how interested she was in the Swedish study, and invited Sonja to come to London so they could meet and discuss their respective on-going work in the field of child health. So, Sonja came to see Berry at the Thomas Coram Research Unit in 1988, and this became the beginning of discussions, collaboration (and friendship) that would last for decades, thanks to Berry's initiative and openness to research in other places and countries other than her own.

At the time Berry, was already involved in research on the role of mothers of young children, more specifically, '*the views of one of the most important group of people in the community*': mothers who care for the health of their small children, their ideas about what constitutes good child health care, what their practices were, and how easy or difficult it was for them to do what they thought best.⁶⁴ From there Berry went on to address the different perspectives of the people who work with the health of children, in particular mothers and health visitors. Berry explored their different approaches to knowledge about child health: knowledge based on parental experience of the child in daily life and the more problem-oriented perspective based in professional training respectively. In doing this, Berry discussed the different roles of those adults who are working *for* or *with* the child.⁶⁵

⁶³ Olin Lauritzen S. (1990) *Preventive Health Care – Routine or Relation. Intercultural Encounters Within Swedish Maternity and Child Health Services*. (Diss.) Stockholm University.

⁶⁴ Mayall B, Grossmith C. (1984) *Caring for the Health of Young Children*. University of London: Thomas Coram Research Unit.

⁶⁵ Mayall B, Foster M-C. (1989) *Child Health Care: Living with Children, Working for Children*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational.

So, in these early years, a series of studies dealing with the intersection of health with educational issues were carried out – all based on data collected among adults (the children were under three) and concerned with knowledge about children and child health: how this knowledge is acquired, through experience, through interactive encounters, through more formal learning. Berry then went on to incorporate children’s own voices into her sociological thinking. She carried out some more large-scale studies of children who had reached school-age, where not only their teachers and parents were interviewed about their beliefs about children and “good” childcare but the children themselves were interviewed about their health and what they do to stay healthy.⁶⁶

In doing this Berry also problematised how we collect data from children, bringing to the fore the power-relations between the adult researcher and the child. In particular, she located children as competent persons, able to reflect on their own health and what they do themselves to stay healthy, within the context of family life and the school setting. As we will see in the rest of this paper, Berry goes on to address not only children’s health in the context of family life and school, but also the notion of childhood(s) which becomes increasingly important in her research and sociological thinking.

Throughout these years, Sonja and Berry had on-going discussions about the practices of, as well as research on, child health care carried out by health care professionals, parents and by children themselves, comparing the UK scene with the Swedish – the varying welfare systems, living conditions and health care services – that is, the conditions that parents and children live under in these different countries. These interests in differences between societies are important throughout Berry’s work. Her contacts with colleagues in several countries (in addition to Sweden), such as Norway, Denmark, Finland, Germany, France are reflected in a comparative stance in her research on children and childhood(s).



Berry enjoyed visiting Stockholm and many other cities.

A series of seminars took place between Swedish researchers and Berry and her colleagues at the SSRU, as well as exchange visits back and forth. Sonja became a Visiting Fellow at the research unit in London which resulted in a *Sociology of Health and Illness* paper 1997 with the title *Notions of child health: mothers’ accounts of health in their young babies*.⁶⁷ She appreciated Berry’s introduction to British Medical Sociology, and eventually to the Social Study of Childhood and the scholars who were at the forefront of this new field. In

⁶⁶ Mayall B. (1996) *Children, Health and the Social Order*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

⁶⁷ Olin Lauritzen S. (1997) *Notions of child health: mothers’ accounts of health in their young babies*. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 19, 4: 436-456

particular, the key concept of 'generation' as a relational category became important to Sonja in her future work.

Sonja and Berry did not only discuss issues of research relating to children and parents, Berry also generously shared her vast knowledge of British culture with Sonja. She took her to the Tate Gallery and lectured her on the history of British landscape painting. They also went to Stratford-on-Avon to see Shakespeare's play *Coriolanus* (Sonja had to read the book first!) and Berry shared her knowledge about gardening and British history.

1990s – The Middle Years – Geraldine and Berry

During her time at SSRU, Berry introduced Sonja to many colleagues, including Gill Bendelow, who was doing her PhD with Ann Oakley at the time. Some time later Gill went on to take up a post at the University of Warwick in Sociology. Sonja and Gill always remained in touch and visited.



Berry at SSRU in 1994 with Sandra Stone, SSRU's very efficient founder-administrator behind her.

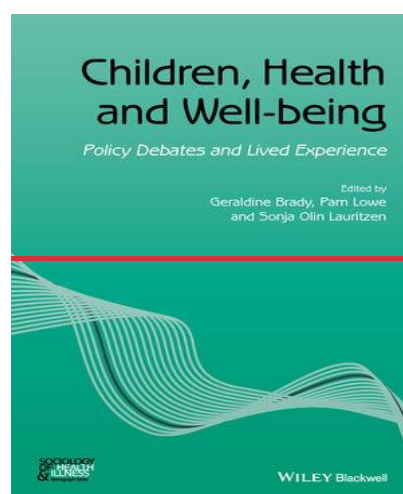
At Warwick in the mid 1990's Gill Bendelow taught Geraldine Brady the sociology of childhood and also sociology of health and illness. Gill was her dissertation supervisor and later one of her PhD supervisors. Geraldine combined a sociology of childhood perspective with the theory of medicalisation in her doctoral research on children's lived experience of an ADHD diagnosis and treatment. She drew on the work of Warwick Professor Meg Stacey and Berry, in applying the concept of the child health care division of labour to the children encountered, who were quite clearly managing their health and contributing to the social order. She had been introduced to Berry's research through Gill, her writing had a strong influence on the direction that Geraldine took with her doctoral studies. She admired Berry's work and heard her speak at conferences but did not have the opportunity to meet her until much later.

It was during this time that Geraldine was introduced by Gill to Sonja. Sonja and her colleagues, at the time from Linköping University, undertook a research visit to Warwick University, this was a week-long symposium and a fruitful opportunity to share research and engage in lengthy discussion. Sonja's work on issues of normality and deviance in parental

encounters with the child health services also influenced the direction in which Geraldine took her research, framing understandings of how parents make sense of perceived 'difference' in their child, which was presented in her PhD thesis in 2004, *Children and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): a sociological exploration*.⁶⁸ Then followed a period of ten years before Geraldine had contact with Sonja again. In much the same, easy, unforced way that Sonja and Berry had made contact all that time before (no letters, by email now!) Geraldine emailed Sonja to suggest an idea for research collaboration (Geraldine now at Coventry University and Sonja at Stockholm University), responding to an internal funding opportunity to 'internationalise' her research with children. Sonja greeted the idea with enthusiasm and was really pleased to hear from Geraldine. With the support of seed-corn funding a collaboration started which has endured since 2010 and led to Geraldine having a Visiting Fellowship to Stockholm University Department of Education, to many exchange visits to teach and research at Stockholm University and to new relationships with Sonja's PhD students, many of whom are now early career researchers in the departments of Education and Special Education.

2000s - The Sociology of Child Health

So, returning to Berry and her influence on both Sonja and Geraldine, during one of these research visits to Stockholm Sonja and Geraldine discussed Berry's ground-breaking call for a sociology of child health, a paper which was published 1998 in SHI, *Towards a sociology of child health*. We noted that still in the sociology of childhood 'health' was not a prominent feature of the topics researched and 'children' are not a prominent feature in the sociology of health. In the mid-2010's, Sonja, Geraldine and Pam Lowe took forward Berry's premise that medical sociology tends to overlook children and childhood studies tends to overlook health and proposed an edited special issue of SHI on this issue. Berry was very pleased with this development in the field and the international collaboration, generously supporting by contributing the final paper in the collection. Later invited as the Keynote speaker at the launch event at Tema Barn (Department of Child Studies) at Linköping University, Berry captivated the audience and was clearly delighted to see the vibrancy of the contributions, demonstrating that this continued to be a fruitful area of research.



⁶⁸ Brady G. (2004) *Children and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): a sociological exploration*. PhD thesis. University of Warwick.

The papers that made up this Special Issue of *SHI*,⁶⁹ also published as a monograph, formed three key themes – all of which were central in the work of Berry.⁷⁰ We set out the significance and pervasive influence of health policy in shaping the lives of children and their families, uncovering implicit ideas about ‘the child’ which pervade health policy. We explored in more detail ‘health policy in action’, examining some of the practices of children’s health and well-being; and we had a specific focus on the lived experiences of children as health actors.

We aimed to encourage reflection on contemporary and culturally specific ways of knowing and understanding children’s health. In a world of increasing health and social inequalities a critical engagement with the ways in which health policy impacts on children is much needed. Understandings of child health, we argued, are relational and constructed in communication between a range of different actors with different beliefs about health, about normality or deviance from the norm, about where intervention is considered necessary and who with?

Our key focus was on children’s inclusion – not through consultation or merely seeking their views but through truly accessing their understandings, experiences, agendas, competence and agency – crucially, because children’s concerns and their way of ‘doing health’ often differ from adult’s concerns, such as how children integrate their understanding of a diagnosis or condition with their own sense of self. In her final chapter of the Special Issue from 2015, *Understanding inter-generational relations: the case of health maintenance by children*, Berry makes explicit the minority status of children within intergenerational relations and the diversity of childhoods to illustrate that there is little that is universal about ‘the child’.

2023 – Contemporary Joint Reflections

Our biographies, research and academic journeys have been very much influenced by Berry, and her ideas continue to enrich our shared purpose of contributing to building a sociology of children’s health and well-being. Our tribute in this Festschrift collection reflects that when we instigate a new collaboration in academia we never quite know where it may lead and how exciting or rewarding those research relationships can be.

⁶⁹ Brady G, Lowe P, Olin Lauritzen S. (2015) Children, health and well-being: policy debates and lived experience. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 37, 2.

⁷⁰ Mayall B. (1998) Towards a sociology of child health, *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 20,3:269-288.

The Influence of Emerita Professor Berry Mayall on Childhood Studies Research in New Zealand

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The Children's Issues Centre (CIC) was established at the University of Otago in New Zealand in 1995. Throughout its 28-year history, it has been devoted to advancing knowledge about children's development, wellbeing and rights. From the outset, we drew on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989,⁷¹ Sociocultural theory^{72, 73} and Childhood Studies^{74, 75, 76, 77}, to underpin our research and postgraduate teaching programme. This prioritised children's rights, agency and participation and was strongly influenced by the research and publications of Berry Mayall.^{78, 79, 80, 81, 82} Berry's work helped

⁷¹ United Nations. (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Geneva: UNHCHR.

⁷² Smith AB. (2013) *Understanding Children and Childhood* (5th ed.). Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.

⁷³ Vygotsky L. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Mental Processes*. Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press.

⁷⁴ James A, Prout A. (eds) (1997) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*. London: Falmer Press.

⁷⁵ Mayall B. (ed) (1994) *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced*. London: Falmer Press.

⁷⁶ Mayall B. (1996) *Children, Health and the Social Order*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

⁷⁷ Qvortrup J. (1994) An introduction. In J. Qvortrup, M. Bardy, G. Sgritta, H. Wintersberger (eds) *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Policy* (pp. 1-24). Avebury: Aldershot.

⁷⁸ Mayall B. (ed) (1994) *Children's childhoods: Observed and experienced*. London: Falmer Press.

⁷⁹ Mayall B. (1999) Children and childhood. In S Hood, B Mayall, S Oliver (eds) *Critical Issues in Social Research: Power and Prejudice* (pp. 10-24). Buckingham: Open University Press.

⁸⁰ Mayall B. (2000) The sociology of childhood in relation to children's rights, *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 8: 243-259.

⁸¹ Mayall B. (2000) The sociology of childhood: Children's autonomy and participation rights. In AB Smith, M Gollop, K Marshall, K Nairn (eds) *Advocating for Children: International Perspectives on Children's Rights*. Dunedin, University of Otago Press.

⁸² Mayall B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from Children's Lives*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

lead to research commencing in New Zealand on children's perspectives on aspects of their everyday lives, including research 'with' rather than 'on' children, and the recognition of "children as human beings rather than as human becomings."⁸³

We invited Berry to be a keynote speaker at the CIC's Third Child and Family Policy Conference on the theme of *Children's Rights: National and International Perspectives* (Dunedin, New Zealand, 7-9 July 1999). Her paper on 'The sociology of childhood: Children's autonomy and participation rights' was subsequently published in our book on *Advocating for Children: International Perspectives on Children's Rights*.⁸⁴ Berry's trip was supported by a British Council grant and it was wonderful to welcome her to New Zealand and for our postgraduate students and conference participants (incorporating a diverse range of professionals working with children, young people, and their families) to have the opportunity to be inspired by her.

Our next book *Children's Voices: Research, Policy and Practice*⁸⁵ was also influenced by Berry's work. We felt very privileged when she agreed to write the Foreword to it, where she discussed the knowledge and skills necessary for the social study of childhood.⁸⁶ This book was the first one published in New Zealand that drew on Childhood Studies and documented our own, and colleagues', research findings on children's perspectives on such issues as post-separation care arrangements, legal representation, risk and trauma, out-of-home care, fathering, and local government and family law contexts.

Professor Anne Smith (the CIC's Inaugural Director) and I were fortunate to meet with Berry in London on several occasions. We always greatly enjoyed the time we spent together and came away stimulated by her new research endeavours and her latest thinking about children and childhood.

Berry is an icon in the field. The generous sharing of her wisdom certainly helped the CIC to establish Childhood Studies in New Zealand and to generate a wave of research amongst scholars and students that continues to flourish here today.

⁸³ Mayall B. (ed) (1994) *Children's Childhoods Observed and Experienced*. London: Falmer Press, p.4.

⁸⁴ Mayall B. (2000) The sociology of childhood: Children's autonomy and participation rights. In AB Smith, M Gollop, K Marshall, K. Nairn (eds) *Advocating for Children: International Perspectives on Children's Rights*. Dunedin, University of Otago Press.

⁸⁵ Smith AB, Taylor NJ, Gollop MM. (eds) (2000) *Children's Voices: Research, Policy and Practice*. Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson Education.

⁸⁶ Mayall B. (2000) Foreword. In AB Smith, NJ Taylor, M Gollop (eds) *Children's Voices: Research, Policy and Practice*. Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson Education.

Violence against Children in Kenya: An Ecological Model of Risk Factors and Consequences, Responses and Projects

Berry Mayall's inspiration manifested

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In many of her writings, Berry Mayall has encouraged and expressed a resolute commitment to research with and for children. She inspired students, researchers, and practitioners in the field of children and childhood that '... the development of theory about childhood is an important sociological task,' that we must all prioritise.⁸⁷ And that '... the new sociology of childhood ... provides ways into understanding why children have low social status in our society.'⁸⁸ She repeated these sentiments severally during our lectures on the Master's course on the Sociology of Childhood and Children's Rights (Childhood Studies) at the UCL Institute of Education, University of London in 2006 – 2007. These thoughts were reawakened when the calling for doctoral study matured in 2010. I recalled her admiration of Urie Bronfenbrenner (a leading Russian-American psychologist) as one of the frontrunners to study and write about childhood in contemporary societies. While making the decision to research violence against children in Kenya,⁸⁹ anchored on my two decades of practice with children and youth working and living on the streets, I was, at the same time, conscientiously reflecting on Mayall's cautionary sentiments about the 'growing passion' by the researchers to studying childhood miseries.⁸⁸

However, I was curious to make sense of how and why violence against children continues to happen in Kenya regardless of the knowledge and policy developments and the agencies' practices to prevent it.

Methods

Urie Bronfenbrenner's⁹⁰ ground-breaking ecological theory provided the perfect framework to structure the research on violence against children in Kenya. Thanks to Berry Mayall for an unparalleled introduction to Bronfenbrenner during the lectures (2006/2007). This study was conducted in the cities of Kisumu, Nairobi, and Mombasa in Kenya (due to their easy access and the multicultural nature of these cities). The research respondents (30 children – 12 male and 18 female and 48 adults – 21 male and 27 female) were carefully and deliberately sampled based on their concrete experience of violence while their perceptions were captured through semi-structured interviews and observations, group discussions and other qualitative methods. The interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder, transcribed, translated, and analysed. ATLAS ti., a qualitative data analysis software, was

⁸⁷ Mayall B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from Children's Lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press, p. 119.

⁸⁸ Mayall B. (2006) Values and assumptions underpinning policy for children and young people in England, *Children's Geographies*, 4:01, 9-17, p.12.

⁸⁹ Omolo LCA. (2015) *Violence Against Children in Kenya: An Ecological Model of Risk Factors and Consequences, Responses and Projects*. Münster: Waxmann.

⁹⁰ Bronfenbrenner U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

applied for data coding, data management and concept building. While applying the project and policy cycle frameworks, the study examined four implementing projects, working to prevent violence against children and seven national policy documents structuring prevention measures (provision of care and services) to child survivors of violence.

With the research design well explained, the study set out to answer two simple questions:

1. What are the main risk factors and consequences for children becoming victims of violence in Kenya?
2. What are the responses and projects implemented to prevent violence against children in Kenya?

The social construction of violence

While setting up the stage for Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, the study explains that the notion of violence is created and sustained through mutual engagement between individuals and their multi-layered dynamic social environment. A clearer understanding of the social conditions that contribute to violence against children is key to effectively examining risk factors and consequences, responses, and projects. Bronfenbrenner's⁹⁰ ecological model provided a perfect lens to better visualise the examination of violence against children beyond the usually over-emphasised child or family-related factors. Children and their social environment are a unitary system nurtured in unique cultures and historic contexts of societies. Predictably, such unique cultures and historic contexts create and nurture violence against children. To complicate this is the general and legal understanding of violence which differs from country to country or culture to culture (Ibid). In view of this, the study used the definition of the World Health Organisation to explain violence:

'The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either result in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.'⁹¹

This made it possible to examine what is known about violence against children in Kenya and better understand why/how violence against children continues to happen in Kenya even though there are laws, policies and projects implemented to stop and eradicate it.

The ecological model

Bronfenbrenner's^{90, 92} four ecological structures of human development, fitted very well as research design and analytical framework to examine and explain the social conditions that threaten or promote the welfare of children. The ecological structures, micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems, provide a broader and systematic framework that includes the influencing factors within the sociocultural, economic, and political settings of the local and wider society. For this study, the microsystem stands for the individual child level, the mesosystem is the family/neighbourhood level, the exosystem is the community and school

⁹¹ Krug GE, Dahlberg LL, Mercy AJ, Zwi BA, Lozano R. (2002) *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization, p. 5, in Omolo (2015) p. 35.

⁹² Bronfenbrenner U. (1994) Ecological Models of Human Development, *International Encyclopedia of Education*, Vol. 3, 2nd Ed. Amsterdam: Elsevier. Reprinted in: Gauvain M, Cole M. (eds) (1993) *Readings on the Development of Children: Second Edition*. New York: Freeman, p. 37–43.

level and the macrosystem is the society level. Indisputably, the capability of the systems-oriented ecological model to support the scrutiny of human development in the socio-cultural and economic contexts, and to explain research problems based on social structures and processes, is well set. While the study was ongoing, came another call from Berry Mayall⁹³ that when reflecting on how best to think about childhood, 'it is necessary to site childhood within theoretical considerations.' Thus, the intention to journey with Bronfenbrenner to the conclusion of this study was well-championed and secured by Berry Mayall.

Study limitations and achievements

The findings from this study can be replicable in most urban centres in Kenya and perhaps, other Eastern African countries. Despite that, and considering the small sample group and sample methods, the findings cannot be scientifically overgeneralised as a representation of the entire country. With expanded coverage, the use of qualitative and quantitative methods is likely to bolster its thoroughness and exactness. The study was unable to access any relevant research with a similar approach since previous studies on violence against children in Kenya attended to the individual child survivors ('victims') and their families.^{94, 95} The study was not immune to the usual challenges of inaccuracy in recalling and detailing the events and the intentional selection of facts by the research participants. Other limitations were gatekeeper challenges in accessing and consenting participants and inadequate resources to facilitate spreading the study coverage.

Study findings

The study reported that factors that influence violence against children are as sophisticated and widespread as the types of violence that trouble children. Due to the limitations of space and time, this paper is unable to provide specific details of every item of the findings. Seven risk factors were reported the most at the individual child, family, community, and society levels (micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems of the ecological model). These were the age of the child, gender of the child, home and family factors, cultural practices and beliefs, poverty, excessive use of alcohol and drugs, and legal conundrums and high cost of justice. In a similar ecological distribution, six consequences of violence against children were cited the most. These were disruption of schooling of the child, lifelong health complications for the child, death of the child, family conflicts and separations, 'conspiracy of silence (unwillingness to report or be a witness in court),' insecurity and a high crime rate.

Again, while appreciating the limitation of space and time for this paper, responses and violence prevention projects can only be listed here but not elaborated upon. Four commonly reported responses distributed at ecological levels were children's agency (i.e., children making the choice to disclose the incidence of violence to a parent/s, relative or a

⁹³ Mayall B. (2012) An afterword: some reflections on a seminar series, *Children's Geographies*, 10(3)347-355: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285> p.351.

⁹⁴ Ruto JS. (2009) Sexual Abuse of School Age Children: Evidence from Kenya, *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 12(1)177 – 192: <http://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/cice/e-publications/12-1Sara.pdf>.

⁹⁵ Erulkar SA. (2004) Gender-based violence and reproductive health: the experience of sexual coercion among young people in Kenya, *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 30(4)182 – 189, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1566492>.

friend or not disclosing at all and their reasons for doing so – the limitation of agency,^{96, 97} parents (report to police, unwillingness to report, being paid off – the context was a major factor on their decisions), community (dual role of neighbours as perpetrators and rescuers, community-led champions), and societal response (law on sexual offence in Kenya and guidelines on how to administer it, family/child-friendly courts, etc.). Measures implemented to prevent violence against children by the projects were mainly medical and psychosocial support, rescue and temporary shelter, legal support, family reunification, community mobilisation, advocacy, and initiating/engaging/supporting review of policies and laws to shape prevention measures.

Significance and implications of the study findings

Implications for theory: social conditions that expose children to the risk of violation are different from country to country or culture to culture. Any form of generalisation of such conditions can only be relevant when contextualised to the specific local cultures and practices. The study further postulates that the family, the immediate social setting of the child, embodies the source of risks for their violation and at the same time opportunities for their protection.

Implications for practice: violence prevention (stopping violence from taking place, providing immediate treatment, and minimising further harm and long-term care and rehabilitation) offered by services projects lacked empirical evidence to support them. The projects are ‘spread too wide and yet too thin’ to make any tangible impact due to constrained resources and competencies for many of them. Implementing and funding partners appear to hold diverse opinions on implementation priorities. This difference of opinion is likely to cost child survivors of violence essential and quality prevention services. The need for evidence-based practice and support for factors that reinforce prevention at the family and community levels cannot be emphasised enough.

Implications for policy: while acknowledging the foundation laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in protecting children, ‘contextual wisdom’ is a critical implementation feature. As such, policies meant to structure prevention services must include approaches designed in mutual dialogue with the concerned communities as well as being evidence-informed. A widespread gap observed in many of the public policies analysed is the absence of clarity on the resources that will facilitate their implementation. The study observed a trendy hype in the development and launching of public policy documents but with no implementation plan and nothing to show for the outcome of their implementations.

Conclusion

Research on violence against children should strive to include perpetrators of such violence so as to expand the understanding of risk factors and consequences. This has the probability of reinforcing the quality of prevention measures. For this, expanded research using diverse methodologies is encouraged.

Prevention measures (i.e., stopping violence from taking place, providing immediate treatment, and minimising further harm and long-term care and rehabilitation) depend on adequate knowledge of the risk factors. Without evidence to support the implementation of

⁹⁶ Alderson P, Yoshida T. (2017) Meanings of children’s agency: When and where does agency begin and end?

⁹⁷ Morrow V. (2003) Perspectives on children’s agency within families: A view from the sociology of childhood. SAGE Publications, Inc., <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452229645> [25/1/2007].

prevention services, the prevention measures implemented hold no tangible solutions for the children since they are based on erroneous diagnoses of the problem. Such prevention measures can potentially perpetuate social exclusion and further harm to the children, survivors of violence.

Editor's note. Everyone should read Alphonse Omolo's excellent book *Violence Against Children in Kenya: An Ecological Model of Risk Factors and Consequences, Responses and Projects* (2015, Waxmann: Münster). It was reviewed in Alderson P. (2016) Children's rights and violence, *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 24: 915-923.

Bridging Time and Place: Memory and Berry Mayall's Sociology for Childhood

Dr Kirrily Pells, Associate Professor of Childhood, Social Research Institute UCL

I have many fond memories of Berry Mayall. As a PhD student presenting at my first academic conference, I was very nervous to find myself on a panel with Berry given the centrality of her work to establishing sociology of childhood as an academic field. I shouldn't have worried however, as Berry was supportive and encouraging, which meant a lot to someone at my stage. Berry was equally supportive and encouraging when several years later I joined the Social Science Research Unit at UCL. We would often go to lunch and discuss research and teaching, as well as put the world to rights! I enjoyed her sense of humour and miss her wisdom and support.

In this short piece I would like to reflect on two areas of Berry's scholarship that have been influential upon my own work on memory in childhood. First, Berry's relational approach to studying childhood and intergenerational relations, and second, childhood sociology as a political enterprise. I will explore these contributions through my research in Rwanda. The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi saw over 1 million mainly Tutsi, but also Hutu opposed to the extremist government murdered in 100 days. The genocide arose from a complex interplay of different factors, but central was colonial manipulation of class or socio-economic groups according to racial physical stereotypes and their transformation into fixed ethnic groupings.^{98, 99}

In a powerful poem Rwandan Ivan Nyagatare poses the question: "How do you remember what you haven't lived?" Speaking as a member of the 'second generation' or 'post-genocide generation' who have no direct experience of the Genocide, Nyagatare concludes:

I have to remember what I haven't lived through those who did.
I have to play my role so that it won't happen again.
I don't need to have lived then to remember now.¹⁰⁰

Studies on intergenerational memory and the genocide have observed how parents are both hesitant to share experiences, but also feel compelled to do so before children are taught history at school or attend commemoration events.^{101,102} Parents also feel unsure how to have these conversations with their children given the existence of different narratives in the public and private spheres and the sensitive nature of the social and

⁹⁸ Forges DA. (1999) *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

⁹⁹ Mamdani M. (2002) *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹⁰⁰ For the full poem please see: <https://twitter.com/gentlemanwalkin/status/1511864878788657160> (accessed 10/05/23)

¹⁰¹ Berckmoes LH, Eichelsheim V, Rutayisire T, Richters A, Hola B. (2017) How Legacies of Genocide are Transmitted in the Family Environment: A Qualitative Study of Two Generations in Rwanda, *Societies*, 7(3)1–18.

¹⁰² Sinalo CW, Irakoze PC, Veale A. (2021) Disclosure of Genocide Experiences in Rwandan Families: Private and Public Sources of Information and Child Outcomes. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 27(4):642–653.

political environment.^{102, 103} The focus, therefore, both within practice, as well as research, tends to fall into two areas. Either on how can teachers or parents teach children about the past. Or a focus on intergenerational transmission of trauma, referring to the transfer of trauma from the individual who experienced the genocide, to their children who it is suggested then go on to display similar emotional or behavioural responses to their parent or other caregiver.¹⁰⁴ There has been limited consideration of what children might know already, the active role of children as translators of individual and collective memory, and children as agents in memory work. Thus, there is a neglect of children's own experiential knowledge, which Berry observed so frequently in her work.¹⁰⁵

In response, I, along with my colleagues Eric Ndushabandi, Chaste Uwihoreye and Ananda Breed created a project called Connective Memories, which sought to explore the ways in which young people engage with the concept and practices of memory.¹⁰⁶ Ten young researchers (aged 12–20) and six adult facilitators used arts-based methods, including image and forum theatre, drawings, photos and films, to create and undertake the research project. We have written more about the research elsewhere, but here I want to take one empirical example and bring it into dialogue with Berry's work.¹⁰⁷

In one activity the young researchers were asked to create representations of 'memory' using image theatre.¹⁰⁸



Figure One: memory as a temporal bridge

¹⁰³ Longman T. (2017) *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰⁴ American Psychiatric Association. (2013) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. 5th Edition. Arlington, VA: APA.

¹⁰⁵ Mayall B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: thinking from children's lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

¹⁰⁶ Connective Memories: intergenerational relations in contemporary Rwanda was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council Changing the Story Small Grant Scheme (RG.MODL.114343.011). Connective Memories is a partnership between the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDPP), Uwisenga Ni Imanzi (UNM), the University of Lincoln and University College London (UCL).

¹⁰⁷ Pells K, Breed A, Uwihoreye C, Ndushabandi E, Elliott M, Nzahabwanayo S. (2021) 'No-One Can Tell a Story Better than the One Who Lived It': Reworking Constructions of Childhood and Trauma Through the Arts in Rwanda. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 46: 632–653.

¹⁰⁸ Informed consent was obtained from all participants included in the study and from guardians for all children and young people. Consent was given for both participation in the studies involved and for the publication of data, including photos.

This group explained that their image (Figure One) was intended to convey the sense of memories as a series of connected events, linking past, present and future, rather than relating memory solely to the past. The group also suggested that the image represented the need for support, particularly of the young to overcome struggles, demonstrated by the adults forming the bridge for the young person to cross.



Figure Two: memory as intergenerational connection and/or rupture

In this image (Figure Two) the group elaborated that they wished to illustrate the importance of the context in which memories are shared and how memories are received by those listening, noting that the process of sharing memories may forge or destroy social relations, by connecting to, or silencing, the stories of others.



Figure Three: memory and moral agency

In reflecting on the third image, the rest of the group questioned whether the actors here were depicting a trajectory that someone might pass through following a bad experience, from despair to joy to contemplation. However, the young people responded that the intention was to show how one memory could have multiple emotions. One young female researcher explained how in listening to the memories of another:

you will share their feelings and emotions in some way and then and then the story s/he shares with you will build you as a person rather than just letting him tell you to pass it on to others like that, without personalizing it.

In reflecting on the images created, I suggest that Berry's work is productive in reworking some of the limitations within dominant psychological understandings of intergenerational transmission of trauma, while recognising of course that Berry's work drew on empirical data from the Global North. Berry argued convincingly that if we start from children's experiences and actions then we have to rework our understandings of intergenerational relations to consider the role of children in creating and maintaining intergenerational relations, especially through children's moral agency and affective labour within the family.¹⁰⁵

Within the image theatre activity, the young people, working collaboratively with adults challenged the notion of 'transmission' whereby children are positioned as the objects or subjects of the transmission of memories, rather than considering children as active translators and mediators of individual and collective memory, sharing in the stories and emotions of others.^{109, 110} One of the young female researchers later described the affective labour involved in listening to the memories of older generations and her moral agency in terms of caring for the stories of others:

The first time for me to share my story it was a challenge but when hearing the stories of adult people I became so happy and comfortable. So I am asking myself how are they going to take my story but for me how am I going to take theirs? Am I going to remain with it or am I going to speak it? So they are trusting that we are not going to speak it or share it...so yeah...I have their trust.

However, the young researchers reflected on how adults often do not share stories or memories with them, reflecting widespread societal assumptions about children and the status of childhood. One young researcher explained how "because many of us, the young, we were not there in the past events of the country they told us we do not understand". As Berry noted, children's agency in creating and maintaining intergenerational relations is structured by familial, social and cultural norms.¹⁰⁵

A relational approach therefore shifts our thinking from unidirectional transfers or transmission from older to younger generations to multidirectional and relational connections. In creating the research project that followed on from this activity, the group selected the concept of "isangizanyankuru" meaning to share stories from your life or the lives of others (in Kinyarwanda) as the focus of the project to encompass a sense of multidirectional connections (as well as possible ruptures) between the individual and the collective, and between generations.¹⁰⁷

Turning to the second contribution I identified at the beginning, namely childhood sociology as a political enterprise, I vividly remember reading the following words while a PhD student and feeling that I had finally found an academic 'home' with my own work. At the end of 'Towards a Sociology for Childhood' Berry wrote: "The principal aim of

¹⁰⁹ Kidron CA. (2009) Toward an Ethnography of Silence: The Lived Presence of the Past in the Everyday Life of Holocaust Trauma Survivors and Their Descendants in Israel. *Current Anthropology*, 50(1):5–27.

¹¹⁰ Pells K. (2018) Connective Memories: Reflections on Relations Between Childhood, Memory and Temporality. *Entanglements*, 2(1):97–101.

developing sociological thinking about childhood is to contribute to raising the status of childhood; it aims to be sociology for childhood.”¹¹¹ We often talk about the sociology *of* childhood but sociology *for* childhood is a powerful call to think about the motivations and contributions of our own work towards elevating the status of childhood. In relation to memory, this entails questioning which social and institutional structures enable or constrain the possibilities for intergenerational encounters and the sharing (rather than the transmission) of knowledge and experiences. This is relevant in the context of Rwanda, but also more widely, a recent example being intergenerational memories around Covid and the different, as well as similar, memories of children and adults. Yet who’s memories get heard or not?

As a final comment, the image of the bridge serves also as a metaphor for considering Berry’s scholarship. For many of us sociologists of childhood, Berry’s work has been a bridge, on which we build, deepening our insights and ultimately attempting to build a better society with and for children.

¹¹¹ Mayall. (2002): p.178.

Generational Relations – Socks and Shoes

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As many of my fellow contributors to this book have said, the discipline of childhood sociology has lost one of its innovators and leading lights, but I, like others, am delighted to have this opportunity to give thanks and celebrate what Berry has left behind, what she has given to many of us, and personally what she has given to me.

I first met Berry in Jyvaskyla. It was lunchtime and I was nervously waiting to take part in a European Sociological Association Childhood Network Symposium. Knowing Berry was going to ask some hard questions.

When Berry asked Leena Alanen where she could buy some socks, I offered to walk with her, navigating with Leena's instructions. Having only recently come to understand what childhood sociology was thanks to Berry and Leena, I was practically pinching myself that I was there. And then suddenly, through that walk, I knew what socks Berry would choose, as well as a little more about her as a person.

Berry helped me understand four things.

First, that childhood was a relational concept and that children could be considered a social group.

Second, notions of structure and agency and resistance.

Third, she paved my way towards using critical realism within childhood studies.

Fourth, she enabled me to land in the familiar ground of standpointism, which made me feel at home.

I will try to write a little about each of these.

Thinking academically about children and childhood was relatively new to me when I started my PhD. My first degree was Politics, with a touch of Philosophy and Economics. When I started my PhD I was a bit stuck. The theorists I was familiar with had largely ignored children, or had written about them in derogatory and patronising ways. I needed new lenses on the world.

And then I stumbled on a book Berry coedited: *Conceptualising Child Adult Relations*. In the introduction, Berry describes how:

'In seeking to develop understandings of childhood as a relational concept, we may initially identify three interlinked components of the concept, ...

[I'll jump to the second of these...]

Secondly, relationships are also constituted between social groups: the social group children and the social group adults interact across the generations. Here we may be centrally concerned with notions of "childhood" and of "adulthood"; how people understand these and the distinctions between them; how they construct, legislate for, or enact behaviour at group level between the two groups...'¹¹²

I was hooked.

¹¹² Alanen L, Mayall B. (2001) *Conceptualising Child Adult Relations*. London: Routledge.

In her chapter in that same book, she reaffirmed:

'Children are those identified by adults as non-adults, so the social world that adults construct consists of two groups with somewhat separate interests and relationships to the social order.

Secondly, children's lives are structured by adults—by their interests, understandings and goals; the social condition of childhood is defined through adult-child relations mediated through these interests, understandings and goals.

Thirdly, the family and to a lesser extent the school operates on the basis of personal including affective relationships between adults and children. Thus, the permanent social category childhood can be seen as structured in relation to adulthood...'

I loved this. I suddenly had someone describing to me things that I had observed and experienced, in language that was accessible and with analysis that was rigorous. It made sense, or at least, nearly made sense, because there were new words – structure here seemed to mean something a little different But there was an historical analysis that resonated with my existing understanding of the world.

In describing the notions of childhood and adulthood, she expanded:

*'These understandings have their roots in time past—which throw long shadows forward—and they are re-negotiated and transformed through interactions between the groups...'*¹¹³

With shades of the philosophical argumenting that I was familiar with, Berry illustrated this claim with an example:

*'...Parents and teachers grew up under the influences of policies current in the 1970s (and deriving from those of the 1960s), but both they and children are now faced with dramatic changes in education policies, formulated in the late 1980s...group experience and understanding is shaped by large-scale historically rooted influences, ideologies and policies. In the case of children this is especially useful in helping us to become more sociological, to move from a focus on the individual child and local adult influences on her, and to lift children and childhood, theoretically speaking, out of the family. Then we can begin to see children as a social group operating in relation to the social order; to understand local activities and interactions in relation to large-scale forces.'*¹¹⁴

And so I was hooked. Not only into sociological thinking, but also into a new notion of childhood studies.

But this was not a form of thinking about children as resisters that also chimed with my practice experience – working with The Children's Society and Save the Children for many years. My activist background. Berry challenged the simplified notion of socialisation (which I had heard bandied about a lot) and she highlighted children's

¹¹³ *Ibid.* p. 3.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 114-115.

'negotiation'—participation, self-formation and resistance....Children can be seen as both reproducing and resisting the structures that shape their lives.'

An example of part of my journey towards understanding resistance as an important concept in understanding childhood is the memory of a child resisting the request to stop playing, with his own request for one more go down the water slide, in a context where there are 80 children on the waiting list for an annual playscheme that is accessible to disabled children. He may not get another chance.

So Berry's pathway of theory, accessible examples and concepts – facilitated my journey towards critical realism as a theoretical underlabourer for exploring and understanding children's experiences. I quoted Berry in my PhD¹¹⁵ noting that she said:

*'CR gives due place to the force of history in laying down sediments – as to both agency and structures. It takes account of power, vested interest, cultural capita;; and shows both the limitations and possibilities of agency including the agency of minorities.'*¹¹⁶

And this theoretical orientation, with help from Priscilla too, and the bravery to speak out, which Berry helped me find in Jyvaskyla, has carried forward into my recent writing in childhood, which enabled me to date to take on, develop and criticise Margaret Archer, adapting notions of Primary and Corporate Agents to include children.¹¹⁷ And this in turn guides my practice as an activist, trying to create and recreate more opportunities for children to exercise influence over social resources, that can be used to improve children's lives at large scale.

And so, landing back on the point where I started, and the socks and shoes of Standpointism. Berry wrote:

*'Using children's accounts of generational issues, I aim to contribute to the development of a child standpoint: how their accounts contribute to understanding their social positioning.'*¹¹⁸

I think this remains the ongoing aim of my career. To find ways in which children can tell us where they stand, now, as only they know what those socks and shoes feel like, and to try to learn from their perspectives, so that, together, across generations, we can understand and seek to transform the injustices that intersect in their multiple lived social positions.

So, my thanks are:

For giving me a point of connection into this world of childhood sociology in which I have found my home;

¹¹⁵ Larkins C. (2011) *Children, Citizenship and Europe: A study guided by the perspectives of marginalised children in two countries* PhD Thesis, University of Central Lancashire p. 80.

¹¹⁶ Mayall B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from Children's Lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press, p. 35.

¹¹⁷ Larkins C. (2019) Excursions as corporate agents: A critical realist account of children's agency. *Childhood*, 26(4), 414–429. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568219847266>

¹¹⁸ Mayall B. (2001) Understanding childhoods: A London study. In Alanen L, Mayall B. (eds) *Conceptualising Child-Adult Relations* (pp. 128-142). London: Routledge pp. 128-142.

For giving me the courage to speak freely at that first European Sociological Association symposium in Jyvaskyla;
For creating spaces in which colleagues, such as many of us here, have been able to reflect and grow new understandings.
For laying down some of the foundational challenges which will continue to guide my work and inspire future generations.

Tribute to Berry by her granddaughter Alice-Mae Mayall

Our Granny upstairs

Truly right on
Tiddly pom

Dressed all in red

A jolly jersey

Singing, laughing and arguing

Oh blast

Bombast

Onwards

To talk to, to be taught by and to tell

Granny taught me poems
Granny taught me handwriting

And tried to teach me spelling

A memory for everything
A story for every time
And a thank you for every bus driver

Always there, up the stairs