

Storied Experiences of Physical Activity Involvement, Family  
Membership and Happiness

by

John Day

Canterbury Christ Church University

Thesis submitted

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2018



## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Abstract	1
<b>1 Physical Activity Socialisation: Wellbeing, Families, and Life Histories</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 Being Active, Being Healthy, and Wellbeing</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Wellbeing, Happiness, and a Life which turns out well	10
<i>2.1.1 Wellbeing Consequences of Physical Activity in the unfolding of a Life</i>	16
2.2 Conceptualisations of Wellbeing in Physical Activity Research	18
<b>3 Physical Activity, Health, and Families</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1 Childhood Physical Activity Correlates	25
3.2 Physical Activity and the Being and Becoming of Family Membership	32
<i>3.2.1 Physical Activity and Gendered Parental Socialisation</i>	36
<i>3.2.2 Ageing Children and Gendered Anticipatory Socialisation</i>	39
3.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Differences: identified but unexplained trends in the physical activity of families	42
3.4 The Ethnocentricity and Family Values Entrepreneurship of Physical Activity Research	46
3.5 The Value of Physical Activity within the Social Context of Family Life	51
3.6 Family Life as a Process	55
<b><i>Research Issues and the Methodological Implications</i></b>	<b>62</b>
<b>4 Methodology</b>	<b>64</b>
4.1 Aim and Objectives	64
4.2 Stories: reflexivity and philosophical assumptions	
<i>4.2.1 Getting to Know myself through Family Stories</i>	66
<i>4.2.2 Knowledge, Experience, Truth and the Real</i>	72
4.3 Data Collection	
<i>4.3.1 Oral Histories of Family Membership</i>	86

4.3.2	<i>Physical Activity Careers</i>	89
4.3.3	<i>Career and Oral History Interviews</i>	91
4.3.4	<i>Ethical Review Procedure</i>	95
4.4	Participants	
4.4.1	<i>Sample</i>	96
4.4.2	<i>Recruitment</i>	99
4.5	Data Analysis	99
4.6	Quality Guidelines	106
4.7	Theoretical Framework: contextualising the working hypotheses	110
	<b>Findings and Discussion</b>	<b>114</b>
	<b><i>Participant Information</i></b>	<b>114</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>The Absence of Wellbeing and the Discovery of Happiness</b>	<b>121</b>
5.1	The Absence of Wellbeing within Lived Experience and Human Perception	121
5.1.1	<i>The Perceptual Flaw in the Concept of Wellbeing</i>	127
5.1.2	<i>Discovering Feelings of Happiness</i>	131
5.2	Happiness: being an involved actor and impartial spectator of previous experiences	134
<b>6</b>	<b>The Retrospective Pleasure of Physical Activity Involvement</b>	<b>146</b>
	<b><i>Working hypothesis audit trail</i></b>	
6.1	Getting Bitten by the Endorphin Response	149
6.1.1	<i>Learning to Interpret the Body's Response as Pleasurable</i>	162
6.2	The Moral Sentiment of Regard for Others	168
6.2.1	<i>Healthism: turning moral sentiment into moral judgement</i>	169
6.3	Deviant by doing Nothing: sedentariness as a threat to pleasure	176
<b>7</b>	<b>The Purpose of Physical Activity as a Practice</b>	<b>184</b>
	<b><i>Working hypothesis audit trail</i></b>	
7.1	Symbolic Parenting and a Generational Shift in Motherhood	185
7.1.1	<i>Mothering Fathers? Becoming a father and establishing a physical activity routine</i>	192

7.1.2 <i>The Purpose is in the Parenting</i>	195
7.2 Physical Activity and the Ageing Process	196
7.2.1 <i>Active Ageing: fighting for health or adapting for happiness</i>	199
7.2.2 <i>The Physically Active Adult Self</i>	203
7.2.3 <i>The Practice of Physical Activity and the Generational Structuring of the Life Course: 'Who's that nutter?... people used to look at you and think you were strange'</i>	207
7.3 Physical Activity, Purposefulness and the Life Course	211
<b>8 Family Membership and Physical Activity</b>	<b>214</b>
<i>Working hypothesis audit trail</i>	
8.1 The Emergence of Physical Activity Provision as a Parenting Task	215
8.1.1 <i>Parenthood and the Inception of 'Being Active' as Desirable</i>	222
8.1.2 <i>Parental Anxiety about getting Children to be Active 'Enough'</i>	226
8.2 Following Father: intimate socialisation into physical activity	230
8.2.1 <i>Lads and Dads: leaning on father to become self-dependent</i>	232
8.2.2 <i>Fathering through Physical Activity: comfortable 'involvement'?</i>	237
8.2.3 <i>Missing Mothers: 'I can't imagine my mum playing sport'</i>	244
8.2.4 <i>The Father-Daughter Bond: reshaping the gendered practice of family physical activity?</i>	247
<b>9 Childhood Physical Activity and the Life Course Implications</b>	<b>252</b>
<i>Working hypothesis audit trail</i>	
9.1 Walking: adult consciousness of childhood memories	255
9.2 Childhood Physical Activity: there's nothing good or bad about it	260
<b>10 Conclusion</b>	<b>268</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
Proportionate Ethical Review of Study	281
Example Interview Transcript	295
<b>References</b>	<b>306</b>

84,483 words

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisory team for providing me with an enjoyable and challenging learning experience throughout the process of doing my PhD. Particularly, Mike for encouraging me to extend my knowledge and thinking beyond sociology, Ian for the extra time and effort he has devoted to my development, and Jan for offering expert insight and guidance at key points in the process. Each of you have played integral roles that have allowed me to produce this thesis, for which I will be forever grateful. I would like to thank my family, for your continuous support, even when times were at their most difficult. I would also like to say thank you to Louisa, Renata, Phil, Shane, James Donaldson, Kev Brown, James Brighton, James Perry, Amy, and Lucy, for helping me when I was sad, although you were probably unaware that you were doing so at the time. I have to extend special gratitude to my brother, Mark, as studying for a PhD would have been much more difficult without your friendship, unwavering support, optimism and for reminding me of who I am. A big thank you also goes to my participants, I hope you find the thesis meaningful and interesting. I have also been lucky enough to work with some exceptional colleagues during my academic career so far, who have given me valuable support during my studies, especially Andy Jones, Matthew Morgan, Jane Martin, Albert Leon, Laura Gubby, Suzanne Dowse, Marion Stuart-Hoyle, Jim Lusted, Elina Hasanen, Melinda Spencer, Anna-Katriina Salmikangas, Dikaia Chatziefstathiou, Lynne Duval, Nichola Kentzer, Sarah Clinkard and Catherine Waite. Finally, I would like to thank my undergraduate tutor, Joe Maguire, for encouraging me to pursue postgraduate studies in the first instance and instilling the belief in me that I was capable of becoming an academic.

## **Abstract**

Most physical activity (PA) research to focus on the influence of family context has concerned the parental provision of PA for children, within a climate of growing concerns about children's health and wellbeing. Many such studies approach families as static entities, with some researchers categorising families as either intact or broken and the lived complexities of wellbeing and PA often conceptualised as statistical trends. This study employed life history interviews with 30 participants recruited according to variety in terms of gendered family membership and differing levels of PA involvement. The aim of the research was to better understand lived connections between PA, wellbeing and family membership and the impact on PA participation over the life course. Absent from participants' storied experiences and lived perceptions, it is argued that the concept of wellbeing holds considerably less value than feelings of happiness in the context of qualitative research. Regularly active participants' experiences revolved around the retrospective interpretation of PA involvement as pleasurable, despite ambiguous bodily experiences during participation. PA took on increased purpose for participants according to entry into parenthood and increased awareness of the ageing body. Recollections of shared experiences and stories between family members revealed the significant influence of fathering and being fathered into PA, while any potential influence by mothers was belittled by sons and daughters. As a leisure activity among most of the older participants and a memorable family event during childhood across the sample, walking served as a useful point of comparison to scrutinise the relevance of childhood PA to participation across the life course. While connections are plausible and supported by some of the data, these claims are too often depicted in an overly deterministic fashion when examined against participants' real, unstable PA careers.

Throughout the thesis the doctrine of healthism is pervasive, with participants concerned about not doing 'sufficient' PA, even when regularly active. Interviewees believed sedentariness would lead to future suffering and illness, yet these fears carried little weight as powerful motives for sustained PA involvement, especially in comparison to the enticement of pleasure.



## **1. Physical Activity Socialisation: Wellbeing, Families, and Life Histories**

Assumptions exist about the 'types' of family most likely to socialise and produce happier children and young adults. There is also a tendency for academic research to overlook more complex understandings of wellbeing and happiness and instead uncritically perpetuate dominant western ideals about measuring wellbeing to highlight national 'progress'. To a large degree, the available academic research on physical activity, families and wellbeing support such uncritical notions. As the majority of this knowledge is derived from statistical measures incapable of uncovering the storied complexities of the socialisation process that bring about these trends, there is considerable strength in championing the need for more qualitative investigations in this area that utilise methods better matched with socialisation experiences. Closely connected to assumptions about superior types of family and wellbeing is the hypothetical belief that a physically active childhood will most likely lead to lifelong physical activity engagement. Yet most studies of physical activity participation within the context of families, wellbeing and the life course have persistently overlooked retrospective techniques, where regular physical activity involvement is already real, has ceased, or is yet to occur. Moreover, using a qualitative retrospective design also allows participants to identify and explain the key moments, stages, phases, transitions and cycles that they recollect as having a significant and lasting impact on the extent and meaning of their current and previous involvement in physical activity. Such methods would also open-up the impermanent nature of physical activity engagement within the context of negotiating the life course and passing through particular life stages, which is more befitting of the everyday practice of physical activity than simplifying physical activity participation as a measurable outcome.

The policy implications of a retrospective qualitative research strategy to studying familial physical activity socialisation would also be timely following the move by the UK's Department of Health (DoH (now the Department of Health and Social Care)) (2011) physical activity guidelines to recognise the powerful influence of both the life course and family members upon participation. Despite good intentions, the DoH's claimed 'lifecourse' approach was poorly articulated and amounted to no more than biological generalisations about what most people are likely to be capable of doing within a series of narrow and broad age groups. This includes one set of age category recommendations 'tailored' for people between 19 and 64 years of age. While qualitative research is more likely to expose numerous policy dilemmas than the narrow comparison of variables within quantitative research, it is also more conducive to discovering real and practical consequences, and experiences and interpretations of everyday events, moments and memories (Denzin, 2001; Plummer, 2001). The type of events, moments and memories that direct people's thoughts, behaviours and feelings towards some life course trajectories, and away from others (Denzin, 2001, 2014; Plummer, 2001; Sartre, 1963; Shaw, 1930; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918; Wright Mills, 1959; Znaniecki, 1934). The past 100 years of life course sociology indicate that a career approach is useful in researching a specified behaviour in detail (Becker, 1966, 1973; Becker, Geer, Hughes & Strauss, 1961; Goodson, 2001; Shaw, 1930), yet few qualitative studies of physical activity careers have explicitly utilised the ontological and epistemological assumptions proposed by those who founded and developed qualitative career methods during the past century. Using a retrospective research design, this thesis draws upon and implements sociological career methods explicitly. Furthermore, there is much room to utilise this approach to simultaneously investigate claims made about the positive relationship between physical activity and

wellbeing in more detail, as there is currently a movement within economics research that advocates the need to study people's experiences of happiness over extended periods of time (Dolan, 2014). Additionally, Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) have championed the life history method more broadly as being the most insightful way to represent experiences of happiness.

Life history research philosophy, which the career approach forms part of and is connected to through Chicago School social theory (Blumer, 1969) is firmly rooted in the premise that primary socialisation occurs within families (Ferrarotti, 1981; Plummer, 2001; Shaw, 1930). As the majority of physical activity research is characterised by misunderstandings and confusion about and between family and household structures and types (Day, 2018), life history methods offer an avenue through which to examine people's interpretations of being a family member and how this influenced, and was influenced by, physical activity participation. The concept of *membership* is used intentionally here to provide balance between the fluid structure of family environments and the role of human agency in family relationships. Thus, family membership embodies what family members might expect of each other according to societal norms associated with gender and life course stage as well as the identities individual members choose to adopt. A problem with using a generic life history approach to study families, is that historical knowledge has been structured in unequal ways (Thompson, 2000). The remnants of which are still apparent in the intensive caregiving expected of mothers (Chambers, 2012), physical activity studies dominated by white middle-class parents and their children as participants (Lim & Biddle, 2012), and an undercurrent in the wellbeing sciences that implies the form of happiness dominant in the Western world is most desirable (Zevnik, 2014). Therefore, simply explaining people's life experiences and events through popular beliefs about

what was happening 'at the time' undermines the participant's own interpretations of their lived experiences, distinct periods of their life, and, most importantly, how they make history through their own actions and interpretations. Yet, to lose the retrospective spirit of history would detract from the originality of the research design already proposed. Instead, an oral history approach was used, which rejects the assumption that written history is superior to spoken recollections of the past and allows participants to voice their own interpretations, in the ways that they recall living and making history (Thompson, 2000).

The broad aim of the research was to better understand the connections between physical activity, wellbeing and family membership through storied experiences and the impact on participation over the life course. This was broken down into the following objectives:

- Identify and explain the potential contribution of physical activity to human wellbeing across the life course within a range of family contexts
- Investigate the interplay between family membership and the practice of physical activity
- Explore the relevance of being active during childhood to physical activity participation across the life course

### *Outline of the Thesis*

In Chapters two and three of the thesis existing literature is reviewed. Chapter two focuses on connections between regular physical activity involvement and favourable wellbeing, and Chapter three then examines the body of knowledge which

champions family environments as a crucial site for influencing physical activity as a health-related behaviour, especially in the interests of children. Drawing together the existing knowledge from work in these areas, the key methodological consequences for the study are outlined, particularly the need to consider retrospective perspectives of the interplay between physical activity involvement, family influence and the wellbeing consequences by acknowledging voices from a greater variety of perspectives.

Then, Chapter four, which outlines the method of the study, includes a rationale for the study objectives, the conventions of the life history method, the design of the interview schedule, the sample and recruitment of participants, how analytic induction (AI) was used to analyse the data and generate the main findings of the research, the quality considerations of the work, and how the researcher became sensitive to the theories used to support the explanation of the findings.

There are five findings and discussion chapters, namely a critique of wellbeing as a useful academic concept in qualitative research in Chapter five, and, in Chapter six the focal point of pleasurable interpretations of the response of the body following physical activity participation for those who are regularly active. Chapter seven is grounded in participants' experiences of ageing and parenting, which physical activity can bring increased purpose to. Chapter eight traces the emergence of physical activity provision as a parenting task and then marks out the significance of being fathered and fatherhood in the initial stages of participants' physical activity careers. Following this, connections between childhood physical activity and participation across the life course are considered alongside ideas about the feasibility of lifelong involvement in Chapter nine. The practice of walking is used as a point of comparison, as participants' memories of family walks during childhood irregularly endure

throughout the life course. Overall, it is argued that connections between childhood and life course physical activity are temporal, and thus not as simple as is portrayed by the deterministic proposals made in previous studies and commonly held assumptions. The concluding chapter then revisits each of the research objectives before reflecting on the research process and how the working hypotheses developed might be tested in future research.

## **2. Being Active, Being Healthy, and Wellbeing**

Although there is a broad and substantial evidence base linking physical activity with improved physical and mental health (Biddle, Mutrie & Gorely, 2015; Hardman & Stensel, 2009), subjective judgements about what most people *should* be doing to improve their health is an issue that pertains to what people conceive as conducive to wellbeing (Vernon, 2008). In this respect, making sense of what is meant by the concept of wellbeing is a central issue. Despite the establishment in neuroscience that feeling well and happy correspond with measurable brain activity (Layard, 2011), sources of wellbeing and happiness remain more personal, transcendent and difficult to discriminate between than the correlates of improved physical and mental health identified in the natural sciences (Layard, 2011; Vernon, 2008). However, it is the very emergence of the neuroscientific proof that feelings of happiness exist in a measurable and comparable form which better justifies the study of happiness and wellbeing as an academic discipline, as opposed to speculative studies of people's subjective feelings (Layard, 2011). Accordingly, this chapter considers the main positions of happiness and wellbeing, which leads to a primary focus on the importance of experiences over the life course. This position of wellbeing is then used to consider the impact of physical activity upon wellbeing in the context of life experiences and stage of the life course. Finally, approaches to wellbeing that have been used in physical activity research are considered and evaluated, with shortcomings and knowledge gaps identified.

## 2.1 Wellbeing, Happiness, and a Life which turns out well

A complexity in making sense of what is meant by wellbeing can be found in relation to whether it is interchangeable with, or distinct from, the term 'happiness' (Vernon, 2008; Zevnik, 2014). For Vernon (2008; p. 3), wellbeing 'carries wider, deeper connotations' than happiness, while Layard (2011; p. 249) offers no distinction and mainly refers to happiness, defined as 'the underlying mood that pervades your being', which includes how one feels about their past, future and present. Zevnik (2014) explains that although happiness and wellbeing are commonly equated with one another, the fundamental point of departure concerns whether researchers perceive wellbeing to be hedonic or eudaimonic. The hedonic perspective views wellbeing as experiencing pleasure and avoiding pain, which is advocated as a scientific method for exploring happiness (Zevnik, 2014). The eudaimonic stance dismisses any connection between wellbeing and happiness on the grounds that immediate sources of pleasure may have more long-term consequences that are detrimental to wellbeing (Zevnik, 2014). Eudaimonic wellbeing is instead associated with human flourishing, which is rooted in Aristotelian philosophy and the quest to realise our potential and satisfy our inner spirit (Vernon, 2008; Zevnik, 2014). Eudaimonic theorists, such as Vernon (2008), discriminate between two types of flourishing and wellbeing; lower flourishing and higher flourishing. Lower flourishing concerns prospering within our everyday lives, like making the most of our family relationships and friendships, as well as the time and energy we devote to work and engaging in worthwhile and meaningful leisure activities (Vernon, 2008). Higher flourishing is more difficult to pin-down and requires ethical, spiritual and sometimes religious reflections upon one's life and thus carries deeper and broader connotations than the current state of our relationship, work and leisure affairs (Vernon, 2008). For



Vernon (2008; p. 9), the transcendental 'is the reason for higher flourishing'. In a similar fashion to religion, the transcendental nature of eudaimonia is related to spiritual meanings and 'truths' that there is no tangible proof for, but allegedly deeply rooted within the human spirit (Vernon, 2008). In summary, the hedonic perspective purports that wellbeing is the scientific representation of happiness apparent in and accessible through people's experiences and feelings of pain and pleasure (Zevnik, 2014). Whereas eudaimonic understandings of wellbeing are positioned within the notion of human flourishing, which is deeply spiritual, ethical and transcendent, as a consequence of our continuous self-appraisal and reflection upon the life we have lived so far and the life we seek to live in the future (Vernon, 2008).

The implications for researching wellbeing are that explorations of eudaimonic wellbeing have been largely philosophical but somewhat tentative in drawing conclusions, whereas investigations of hedonic wellbeing are empirical and systematic, despite a reliance upon the simplistic positive relationship between happiness, wellbeing and pleasure, upon which the approach is justified (Vernon, 2008; Zevnik, 2014). For Riordan (2011; p. 211), only a broadly eudaimonic approach to human wellbeing can do justice to the complexities of the varied realities from which human flourishing might emerge, as 'our society does not share a single account of a life which turns out well'. Riordan (2011; p. 214) suggests this is because 'the ability to recognize the value of something, to appreciate the good at stake, requires a prior history of socialization'. Informed by a eudaimonic stance, Riordan (2011) further proposes that discussions, debates and tensions regarding human wellbeing revolve around five pivotal aspects. These are human nature, relationships, ties of moral obligation, conceptual definitions, and the role of the state and public authorities, which are impossible to consider as separate entities (Riordan, 2011). Generally

speaking, ambitious attempts by eudaimonic theorists to capture an all-encompassing way of addressing human wellbeing are yet to develop beyond a shared appreciation of the claimed enduring significance of a selection of observations made by Aristotle (Zevnik, 2014). As such, Riordan's suggestions are indicative of a seemingly endless work in progress, which seeks to establish an agreed method of tackling wellbeing from a eudaimonic perspective. Consequently, a clear direction to the study of eudaimonic wellbeing is yet to emerge and the search for a relatively congruent approach remains highly contested (Zevnik, 2014).

Hedonic research draws predominantly upon the established method of self-reported subjective wellbeing (SWB) through assessing the positive mood, negative mood, and life satisfaction of research participants (Zevnik, 2014). Proponents of the measure of SWB, Diener and Suh (2000; p. 4), argue that SWB 'can represent the degree to which people in each society are accomplishing the values they hold dear' as well as reflecting 'to some degree how much people are living in accord with evolutionary imperatives and human needs'. Zevnik (2014) is not convinced by such claims due to the survey-based procedure by which SWB attempts to encapsulate human wellbeing and happiness. Diener and Suh imply that 'evolutionary imperatives' and 'human needs' are natural and universally similar across and between people situated in different cultures and various societies (Zevnik, 2014). Diener and Suh thus conceive wellbeing as a generic and comparable experience for most people, which is disputed by Zevnik, who suggests experiences and meanings of wellbeing are culturally and socially specific. Zevnik's argument is that definitions and practices of wellbeing are determined by the social contexts in which people are immersed and have been socialised. Social contexts that are not explored by SWB surveys, which consist of fixed questions requiring closed-ended answers (Zevnik, 2014). Although

statistics derived from SWB surveys of hedonic wellbeing are unable to sufficiently depict the complexities of human wellbeing (Zevnik, 2014), they do offer a measure for collecting data pertinent to both individual and collective wellbeing (Diener & Suh, 2000).

Grounded within the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Enlightenment movement, communal happiness became concomitant with the growth of utilitarian thought and central to emerging public concerns about social conditions that would provide 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number' (Zevnik, 2014; p. 5). In spite of the various scientific disciplines that have since contributed various angles to the study of happiness and wellbeing, it remains that the essential purpose of this research is increased happiness for most people (Layard, 2011; Zevnik, 2014). Now referred to as collective happiness rather than communal happiness (Zevnik, 2014), SWB survey methods have been used to judge and compare the quality of life of people from different societies and nation states (Diener & Suh, 2000). In this respect, the average level of wellbeing and happiness of people from a particular society is now deemed a key indicator of how well or poorly an entire society or community functions (Diener & Suh, 2000; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Layard, 2011). Arguably infused with Western notions of progress, egalitarianism, liberalism and freedom (Zevnik, 2014), such crude statistical measures of ascertaining and comparing the quality of life of people from different societies, cultures and communities simultaneously highlights that academics, governments and public policies regard people's wellbeing as a pertinent issue (Diener & Suh, 2000; Layard, 2011). Following the growth in emphasis upon both individual and collective happiness during the Enlightenment period of human thought, the greatest happiness principle has, in Layard's (2011) view, informed most elements of social progress for the past

two hundred years. The greatest happiness principle conveys that at the level of public policy the overarching aim should be to produce 'the greatest happiness' and individual behaviour should be geared towards 'the right moral action' in terms of choosing those actions which produce 'the most happiness for the people it affects' (Layard, 2011; p. 5). Although this is difficult for individuals and governments to implement, not least because the far-reaching consequences of public policies and individual behaviours are unpredictable, Layard (2011; p. 234) has suggested that the greatest happiness principle should serve as a common good to be collectively pursued as 'a society cannot flourish without some sense of shared purpose'. Yet the issue of how individuals determine the 'right' moral action remains unclear, especially when taking into account the assertion of the eudaimonic wellbeing thesis that undesirable long-term outcomes can result from experiences that are initially pleasurable. Davis, Blackmore, Katzman and Fox's (2005) study of adolescent females diagnosed with anorexia nervosa found that a year prior to being diagnosed, the females' physical activity levels increased significantly. Therefore, even though regular physical activity participation is encouraged by health authorities and widely associated with being an enjoyable experience (DoH, 2011; Wellard, 2014), it was concluded that notable rises in adolescent female physical activity levels might play a part in the development of an eating disorder. Nevertheless, in light of uncertainties about what specifically constitutes the 'right' moral action at the level of policy and individual behaviour, Layard (2011; p. 125) maintains 'we shall not always do what is right, but if everyone tries to, we shall end up happier'.

Riordan (2011) explains that contemporary interpretations of Aristotle by eudaimonic theorists underline that wellbeing might be better appreciated as a retrospective and ongoing experience than a sought-after set of future circumstances

one hopes to encounter. Thus, if it is 'a life which turns out well' that typifies human flourishing, then it follows that 'it is the lifetime, the living of the life as a whole narrative that is stressed, not some end-product' (Riordan, 2011; p. 210). Moreover, 'considering ethics in terms of a life which turns out well avoids the exclusive concentration on rules to guide action, or on the outcome of action, or on the characteristics of agents that condition action' (Riordan, 2011; p. 211). Riordan (2011) is also specifically critical of Layard's reductionist take on the nature of happiness as *nothing other than* an activity of the left side of the brain. From a eudaimonic position, Riordan contends that human wellbeing and happiness are expansive phenomena that we understand as realities which are *always more than* what we have yet been able to fully comprehend. As an example, Riordan (2011; p. 214) elucidates further, 'the goodness of fidelity, a sustained love over a lifetime despite hardships, is normally not apparent to an observer who does not share the relevant values'. For this reason, it is previous experiences which appear to moderate how one goes about pursuing a better life that marks happiness as 'always more than what we can hope or imagine' (Riordan, 2011; p. 215). MacDonald and Shildrick (2013) have observed that the wellbeing of young people is complicated and compounded by the manner in which they reflect upon unanticipated critical moments of their lives. Given the extensive amount of relatively large-scale survey-type research to quantify young people's health experiences, MacDonald and Shildrick (2013) encourage others to adopt qualitative approaches in attempting to understand the wellbeing of youth to emphasise the complications and meanings attached to critical moments. More widely, retrospective qualitative accounts of the impact that critical moments have upon human wellbeing which are not confined to the lives of young people but also applied

to adults are likely to provide bespoke insights, descriptions and explanations of lives which may or may not turn out well.

### *2.1.1 Wellbeing Consequences of Physical Activity in the unfolding of a Life*

Life events expressed within the context of people's life stories, are likely to have a relatively more powerful impact upon psychological aspects of wellbeing, such as affect and mood, than regular exercise participation (Faulkner & Biddle, 2004). Faulkner and Biddle's (2004) case study of three life stories illustrates how life events have a direct bearing upon wellbeing and that changes in wellbeing have implications for physical activity engagement levels. Terry, one of the research participants, speculates about the positive influence exercising regularly at the gym seemed to have on his wellbeing yet how, after gaining employment, attending the gym no longer featured in his daily routine:

I think the gym filled a part of the day for me at a time when I needed part of the day filling. I don't think I gained anything much physically, but it certainly got me out of the house at a time when I probably wouldn't have gone out for any other reason. ... But it's been overtaken by other things now. (Faulkner & Biddle, 2004; p. 8)

Other studies also demonstrate how being regularly active can have potentially life-enhancing benefits that extend beyond gains in physical fitness (see Bath & Morgan, 1998; Blomstrand, Björkelund, Ariai, Lissner & Bengtsson, 2009; De Souto Barreto, 2014; Dionigi, 2007; Hassmén, Koivula & Uutela, 2000; Holder, Coleman & Sehn, 2009; Kim, Heo & Kim, 2014; Kull, 2002; Lee & Park, 2010; Mack *et al.*, 2012; Moriarty, 2013; Poole, 2001). The stories of older women who exercised frequently, derived from semi-structured interviews by Poole (2001), accentuate the telling role played by

a multi-faceted type of wellbeing, of which physical fitness was only one aspect that the women experienced through keeping their ageing bodies active. The wellbeing constructed and encountered within this fitness environment consisted of individual feelings of enhanced confidence, vigour and attractiveness as well as the satisfaction felt by making intimate and communal connections at a collective level through exercising together. As females tend to outlive males, the social connections founded via regularly socialising with other female exercisers carry the possibility of providing the women with future pathways to maintain their wellbeing and activity levels, in the form of a social support network, should they outlive their husbands (Poole, 2001). For those women of the study who were married, the promise of attending exercise classes also served the purpose of spending some time away from their retired husbands, who preferred to relax instead of engaging in regular physical activity. Some of the married women also referred to how their husbands were not especially supportive of their desire to be active on a frequent basis. Nevertheless, 'the sense of fun, belonging, and activity found in the narratives of these women tells us not so much about constraint and conformity to the discourses of fitness and health but about lives well lived' (Poole, 2001; p. 311).

Problematic to our understandings of active ageing in later life are some of the preconceived ideas that researchers have about studying the wellbeing and health of older people (Grant & Kluge, 2007). The attachment of ageing in later life to decrepitude, frailty and being 'past it' are problematic when attempting to unearth and reproduce a person's lived experiences of becoming older (Grant & Kluge, 2007). It appears to be acceptable for studies to overlook that 'older people have passed through various life-stages that have clearly influenced every part of their identities' in contrast to the more prevalent rhetoric, which situates older people within poor health,

as an economic burden and in requirement of help (Grant & Kluge, 2007; p. 400). The research by Poole (2001) underlines that accessing the lived experiences of older people, expressed in their own words through their own stories, can uncover rich insights into how active living in later life contributes to wellbeing. Widening the wellbeing and active ageing research agenda to include the recollection of notable life events and transitions of people from a range of ages can only enhance understandings of wellbeing as a continuous construct. Moriarty's (2013) work with children from eight to ten years of age shows that even a relatively brief amount of life experience functions as a frame of reference from which children can assemble stories that tie being active to a general grasp of wellbeing. Moriarty's (2013) research focused on spiritual elements of wellbeing experienced through active and passive involvement in sport and deduced that sport developed children's sensory awareness, enhanced their relationship ties and strengthened their personal identities. The physical endeavour of sport as a way of being active featured most prominently in children's heightened sensory awareness of their bodies and the excitement generated by some of the physical risks and dangers that sport represented. Overall, 'sport was a source of wonder and delight, and enhanced the children's physical, social and spiritual well-being' (Moriarty, 2013; p. 116).

## 2.2 Conceptualisations of Wellbeing in Physical Activity Research

The spiritual consideration of wellbeing and references to the transcendent by Moriarty align the study with a eudaimonic perspective of wellbeing, which offers somewhat of a contrast to most wellbeing and physical activity research. Some psychological studies of the influence of physical activity upon wellbeing have



attempted to use surveys developed by Ryff (1989), comprising a series of quantitative scales, to measure all dimensions of eudaimonic wellbeing. Utilising this approach, Mack *et al.* (2012) found an association between being active and feelings of eudaimonic wellbeing amongst female undergraduate students. The survey methods employed mean it is unclear how the female's previous life experiences informed the constitution of their eudaimonic wellbeing, as are the specific features of physical activity that gave rise to eudaimonic wellbeing. However, the study does indicate that physical activities which were part of the student's everyday lifestyles, excluding structured exercise participation, encouraged a sense of eudaimonic wellbeing. Vernon (2008) would likely contest that wellbeing, and particularly eudaimonic wellbeing, is not something that is as instantly obvious as the rationale behind quantitative surveys imply. Considering that survey methods may lack the depth and elusiveness that characterise wellbeing (Vernon, 2008), the issue is not that quantitative surveys are flawed, but that the manner in which surveys represent wellbeing is incomplete and removed from the lives through which wellbeing is constructed (Zevnik, 2014). Nonetheless, most studies of the relationship between physical activity and psychological wellbeing rely heavily upon statistical analysis of SWB surveys, thus reproducing a hedonic interpretation of wellbeing.

Sjögren *et al.* (2006) found light resistance training on a daily basis brought about marginal increases in subjective physical wellbeing among office workers and Garatachea *et al.* (2009) reported positive correlations between SWB and total time spent per week being active. Yet, extending our understandings of correlations of increased wellbeing to the context of people's lives calls for more in-depth investigations that include qualitative accounts of people's wellbeing, as expressed in their own words, in connection with their own experiences (Faulkner & Biddle, 2004).

In-depth interviews by Dionigi (2007; p. 723) revealed 'meaningful perceived improvements in psychological well-being that have not been uncovered in quantitative studies of healthy older people undertaking resistance training'. Following resistance training twice per week for four weeks, the group of male and female participants aged between 65 and 72 years referred to feelings of pleasurable bodily sensations (Dionigi, 2007). Barbara mentioned that the training 'really makes your heart go and your blood pump ... you feel your whole body is alive! It's kind of a tingly feeling all over' (Dionigi, 2007; p. 731). Overall, the descriptions of the active experiences provided by the interviewees reflected an element of realisation that their bodies were capable of performing demanding exercises. More broadly, the training was also beneficial to wellbeing in social, as well as physical and psychological terms, as the participants articulated their enjoyment of the interactive atmosphere at the gym and developing an intergenerational relationship with the student instructors who supervised the training programme.

Some psychological analyses of physical activity and wellbeing, such as that by Kilgour and Parker (2013), offer mainly empirical accounts of wellbeing, thus avoiding some of the predispositions of wellbeing that inform the collection of data. Unlike most of the psychological research in this area, Kilgour and Parker's (2013) investigation involved the collection of both survey and interview material. The study, conducted with female employees and students aged between 18 and 62 years from a University in the South West of England, adeptly illustrates how survey data reveal trends which can then be subjected to a more detailed interrogation through qualitative techniques, such as life stories. The main findings of the study, with regard to the contribution of being active to wellbeing, were that females saw being active as affording them the time and space to feel empowered by engaging with activities that

they could perform alone, away from others. The females also perceived their participation in running and walking as a rejection of, and distinctly different from, the organised and formalised activities that they had previously experienced during physical education, which, at the same time, functioned as activities that did not carry connotations attached to body image and ability level that they associated with physical education. Interestingly, and perhaps as a consequence of being active in ways viewed as a notable contrast from those insecurities aroused by physical education, 'while many of the students and employees identified themselves as "non-sporty", the majority appeared relatively "active" when compared to present-day government guidelines' (Kilgour & Parker, 2013; p. 52). Along with mirroring some of the findings by Poole (2001), that situated being active as an empowering practice of escapism within the lives of women, Kilgour and Parker also reported that being active in natural outdoor environments appeared to have more positive implications for health and wellbeing than in urban surroundings.

Bearing in mind that both the spatial location in which one is situated when physically active is probably influential in how wellbeing is experienced, and previous experiences of physical activity involvement are not always advantageous for wellbeing, Bloodworth, McNamee and Bailey (2012) have offered something of an alternative interpretation. Bloodworth *et al.* (2012; p. 497) claim 'the value of sport and physical activity should be situated in fundamental arguments about the conditions required for human flourishing'. This is to say that sport and physical activity carry only positive experiences of and consequences for human wellbeing. The evidence would suggest otherwise. Life stories of females have intimated a disenchantment with ability-oriented features of formal physical activities (Kilgour & Parker, 2013) and significant increases in levels of physical activity amongst adolescent females have

been linked with the development of eating disorders (Davis *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, it is essential to differentiate between the competitive nature of sport and the type of incidental daily physical activities that do not constitute structured exercise. As well as the distinct contributions that sport and physical activity make to wellbeing; with sport participation eliciting subjective feelings of enjoyment (Wellard, 2014), but not necessarily improving physical health (Waddington, 2000), and regular physical activity positively correlated with a plethora of health-related physiological and psychological variables (Biddle *et al.*, 2015; Hardman & Stensel, 2009). Most of the evidence reviewed here may well support the claims of Bloodworth *et al.* (2012) in respect of physical activity, but not sport. Though to make claims about what wellbeing *should* comprise belittles the elusive nature of human wellbeing and the plurality of those lives which turn out well (Riordan, 2011; Vernon, 2008).

Bloodworth *et al.*'s proposal that physical activity should be an objective element of a good life also seems misplaced when considering Offer's (2006) economic perspective of wellbeing and physical activity. Offer (2006) suggests that increases in body weight in the United States and Britain since the 1960s can be attributed to increased food consumption and declines in physical activity. When examined together and in conjunction with political and personal preferences to avoid rises in body weight, Offer argues that the direction of changes in levels of food consumption and physical activity denote a more general trend of a decline in self-control. Attempts by some people to re-establish a greater degree of self-control and reduce their body weight saw an increased engagement with structured exercise as a health-related leisure activity from the 1970s, which also laid the early foundations for the development of the fitness industry (Offer, 2006). Yet, during the 50-year period between the 1950s and the beginning of the twenty-first century, levels of individual

wellbeing have remained relatively unchanged (Offer, 2006). Thus, declines in levels of physical activity do not appear to be a crucial determinant of collective wellbeing, as if they were, individual wellbeing would have declined alongside falling levels of physical activity across the second half of the twentieth century. Thus, longitudinal economic evidence does not support Bloodworth *et al.*'s 'objective' position that regular physical activity participation is a necessary requisite for human flourishing, especially as 'reported subjective well-being in most affluent societies is remarkably high' (Offer, 2006; p. 369). The economic evidence does, however, reveal notable social demographic patterns about those people who are more likely to experience any exercise-related gains in wellbeing, by identifying those types of people who are more likely to participate regularly in structured exercise.

Economic data from the second half of the twentieth century shows that those who are better educated, earn higher incomes, have never been married, are male, and in professional occupations participate in structured leisure-time exercise most frequently (Offer, 2006). While wellbeing economics might point out that population levels of physical activity have not had a notable bearing upon the overall wellbeing of Britain and the United States, the majority of sociological and psychological research demonstrates that being regularly active does have some degree of benefit for individual wellbeing. In the qualitative research examined, participants cite empowerment, escapism, enjoyment, pleasurable bodily sensations, liberating realisations about the capacities of their bodies, a strengthened sense of identity, increased confidence, and feeling more attractive as consequences of being active (Dionigi, 2007; Kilgour & Parker, 2013; Moriarty, 2013; Poole, 2001). A synthesis between the stories of participants from qualitative studies and the longitudinal trends identified in wellbeing economics might, therefore, conclude that although being active

seems to enhance individual wellbeing, the contribution of physical activity to collective wellbeing is unclear.

Families are an important environment in which to better understand both the individual and collective wellbeing consequences of physical activity, as family relationships are more crucial to wellbeing than physical activity participation (Day, 2018), and this type of wellbeing is inherently interdependent and collective. While individual family members will also possess personal experiences and perspectives of the connection between wellbeing and physical activity. An uncritical assumption which often informs and justifies research into the physical activity patterns of family members is that being active is, or at least should be, a source of health and wellbeing for most people. This assumption is evident in the studies by De Craemer *et al.* (2013), Hart *et al.* (2003) and Schluter *et al.* (2011) that identify family members as being insufficiently active, primarily as a consequence of the lack of value parents attribute to being active as a health-enhancing practice.

### **3. Physical Activity, Health, and Families**

Initially, this chapter identifies that most family focused physical activity research is concerned with, and reflective of, social concerns surrounding the health of children. So much so, there is notably less research that considers the physical activity of all members of a family without the explicit intention of outlining the implications of the findings for children. This gap in the research concerning the lack of sufficient consideration of the place and meaning of physical activity within everyday family life is then discussed. As a further consequence of the strong emphasis on children's health, much family-oriented physical activity research is disconnected from crucial discussions taking place in the social sciences about how to go about conducting family research, and indeed, what the concept of 'family' represents and if it still carries any worth in contemporary societies. Accordingly, the following review of this body of literature connects these pertinent debates to our existing knowledge of interactions between physical activity participation and family context. In doing so, further limitations to the research methodologies employed in physical activity are recognised, especially the ethnocentricity at play. Moreover, it is identified that in physical activity studies families tend to be viewed in terms of their structure, without being properly conceptualised. Subsequently, it is then proposed that family life, within the paradigm of physical activity, should be seen as more of a fluid, changeable and intimate process of membership.

#### **3.1 Childhood Physical Activity Correlates**

Physical activity research in the context of families has mainly focused on the importance of physical activity for the health of children, the level or lack of importance

parents place upon their own and their children's physical activity, and the amount and type of opportunities provided by parents for their children to be active (Boufous, Finch & Bauman, 2004; Hamilton & White, 2010a; Hart, Herriot, Bishop & Truby, 2003; Hofer, McKenzie, Sallis, Marshall & Conway, 2001; Macdonald *et al.*, 2004; Schinke *et al.*, 2010; Thompson *et al.*, 2009). Such studies are underpinned by popular ideas about the responsibility of parents, particularly mothers, to nurture healthy children and the notion that regular physical activity during childhood significantly increases the likelihood of maintaining an active lifestyle throughout the life course (Bevan & Reilly, 2011; DoH, 2011; Edwardson & Gorely, 2010; Lewis & Ridge, 2005; World Health Organization, 2002). This scholarship has been constructed within a social climate of extensively publicised concerns regarding young people's levels of physical inactivity, sedentariness and other obesity-related behaviours (De Craemer *et al.*, 2013; DoH, 2011; Dwyer, Higgs, Hardy & Baur, 2008; Gorely, Atkin, Biddle & Marshall, 2009; Jago, Fox, Page, Brockman & Thompson, 2010; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2013; Schluter, Oliver & Paterson, 2011). The contemporary magnitude of the pressure on parents to rear healthy children, brought about in part by public anxieties surrounding childhood obesity, is a likely reason for why parents substantially exaggerate and over-report the amount and intensity of their children's physical activity engagement (Corder, Crespo, van Sluijs, Lopez & Elder, 2012; Dregval & Petrauskienė, 2009). Despite the number and range of studies to investigate parental influence upon their children's active and sedentary behaviours, the relationship lacks clarity due to conflicting findings and varied research approaches (Anderssen, Wold & Torsheim, 2006; Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006; Jago *et al.*, 2010; Kantomaa, Tammelin, Näyhä & Taanila, 2007). Parental social support, encouragement, role modelling, educational level, involvement, transport provision, level of control, communication, safety fears,



perceptions of competence, socio-economic status, self-esteem, time constraints, work commitments, care responsibilities, age, marital status and language have all received attention in studies of how parents shape children's physical activity habits. Consistent evidence has been generated for the positive influence of parental support, involvement and encouragement upon children's physical activity levels (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010; Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006). However, there have been mixed findings for the significance of the parental demographics of marital status, educational level and socio-economic status (Dregval & Petrauskienė, 2009; Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006; Zecevic, Tremblay, Lovsin & Michel, 2010).

With regard to marital status, Gorely *et al.* (2009) found that boys from single parent households are at 'high risk' of sedentary behaviour, whilst Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) argue that relationships between children's physical activity levels and the number of parental role models in the home seem to be determined by the activity levels of parents. This suggests children residing with a single active parent are more likely to be more physically active than children living with two inactive parents. In reference to physical activity intensity, Hesketh, Crawford and Salmon (2006) found children from single parent households to be less vigorously active than those children from dual parent households and also cited the positive influence of the presence of siblings in the household. Furthermore, Hesketh *et al.* (2006) concluded that family composition is more related to the intensity of children's physical activity than indicators of socio-economic status. A finding likely to be refuted by Telama, Laakso, Nupponen, Rimpelä and Pere (2009) who suggested that data gathered over a 28-year period between 1977 and 2005 indicated a significantly higher proportion of the children that took part in sport, and moderate to vigorous physical activity more generally, were from higher socio-economic status families than children brought up

in lower socio-economic family settings. Socio-economic indicators such as parental level of education and family income correlate with the types of leisure activities in which children participate, according to Dregval and Petrauskienė (2009). Children of parents with lower levels of formal education from low-income families were less likely to attend organised sport and dance clubs than children from higher income families with parents holding a university education. Yet the children from lesser socio-economic family environments participated less in the sedentary pastime of playing computer games than children from higher socio-economic backgrounds and were also more often involved in less structured and formal outdoor play. In contrast, Shropshire and Carroll (1997) concluded that differences in the physical activity levels and habits of 10 and 11 year-old children were not attributable to socio-economic status. Although this study relied solely upon children's self-reported physical activity and determined socio-economic status via free school meal eligibility. This measure of socio-economic status produced only two 'different' groups, even though children in different groups may have been from households with comparable levels of income and the households of children assigned to the 'lower' group may have greater expendable income. The lack of a standardised measure of family socio-economic status has often hampered studies pertaining to the role of parental demographics upon their children's physical activity, meaning the majority of findings from such research are not entirely commensurate, even though researchers may draw similar conclusions (Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006).

Despite inconsistent measures and ambiguous findings in examinations of the relationships between parents and the physical activity of their children, a number of limited but useful reviews have been conducted (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010; Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006; Lim & Biddle, 2012; Pugliese & Tinsley, 2007). Gustafson

and Rhodes' (2006) review of *Parental Correlates of Physical Activity in Children and Early Adolescents* considered studies of parental physical activity level, parental support for physical activity, the influence of one parent versus both parents, family socio-economic status, ethnicity and sex relations. In light of the evidence, Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) concluded that the strongest correlations exist between higher levels of parental support and increased levels of child physical activity and a smaller body of evidence intimates that active parents are more supportive of their children's participation in physical activity than non-active parents. As previously mentioned, the encouragement and support received by children from their active parents appears to be a more powerful correlate in children's physical activity habits than the number of parents in the household (Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006). Due to the paucity of studies and methodological shortcomings, Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) adjudged that the effects of single parent households, family socio-economic status and ethnicity were inconclusive. Inconsistent results meant that the impact of family relationships between mothers, fathers, daughters and sons were also described as being unclear in the context of children's physical activity. Although enough complementary data was available to make the tentative proposal that boy's physical activity is shaped more by their father than mother, and girl's physical activity more closely resembles their mother's than father's physical activity habits (Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006). Within this context, and primarily positive correlations for increased levels of physical activity amongst those children in receipt of higher proportions of parental social support and encouragement and the household presence of at least one active parent, it appears that parental socialisation holds an authoritative position in the active and sedentary behaviour of children. Which, akin to other family and parenting practices (Chambers, 2012; Cheal, 2002), is a gendered socialisation process.

A meta-analysis of the parental socialisation of child physical activity identified 'a moderate positive relation exists between parental support and modeling behavior and child and adolescent PA [physical activity] levels' (Pugliese & Tinsley, 2007; p. 331). Moreover, Dollman (2010) argues that a comparison between health and fitness survey data collected in 1985 and 2004 highlights parent role modelling of physical activity has become more significant over time as a socialisation method for rearing active children. According to Dollman (2010), this is illustrated by a greater pronounced divide in sport participation between those children with and without active parents in 2004 than in 1985. Nonetheless, this claim is somewhat misplaced as the survey measured the number of sports played but not time spent participating or the intensity of different activities. This is not to dispute the likelihood that children who regularly participate in a variety of sports are highly active, but to infer that children who participate in a lesser range of sports are less active is an assertion far removed from the data collected via the survey. Unrecognised by the author, the results of the survey do provide an insight into the powerful significance that more and less active parents may have upon unwittingly enabling and constraining the amount of choices available to their children to be active via their own physical activity habits. As noted elsewhere, less active children from less active families of a lower social class are often constrained in their options to be active by the amount of expendable family income available (Evans & Davies, 2010). However, further constraints to such circumstances are evident when local and national physical activity and sport initiatives attempt to reduce financial costs associated with participation by reducing or subsidising sport and fitness club membership fees. As those children able to be more active as a consequence of government strategies are unlikely to be in a position to embrace these opportunities because they lack the required embodiment for

sustained engagement in sports and activities that they and their families have little to no previous participation experience of (Evans & Davies, 2010). From a research perspective, the paper by Dollman (2010) also emphasises that social psychological measures and variables, such as role modelling, are unstable and differ in significance over relatively short periods of time.

A systematic review of 96 publications relevant to parental influence on different types or intensities of youth physical activity found that to foster a physically active lifestyle amongst their children, adults need to be involved in their children's physical activity in multiple ways (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010). Results from the review propose that to increase the chances of rearing physically active children, parents should look to be active themselves while also supporting, encouraging and facilitating their children to be active (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010). This includes providing transport to allow their children to participate in physical activities that they would otherwise be unable to access (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010). Therefore, it is no surprise that the intensive parenting required to fulfil this type of responsibility within parents' everyday lives has been referred to as an ongoing source of stress, particularly by mothers (Bevan & Reilly, 2011). The orientation of this review, as well as the 96 studies analysed within it, is symptomatic of a tendency for psychological research to under-represent the interdependence of the physical activity relationship between parents and their children. Despite the considerable attention in physical activity research upon a one directional influence from parent to child, some researchers have recognised that children's physical activity also effects the physical activity behaviours of their parents (Berniell, de la Mata & Valdés, 2013; Ruseski, Humphreys, Hallmann & Breuer, 2011). However, this relationship has been somewhat trivialised by being described as a 'spillover' of physical activity participation from active children to the

increased activity of parents (Berniell *et al.*, 2013; Ruseski *et al.*, 2011). Notwithstanding the quantitative conceptualisation of interdependent human behaviour as a one-directional spillover from one family member to another, the influence of children's health-related behaviour upon that of their parents encompasses health reform, children's educational experiences, parents' educational level and is gendered (Berniell *et al.*, 2013). Berniell *et al.* (2013) found health reforms in primary school education to increase the physical activity levels of less formally educated fathers of schoolchildren of this age, but not mothers.

### 3.2 Physical Activity and the Being and Becoming of Family Membership

Although a body of knowledge has developed intimating that the presence of children in the household constrains adult physical activity involvement compared to households without children and being a parent decreases physical activity participation (Adamo, Langlois, Brett & Colley, 2012; Hamilton & White, 2012; Lewis & Ridge, 2005), less is known about how the experience of *becoming* a parent is negotiated with regard to being active (Hamilton & White, 2010b). This exposes a fundamental criticism of studies of 'the family' across various academic disciplines, where family is approached as a static unit of analysis in conjunction with dominant ideas about traditional notions of heterosexual marriage and adult relationships laden with assumptions of male breadwinners and female homemakers (Chambers, 2012; Cheal, 2002; Farrell, VandeVusse & Ocobock, 2012). As Farrell *et al.* (2012; p. 293) have observed of family sociology, 'a preoccupation with studying married heterosexual couples persists... limiting a more complex understanding of household labor and gender inequality'. The upshot is that in many sociological studies the

constitution of 'the family' remains singular, conventional and 'traditional'. Research by Hamilton and White (2010b), carried out through individual and group interviews with mothers and fathers aged between 23 and 49 years, indicated that becoming a parent reduces participation in the amount and intensity of more organised types of physical activity. Despite falling into the trap of reinforcing universal assumptions about the composition of 'the family', Hamilton and White (2010b) embrace family life as fluid and subject to normative and unexpected changes sensitive to the life course, rather than as a stable and unchanging experience removed from the human ageing process and unanticipated events (Allan, 1999; Allan & Crow, 2001). The awareness of changeable aspects of family life in the context of becoming a parent, coupled with a qualitative approach, unearthed parents' perspectives of their attempts to balance parental responsibilities with their desire to remain as active as possible (Hamilton & White, 2010b). Parents who had experienced declines in being physically active due to parenthood, spoke enviously of those parents who had been able to maintain a level and intensity of physical activity that resembled their physical activity habits prior to the arrival of their children (Hamilton & White, 2010b). At the same time, parents also spoke of the empowerment attached to the opportunity to balance conflicts between parental responsibilities and attempting to remain active (Hamilton & White, 2010b).

Thompson *et al.* (2009) argue most parents do not perceive periods of time when the family are together as an opportunity to be active together. Instead, what the family do when they are together is incidental and of little significance compared to the function of family time for sustaining communication levels between parents and children (Thompson *et al.*, 2009). Yet the root of the conflict between wanting to remain active and becoming a parent is that it appears problematic for parents and their children to be active together or at the same time, especially when situated within the

predicament of other pressing responsibilities (Hamilton & White, 2010b; Lewis & Ridge, 2005). Furthermore, many parents are willing to sacrifice their own physical activity participation in favour of providing their offspring with opportunities for an active childhood (Hamilton & White, 2010b; Lewis & Ridge, 2005). A mother interviewed as part the study by Hamilton and White (2010b; p. 279) typifies the superior value attributed to having active children at the expense of being active herself:

It's important to me to get the kids into activity ... exposing them to many different activities as well ... but as for me, ever heard the saying do as I say not as I do.

The willingness of mothers to give up aspects of their own physical activity, in the interests of opportunities for their children to be active, is evident within the sparse qualitative literature on the topic (Hamilton & White, 2010b; Lewis & Ridge, 2005). Following interviews with mothers of children under five years of age, Lewis and Ridge (2005) proposed that the decision made by some mothers to be regularly active was tinged with guilt as informed by stereotypes of what constitutes a 'good' mother. These mothers were simultaneously aware of the importance of preserving their health and that being active involved spending time away from the home, and being temporarily absent from their domestic responsibilities as a mother (Lewis & Ridge, 2005). Regarding this tension about whether physical activity participation is a component of the identity of a responsible and caring mother in contemporary society, Lewis and Ridge (2005) theorised that two categories of 'good' mothering emerged from the data collected, categorised by contrary meanings connected to physical activity participation. Active women justified their regular physical activity participation in a way that challenged the more traditional notion of being a good mother, widening a 'good' mother's ethic of care to also include being an active role model and the necessity for



personal health and wellbeing (Lewis & Ridge, 2005). Whereas for less active mothers, who also saw themselves as 'good' mothers, any suggestion that time which could be spent performing duties of motherhood might be instead used for their own physical activity participation was perceived as an act of selfishness (Lewis & Ridge, 2005). Less active mothers also saw a central tenet of being a 'good' mother as positioning their children's health as paramount, above and beyond their own, with no mention of how taking more time to care for themselves might contribute to the health and wellbeing of the family unit in a more holistic sense (Lewis & Ridge, 2005; p. 2300):

As far as I'm concerned the mother goes to the backseat and everyone else comes in first ... I think when you've had them you tend to grow up more and you prioritise more ... you learn that you're not so important. (Jemma (three children, full time mother, no regular activity))

The inclusion within the role of the mother, as opposed to that of the father, to be responsible for providing and organising sufficient care for children is symptomatic of Western ideologies of families tied together by intimate heterosexual relationships (Chambers, 2012; Cheal, 2002). Amidst a growing awareness that fathers in Western societies are doing more to care for their children, it is argued that mothers continue to experience substantially more time stress than fathers, due, in the main, to the childcare responsibilities of mothering (Cheal, 2002). The idea that mothers should be responsible for ensuring their children are appropriately cared for is imbued with notions of the nuclear family as the 'proper' family, and thus fathers are simultaneously deterred from being expected to participate in what is perceived as 'women's work' (Chambers, 2012). Therefore, gendered parenting identities and practices within heterosexual relationships appear to have a heavy bearing upon mothers' physical activity involvement, although little is known about how, if at all, the transition into fatherhood enables and constrains the active and sedentary behaviour of males

(Lewis & Ridge, 2005). Nevertheless, a more comprehensive evidence base exists pertaining to the gendered influence that mothers and fathers have upon the ways in which their sons and daughters are more and less active.

### *3.2.1 Physical Activity and Gendered Parental Socialisation*

The systematic review of parental influence on different types or intensities of youth physical activity also revealed a gendered effect in the form of what appears to be the more powerful influence of fathers' than mothers' physical activity patterns upon the physical activity participation of their children (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010). Studies, both longitudinal and cross-sectional in design, report a positive relationship between the activity levels of fathers' and adolescents' overall time spent being active across the whole day (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010). Bois, Sarrazin, Brustad, Trouilloud and Cury (2005) suggest that a father's perception of their child's physical self-competence is a direct predictor of the time children spend participating in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. Bois *et al.* (2005) also found physical activity involvement by mothers, and not fathers, predicted their child's engagement in physical activity of a moderate-to-vigorous intensity. However, Eriksson, Nordqvist and Rasmussen (2008) provide a more extensive explanation by proposing that associations of vigorous physical activity and sport participation between parents and their children is more a case of the significant influence of mothers upon daughters and fathers upon sons, rather than viewing children as a homogeneous group. In the relationship between boys and their fathers, the data presented by Eriksson *et al.* (2008) identifies that boys' self-perceived athletic competence informs their vigorous physical activity and sport participation when their fathers participate regularly in sport during leisure

time. A similar trend and the need to distinguish between male and female parents and their children's physical activity habits is also evident in data generated by Martin, Dollman, Norton and Robertson's (2005) comparative investigation between health and fitness surveys completed in 1985 and 1997-9. The division between mother-daughter and father-son physical activity patterns was illustrated by boys being more likely to pick-up on the active habits of fathers, whereas girls were more likely to be influenced by the sedentary behaviours of mothers (Martin *et al.*, 2005). Over a 12-month period those boys with active fathers were most likely to participate regularly in organised physical activities while girls with inactive mothers were more likely to participate less regularly in organised physical activities. Although these gender differences were obvious only in the 1985 data, as the 1997/9 sample did not demonstrate any gendered physical activity or inactivity associations (Martin *et al.*, 2005). The decrease in intergenerational family physical activity associations via gender could reflect broad social changes in gender relations during the 12-year gap between data collection points. Specific to changes in family life, sociologists contend that there has been less stability and greater diversity in family and household life since the final quarter of the twentieth century, inextricably linked to transformations to intimate relationships and increased individualisation (Allan, 1999; Allan & Crow, 2001; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Chambers, 2012; Giddens, 1992). Giddens' (1992) premise that people's personal lives have become open projects is crucial to understanding the manner in which people appear more engaged in constructing relationships, as opposed to a previous pre-determined conformity to gendered ideas about ascribed family roles from birth (Allan & Crow, 2001). Such a framework of thought allows us a better grasp of the notable growth in number of same sex couples and increases in the amount of same and different sex couples who share a household

without being married, in addition to the opportunity to think outside of hetero/homobinaries (Chambers, 2012; Cheal, 2002).

The study by Shropshire and Carroll (1997), published at a similar time to when the second and final set of data used by Martin *et al.* (2005) was being collected, indicated sons' and daughters' physical activity levels were strongly related to their perceptions of how active their fathers were. More active children had more active fathers, less active children had less active fathers and there was no evidence of a relationship between the physical activity habits of mothers and their children (Shropshire & Carroll, 1997). According to Edwardson and Gorely (2010) this father-child physical activity relationship is indicative of the majority of research on adolescents, identified as children between 12 and 18 years of age. However, the cross-sectional physical activity associations between mothers and daughters and between fathers and sons found by Eriksson *et al.* (2008) are not entirely congruent with Edwardson and Gorely's (2010) systematic review, as the children studied were adolescents of 12 years of age. Moreover, any conclusions drawn by Eriksson *et al.* (2008) do not contribute to sophisticated understandings of parental influences of more and less active habits upon their children. This is because the measure that assessed physical activity levels was employed with a view to identifying which children are 'sufficiently' and 'insufficiently' vigorously active. This rather crude use of physical activity recommendations predetermines that children who are insufficiently vigorously active are less healthy than those sufficiently vigorously active. To qualify as sufficiently active children had to self-report participating for at least 20 minutes and subsequently being out of breath and sweating on at least three occasions in the past week, otherwise they were classed as being insufficiently active (Eriksson *et al.*, 2008). It is therefore presumed that 12-year-old children who have not met the 'sufficiently

active' threshold are unlikely to be as healthy those children who have reported such a level of participation. This preoccupation with the significance of physical health is further ramified by Eriksson *et al.*'s (2008) investigation of a possible modifying effect of children's weight status, as measured by body mass index, upon the relationship between the physical activity behaviours of parents and children. No modifying effects were found by Eriksson *et al.* (2008) for children's weight status, as was the case in previous research with children of this age and younger.

### *3.2.2 Ageing Children and Gendered Anticipatory Socialisation*

Drawing together the research by Edwardson and Gorely (2010) and Bois *et al.* (2005), there is evidence to suggest the gendering effect of parental influences on children's physical activity could be attributed to the age of children. The physical activity participation of 9 to 11-year-old children was predicted by mothers' physical activity involvement and fathers' perceptions of their child's physical self-competence (Bois *et al.*, 2005). Then, during adolescence, both sons' and daughters' physical activity involvement is more indicative of the father's physical activity levels (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010), possibly because, as they age, children become less intensively mothered (Cheal, 2002). Moreover, if arranging and providing physical activity participation for their offspring is a practice within the remit of mothering, the reduction in the physical activity levels of children as they age may also be explained by less input and influence from mothers, as children are encouraged to become more responsible for their own behaviours. Cheal (2002; p. 96) has referred to adolescence as a phase of anticipatory socialisation, a point in the life course when children 'seek out experiences which help them to develop attitudes and skills that they believe they

will need in later life'. Cheal (2002) further explains that despite 14 to 18-year-old sons and daughters spending similar amounts of time doing household chores, the type of housework they each engage in is gendered. With sons more likely to perform maintenance work outside of the house, involving heavy lifting and predominantly physical work, and daughters more likely to work inside the house doing tasks such as cleaning, cooking and washing (Cheal, 2002). Therefore, during the anticipatory socialisation of adolescence, sons and daughters are assigned and ascribe to masculine and feminine household tasks respectively, which also serve as gendered, albeit incidental, contributions to overall physical activity levels. Furthermore, daughters of mothers with more traditional conceptions of how to be a 'good mother', who become more sedentary because of motherhood (Lewis & Ridge, 2005), may also be anticipatorily socialised into beginning to prioritise the physical health of other family members over their own. While such a view is supported by Martin *et al.*'s (2005) findings that daughters between the ages of 10 and 13 are socialised by the sedentary rather than the active habits of their mothers, Zecevic *et al.* (2010) found that daughters become less active than sons as early as post-infancy.

Across a sample of 54 boys and 48 girls between the ages of 3 and 5 years, Zecevic *et al.* (2010) found that the older children in the study were less likely to be reported by their parents as highly active on a five-point Likert scale. The nature of the preschoolers' age-related decline in physical activity was such that the authors were also able to conclude that the children became less active with each month of age (Zecevic *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, declines in physical activity levels with age were steeper for girls and Zecevic *et al.* (2010) proposed that future research should focus on girl's physical activity, as they were almost three times less likely than boys to meet the levels of physical activity recommended for health benefits. As Zecevic *et al.*

(2010) relied upon a quantitative and cross-sectional approach it is unclear as to why children, and particularly daughters, became less active with each month of age following infancy, although it is specifically this approach that allows for the identification of such precise trends.

Longitudinal and qualitative research by Ziviani, Macdonald, Ward, Jenkins and Rodger (2006), with six children and their parents, found little evidence to support the trend of age-related declines in children's physical activity, as is often reported in quantitative studies. Ziviani *et al.* (2006) conducted interviews with the parents and their children when the children were aged 7 and 8 years and two years later when the children were of 9 and 10 years of age, unearthing gendered relationships and divisions in children's physical activity involvement. The physical activities that the children valued and chose to participate in were gendered with regard to activity intensity, an age-related increased self-consciousness of how their bodies looked and worked, and a tendency to engage with activities that their parents and older siblings of the same sex were directly involved in (Ziviani *et al.*, 2006). Sons and brothers preferred to play soccer, cricket and hockey and girls and sisters favoured dancing, softball and horse riding. Family members of the opposite sex were active independent of one another, which, simultaneously, may be a contributory factor and consequential result of why, when aged 9 and 10, boys had become more aware of how their bodies functioned when active, whereas girls were more aware that activity levels impacted upon how their bodies looked (Ziviani *et al.*, 2006). Like the trend identified in quantitative research, the activities engaged in by girls tended to be less physically strenuous than the ways in which boys were active. Ziviani *et al.*'s (2006) interviews with parents provided further insight into the differing propensities for physical activity displayed by boys and girls. Parents suggested that boys had to be discouraged from

being constantly active to achieve some degree of parental control over their sons, whereas girls were more likely to begrudgingly take part in physical activity, only because parents had strongly encouraged their daughters to be regularly active (Ziviani *et al.*, 2006). For research purposes, Ziviani *et al.* (2006) illustrate the detailed type of data that can be derived from qualitative methods and how such an approach can serve as an opportunity to simultaneously interrogate and supplement trends exposed by quantitative techniques. With specific reference to research design in the area of family physical activity, Archbold, Richardson and Dugdill (2009) voice reservations as to whether quantitative methods alone are capable of capturing and representing the multifaceted intricacies of the physical activity patterns of families. With Archbold *et al.*'s (2009) reservations in mind, and the sometimes mixed and unclear findings of quantitative research on the physical activity of families in the research mentioned so far, this review will now cover some of the major limitations of both qualitative and quantitative studies, earmarking ways in which this existing body of knowledge may be developed.

### 3.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Differences: identified but unexplained trends in the physical activity of families

Notwithstanding the justification that studies of the physical activity of families often reduce the scope of investigation to the relationship between parents and their children, as this is usually the most significant relationship in children's initial socialisation (Cheal, 2002), changes in parent and child physical activity associations over time are predominantly overlooked (Alderman, Benham-Deal & Jenkins, 2010). It appears that as children and their parent's age, the moderate physical activity



association between them apparent during the child's preschool years fades (Alderman *et al.*, 2010). According to parents, as their children age their physical activity involvement remains based, to some extent, on the concepts of fun, enjoyment, motor skill improvement and self-confidence, but becomes increasingly about gains in physical fitness and the development of social skills (Alderman *et al.*, 2010). As children age they are generally exposed to wider social influences, such as friends they make at school and may perceive teachers as alternative or complimentary role models to parents (Alderman *et al.*, 2010). Invariably, when building relationships outside of the family unit, children develop interests that may not be shared by parents (Alderman *et al.*, 2010). These influences researchers have recognised, but the key actors neglected in research are family members other than parents (Chambers, 2012). This includes siblings residing in the same household and aunts, uncles and grandparents as well as friends of a family, who may spend more or similar amounts of time with children during childhood than some family members (Chambers, 2012; Mauthner, 2005).

In the case of the lack of acknowledgement of sibship, similar criticisms can be made of family sociology and, as argued by Mauthner (2005), especially experiences of sisterhood. It seems 'family sociologists show greater interest in vertical parent-child ties than in lateral sibling or friendship ties' (Mauthner, 2005; p. 624). Most of the existing studies of physical activity within the context of families recognise children and young people as active social agents, but not in reference to their family role as a sibling for those children with brothers and sisters, such as the study by Alderman *et al.* (2010). Taking into account the relatively well-established trend from qualitative and quantitative research that the level and intensity of physical activity participation of girls declines with age at a significantly greater rate than that of boys, a greater

acknowledgement of the role of being a sibling from a qualitative perspective might provide more detailed explanations of contributing factors, as Ziviani *et al.* (2006) illustrate. Or as Mauthner (2005; p. 626) puts it, 'when interviewed, women recount conflict, and painful and ambivalent emotions about the sensitive relationship of sisterhood'.

A cross-sectional survey-based study by Zach and Netz (2007) was rare in that it studied the physical activity patterns of three generations of the same family, including both sets of grandparents of a single adolescent grandchild. As with other quantitative research, Zach and Netz (2007) found physical activity levels decreased with increased age. A decrease that was particularly sharp between adolescence and adulthood, with most adolescents twice more likely to meet health-informed levels of physical activity than their parents and grandparents. From a sociological perspective, the physical activity habits of grandparents identified by the survey are interesting as they indicate gendered comparisons and contrasts with the childhood physical activity patterns developed by boys and girls, already suggested by Ziviani *et al.* (2006). This is to speculate that boy's inclinations for more intense ways of being active during childhood may remain across the life course, as Zach and Netz (2007) found that grandfathers were significantly more likely to participate in vigorous physical activities than grandmothers. However, in contrast to both the reluctance of daughters between 7 and 10 years of age to regularly participate in physical activity and the persistently active habits of sons of a similar age discovered by Ziviani *et al.*, 2006, a higher proportion of grandmothers than grandfathers were found to be meeting the levels of physical activity outlined by health guidelines (Zach & Netz, 2007). The underpinning mechanisms by which these changes and continuities in family physical activity patterns occur will remain unclear without collecting detailed qualitative data.

Although, the little qualitative information gathered by Zach and Netz (2007) indicates that similar motives for physical activity engagement existed across all three generations of families. These physical activity motives comprised feeling 'better' about oneself in a way that embraced both physical and mental aspects of the self, enjoyment, and the improvement of physical appearance (Zach & Netz, 2007). Due to the generational, age-related and quantitative disposition of the study, it is not clear as to whether particular motives are informed by gendered ideas about being active. The motives that persist across the life course, according to Zach and Netz (2007), bear comparisons with the gendered awareness of the active body suggested to develop during childhood by Ziviani *et al.* (2006), specifically girl's increasing consciousness of the appearance of their bodies in conjunction with being active.

Nevertheless, if the findings of Zach and Netz (2007) and Ziviani *et al.* (2006) are representative of society more generally, it appears that some daughters, mothers and grandmothers retain the awareness of their physical appearance as an outcome and motive for physical activity participation across the life course and throughout family life. To summarise, the evidence suggests boys are drawn towards more vigorous forms of physical activity whilst daughters require encouragement to be regularly active during childhood, but by the time they reach older age and become a grandmother they are more regularly active than their male partners. Physical activity for females who are mothers is further complicated by contemporary tensions between traditional mothering, that involves sacrificing physical activity participation to spend more time caring for their children, and emerging notions of the 'new mother', who takes pride in making time to be regularly active in the interests of the wellbeing of the family as a whole (Lewis & Ridge, 2005). Therefore, for the most part, our understandings of physical activity participation in the context of families represent

quantitative trends associated with psychological correlates, socio-economic status, gender and ageing, as opposed to ascribed and assigned family roles. In this sense, we are only beginning to understand physical activity in the context of family life and require more detailed qualitative research to compliment the trends that have been described, but not explained, in quantitative studies.

### 3.4 The Ethnocentricity and Family Values Entrepreneurship of Physical Activity Research

Studies of physical activity and families by Dwyer *et al.* (2008), Hart *et al.* (2003), Hesketh, Hinkley and Campbell (2012), Rutkowski and Connelly (2011), and Schluter *et al.* (2011) make uncritical assumptions about the knowledge and values that researchers think families ought to possess regarding physical activity and health. Rutkowski and Connelly's (2011) and Hesketh *et al.*'s (2012) views about physical activity and health appear to be informed and shaped by national health policies and guidelines, which subsequently influence their research motives. This influence can sometimes extend to the expectancy that research participants should also be aware of national health guidelines relevant to physical activity and inactivity, as demonstrated by Dwyer *et al.* (2008). Should participants be unaware of current health policies, researchers tend to conclude, and thus, decide for these people that they should be more interested in this knowledge, and policy disseminators should make greater strides to educate these 'disadvantaged' groups about how to achieve a healthy lifestyle (Dwyer *et al.*, 2008; Hesketh *et al.*, 2012; Rutkowski & Connelly, 2011; Schluter *et al.*, 2011). Schluter *et al.*'s (2011) study of mothers' perceptions of physical activity barriers and incentives in New Zealand concluded that those mothers and

families residing in pacific communities were at high risk of avoidable death and disease and a social cost due to their high physical inactivity and obesity levels. Schluter *et al.* (2011) made this conclusion after finding that mothers living on the Pacific Islands did not view physical activity as a meaningful behaviour, even though, according to the researchers, increased physical activity levels amongst this population would have marked benefits upon their health. Schluter *et al.* (2011; p. 157) are aware of the possibility 'that Pacific mothers do not see PA [physical activity] as an issue of importance relative to the many other demanding and immediate issues which confront them', and also admit that the study may be flawed by making little attempt to situate families within the cultural circumstances which they exist. From this perspective, Schluter *et al.* (2011) attempt to enforce a particular set of health values upon families and a community who do not share such values. At the same time, Schluter *et al.*'s (2011) intentions are to improve the health and reduce the prevalence of disease and mortality of Pacific Island mothers and families. The issue here is one of ethnocentricity, which has blighted family research on minority ethnic families (Chambers, 2012).

The indiscriminate research stance of ethnocentricity is described by Chambers (2012; p. 6) as 'the predisposition for western academics to interpret minority ethnic families from their own ethnic viewpoint', leading to a privileging of largely white middle-class family values, who are thus also viewed as being a superior family group. Regular physical activity participation and the importance attached to physical activity by parents as a healthy behaviour appear to be primarily white middle-class family values, reflected in the majority of research to find positive physical activity correlates between parents and their children between 3 and 18 years of age, who were white and middle-class (Lim & Biddle, 2012). This places researchers such as Schluter *et*

*al.* (2011) in a difficult predicament, as they simultaneously impress white middle-class health values upon ethnic minority and lower-class families with the motive of improving their health, without being entirely dismissive of their way of life. Thus, through championing the health benefits of physical activity, which has the potential to markedly improve the physical health of 'at risk' groups, researchers are also implicitly and unintentionally intimating that the family values and parenting practices of minority ethnic families are somehow deviant (Chambers, 2012). Moreover, 'The principles that govern notions of 'good' motherhood can differ significantly according to families' class and ethnic backgrounds', although our understandings of ethnic minority motherhood are limited due to poor research (Chambers, 2012; p. 58). Clearly, physical activity research in the context of family life requires an approach more sensitive to understanding the value of physical activity from the perspective of family members, as opposed to researchers.

Academic scrutiny of parents' health-related knowledge and parenting practices is not exclusive to minority ethnic families. Hart *et al.* (2003) have suggested that parents of primary school children from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds in the United Kingdom have a perspective of health that is too short-term and likely to have undesirable long-term health consequences for their children. Hart *et al.* (2003) use the low status afforded to physical activity within family lifestyle decisions, which receives little parental input or encouragement, as an example of the short-term health focus held by these parents. Although Dwyer *et al.* (2008) have since proposed, that when their children are of preschool age, parents begin to feel a degree of helplessness in encouraging their children to be active, as they perceive the structure of society to socialise children into sedentary habits in spite of their children's strong desire to be active. Parents themselves are also faced with the contradiction of

inculcating their preschool children with the discipline required to sit still when instructed to do so, to prepare them for school (De Craemer *et al.*, 2013). Dwyer *et al.* (2008) recommended that parents would benefit from being better educated about the health risks associated with sedentary behaviours during childhood, which they appear unfamiliar with the national health guidelines for.

A lack of parental involvement in their young children's physical activity has also been attributed to parents' perceptions that they do not need to organise and encourage their children to be active, because they perceive them to be naturally active (Hesketh *et al.*, 2012). Regardless of parents' level of knowledge about the latest national health guidelines for physical activity and sedentariness, the greatest influence upon the extent to which parents are able to promote healthy behaviours amongst their children is that of family circumstance (Hesketh *et al.*, 2012). In a comparison between parents with a firstborn preschool aged child and those with a firstborn child less than a year old, it emerged that those who had been parents for less than a year were hopeful about being able to minimise the time that their children would spend being sedentary, whilst encouraging them to be highly active throughout childhood (Hesketh *et al.*, 2012). However, these hopes were not shared by those who had been parents for at least three years. The more experienced parents had become resigned to the use of effective methods, such as using the television as a babysitter, to give themselves more time to perform other household duties (Hesketh *et al.*, 2012). The authors, Hesketh *et al.* (2012), also point out that the parents of the preschool children were also more likely to have returned to the constraints of their everyday family and employment routines, making them more time poor than the parents who had entered parenthood more recently. Therefore, the circumstances of family life, as dictated by the work, time and caregiving constraints and opportunities of adult family

members, play an influential role in the amounts and types of active and sedentary practices that family members are engaged within contemporary Western societies (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). It is within this context that parents claim society 'de-programs' their young children's 'natural' desire to be active (Dwyer *et al.*, 2008). Yet family circumstances, like the societies which they are a part of, are neither static nor unchangeable (Farrell *et al.*, 2012; Wilson & Pahl, 1988).

Family circumstances alter over time, via changes to aspects of the work, leisure and personal lives of family members and the composition of families more broadly (Farrell *et al.*, 2012; Gilding, 2010; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). Although understandings of current health policies might impact upon parenting practices and the future health of children, the ever-changing circumstances in which families are situated determine the opportunities and constraints that family members have to balance to engage in health-related behaviours (Hesketh *et al.*, 2012; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). Given the increasing diversity of family life and the personal lives and intimate relationships of family members (Chambers, 2012; Giddens, 1992), a research perspective that prioritises parental awareness of national health guidance also overlooks and undermines the likely diversity of the subjective health values constructed by increasingly varied family and household circumstances. Accordingly, it seems reasonable to suggest that to develop our understandings of physical activity in the context of family values and circumstances, detailed qualitative analyses are required to capture the intricate fluctuations in people's personal lives and embrace the diversity of contemporary family life (Chambers, 2012; Farrell *et al.*, 2012).



### 3.5 The Value of Physical Activity within the Social Context of Family Life

The subjective physical activity and health values of families have received relatively less research attention than quantitative surveys of family member's physical activity participation levels, the influence that parents have on the physical activity patterns of their children, and the prevalence of sedentary behaviour during childhood. Be that as it may, it is these subjectivities in the context of family member's personal lives that inform their engagement with being more or less active at various stages of their life course.

Research by Macdonald *et al.* (2004), Ochieng (2011), Pang, Macdonald and Hay (2013), Quarmby and Dagkas, (2010, 2013), and Ramanathan and Crocker (2009) serve as examples of this. Crucially, this research has examined some of the detailed subjectivities of personal lives and family circumstances to discover complex aspects of being more and less active, which are beyond the scope of quantitative methods and those qualitative approaches that reduce physical activity involvement to the psychological climate between parents and children. Through studying the value of physical activity as an aspect of family life from the perspective of 12 Australian families from various socio-economic backgrounds, Macdonald *et al.* (2004) reported that parents of all 12 families referred to how the value of physical activity extended beyond the remit of health and contributed to the overall wellbeing of their family. Overall, parents reflected on physical activity participation as being associated with feeling better about themselves (Macdonald *et al.*, 2004). For parents, feelings of betterment attributed to physical activity engagement consisted of the dimensions of improved long-term physical health, desirable management of body weight and increased emotional wellbeing (Macdonald *et al.*, 2004). Parents also extended similar benefits of physical activity involvement to their children's health, and advocated being

active as a way for children to achieve and maintain their physical health and a useful habit to adopt during childhood for looking after the body throughout the life course (Macdonald *et al.*, 2004). Some of the parents also expressed reservations about the type and location of children's physical activity participation, as potential threats to their children's safety, such as being injured through involvement in contact sports (Macdonald *et al.*, 2004). Regarding location of physical activity participation, seven of the parents shared fears about their children being active outside of their immediate supervision in areas surrounding the family home (Macdonald *et al.*, 2004). Fast moving traffic on nearby roads and the possible presence of strangers were identified by parents as legitimate barriers, and thus constraints, to children's largely informal engagement with physical activity (Macdonald *et al.*, 2004). One of the parents emphasised how anxieties about traffic and strangers were relatively recent developments and notably absent from their own childhood experiences of informal physical activity in residential areas:

Well, when I was a kid there were more children in the street, there was lots of riding bike[s] up and down the street, there was much less traffic then and less fear of being abducted. (Macdonald *et al.*, 2004; p. 318)

Despite the parent's mention of the recent emergence of child safety as a significant social concern, the authors make no attempt to further understand how child safety fears have emerged and might be connected to broader societal changes. Nor do the authors provide any insight into how physical activity is valued in conjunction, and comparison with, other family practices and values.

Pang *et al.*'s (2013) study of 10 to 15-year-old children, who had migrated with their families to Australia from China, located physical activity within these young people's lifestyles as being somewhat at odds with the Confucian philosophy

underpinning many of the family values and practices encouraged by their parents. Pang *et al.* (2013) draw upon the tension between practices which parents expected and supported their children to invest in for a successful future and those activities, such as physical activity, which were of interest to the young people but fell outside of being legitimised as worthwhile via their parent's Confucian beliefs. The parent's Confucian-informed approach to raising their children in a largely Westernised nation was based primarily on the binary thesis of "being happy now won't lead to success in the future", and vice versa' (Pang *et al.*, 2013; p. 13). Those activities legitimated as being worthwhile by parents were limited to academic and musical pursuits and achievements, yet their children's subjective definitions of success also incorporated being happy and proud of themselves and therefore, at times, deviated from Asian family norms, probably as a consequence of the children's Australian schooling. Tensions between parents and their children as to whether physical activity was a practice to be prioritised in young people's lifestyles often resulted with the children sacrificing their involvement in physical activity to devote more time to their academic studies, and justifying this forfeit on a personal level by associating academic study with an increased chance of gaining ideal employment in later life (Pang *et al.*, 2013).

In contrast to the research by Macdonald *et al.* (2004), Pang *et al.* (2013) situate the value that families place upon physical activity participation within the milieu of other family values, philosophies and practices, which are not necessarily conducive to prioritising physical activity participation as a worthwhile practice for family members. A proposed reason for Macdonald *et al.*'s (2004) representation of physical activity values being constructed independently of other family values is due to the difficulty of thinking sociologically about the public and private milieu and structures in which both the researchers and participants are immersed. Wright Mills (1959)

suggests that a core premise of thinking sociologically is the necessity to navigate the distinctions and connections between personal troubles and public issues. Such connections and distinctions were likely to be more obvious to the researchers in Pang *et al.*'s (2013) study, as the participants were migrant families experiencing personal troubles brought about by clashes between the child-rearing values of the Eastern world, from which they emigrated, against those of the Western nation they had immigrated to. Whereas, despite collecting interesting data, Macdonald *et al.*'s (2004) study of Australian families falls short of explaining and placing the physical activity values of single family units within the broader context of Australian family values. Wright Mills (1959; p. 10) also proposes that 'to understand the changes of many personal milieux we are required to look beyond them.' Yet Macdonald *et al.*'s (2004; p. 307) generalised conclusion that 'physical activity was highly valued across different family contexts' illustrates that the research has not 'completed its intellectual journey' (Wright Mills, 1959; p. 6). This is to say that future studies of the value of physical activity involvement within the context of family life need to identify and explain connections and distinctions between the personal lives of family members and wider social structures and processes, to make better sense of physical activity within family life (Evans & Davies, 2010).

Ramanathan and Crocker's (2009) qualitative study of adolescent females from families of Indian descent residing in Canada provides a detailed account of the influence of Indian family culture on girls' engagement with physical activity. Ramanathan and Crocker (2009) consider that such is the prominence placed on equipping girls with the capabilities required to become good mothers from a young age within Indian culture, that the time girls have available to participate in physical activity is constantly restricted. One participant felt that, from birth, the cultural heritage

of Indian families pushes females toward being responsible for taking care of a family. Even though not all cultures attempt to condition girls into mothers as early as might be the case in Indian culture, Ramanathan and Crocker's (2009) findings give rise to the consideration that mothering is a valued family practice, rather than simply a social role associated with being of a particular age, which appears instantly as a consequence of having children. Based on Ramanathan and Crocker's (2009) findings, it seems that although adolescent daughters value the opportunity to be regularly active to maintain and improve their health, it is the value that their families attach to girls becoming 'good mothers' which is their priority, even though they are yet to have any children of their own. This presents an interesting area for more thorough and extensive research and an opportunity to move away from thinking about parent-child relationships as being primarily dictated by parents, who are effectively portrayed as being 'in charge' of the family. Furthermore, sociologists of the family have started to think beyond nuclear family norms and outside of presumed binaries between homo and heterosexual relationships, at a time when personal lives are becoming increasingly diverse, fathers are more involved in providing care for their children, and new identities of motherhood are developing (Chambers, 2012; Lewis & Ridge, 2005). More physical activity research that is conscious to such trends is merited.

### 3.6 Family Life as a Process

To develop qualitative physical activity research there is also a need to embrace family life as a social process, rather than it being confined to that of a social structure (Allan, 1999; Allan & Crow, 2001). Quarmby and Dagkas (2010; p. 53) assert 'that

family structure plays a vital role in helping to shape children's dispositions towards physical activity', as well as providing reasonable evidence to make this claim. However, Quarmby and Dagkas' argument is predominantly based on the *process* through which children are exposed to and adopt physical activity values held by their parents in both single and dual parent households. Quarmby and Dagkas propose that children's inclinations or absence of inclinations to be regularly active are a product of their family background. Yet such inclinations were also part of the wider process of their parent's own biographies, life histories and socially constructed interests and values, processes which were evidently significant regardless of the number of parents in the household (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). Therefore, to understand physical activity values within the circumstances of family life it is crucial to adopt a perspective that embraces family values as being intergenerational, a view supported by Macdonald *et al.* (2004).

Despite Quarmby and Dagkas' preoccupation with reiterating the significance of family structure at the expense of family processes, their application of the work of Pierre Bourdieu to the processes and structures of family life and relationships is a useful sociological approach. At the crux of Quarmby and Dagkas' argument is Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus, utilised to make sense of how children's physical activity dispositions are a product of their socialisation during early childhood. Family is arguably the most prominent domain in respect of a child's early socialisation and thus of bespoke relevance in the development of habitus, which people act out as routine practices (Bourdieu, 1984; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). Yet at the same time as developing a habitus that embodies their inclinations towards more and less active behaviours, young children are also developing a habitus as a family member (Bourdieu, 1984). It is this process of learning how to fulfil the role and identity of a son

or daughter within specific family circumstances that is overlooked and unintentionally reduced to the *structure* of families by Quarmby and Dagkas. Herein exists an opening for the current investigation to study the nature of the interdependencies and connections between family and physical activity and changes which occur in conjunction with transitions through childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus holds a commanding position in explicitly sociological research on the physical activity and sport socialisation of children. With a greater concentration on the sporting habits of children than Quarmby and Dagkas' (2010) more general scope of physical activity, Wheeler, Green and Thurston (2019) argue that children's opportunities for participation are more constrained if their parents are working-class compared to children with middle-class parents. Thus, according to both studies, the implications are that, at best, working-class parents are in severe need of help because their resources of time and money are too limited to be able to help themselves, or at worst, they care little about broadening their children's access to participatory experiences. Either way, children of working-class families (Wheeler *et al.*, 2019) and single-parent households (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010) would appear to be doomed. In themselves, both pieces of research provide convincing and compelling arguments for the immediate and short-term predicament of children's physical activity and sport participation as shaped by household structure and social class respectively. The common thread of predicting pessimistic futures for these children would appear to emerge from the choice to apply Bourdieu's (1984) work to the research, with some evidence of a reversion to Marx's (1867/2004) deterministic interpretation of the underclass proletariat's life chances, who is instantly trapped forever by the family they are born into. Effectively, both studies utilise Bourdieu's claims about the consequences of habitus to predict significant

connotations for the lifelong sport and physical activity participation of the children studied, according to the family circumstances they found themselves in during childhood. There is therefore a case to be made for a retrospective study design, where participants themselves can recall the relevance of childhood physical activity to the notion of lifelong participation.

Away from methodological and theoretical analyses of the physical activity of families, a more basic discussion persists, which has, in various forms, dominated the sociology of the family for almost three decades. Put simply, what is 'the family?' (Allan & Crow, 2001; Bernardes, 1988; Bokemeier, 1997; Chambers, 2012; Gilding, 2010). The emergence of new ways of thinking about family life has been accompanied by a growth in alternative and supplementary concepts employed in family sociology (Chambers, 2012; Gilding, 2010). The increased prominence of research framed by personal lives, intimacies, relationships, kinship, family practices, friendships and communities as situated within family life have meant that 'the family' is now rarely conceptualised as a social institution characterised by biological ties (Chambers, 2012; Gilding, 2010). Gilding (2010) is critical of this shift, by arguing that the fundamental agreement once shared by sociologists as to the basic constitution of the family has been lost in favour of an excessively reflexive approach to making sense of family life. Research has moved away from what was once understood as the sociology of 'the family', and a number of new frames of enquiry have emerged in conjunction with increasingly diverse personal lives and the erosion of family as a patriarchal and heteronormative institution (Gilding, 2010). While 'the family' as a field of inquiry may have been displaced by more critical modes of thought, according to Gilding there has also been an unwarranted reflexive dismissal of the appreciation of the biological dimension of family kinship ties and families as social institutions.



Instead, it has become commonplace for families to be looked upon as a series of inter-related social relationships, therefore reducing families to a single configuration of relationships amidst others (Gilding, 2010). In this sense, sociological studies of the broad area of what used to be referred to as 'the family' now tend to overlook two of the vital premises upon which such studies were initially justified (Gilding, 2010). These underpinning rationales are that families are unique because of the intimate biological ties involved and that families are arguably the most significant social institution due to their role in the early socialisation of most people (Cheal, 2002; Gilding, 2010).

Gilding's (2010) fears about the recent decline in the use of 'the family' as a term in family-oriented research are also evident in academic debate over two decades earlier. This debate ensued when Bernardes (1987) questioned the role that family sociology might have played in legitimating a nuclear model of the ideal family used in family policy. Bernardes (1987; p. 695) goes on to suggest, because of the power of family ideology, 'the family' should be abandoned as a sociological concept and alternative, less archaic terms should be used to proceed with analyses of 'family life'. The basis to Bernardes' (1987) recommendation is that although people have an idea of what a family is, different people have different and sometimes contradictory images of what this idea of the family is, contradictions and differences that seldom emerged in sociological studies of the family. Conversely, on the odd occasion when more thorough analyses of family life are accomplished, Bernardes (1987; p. 683) claims that "'the family" *does not actually exist*' and holds little relevance to people's lived circumstances. Wilson and Pahl (1988) rejected Bernardes' attempt to denounce 'the family' from the study of family life, by suggesting that the most pressing issue in family sociology was the need for researchers to distinguish between 'household' and

'family'. Although Wilson and Pahl agreed with Bernardes in respect of avoiding any need to categorise household and family 'types', as too many varieties of family exist to justify a typology as useful. Wilson and Pahl (1988) used data from a family ethnography they had conducted to illustrate that the core problem does not concern the relevance of the term 'family' to people's circumstances, but what research participants *really* mean when mentioning 'my family'. Wilson and Pahl suggested 'kin' to be a better point of reference than 'family', for the purposes of sociology. Wilson and Pahl (1988) concluded that to study family is to study a process, not a stasis, and that more detailed qualitative enquiry is needed for a fuller understanding of the complex social boundaries at play. Bernardes' (1988; p. 268-9) response homed in on three pivotal research issues pertinent to interpretations of the term 'family', relevant to researcher reflexivity, methods, and interviewees' responses:

Firstly... we each already know too much about 'the family'. Secondly... 'family' terms are 'present in a host of different situations involving different meanings all at the same time'. Thirdly, 'family' terms are prototypical – they carry political/ideological/moral power as patterns, models, standards or archetypes.

These issues remain crucial considerations in contemporary family sociology, even more so as the concept of family becomes increasingly fluid and changeable (Chambers, 2012).

Against the critical backdrop of the rich and challenging debates of the past three decades in family sociology (Chambers, 2012; Farrell *et al.*, 2012; Gilding, 2010), research that attempts to understand physical activity within the context of family life, practices, influences and structure are noticeably less thorough and reflexive. On the whole, 'the family' is used as a static and reliable point of reference by scholars such as Quarmby and Dagkas (2010) and Bois *et al.* (2005), to critically examine the more

and less active and sedentary pursuits of family members, particularly children. This is most evident in the way families have been described by Bois *et al.* (2005) and Quarmby and Dagkas (2010) as 'intact', in consisting of two non-divorced heterosexual parents and their biological children. The definition of the intact family holds many similar characteristics to that of the ideal, unrepresentative and functional nuclear family, and implies that there is something inferior and less pure about the intimate relationships of families which deviate from this president (Chambers, 2012). In other words, families comprised of homosexual couples, step-parents, single parent households, adopted children, step-children, or no children do not constitute moral, stable and 'proper' families, as they are allegedly 'broken' (Chambers, 2012). It is this type of misleading assumption attached to 'family types' by researchers in family sociology and physical activity that continues to receive criticism for being hierarchical, homophobic and exclusionary (Chambers, 2012).

In addition to being unrepresentative of the make-up of contemporary families, Bois *et al.* (2005) and Quarmby and Dagkas (2010) restrict family members' physical activity influences to those which exist within pre-determined strict family structures and overlook the trend of increasing familial diversity. As explained by Chambers (2012; p. 175), "'families as friends" and "friends as family" are increasingly in circulation nowadays to indicate the fluidity and egalitarian possibilities of personal ties'. There appears to have been something of a convergence between family and friends in recent times, with friends more likely to fulfil roles once performed primarily by family members and people becoming increasingly selective about which extended family members they regularly socialise with (Chambers, 2012). In conjunction with Giddens' (1992) suggestion of democratic transformations to intimate relationships and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) individualisation thesis, there is a growing

school of thought that one's 'family' life is better understood as their *personal life* to embrace the way in which friends have become a more prominent part of people's personal lives and *families of choice* have emerged (Chambers, 2012). Therefore, there is no reason for future physical activity research in the context of family life to be restricted to the study of biological ties or 'intact' and 'broken' family structures. Moreover, research approaches more sensitive to the fluidity of both historical time and the individual life course will also be conducive to more useful and detailed research findings.

### ***Research Issues and the Methodological Implications***

In some respects, both wellbeing and family strands of physical activity research exhibit similar tendencies, through being dominated by conceptualisations of specific types of family and wellbeing. In the case of families, this singularity is due to an absence of a critical awareness that family is a difficult concept and area in which to conduct research. In one sense, there is the unassailable issue that family is continuously changing, but the lack of any recognition of vital discussions around the concept of family that continue to take place in the social sciences is an avoidable limitation of the physical activity literature. The narrow approach to wellbeing within physical activity research is due to the authoritative position held by SWB surveys. The notion of SWB has been useful in outlining the largely positive relationship between physical activity participation and wellbeing, although notably less thought has been given to how wellbeing is experienced over extended periods of time within the unfolding of a life. On a practical level, this section of the thesis implies that there is significant overlap between family and wellbeing within people's everyday

experiences. With family relationships likely to function as a fundamental source of wellbeing, and feelings of wellbeing certain to impact upon the quality of family relationships. Hence, any qualitative method conducive to collecting data of a storied nature must be capable of viewing family life as an ongoing process of socialisation as well as making connections between wellbeing and the unfolding of a life. Salient to the reviewed literature is how ageing and gender influence socialisation experiences of family life, wellbeing and physical activity participation. Whilst social class-oriented analyses of family influences on physical activity engagement paint more of a static and unchangeable picture, ageing is inherently processual and inseparable from socialisation and the gendering of family life would appear to offer a unique platform from which to further understand ongoing changes to gender relations. A retrospective study design would also be beneficial in further understanding claims made about the positive association between childhood physical activity and the chances of lifelong involvement. In addition to the importance of gender and age, maximising the variety of the participant sample to recognise contrasting family contexts and interpretations of the connection between physical activity participation and improved wellbeing could challenge existing dominant interpretations, while also increasing the transferability of the findings across a great frequency of contexts. In the next chapter, a life history research philosophy is proposed with these considerations in mind, before outlining career and oral history interview methods more specifically.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1 Aim and Objectives**

The broad aim of the research was to better understand the connections between physical activity, wellbeing and family membership through storied experiences and the impact on participation over the life course. This was broken down into the following objectives:

- The potential contribution of physical activity to human wellbeing across the life course within a range of family contexts

That physical activity is beneficial to wellbeing is predominantly understood through psychological studies that show more physically active people tend to have higher levels of wellbeing. Nevertheless, the majority of this knowledge rests upon SWB surveys that tell us little about the context of people's everyday lives or the wellbeing experiences brought about by being physically active. Thus, it is an intention of the current study to generate more detailed and specific knowledge about the relatively well-established connection between physical activity engagement and enhanced wellbeing. The study is designed to do this through lived experiences and interpretations of wellbeing in relation to physical activity participation amongst a sample of participants who exhibit variety according to family context and the associated gendering of family membership.

- The interplay between family membership and the practice of physical activity

For the most part, family research in the social sciences has been preoccupied with one-directional vertical ties between parent and child (Mauthner, 2005), implicitly

informed by the idea that socialisation is something all-powerful parents impart upon their children (Edwards & Weller, 2014). The same can be observed of physical activity participation studies in the context of families (Day, 2018). Taking a more intimate approach to investigating families, the study aims to get at the interplay between physical activity careers and being a family member. Viewing this as an interaction, and therefore recognising that physical activity levels and day-to-day family life change over time, promises for a deeper, fuller and more complex understanding than most previous studies. The nature of this data will also avoid portraying parental socialisation as the sole cause of how the lives of participants and their own children have unfolded so far, another shortcoming that informs the design of existing studies and the type of evidence subsequently produced (Day, 2018).

- The relevance of being active during childhood to physical activity participation across the life course

Some evidence exists for the significant influence of childhood physical activity upon lifelong physical activity, although some studies also show a lack of connection between the life course stages of childhood and adulthood (Day, 2018). Contradictory findings for such a link mean that it does not *always* exist and, more importantly, the real significance of this assumption is unclear, despite lifelong adherence to physical activity being continually cited as the fundamental rationale for researching children's physical activity participation (Day, 2018). Using a retrospective qualitative research design to study physical activity involvement across the life course lends itself to exploring how life course stages, phase and transitions inform physical activity engagement. A further advantage of a design of this type is that the role played out by

those parts and events of life that transpire unexpectedly and unsettle the normativity of the life course will be acknowledged. Above all else, the greatest value of retrospective lived experiences of physical activity is that they represent interpretations of real occurrences, rather than informed predictions about the *likely* lifelong consequences of childhood physical activity commonplace in this research area.

## 4.2 Stories: reflexivity and philosophical assumptions

### *4.2.1 Getting to Know myself through Family Stories*

As referred to in the literature review, people hold different and sometimes contradictory images of what they perceive and interpret as 'family'. Considering this, interpretations of what I perceive others to mean by the term family will be affected by my own upbringing and background. Thus, it is appropriate to reflect on some of the crucial moments I seem able to recall from my socialisation so far and how these experiences may have shaped what I have come to 'know' about the world through my reliving of stories constructed in collaboration with significant others.

Prior to my birth, my mum's brother was killed when he was hit by a car while walking home from college, his name was John. As the next born into my extended family, I was named John. During the early years of my life, I remember my mum making occasional reference to how much she missed him and trying to explain to me what he was like as a person and a brother. She also predicted that he would have revelled in his role as my uncle. When my mum relayed stories of my late uncle's life, I can recall how I sensed the complexity of her emotions. She seemed to be sad but at the same time it felt as though she gained some form of inner peace by taking time out from her daily schedule of household chores to remember the life of someone she



missed dearly. There was a photograph of him on a shelf above the television and I would sometimes look at it when the television was on and attempt to imagine what he was like based on my mum's stories. Generally, I would think of him as a talented musician who also had a gift with computers, and if I thought about him for long enough I would sometimes experience a degree of bitterness that I would never get the opportunity to meet him. One day, when mum picked me up from school, this changed. It was winter, and approaching the end of the calendar year during my first or second year at primary school, so, in preparation for the traditional nativity play we had been introduced to the characters of God, Jesus Christ and Joseph. I cannot remember the specifics of how the teacher disseminated this information, but I do remember the first question I asked my mum after school that day. 'Mum, do you believe in God?', up until this point in my life, I expect most of the questions I had asked my parents received a clear answer. My mum's response was something along the lines of, 'No I don't, if he did exist then why did he take my brother away? and when he was hit by that car, why did he let him die? Although you can believe in God if you want to, it's up to you...'. From this point onwards, whenever I looked at his photo I was perplexed about the role that God may or not play in the commencement and termination of human life. Even more confusing was that I was being educated by my school about something that my mum did not believe in.

By the end of my time in compulsory education, I had become unsettled by how I had been schooled in subject areas that were partitioned off from one another, as though they were standalone topics, constituting entirely separate types of human knowledge. On the whole, the message was a contradictory one. I can still recall Tuesday afternoons when I was twelve years old, after lunch we would have religious education and then walk across to the science laboratories for biology. Religious

education was approached from the position that various Gods had created humans and then we would go about biology as though humans had evolved from other species. Across the subjects I studied at school, it seemed that the main underpinning issues of relevance and purpose were excluded from curricula in favour of more linear issues, consisting of facts to be imparted, learned and regurgitated. It felt as though there was an obvious gap between my life at home and my life at school, even though each were supposed to help me with the other and prepare me to become a functioning adult member of society. Of course, there were also other things going on at this time, things that were bigger than me, in which I had played no part, but were likely to have a bearing on the rest of my life.

My preferred subject was physical education and my dad was friends with the manager of a local sports centre, so to begin my penultimate academic year in compulsory education this is where I chose to do my mandatory two-week work experience placement. I was sat behind the reception desk on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 when news broke that at least one plane had crashed into New York's World Trade Centre. Over the next few weeks, media coverage of what was now being referred to as '9/11' was unparalleled. It occurred to me that, within my lifetime, this might be a historically significant event that re-shapes the future. I took a step back and exposed myself to as many perspectives as I could. The thing that troubled me most were the experts who appeared on television attempting to make recommendations as to how the problem of terrorism could be 'solved', as though it was possible for societies to revert back to how they were before 9/11. There were also those who struggled to accept that over half a century after the end of World War Two some groups of humans were still killing other groups of humans, a disbelief apparently justified on the grounds that 50 years is a 'long' time. I think this is when I started to grow a sociological

imagination. The work experience placement was a disappointment, both for myself and my dad's friend. I found the work tedious, repetitive and to be more about business and management than sport. I think my temporary boss was expecting me to be loud, outgoing and happy-go-lucky like my dad, but at this age I was quiet, shy and tentative, more like my mum. It was not until after I had left school and started making choices for myself that I learned about the value of money, friendship, honesty and hard work and gradually became more confident and assertive.

During my penultimate academic year at secondary school my grandfather (my mum's father) died following a heart attack. Subsequently, my grandmother, now living alone, eventually moved to the village where I lived with my parents to be closer to us. This was a new experience for me, as it meant for the first time in my life, I lived within walking distance of one of my grandparents. By this time, I had finished compulsory education and was taking further qualifications at college. When I started visiting her I was intrigued by how she had a view on most current news topics and seemed to enjoy sharing these with me. Over the next couple of years, before I left for university, we grew closer. I would visit her around twice per week and pepper her with questions about how she had come to form her opinions on issues such as immigration, transport and welfare benefits. Her evidence consisted almost entirely of her own experiences, that she had lived through and shared with others. She remembered, told me about, and relived her memories through stories. She built-up a context, which sometimes focused on the location, or at other times was more about the people she was with, but there was always sufficient descriptive detail for me to paint a picture in my own mind. A leading example occurred while we were watching television news coverage of how the suspect of a plotted bomb attack in Ireland had been released without charge. Her immediate reaction was 'I'm not surprised; those Irish police are ever so

sensitive!', I was curious, and knew I was about to listen to a story. She told me of how her and my grandfather had once visited Ireland for a holiday in their campervan. One night they parked on the side of a quiet road to sleep before continuing on their journey the following morning. They were awoken early, at around 4.00 am, with torchlights shining through the windows and a bang on the door. It was the police, and they wanted to search the campervan for firearms. My grandad explained that he and my grandma were simply tourists who had settled down for the evening. It was of no avail and the police searched my grandparent's temporary home from 'top to bottom'.

I learned a considerable amount from my gran's stories during this period of my life about how people come to know, or at least think they come to know, about the contexts in which they are situated and exist. It was not so much the content of what she said, but why she chose certain stories from her extensive back catalogue of life experiences. She shared her experiences with me because they carried meaning, but each story had a unique meaning. Nothing was as meaningful and resonated with me as much as when she revealed that my grandad had been unfaithful on numerous occasions. That opened my eyes to the possibility that everything was not always as it seemed, and that some elements of the lives of family members who were close to me had been hidden from me during my childhood. She explained 'leaving him was never really option though, we were both working, had businesses to run and four children to bring-up... yeah the children were the main thing really'. I remember this word-for-word because it is the most selfless thing I have heard a mother say. I felt humbled that this person was my grandma. She put my mum's upbringing before her own emotional pain and suffering. She just carried on as normal. What I learned from this was sometimes people close to you unexpectedly put in you in a position where you are forced to make a choice that will change the future. My gran's reaction to my

grandad's infidelity was that the bigger picture was more important in the long-term, her pain was not worth disrupting the childhood of her four children for. Despite some of what my gran revealed to me on this occasion being difficult to take-in and accept, she was more than comfortable in reliving the events of the time she followed my grandad to confirm her suspicions. This is an indicative characteristic of our relationship, there is rarely any 'small talk' we just get straight to it and share our opinions of both private and public issues. In this respect, I find it easier to talk to my gran than my parents about some aspects of my life. I am grateful for the upbringing my parents provided me with, so much so that I feel a pressure and expectation to do them proud, as a way of repaying them. This pressure and expectation is entirely self-imposed, but also an unavoidable circumstance that I was born into. Part of it may be due to the fact I was named after my mum's dead brother, but I cannot be sure, as I can only ever be myself and I was named after him for no other reason than because he died. The generational 'gap' between my gran and I somehow functions as a way of removing any reservations I might have about expressing myself.

Now that I am no longer dependent upon my parents to provide for me, I feel less pressured to do them proud. There is something liberating about the possibilities and risks of being able to make my own mistakes, of which I will experience the consequences. This is one of the main reasons why I think and see the dependent son that I was, as a different person to who I am now. Nevertheless, I am also aware that this period of my life provided the structure for the person I am now. I found growing-up as difficult, it was as much as about keeping my nose clean as it was about getting ahead of my peers and generational cohort. I have a stronger sense of self-identity now. I am aware of various structural social constraints that might restrict my choices, but I see these as challenges to be overcome, but then again as a young,

white, heterosexual, middle-class male I am expected and in a position to make such a statement. I also feel privileged for my upbringing. My parents provided stability, they have been together since they were sixteen, my dad has always had the same job and we moved to a new house once but remained in the same village. I was born into a family and experienced a childhood that subsequently placed few restrictions on my early life as an independent adult. We were also fortunate on various occasions when my dad's company almost went out of business, the financing of which was secured against the family home. There were also other instances when we got lucky as a family, when my brother was a metre away from being hit by a car on a family holiday, or when a scaffolding pole slipped off the back of a truck and through the windscreen of the car my mum was driving, but only cut her hand. On the whole, I feel my childhood was long enough ago to be referred to as *the past*.

#### *4.2.2 Knowledge, Experience, Truth and the Real*

My understandings and interpretations of past experiences are influential to the way I go about my everyday life. I would say that my previous experiences have come to inform what Thomas and Thomas (1928) referred to as the evolution of a life policy. This personal life policy represents and rationalises how I go about my daily interactions with others and negotiate the world around me more generally. Although this particular life policy is my own, it is an ongoing product of my socialisation, a continuous process simultaneously enabled and constrained by the generational cohort I was born into and the accompanying social conditions in place at this point in time (Miller, 2000). In some respects, the choices I had available to me were determined by the interplay between social conditions and the values of those

significant to my ongoing socialisation. People hold unique world views, but these views are constructed from a specific position and we do not chose the family circumstances that we are born into, or our initial positioning within the family unit who introduce the world to us (Miller, 2000). Those around me play a part in the perpetual evolution of my life policy and world view. As such, I construct my knowledge of the world through my interactions with others (Mead, 1934). Yet while these interactions are a fundamental aspect of how one acquires knowledge via socialisation, it is the *interpretation* of interactions with others that serves as the sticking point in what constitutes knowledge (Denzin, 2001, 2014).

People interact through symbols, performances and words. For Herbert Blumer (1969), symbols are most obvious and influential, Norman Denzin (2014) proposes that our lives are played, recalled and reinterpreted as symbolic statements of textual performances, and Jean-Paul Sartre (1963) has proclaimed that interactions and expressions are to be found only in the limited amount of words available to us. Although these slightly different perspectives are interesting for discussions concerning the most basic level of human interaction, there would appear to be some form of agreement between them relevant to how our knowledge of the world is mediated and shaped by practices of human interaction. Our most comprehensive and intentional interactions with others and ourselves are arranged and structured into stories (Atkinson, 1998; Bertaux, 1995; Cole & Knowles, 2001a; Denzin, 2001, 2014; Matiss, 2001; Plummer, 2001). Organising our scattered life experiences into stories gives a degree of order and coherence to how we recall and tell of our lives, which are always personally situated and historically contextualised (Atkinson, 1998; Plummer, 2001). Commenting on the potential usefulness of stories for researchers, Atkinson (1998; p. 74) observes, 'Story gives us lived experience in its purest, and rawest, form.

Story gives us the real context within which a thing needs to be seen to understand it effectively'. Permeating the link between personal and human history as well as the inextricable relation between 'knowing' and 'meaning' within the 'real' context of life stories, efforts to capture people's lived experience would seem to permit academics to make knowledge claims about the lives of others (Cole & Knowles, 2001b).

For Bertaux (1981), historical knowledge is the single variety of knowing that sociologists can attempt to get at. Atkinson (1998) concurs, based on the premise that we can 'know' only about experiences and events that have already happened. Historians might be quick to point out that knowing about the past is valuable because it has come to structure the way we live in the present, but this point of view does not acknowledge that it is impossible to capture 'the present'. Instead of attempting to make problematic and unnecessary distinctions between the past, present and future, Bertaux (1981) suggests social researchers orient themselves to view the present as history, because the present always becomes history. This standpoint allows us to locate ourselves within, and acquire knowledge about, the everyday social struggles, conditions and processes of the historical time in which we exist (Becker, 1966; Bertaux, 1981). Postmodernists and poststructuralists have been critical about postulations that assert any degree of a singular knowingness over research participants or audiences (Goodson, 2001). Likewise, theorists who believe humankind recently entered a new epoch have unsettled dominant ideas about the chronological ordering of history and life stories, by considering them as no more than linear assumptions (Denzin, 2014; Goodson, 2001). The alternative to constructing knowledge and history as singulars, for those who identify with a movement beyond the modern and the structural, is represented by the multiplicity and disruption apparently evident in people's subjectivities due to the increased messiness of their



lives (Goodson, 2001). Aware of this alternative perspective, Bertaux (1995; p. 69), referring to social mobility processes, argues that although 'it is impossible to know "das Ding in sich (the thing in itself)". We can imagine its existence, i.e. construct mental images of it'. In other words, knowledge is a product of our shared imagination and the structural facets of mainstream frameworks like kinship and political system exist as a point of collective reference at a social level (Denzin, 2001). We know what is meant when referring to 'family', although each of our mental images of what constitutes this concept are likely to exhibit variations on this theme due to contrasting familial experiences (Bernardes, 1988). These variations in experiential knowledge, relayed in story form, are what social scientists strive to better understand by employing specifically designed instruments of observation (Bertaux, 1995). While this goes some way to addressing doubts about whether contemporary knowingness can still rely on modern or structural groundings, scepticism surrounding the instant translation of people's stories and subjectivities into knowledge, voiced prior to the emergence of postmodernism and poststructuralism, merit further discussion.

Around a century ago, in their seminal life history study *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, Thomas and Znaniecki (1918; pp. 4-5) wrote:

The first of these fallacies has often been exposed... the latent or manifest supposition that we know social reality because we live in it, and that we can assume things and relations as certain on the basis of our empirical acquaintance with them. The attitude here is about the same as in the ancient assumption that we know the physical world because we live and act in it, and that therefore we have the right of generalizing without a special and thorough investigation, on the mere basis of "common sense".

A sensibility toward the shortcomings of taking people's subjective perspectives as objective statements and greater researcher acknowledgement of the privileged

position they hold in representing and rewriting people's lives has since established itself in qualitative research (Plummer, 2001). In the main, experts committed to doing justice to the construction of authentic and useful representations of people's lives suggest that knowledge is possible but partial, and should be rooted in human experience in preference to theoretical deduction or scientism, and remain open to alternative interpretations (Bertaux, 1981; Cole & Knowles, 2001b; Denzin, 2001, 2014; Goodson, 2001; Plummer, 2001). As a consequence of concerns by scholars, such as Thomas and Znaniecki (1918), about the worth of treating participant subjectivities as 'the truth' from which knowledge can be created, social researchers, influenced by their colleagues in the physical sciences, set about making social studies more valid and reliable (Goodson, 2001; Plummer, 2001). Gradually, the relative dominance of physical science, under the guise of being the most genuine model of science, brought positivist ideas to the collection and analysis of people's life experiences with the intention of making the social more 'legitimate' (Goodson, 2001; Plummer, 2001). This supposed remedy of social research was at odds with recommendations made by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918), when they voiced their concerns about qualitative representations of a social reality, as they made clear that calls to use the rigours by which understandings of the natural world had been achieved would be a move in the wrong direction in attempting to unravel the social. Likewise, Bertaux (1981, 1995), Ferrarotti (1981) and Plummer (2001) are especially critical of qualitative modes of social enquiry derived from positivist attempts to replicate rules of quantitative scientific method. In a similar, but more contemporary fashion, Bertaux's (1995; p. 85) fears about establishing a 'model' of social scientific enquiry, echo those outlined by Thomas and Znaniecki in the early part of the twentieth century,

To reject such stories because they are 'not objective' (but what *could* be an 'objective' story?), because they are 'subjective', unchecked, value-loaded, mythical, would simply amount to applying the criteria which are good for survey research to another, quite different method of observation... subjectivities contribute to the progress of objective knowledge.

Moreover, positivist presuppositions that the 'objective' is superior to the 'subjective' in getting to grips with the social world run deeper than debates about data analysis and can also be found in attempts to get at people's subjectivities using objective and dehumanistic methods of qualitative extraction. Plummer (2001; pp. 156-7) points out, that 'To purge research of all these "sources of bias" is to purge research of human life. It presumes a "real" truth may be obtained once all these biases have been removed', on the contrary, 'It is precisely through these "sources of bias" that a "truth" comes to be assembled'.

Ferrarotti (1981) holds a position complementary to Plummer's, in that the greater the depth of intimate intersubjectivity reached between researcher and participant, as developed through their interactions and sharing of knowledge, the more comprehensive, profound and revealing the character of the data becomes. Ferrarotti admits that this approach will appear 'risky' to those who rely upon what they perceive to be a robust and mechanical scientific research epistemology, but that the comprehensive, profound and revealing are indicative of objectivity in social terms. Dropping the servile commitment to mythical imitations of the physical sciences, which ignores the interactive and relational chaos of collecting qualitative data from living research participants, opens an awareness of how a researcher's own subjectivities and previous experiences impact the research process and subsequent knowledge claims (Cole & Knowles, 2001c). These influential experiences are not limited to the

researcher's personal involvement in the everyday, but also include their theoretical training, which will shape the ways that subjectivities are interpreted and 'knowing' is represented (Cole & Knowles, 2001c; Goodson, 2001).

In the methodological approach to *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) also took issue with researchers who claim their conclusions represent the pure experiences of their participants, as even the most empirical academic explanation of a phenomena is still an explanation of another and at least once removed from the experiences of participants. Furthermore, scholars of life history and biographical methods, such as Goodson (2001), have since rejected the implicit premise that lived experiences can be fully recaptured. Within Goodson's review of the evolution of life history methods in sociology following the publication of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, it is intimated that as a consequence of the emergence of postmodernity, the unsettling rawness of participants' subjectivities, denounced for not being scientific enough in the early twentieth century, were lauded for their diverse and fragmented outlook by the end of the century. The storied format by which people recall and relay their life experiences and subjectivities has also emerged as a mode of representation that warrants genuine attention and discussion in qualitative research, as they are 'already removed from life experiences – they are lives interpreted and textual. They represent a partial, selective commentary on lived experience' (Goodson, 2001; p. 138).

Getting as close as is possible to people's lives and experiences has therefore become the current aim of much qualitative research (Cole & Knowles, 2001a). The occurrence of an experience has already happened and can only be told and interpreted as it is remembered and represented by the participant (Denzin, 2001). The representative style as well as the content of people's stories provide both an

increased messiness and meaning to the events that have shaped, and continue to shape, their lives (Bruner, 1984; Plummer, 2001). The telling of a life experience offers a unique account from the perspective and memory of a single person, but experiences are often shared with others and feed into a wider collection of tales (Aston, 2001; Atkinson, 1998). It is the interplay between the unique and the collective of storied experience which builds a biography that is simultaneously a cause and product of the personal and the society a person is situated (Denzin, 2001; Wright Mills, 1959; Znaniecki, 1934). People's experiences are attached to names that reflect their personal identities and group memberships (Denzin, 2001). Being a family member comes with an expectancy to perform the role of a mother, father, son or daughter at indicative stages of the life course, and entry into parenthood occurs following experiences of being a daughter or son (Denzin, 2001). Accordingly, families are what Ferrarotti (1981; p. 24) identifies as primary groups, essential to biographical methods as 'the fundamental mediation between the social and the individual'. More than this, primary group experiences 'cut to the core of the person's life and leave indelible marks', giving meaning to biographical experience (Denzin, 2001; p. 62).

The biographies and storied experiences of living people are inherently unstable, locked within a perpetual state of social becoming (Denzin, 2014; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918-1920). The implications for research are that participants' stories frequently contain valuable insights that are unanticipated by the researcher. Presenting us with more than 'fact or fiction', one is instead met with the assemblage of moral struggles, successes, failures and the unfolding of destiny (Atkinson, 1998; p. 20). People recall memorable experiences from specific moments in time, which are often liminal and sometimes become turning-points in a life (Denzin, 2001, 2014; Matiss, 2001). The ambiguous can become weighty and govern the living of a life

(Denzin, 2001, 2014). Storied recollections of biographically illustrative experiences have therefore channelled a life in some form of direction and although these experiences are usually shared with others, the acquisition of unsettling and meaningful experiences is a deeply personalised apprenticeship to life (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918). A father can pass on wisdom to a son about fatherhood which he has gained from his own experiences, but his grandchild will be born, raised and socialised into a different generation in new times, where the challenges and possibilities of fatherhood might have changed considerably (Miller, 2000). Experiences are disorderly, in flux and always in the making, and for this reason probably do some justice in representing the complexities of humans and the lives they live (Plummer, 2001). They are interpretations of a life that concurrently say something about a single individual, their biography and a society (Denzin, 2001). Experiences are therefore associated with practical and specific, as opposed to general, types of knowledge (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918). In this sense, it is difficult to make assumptions about the essence of recollected experiences before co-constructing them with research participants. One claim which can be made, is that the life experiences which people choose to reconstruct and then represent to another in a storied articulation are always meaningful (Atkinson, 1998; Bruner, 1984; Sartre, 1963).

As people battle to do justice and provide some storied order to the lived experiences that they choose to relay, they make further choices about what to tell, what not to tell, adopt a perspective which they perceive to be true, and engage in a narrative style to encompass all of these things (Atkinson, 1998; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995; Plummer, 2001). A researcher is then left with the task of interpreting these chosen narratives, which are layered with ambiguous but important meanings (Denzin,

2014). To assist researchers with the process of interpretation, Denzin (2001), drawing on James Joyce, proposes that there should be a sensitivity to experiences that symbolise epiphanal moments. Epiphanal moments are those meaningful experiences which gave an irrevocable shape or direction to a life (Denzin, 2001). The literature on physical activity within family environments indicates that the perpetual social becoming of family membership brings an epiphanal meaning to a life and consequently gives rise to dramatic changes in physical activity habits and lifestyle priorities (Hamilton & White, 2010b; Lewis & Ridge, 2005; Ziviani *et al.*, 2006),

Before having kids I was like a couch potato ... basically my form of physical activity would be going to the fridge to grab a snack ... Now I do try to go to the gym two three times a week ... pump a few weights. We'll go for walks and take the kids to the park for a run around, kick a football and all that.  
(father interviewed in Hamilton & White, 2010b; p. 279)

The specificity and diversity of such narratives of life-directing experiences would be lost if subjected to broad generalisations removed from the lives in which they occurred. There would be an imbalance in favour of the collective at the expense of the unique and the narrative would no longer hold true to the partial representations of each experience (Plummer, 2001).

A core premise of qualitative biographical research is that the teller's representations of experience should remain as intact as possible, as close to how that person perceived an experience to be true at that moment in time (Atkinson, 1998; Matiss, 2001; Plummer, 2001). A truth that is unique to a single person's experience, not a collective truth that is claimed to be true of all such experiences for all individuals (Denzin, 2001, 2014). This methodological position is useful, and to some degree bespoke, as it can uncover 'true cohort generational effects' (Miller, 2000; p. 39) as well as finding 'conflict between the general values which are believed true of the past

and the more precise record of day-to-day life' that 'may represent one of the dynamics of social change' (Thompson, 2000; p. 273).

Much has been written about the aspect of truth in biographical and life history methods in the social sciences since Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918) first comprehensive life history investigation. Daniel Bertaux (1981), Ken Plummer (2001) and Norman Denzin (2001, 2014) have all made helpful developments to the notion of truth that can be found in the narrative of a participant's subjectivities. Yet the significance and importance of Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918; p. 5) original comments on this issue remain inescapable and became essential to subsequent classic studies on social becoming by Clifford Shaw (1930) and then Howard Becker, Blanche Geer, Everett Hughes and Anselm Strauss (1961),

There must be some objective validity in his [sic] schemes of social facts – otherwise he could not live in society – but the truth of these schemes is always only a rough approximation and is mixed with an enormous amount of error.

The *truths* by which people go about their daily lives are only *real* at the level of the individual, yet always susceptible to change in conjunction with constant fluctuations in social context and alterations to human personality over the course of a life (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918). Herein lies not only the fundamental distinction between the unique and the collective, but why a balance between both is paramount to the study of human lives (Aston, 2001; Atkinson, 1998; Denzin, 2001; Sartre, 1963; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918-1920; Wright Mills, 1959; Znaniecki, 1934). The unique offers a subjective truth held by a single individual during the living of their life, but as a study broadens and more voices are heard, elements of unique truth may be shared by others, and it is at this point the unique becomes a collective, and partial



representations of lived experience become real. People exist as universal singulars (Sartre, 1963), and when they behave as though something is true, this shared truth is real in its consequences (Thomas & Thomas, 1928).

The above participant story taken from the literature on physical activity within family environments illustrates that family membership and relationships affect people's physical activity habits in unique ways. Collectively, we may also say that parenthood would appear to act as a challenge to being regularly active, for some this challenge is constraining and for others it is an opportunity. Therefore, we can also make the claim that the unique social becoming of family membership, and particularly parenthood, represents a *real* collective issue for the wellbeing of people who value being physically active and is deserving of detailed qualitative investigation. Although, not the type of investigation that relies on a series of generalisations in search of an explanation that is true for most people 'in the most part', for this approach would neglect the uniqueness of the initial problem and how this problem exists and manifests itself in real situations because every life history is different (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918). Yet, 'social theory tries to avoid this... by closing its eyes to the problem itself', which is caused by the context from which the data has been produced, not the data alone (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918; p. 39).

In using narratives from participants to make such statements it could be interpreted that narrative is being relied upon to construct a partial insight into an aspect of reality, what Jerome Bruner (1991) sees as *The Narrative Construction of Reality*. However, what is being argued here, is that narrative is important in understanding personal truths and collective lived experiences because narrative is already real. Consider the following story of lived experience,

I tell my childhood story much as it was and continues to be experienced by me ... *It was late at night. And we were little girls. My sister loved that cat. She loved that cat. Really, she had not much else to love. And he [father] woke us up. And he brought us to the garage. I don't remember getting there. Instead, suddenly in my mind, it is night and we are there, my sister and I, standing side by side ... In remembering how, 33 years ago, my father gutted my sister's beloved childhood cat in front of us in a drunken rage ... these repetitions ... the violence it grips me and again and again, sweeping over me ... that night when he killed my sister's cat ... he shouted at us ... "I am a Man! I am a man!"* (Halley, 2012: cited in Denzin, 2014; p. 4)

The writing, reading and interpretation of narrative carries and creates an evocative weight that can give rise to emotional responses. There is not always a 'construction of reality' through narrative, but there is a further interpretation of something that already represents an interpretation of a real, lived, and relived experience. This childhood story tells us something about the real lives of three universal singulars, the primary group family socialisation of two girls, sisters and daughters, and a possible masculinity crisis within a certain space around three decades ago. Narrative is everywhere, it consumes everything that can, has been, and will be used as data in qualitative research, 'We live in narrative's moment' (Denzin, 2001, p. 58). Therefore, the 'real' as expressed in narrative form has featured implicitly at the core of the existing discussion connecting knowledge, experience and truth. The 'real' as accessed through narratives of the lived experiences of real people is an underlying assumption of knowledge claims made by academics about the lives of others, the study of meaningful, unique and collective human experience, and attempted representations of social becoming (Denzin, 2014; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995).

Although 'there is no way to stuff a real-live person between the two covers of a text' (Denzin, 2014; p. 6), we can be certain that

This "real" person was born, has perhaps died, has left his or her mark on other people, and has probably deeply felt the human emotions of shame, love, hate, guilt, anger, despair, and caring for others. This feeling, thinking, living, breathing person is the "real" subject of the biographical method. (Denzin, 2014; p. 12)

Some might take this to imply that studying and writing about the life of another provides a window through which a real world can be seen. Problematic to such a position is that this world only exists as a narrative or story of a past experience from the perspective of a single person (Denzin, 2014).

Therefore, within the biographical method, participants' stories are better understood as fictions 'fashioned out of something that was thought, imagined, acted out, or experienced' (Denzin, 2001; p. 153). Within the narratives of participants these fictions are true to this person's experiences and within the limits of this life (Denzin, 2001, 2014). It follows that both the objective markers and subjective meanings of a person's life have real consequences and thus any distinctions between the fact and fiction of storied experience are meaningless, so long as the experiences hold true to the teller (Denzin, 2014).

The problem then, is an existential one, as real people live real lives made-up of real experiences, which can only ever be represented within the narrative form of real stories (Denzin, 2014). Real people exist, as do real, textual accounts of their lives, but so does a physical and interpretive gap between the two (Sartre, 1963). This is the methodological version of the gap between historical generalisations and everyday life experiences, 'between history and real life' (Thompson, 2000; p. 272).

Nevertheless, even a representational account of a real life has real affects, if the representation is believed to be true (Sartre, 1963). In conclusion, the pragmatic point to be made is that,

there is no safer and more efficient way of finding among the innumerable antecedents of a social happening the real causes of this happening than to analyse the past of the individuals through whose agency this happening occurred. (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918: cited in Shaw, 1930; p. 20)

The assumptions of oral history, a specific strand of the life history method, centre upon the representations of real life at the level of human agency to inform and challenge historical generalisations. In terms of participants' experiences of family membership, it is this variety of data which the interview method was intentionally designed to collect, as discussed in the next part of the chapter.

### 4.3 Data Collection

#### *4.3.1 Oral Histories of Family Membership*

My own narrative of family membership emphasises the importance of life course and generational experiences to my ongoing story of socialisation, possessing many similarities to that of an oral history. The established tradition of implementing oral history methods within family studies is unrivalled in terms of uncovering socialisation, life course and generational experiences of being a family member (Davies & Fitchett, 2015; Thompson, 2000). Simultaneous to and interdependent with the growing recognition of the worth of oral history in getting at the private and intimate aspects of people's everyday family lives, the family stories gleaned from the method have played an important part in revisions of dominant, linear understandings of historical transformation reported in written accounts of the past (Jolly, 2015). The

debunking of the premise that love and affection were not evident in family relationships prior to industrialisation highlights how the production, representation and enactment of wider social processes can be unearthed and scrutinised through oral history (Stewart, 2013). One of the tenets that sets the oral history approach apart from the more established format of written history is the inclusion of storied experiences from those with unprivileged voices (Boschma, 2007; Thompson, 2000). Oral histories can give greater meaning to written histories and simultaneously discover phenomena previously unseen that rupture our understanding of the documented past (Boschma, 2007). Although to depict written and oral methods of historical investigation as opposed instruments of interpretation would be a mistake, as they represent fluid variations of the same events, and oral histories are often converted to text via the convention of academic publishing (Boschma, 2007; Thompson, 2000). The difference in documentary-based historical research is that assumptions are made about the representativeness and relevance of the available archives to a particular topic of enquiry, whereas oral histories intentionally 'build-up' subject-specific interpretations of the past from stories grounded in the lived experiences of multiple people (Thompson, 2000; Wood, 1997).

The multiplicity of standpoints created through oral history tends to produce a variety of subjectivities and meanings for a researcher to negotiate and synthesise (Thompson, 2000). The recollection of multiple original perspectives frequently draws attention to lives that are absent from an existing body of knowledge (Thompson, 2000). That is, 'the reality of historical agency' rebuffs the perception that popular historical knowledge is grandiose and exempt from contestation (Olmedo, 1997; p. 554). Concurrently, the promise of discovering collective continuities within the oral histories of multiple people is offset by the likelihood that the uniqueness of individual

experience will also generate insurmountable empirical issues (Thompson, 2000). Some of these issues are considered below in the interview guide and data analysis, but for now, an argument will be made for focusing the family aspect of this research on people's family *memberships*, which act as a point of primary comparative experience for most people (Denzin, 2014; Ferrarotti, 1981; Thompson, 2000).

Being a family member is concomitantly a collective and unique experience through negotiations of structural expectations and the capacity for human agency (Ferrarotti, 1981). As primary social groups, families 'participate at the same time in the psychological dimension of their constituting members and in the structural dimension of a social system' and thus become 'in turn – and simultaneously – the object of the synthetic praxis of its members' (Ferrarotti, 1981; p. 24). People are affiliated to their kin through their identities as family members, reflected in the way personal stories are composed around themes that carry collective social meanings, such as gender and age (Casella, 2012). Using oral histories to study child-rearing advice received by Australian mothers over a 70-year period, Pascoe (2015) was able to gather stories containing both personal and collective memories reflective of continuities and changes to what it meant to be a mother at particular points in time.

There are handful of studies that examine mothers' physical activity involvement, but none consider mothers' concurrent everyday experiences of being both a physical activity provider and participant (Day, 2018). Moreover, there is less research per se on physical activity and being a mother, father, son, daughter, brother or sister (Day, 2018). By employing an oral history approach, this study does not overlook or neglect certain family membership experiences in favour of others, and includes step-parents, step-children and homosexual couples. Utilising oral histories also ensures a point of access to the intimacies which epitomise family relationships.

As Thompson (2000; p. 176) notes, oral history is useful in ‘uncovering the complexity of contradictory emotions, of intertwined love and anger, which are typical of intimate relationships’. For Jamieson (1998), the study of intimacies is concerned with how family members are connected through the privileged knowledge they share amongst, about, and trust each other with. Therefore, this research also makes a bespoke departure from previous investigations in the area, by explicitly and intentionally concentrating upon the concept of intimacy. This is an important and overdue position to adopt, as ‘crucial distinctions between studying a group of people because they live together or because they are intimately involved in one another’s personal lives... have yet to be considered in reference to physical activity’ (Day, 2018; p. 303).

#### 4.3.2 *Physical Activity Careers*

Observing specific types of behaviour as careers susceptible to change over time enables us to see how transitions, anxieties, adjustments and journeys are situated within the trajectory of people’s daily lives and identities as they are played out (Wynn, 2011). By way of embracing a career method, participants are depicted as actors upon and within their social milieu and the central characters and creators of the meanings which inform the telling of their life stories and events (Skobba, 2016; Wynn, 2011). People engage with physical activity across the life course to maintain and achieve desirable identities and uphold images of successful ageing (Kenter *et al.*, 2015). In Kenter *et al.*’s (2015) study, those who stayed relatively active across their lives were able to repeatedly adjust to changing life circumstances as they grew older. Critically, there is likely to be a point or period during life when such people

cement positive beliefs and attitudes toward the value and relevance of physical activity.

Becker *et al.* (1961; p. 35) adopted a career method to gain a better understanding of how people cultivate perspectives when placed in situations requiring them to make choices they have not encountered in their prior socialisation,

Perspectives arise when people face choice points. In many crucial situations, the individual's prior perspectives allow him [sic] no choice... But where the individual is called on to act, and his choices are not constrained, he will begin to develop a perspective. If a particular kind of situation recurs frequently, the perspective will probably become an established part of a person's way of dealing with the world.

In this way, maintenance of regular physical activity involvement across a life course littered with persistent fluctuations in everyday circumstances will demand continuous negotiations in perspective. It is also likely, that as people encounter novel everyday scenarios for the first time, the perspective which they develop, and possibly establish, might result in the abandonment or postponement of regular physical activity participation. With regard to family context, becoming a parent will bring about a number of novel situations requiring the development of new perspectives and constraint to scenarios previously characterised by greater choice. Changes in life circumstances can also give rise to perspectives that result in re-engagement with regular physical activity, or even becoming regularly active for the first time. As 'revisions or career reorientations continue as we enter adult life' and 'do not come to a standstill' (Kupferberg, 1998; p. 173), there is no better positioned method than that of the career to expand the study of familial physical activity outside of the ethnocentric and moral-laden surveillance of parents and their children's physical activity levels. Career methods are also useful in adding knowledge to the existing literature, as they



champion the significance and relevance of organic biographical experiences accrued over one's life so far (Kupferberg, 1998). This is important because the premise that an active childhood significantly increases the chances of lifelong physical activity involvement, upon which much research is based, is not clear-cut or evident in some analyses (Day, 2018).

#### *4.3.3 Career and Oral History Interviews*

In conducting the study an interview guide (see **Figure 1**) was used to ensure that all interviewees were asked questions on the same topics, albeit that the questions were framed in a manner relevant to the personal stories of participants' lived experiences. Using a guide to conduct the interviews as opposed to a predetermined list of structured and strictly ordered questions also meant that the sequence in which the interview topics were covered was flexible, and often varied between interviews. A career approach to physical activity and an oral history perspective of family membership were synthesised in the style adopted for interviewing participants. In a similar vein to Becker *et al.* (1961), the interview navigated participants' careers by allowing a structured freedom to express ideas, interests and concerns they saw as being important from their own perspective. The initial question of 'Could you please outline the physical activities you have been involved in throughout your life so far?' provided an initial framework for all participants to work from. In response, most participants chose to begin with childhood experiences and gradually progress through the life course and some worked backwards by starting with their contemporary physical activity involvement and moving backwards towards childhood. It was also common for participants to add to

Figure 1

<p><u>Interview Guide</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><u>Physical Activity Career</u></b> <b><i>Could you please outline the physical activities you have been involved in throughout your life so far?</i></b>  Follow-up questions to focus on the reasons for taking up and dropping out of particular activities at various stages of the life course  If participants refer to influences of being a family member and specific family relationships these areas will also be further probed  <b><i>What is your earliest memory of being active?</i></b>  <b><i>Why do you think you remember this in particular?</i></b></li><li>• <b><u>Family Membership and Physical Activity</u></b>  <b><i>Were your parents active while you were growing up?</i></b>  Follow-up questions will then narrow the focus upon the physical activity habits of each member of the childhood family across the life course  <b><i>So what are your current household circumstances / who do you live with now?</i></b>  Follow-up questions will then narrow the focus upon the physical activity habits of each member of the family household across their life course so far.  <i>Should participants speak fondly of shared experiences and/or stories of physical activity with a fellow family member the following question will also be asked:</i>  <b><i>So in reference to your relationship with _____, do you think that physical activity adds quality / an extra dimension to this relationship?</i></b>  Follow-up of <b><i>Why? / Why Not?</i></b></li><li>• <b><u>Physical Activity and Wellbeing</u></b>  <b><i>So bringing your experiences together, do you think that being active is conducive to human wellbeing?</i></b>  Follow-up of <b><i>Why / Why not?</i></b>  There will be further questions about the participant's conceptualisation of connections between physical activity and wellbeing. Personal, heuristic and specific to each participant's experiences and subsequent subjectivities</li></ul>
--

their physical activity career as the interview progressed. In this respect, participants' sudden remembering of additional physical activity experiences made this aspect of the interviews somewhat unpredictable. Therefore, despite posing the same first

question to every interviewee, each interview also became individually tailored and somewhat distinctive, as informed by each unique social context and life course trajectory. Allowing participants freedom to alter the flow of the interview like this encourages an element of risk in the production of knowledge, which is one of the distinguishing features of qualitative biographical epistemology that enhances the quality of the resulting data (Ferrarotti, 1981). Follow-up questions to the descriptive overview of physical activity careers were then framed around why participants had been more and less active at specific points in their lives. Encouraging participants to provide retrospective explanations contextualised by the immediate and broader social environment of their everyday lives was the main interest here. When participants revealed the initial adoption of new physical activities, questioning sought to establish why a particular physical activity was chosen and how they had become involved for the first time.

As part of assembling a physical activity career summary, the researcher also asked participants about their earliest memories of being physically active. The intention was to uncover any motivational shifts for participation across the life course, which might also be matched with alterations to physical activity attitudes and habits. Asking participants to recall memories from the earliest point of their remembered past opens the opportunity for connections to be made between different stages of life as well as between the individual and social. This line of thinking was then further explored by inviting participants to consider why they were able to remember this specific moment. A context was then sought with which to examine the interaction between family membership and physical activity involvement. Therefore, participants were asked to report on the physical activity careers and perspectives of each influential member of their childhood and adult family, until all family members had

been exhausted. This represented the central part of the interview (see 'Family Membership and Physical Activity' section of **Figure 1**). Recognising the importance of the methodological principles of social becoming (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918) and intimacy (Jamieson, 1998), physical activity participation influences with those who were involved in romantic relationships with participants were also explored, even though they might not identify them as 'family'. This focus on intimacies, evident in the way people share personal stories and experiences with those they are or were engaged in meaningful relationships with (Jamieson, 1998), was essential to the quality of interviews and shifting the study clear of the conceptual confusions between families and households across the majority of physical activity research (Day, 2018).

For the final interview topic of physical activity and wellbeing, interviewees were asked 'So, bringing your experiences together, do you think that being active is conducive to human wellbeing?' (see **Figure 1**). In line with the relevant research objective of investigating the 'potential contribution of physical activity to human wellbeing', this question was intentionally designed to lead participants into appraising the positive value physical activity might bring to everyday life. Considering the wealth of scientific literature and policies that champion the benefits of regular physical activity, it was then the follow-up question of 'why? / why not?' that was of greater relevance to the study. Getting at participant subjectivities concerning the relationship between physical activity and wellbeing in this manner encourages interviewees to reflect upon their own practical experiences of this connection, which may not necessarily be congruent with widespread assumptions about the contribution of physical activity to wellbeing. Such knowledge, characterised by unsettling contradictions rooted in human experience, is at the core of advancing our

understanding of the interplay between the human self and human history (Sartre, 1963).

#### *4.3.4 Ethical Review Procedure*

A proportionate ethical review of the study was completed by the researcher and approved by the first supervisor before participants were recruited to the study and data collection commenced (see Appendices). In the first instance, the researcher completed a checklist of potential ethical issues that would warrant disclosure of more specific details about earmarked aspects of doing research with human participants. The methods and focus of the proposed research meant that none of the 16 items of the ethical checklist were of relevance. In accordance with University Research Governance procedures, it was thus deemed that a full ethical review was not required before participant recruitment and data collection could begin. The researcher provided further details about the study, including the working title, the proposed start and end dates for data collection and a lay summary of the research project, which paid special attention to the methodology. The completed proportionate ethical review form along with the consent form and information sheet for participants was then forwarded to the supervisor, who signed the document to agree that all ethical issues had been considered and that this was accurately reflected in the way the form had been completed. For University records, all documentation, as well as a risk assessment, were emailed to the Research Governance Manager. Participant recruitment and data collection then commenced. Recruited participants read the study information sheet and signed two copies of the consent form prior to participating in a single audio-recorded interview. The completed consent forms were kept in a

safe location at the researcher's home address and the recorded audio files were stored on the researcher's personal computer, which no-one else had access to. In the written thesis all interviewees have been allocated pseudonyms to protect their personal identities.

#### 4.4 Participants

##### *4.4.1 Sample*

Evidence from family studies of physical activity identify family life as a process of lived experience informed by the gendering of family membership. A participant sample containing varied experiences of family membership will produce data that can be used for comparison between being a mother, wife, daughter, sister, father, husband, son, daughter, boyfriend, girlfriend, divorcee, step-father, step-mother and various combinations of such memberships. This will also reveal the consequences of continuity and change over time to the gendered norms of family membership and intimacy through interactions between the individual life course and generational norms (Chambers, 2012; Jamieson, 1998; Miller, 2000; Thompson, 2000). A sample of participants containing a variety of gendered family membership experiences was therefore desirable. Gender is an inextricable feature of family membership, kinship terminology and essential to explanations of family life that have remained robust over time (Chambers, 2012; Cheal, 2002). Thus, to provide variety in this sense, it was decided to recruit the same number of male and female participants. In terms of overall sample size, Bertaux (1981) proposes that a saturation of knowledge is reached after collecting stories from at least 25 participants and nothing further can be gained from a sample size greater than 30. The sample, at this point, becomes sociologically

representative 'at the level of sociostructural relations' (Bertaux, 1981; p. 37). Therefore, the aim was to recruit a sample of 30 participants, comprising 15 males and 15 females.

This meant that 15 of the participants had experience of being a daughter and 15 had experience of being a son. To further recruit participants with a blend of experience as brothers and sisters, and possibly some mothers, fathers, wives and husbands, 10 participants in their twenties were recruited, of which five were male and five were female. All of these 10 participants had siblings, meaning five possessed experience of being a brother and five had experience of being a sister. In addition, one was a husband and father, one was a wife and mother, two of the females lived with their boyfriend, one of the males lived with their girlfriend and one participant had experience of being a step-daughter. To recruit participants who were more likely to have experience of being wives, mothers, husbands and fathers, 10 people in their forties were recruited, of which five were male and five were female. Four of the females had experience of being a sister and one was a half-sister, and all five also possessed experience of being a mother and a wife. One of the females was divorced. All five of the males fulfilled the role of a brother, three were fathers and had possessed experience of being a husband, one was divorced, one lived with his boyfriend, and two lived alone.

To further increase the variety of the sample and encourage the transferability of any generalisations made from the data, 10 people aged 60 years and over were also recruited. While this created equal 20-year age gaps between the three groups in the recruitment strategy, people of this age were also recruited for pragmatic reasons, as they would most likely be retired and therefore have more availability to participate in the interview. Furthermore, this also raised the possibility of identifying generational

changes and continuities to family life during analysis of the data. Five of these 10 participants were male and five were female. Of the female participants, four were sisters and one was an only child. All five females had lived experience of being a wife, of which two had experienced divorce and now lived alone, one of these two females had also been a stepmother. One female had also been a widow and since remarried. Of the five male participants aged 60 years and over all possessed experience of being a brother and husband, with three experiencing fatherhood and one with experience of divorce on two occasions, remarrying twice and being a stepfather.

More conventional and positivist assertions about representative samples are championed as being 'superior' at a morphological level in conjunction with predetermined demographic variables but limited to making no more than superficial and static conclusions about how a practice is engaged in by certain 'types' of people (Bertaux, 1981). It is therefore argued that any understanding of physical activity in the context of families and wellbeing does not require a sample containing only regularly active participants. On the contrary, to better comprehend how and why people become more and less involved in the practice of physical activity, the experiences of those who are not currently involved are of as much value to advancing our understanding. Moreover, one of the distinguishing facets of more robust life history and career-oriented research studies are those with participant samples containing variety (Becker *et al.*, 1961; Znaniecki, 1934). Thus, for further variety of prior experience and social becoming, the sample also purposefully contained regularly active, intermittently active and inactive participants and no two participants could be part of the same family or currently reside in the same household.



#### *4.4.2 Recruitment*

In the interests of research authenticity, it was essential the researcher was not too familiar with participants prior to the interview. This necessitated the recruitment of participants who the researcher did not know enough about to hold any significant preconceptions about their prior socialisation and family lives going into the interview. This carries important implications for research quality, as the greater the sense of closeness that develops between the researcher and the researched as the interview progresses, the more real each participant's story of the self will be (Aston, 2001; Jamieson, 1998). The connotations for recruitment were that I needed to gain access to participants from beyond my immediate and everyday social milieu. To accomplish this those participants initially recruited were either friends of my family members or friends of my friends. Meaning that in all cases researcher and participant were not familiar with one another before the interview. At the end of each interview, snowball sampling was employed and repeated until all 30 participants had been recruited.

#### 4.5 Data Analysis

In keeping with the adopted research philosophy and methodological works of Denzin (2001; 2014), Plummer (2001) and Thompson (2000), the interview transcripts produced were viewed as human documents, rather than scientific artefacts. According to Plummer (2001), human documents assembled via life history methods are best analysed using Glaser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory, Sartre's (1963) progressive-regressive method, or AI, originally devised by Znaniecki (1934). In the interests of preserving the empirical and inductive balance of the research, the progressive-regressive method was not used for data analysis, as this technique is an

all-encompassing method that carries with it a pre-determined theoretical explanation positioned within existentialism. However, aspects of the progressive-regressive method are used later in the thesis to explain the repetitive and irregular spiralling of memories of childhood family walks. Grounded theory is better placed to draw out theory from empirical data with fewer presupposed constraints and greater possibilities, although this way of handling data requires constant systematic comparison after collecting data from each participant, which then informs the next data source of the study to be sampled (Plummer, 2001). As the characteristics of the whole sample had been determined in advance of data collection, grounded theory was not a viable option. AI was used for data analysis, as it carries no theoretically determined explanatory commitments and instead uses a flexible working hypothesis that the researcher manipulates as the analysis progresses to fit and account for the story of each case of the phenomena being investigated (Plummer, 2001). In this sense, and in contrast to grounded theory, the study followed Znaniecki's (1934) logic of explicitly crafting the working hypothesis only after all data had been collected.

Within the interview transcripts, stories of physical activity participation, family membership and wellbeing represented 'logical classes' of data (Znaniecki, 1934; p. 249), due to the structuring of the interview guide around the research objectives. Each of the three classes of data were then further scrutinised 'to discover which characters in a given datum of a certain class are more, and which are less essential' (Znaniecki, 1934; p. 259). Elements from a single case were judged as essential when grounded within interpretive recollections of lived experience and either reoccurred between cases or were identified by the participant as being meaningful to the unfolding of their life (see **Figure 2**). The essential elements of each case were then brought together to form a hypothesis, which was tested against the working hypothesis derived from

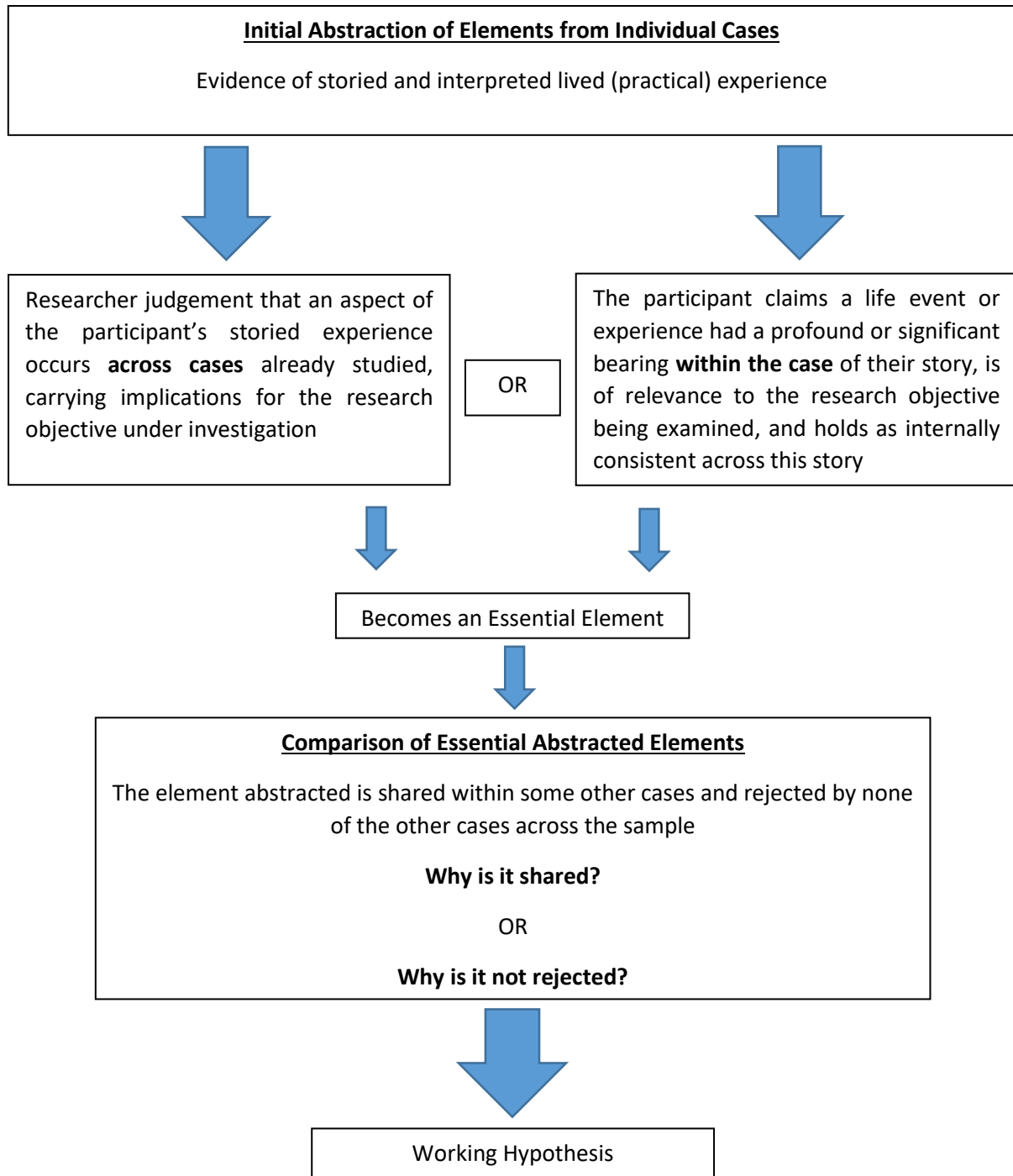
previous cases (see **Figure 2**). This was repeated on a case-by-case basis until all cases had been exhaustively analysed and a working hypothesis reformulated in conjunction with each case, creating a generalised statement that held across the data (Plummer, 2001). The need to reformulate the hypothesis is caused by the discovery of negative cases, the detailed examination of which provide exceptions to the working hypothesis. The explicit aim of AI to seek out negative cases and then attempt to explain the subsequent exceptions to the data brought about is a feature which sets it apart as being more detailed, rigorous and exhaustive than many other qualitative data analysis techniques,

It is not the exception that matters, but our attitude towards it: if we refuse to submit to it, but go on analyzing our data, it is a factor of scientific discovery, whereas if we passively accept it, it is check on further progress... usually common-sense causal generalizations are either accepted in spite of unanalyzed exceptions, or rejected because of unanalyzed exceptions. (Znaniecki, 1934; p. 306-307)

Within each case, it is the heuristic significance of the character of the data which takes precedence over the frequency of reoccurring subjectivities. As within the method, abstraction precedes generalisation and the ontogenetic nature of raw life history data evolves via the abstraction of unique elements during the process of testing each case against the working hypothesis (Znaniecki, 1934). In other words, as each participant provides life history data drawn from their unique prior socialisation, branches of difference and commonality emerge according to how this socialisation affects and is affected by the trajectories of people's lives. Nevertheless, that some degree of prevalence and repetitiveness between cases is required to constitute claims made about shared and common instances of lived heuristic

experiences is a valuable part of the method, and should not be overlooked (Znaniecki, 1934).

**Figure 2 (Use of AI)**



However, AI also symbolises a rejection of trying to treat qualitative data in the same way as statistical analyses of quantitative data because qualitative experiences which reoccur most frequently cannot also be assumed to be those which are most

significant (Znaniecki, 1934). Moreover, significant life events and transitions may only occur once, yet profoundly alter the direction of one's life. Znaniecki's (1934) motive for devising AI was to provide qualitative sociology with a framework of its own and move away from attempting to replicate statistical methods that equate frequency with significance based on the premise of enumerative induction, where generalisation precedes abstraction. For Znaniecki (1934), a single case, which might offer data more heuristic, thorough and relevant in character than all other cases, does so because more essential elements belong to and occur within it, meaning it carries real significance. Although such instances might only occur within a single case, they remain intact throughout data analysis because they are not rejected by preceding and proceeding cases (see **Figure 2**), maintaining their meaning, relevance and richness to the research topic during the AI process.

Following the application of AI, it is rare that data from all cases conform to a strict and monolithic hypothesis (Znaniecki, 1934). During the discovery of negative cases, abstraction etches out new conditions, laws and rules, which expose the previous hypothesis as lacking in precision, giving rise to the emergence of a more robust and detailed variation of this hypothesis. Each negative case demands an increasingly technical abstraction that strikes a complex empirical balance between those aspects of the studied phenomena which structure its composition, and those which alter social behaviours, attitudes and inclinations towards the phenomena. The robust hypothesis formulated by the end of the AI process does not represent a definitive all-encompassing answer, rather, it will always remain a working hypothesis, as 'reality' remains inexhaustible, in flux and 'too rich for our thought to master' (Znaniecki, 1934; p. 256). If required, the flexibility of the method also allows for the

initial problem to be redefined during the analysis, when it is necessary to reclassify the data so that a working hypothesis can be produced (Znaniecki, 1934).

Robinson (1951; p. 814) has suggested that AI, in the form initially proposed by Znaniecki, reveals 'only the necessary and not the sufficient conditions for the phenomenon to be explained.' Robinson's (1951; p. 814) justification for such a criticism is that 'the method calls for studying only those cases in which the phenomenon occurs, and not cases in which it does not occur.' This assessment of AI highlights a misunderstanding of the type of qualitative sociological data that Znaniecki (1934) designed AI to be used with (Hammersley, 2010a; Plummer, 2001). Robinson (1951) overlooks that life histories, case studies and career approaches in sociology are typically used not to simply illustrate why some people participate in particular behaviours, but discover why many people repeatedly move into and out of identified phenomena across both their own lives and historical time, as acted out and manifested within their *social becoming* (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918; Znaniecki, 1934). Moreover, the study of physical activity is especially suited to such an approach because everyone has some form of experience of being active, even if they have not done so since compulsory physical education at school. The value of AI to investigating phenomena of this ilk therefore comes about by contrasting those people with least experience against those with most experience, with the repeated manipulation of the working hypothesis eventually establishing some form of commonality between those cases which could have initially appeared to be 'different'. Yet exceptions are not brought about by the random and unexplainable complexity of individuals, but by prior and ongoing socialisation experiences that are manifested in who people are and who they are becoming (Znaniecki, 1934). AI was selected with this in mind, to explain why the behaviour of physical activity involvement is more

persistent in the lives of some compared with others, not to predict all future occurrences of physical activity participation. Robinson's (1951) interpretation of AI is likely due to Znaniecki's (1934) use of the term *universal laws* (Hammersley, 2010b), which appears to lead to Robinson's (1951; p. 816) interpretation that 'analytic induction is regarded by Znaniecki as a special and *certain* way of proving that the generalizations to which it leads will apply to all instances of the phenomenon under study, whether they have yet been examined or not'. It is unlikely this is what Znaniecki (1934; pp. 256) meant by universal laws, as within his underpinning philosophy for AI, he stated that 'no hope can be entertained that an analysis will be thorough enough to be final'.

It is widely considered that analytic methods are likely to produce some form of generalisability through maximal variety sampling, but not necessarily universality (Katz, 2004). Subsequently, proponents of the method, such as Goldenberg (1993), have instead used terms such as a 'limited universal' to describe the working hypothesis that results from the process of AI. While some confusion remains over what Znaniecki meant by a universal law, recruitment of participants with the intention of producing data of maximal variety, the search for negative cases, and the crafting of a working hypothesis have all been frequently cited as attractive tenants of AI, especially by those looking to achieve rigour in highly original areas of investigation (Gilgun, 1995; Katz, 2004; Rettig, Tam & Magistad, 1997). Over time, while it seems to have been disregarded that AI was initially developed to analyse a particular type of data, where 'cases' represent recollections of an entire life and prior socialisation into and sometimes out of a particular phenomenon, many contemporary methods in qualitative sociology still draw upon the original craft and logic borne out of AI,

Ongoing revision of explanandum and explanans; treating single cases as capable of forcing revision in theory; wariness about arguing from correlational patterns; developing concepts that depart both from definitions taken from popular culture and from the categories used to amass official statistics; arrival at gerund-like concepts that capture a kind of doing, a pattern of becoming, a liminal historical phase. (Katz, 2015; p. 140)

Thus, while explicit use of AI is not as popular as it was during the first half of the twentieth century (Hammersley, 2011), its value remains and continues to inform various and sometimes conflicting methodological strands across qualitative research (Katz, 2015). Explicit use of the method for data analysis in the current study carries the potential to provide complimentary and contrasting explanations to the statistical methods that dominate investigations of physical activity participation and wellbeing in the sport and exercise sciences. To some extent, this resembles a similar rationale as to why Znaniecki (1934) designed the method for sociology, at a time when the discipline was becoming governed increasingly by quantitative methods (Hammersley, 2011). The current study also avoids the possible pitfall of producing a causally homogenous explanation, which can occur when utilising AI after sampling only one particular 'type' of case (Hammersley, 2011). Instead, this research recognises the importance of the principle of maximal variety to uncover negative cases.

#### 4.6 Quality Guidelines

The qualitative methodological approach outlined in this chapter through the philosophical and theoretical decisions that have been made guide the way that the following findings and discussion section should be judged in respect of quality (Seale, 1999). It is necessary to make this explicit because the utilised methods incorporate a



combination of positivist ideals, interpretivist principles, postmodern critique and pragmatic solutions. Focusing on some of the pragmatic solutions offered around issues of collecting and analysing life history data and the main dilemmas discerned from discussions in family sociology, the quality consequences of choosing to use intimacies and AI prior to data collection are evaluated, as they shaped the study throughout. In the case of matching the working hypothesis derived from AI with existing theoretical generalisations, some consideration is also given to the potential generalisability of the research findings.

AI consistently features in deliberations about quality within qualitative research methods texts. It has received varying degrees of praise and recognition as a route toward causal reasoning (Seale, 1999), falsification of competing arguments (Flick, 2007; Seale, 1999), investigator flexibility (Flick, 2007; Seale, 1999), rigour (Flick, 2007; Seale, 1999), increased breadth and depth of research (Seale, 1999), theoretical sophistication (Seale, 1999), generalising from a diverse data corpus (Flick, 2007), comparative logic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and comprehensively recognising and managing exceptions in data (Silverman, 2017). This study sought rigour in the form of researcher flexibility through recrafting the working hypothesis when discovering negative cases as well as falsifying competing arguments when confronted with data which initially seemed contradictory but did not result in reworking the hypothesis following more detailed examination. Documenting such rigour lends to the production of a step-by-step audit trail of how the final conclusions were constructed. An instrument which promotes the trustworthiness of findings in the form of explicit transparency, audit trails of researcher decisions reveal to the reader the justifications that changed and maintained the researcher's positionality and interpretations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Seale, 1999; Silverman, 2017). However,

this is not feasible to document in full when performing AI within and across 30 life history interviews where the heuristic stories of participants' family members were also brought into the data set. Moreover, in account of the researcher's previous and ongoing involvement within the social world, there are also endless observations relevant to the data and influential in the final interpretation that have already taken place (Seale, 1999). As a pragmatic alternative, at appropriate points in the findings and discussion section a shortened audit trail is outlined for each of the three research objectives, which details how the relevant final working hypothesis was decided upon before entering a more conventional discussion. Here, the reader is invited to consider the grounds upon which alternative interpretations were falsified and judged as lacking the same persuasive power of the conclusive interpretation developed from the data.

In some ways, this brief but detailed account of the logic behind the comprehensive treatment of every piece of data represents a form of unorthodox thick description. Typically attached to ethnography as a way of illustrating immersion within the field of study, thick descriptions are also used to provide context in other formats of qualitative research to emphasise to readers that the researcher's interpretations are consistent with the nature of the data (King, Horrocks & Brooks, 2019). While this can certainly make an argument more convincing for a reader, it is also proposed that the main contribution of thick descriptions to research quality lies in giving the reader as much depth as possible about the context which shaped the researcher's conclusions, so readers can make their own judgements regarding the possible transferability of the findings to other settings (King *et al.*, 2019; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Seale, 1999). Opening-up the final stages of hypothesis manipulation and revealing alternative conclusions allows readers to appraise the decisions made in the research process without permitting them to interpret the findings however they wish,

as researchers who encourage this have been criticised for relinquishing responsibility for their own interpretations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The adoption of the concept of intimacy as a lens through which to view the data also allows further claims to be made about the transferability of the findings to other contexts. Within the literature on physical activity and families, there is evidence of a tendency to study 'different' 'types' of family (Day, 2018). This carries with it the assumption that the qualitative content of relationships within non-traditional families is somehow different and less pure than the experience of being involved in family relationships characteristic of more traditional ties (Day, 2018). As a response to this, the current study approached families without the hidden assumptions often made about the experiences of people assigned to a specific type of family household, which structure interpretations of qualitative data before it has been collected. There will be gendered nuances at play, but these nuances themselves can still be similar between family households structured in more and less conventional ways. Moreover, as pointed out in the literature review, any significant differences which surface during the study are more likely to be due to the unfolding of time, as family intimacies are always in a process of storied becoming (Jamieson, 1998), and are never 'intact', a label which has been used elsewhere (see Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). Thus, within the research objective of investigating 'the potential contribution of physical activity to human wellbeing across the life course within a range of family contexts', the *range* of family contexts appreciates that differences in structure are inevitable, but the human intimacies which tie family members together will hold some generality across the sample, regardless of household type or family context. Any such generalisations drawn from the sample can then be tested by readers within their receiving context,

where they can trial the transferability of the working hypothesis against their own experiences (Seale, 1999).

The potential for generalisability according to the rigour of AI and the intimacy-driven perspective of human family membership is also enhanced using existing theoretical generalisations to strengthen and guide the explanation of data and address each research objective. Subsequently, all interpretations and claims made according to the data will have passed through the tests of negative cases and competing explanations and represent similarities with well-established and relevant theoretical perspectives, which themselves have stood the test of time. Based on the assumption that generalisations in qualitative research rest upon logic, rather than the quantitative foundations of probability (Seale, 1999), AI ensures that empirical analytical generalisability has been reached within the sample and provisional connections are then made between the resulting working hypothesis and elements of pre-existing theoretical principles that have been tried and tested in broader settings. The wider relevance of identified similarities across multiple case studies is enhanced through theory by strengthening the researcher's analysis of the data and empirical interpretation in illustrating that, to some degree, what occurred in this study has also happened elsewhere (Seale, 1999).

#### 4.7 Theoretical Framework: contextualising the working hypotheses

Using AI meant that an inductively derived working hypothesis was formulated from the data for each of the investigated research objectives. Greater sense of the data was then made by providing further context in the form of existing academic discussions and relevant theory. Therefore, as might be expected, no single

overarching theory was used and instead a variety of theorists were drawn upon to explain the data. Interviewees' experiences which received detailed examination to address the research objectives were wellbeing, happiness, pleasure, parenting, ageing, intimacies and life course trajectories.

Given the close relationship between life history methods and symbolic interactionism in the development of Chicago School social theory, while designing and conducting the study I became sensitive to the work of influential scholars who were involved in the advancement of this methodological and theoretical tradition. Thus, the insights of Herbert Blumer (1969) and Howard Becker (1973) were logically well-suited to the type of data collected. Although the crucial factor for utilising the work of both authors was the specific areas in which they have conducted empirical studies and written about at length. In the case of Blumer (1969), his detailed discussion of discerning between more and less useful research concepts according to the necessary balance required between everyday perception and academic conceptualisation was illustrative of some of the issues encountered by trying to get at participants' recollected experiences of wellbeing. While Becker's (1973) argument that pleasurable interpretations of previous experience are the essential factor in guiding people's future behaviour towards similar experiences was demonstrative of, and strikingly similar to, participants' physical activity careers.

Jean-Paul Sartre was another author who received regular attention in the life history method texts that informed the study (see Denzin, 2001, 2014; Ferrarotti, 1981; Plummer, 2001) Therefore, I had an awareness of the relevance of Sartre's (1963) progressive-regressive method as a suitable approach to explaining life history data prior to data collection, although it was not until the final working hypothesis had been confirmed that Sartre's method was read in detail. I made the decision to engage with

this work as a potential avenue for analysis, as Plummer (2001) and Denzin (2001) refer to the progressive-regressive method in a fashion that appeared congruent with the research objective of investigating the relevance of childhood physical activity experiences to involvement across the life course. After reading this work it was deemed that the theoretical complexity was befitting and indicative of participants' recollected experiences and is therefore used in the relevant part of the thesis.

In account of the recurring tendency for participants to refer to their previous experiences in terms of happiness rather than wellbeing, while also expressing moral sympathies and judgements about the happiness of the self and others, Adam Smith's (1759) *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* was adopted to provide a psychological foundation from which to work and navigate participants' storied interpretations of what they termed as 'happiness'. The researcher developed a greater appreciation for the significance of Smith's theory by returning to the happiness literature which initially informed the study and noticed how the fundamental tenets of this theory continue to shape the work of prominent happiness scholars, such as Offer (2006) and Layard (2011). Smith's (1759) proposal that moral sentiments are extended from the self to others, and therefore need to be shared between people to cultivate happier societies also represents a potential solution to the gap between individual and collective happiness identified in the literature review. Furthermore, this perspective assists in explaining the darker side of the thesis, in how many participants identified physical activity participation as protecting against illness, suffering and premature death, the fear of which somewhat overshadowed the primary enticing factor of pleasure,

It is from this very illusion of the imagination, that the foresight of our own dissolution is so terrible to us, and that the idea of those circumstances, which undoubtedly can give us no pain when we are dead, makes us

miserable while we are alive. And from thence arises one of the most important principles in human nature, the dread of death, the great poison to the happiness. (Smith, 1759; p. 8)

The parenting and ageing aspects of the findings and discussion section draw upon a variety of relevant peer-reviewed research papers rather than applying grand theoretical ideas to the data. Nevertheless, those papers brought into the discussion carried their own theoretical inclinations, meaning that contextualising the parenting and ageing data still occurred through a theoretical lens. With respect to parenting, the perspective was predominantly feminism (Bristow, 2014; Faircloth, 2014a, 2014b; Lee, 2014; Lee, Macvarish & Bristow, 2010), and analysis of ageing largely focused on the body and the concept of embodiment (Tulle, 2008). As already explained, intimacy, in the form of knowledge sharing and trust (Jamieson, 1998) was selected to navigate the blurred lines of 'family' before data collection commenced.

## Findings and Discussion

In this part of the thesis there are five findings and discussion chapters. Namely a critique of wellbeing as a useful academic concept, the pleasure regularly active participants experience as a consequence of physical activity involvement, how physical activity can also bring further purpose to people's lives as they become parents and age, the pivotal role of fathers in the physical activity careers of sons and daughters, and the centrality of walking to understanding the relevance of childhood physical activity to participation across the life course.

### ***Participant Information***

To provide context to the following discussion of the findings, the table below gives further information about each of the research participants:

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Interview Date</b>
<i>Sophie</i>	1994	Female	20.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with boyfriend</li> <li>• Spent most of childhood playing alone, as her two sisters are 17 and 19 years older</li> <li>• Has no contact with her biological father, but treats stepfather as 'real' father</li> <li>• Stepfather and mother now divorced</li> <li>• Lived with stepfather following the divorce before moving in with boyfriend</li> </ul>			
<i>Grant</i>	1993	Male	16.07.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single</li> <li>• Lives with fellow young professionals</li> <li>• Bermudan national, where he was socialised into physical activity</li> <li>• Moved to the UK for university study</li> <li>• Has a younger sister who is also 'sporty'</li> </ul>			
<i>Brett</i>	1993	Male	07.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single</li> </ul>			



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with fellow young professionals</li> <li>• Has a younger brother, who is physically 'better'</li> <li>• Lived with his aunt for the first six months of his current job, as the commute was easier</li> </ul>			
<i>Becky</i>	1992	Female	07.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with a fellow young professional</li> <li>• Has a boyfriend in the Navy, who lives elsewhere in the UK</li> <li>• Has a younger sister</li> </ul>			
<i>Will</i>	1990	Male	28.07.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with a fellow young professional</li> <li>• Has a girlfriend</li> <li>• Has an older brother, an older sister and a younger brother and all of them are regularly physically active</li> <li>• Father is also regularly active, but mother is not</li> <li>• All four grandparents are Polish, he attended Polish school and Polish scouts</li> </ul>			
<i>Beth</i>	1990	Female	18.06.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single</li> <li>• Lives with a fellow young professional</li> <li>• Moved away from home to attend university and remained in the same area after graduating</li> <li>• Has one older brother and one younger brother</li> <li>• Describes herself as being a lazy child and playing on her own most of the time</li> <li>• Her parents are keen walkers and met at a caving club</li> </ul>			
<i>Yasmin</i>	1989	Female	27.07.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with her husband, daughter and son</li> <li>• Has an older sister and younger brother</li> <li>• Describes herself and brother as being regularly active and her sister as 'the laziest mare'</li> <li>• Cites her father's genes as the main cause of her sporting ability</li> <li>• Started working as a fitness instructor after losing a significant amount of weight through attending the gym post-pregnancy</li> </ul>			
<i>Wayne</i>	1988	Male	19.09.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with wife and son</li> <li>• Wife is a dance teacher and currently pregnant with second child</li> <li>• Has an older brother and younger brother</li> <li>• Australian, emigrated with family at the age of four</li> </ul>			

<i>Chris</i>	1988	Male	07.05.2015
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with girlfriend</li> <li>• Has an older brother</li> <li>• 'Followed' his older brother and father into rugby as a teenager, but no longer plays</li> </ul>			
<i>Charlotte</i>	1986	Female	20.04.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with boyfriend</li> <li>• Has an older brother, younger brother and younger sister</li> <li>• Is physically active with younger siblings, but not older brother</li> </ul>			
<i>Maria</i>	1974	Female	15.07.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with husband, daughter and son</li> <li>• Moved to the UK when 21 years of age from Czech Republic, where she was born</li> <li>• Has two younger brothers, she is 16 years older than her youngest brother</li> <li>• Her parents separated shortly before she moved to the UK</li> <li>• Remembers running with her dad throughout childhood</li> </ul>			
<i>Stuart</i>	1974	Male	16.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a son</li> <li>• Lives alone following divorce</li> <li>• His mother and father divorced when he was young, so he never really knew his father</li> <li>• 'Shied away' from sport at school, so is trying to ensure that his son has a more active childhood</li> </ul>			
<i>Emma</i>	1973	Female	18.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divorced</li> <li>• Has a boyfriend</li> <li>• Lives with her daughter and son</li> <li>• Family-based physical activities were restricted during childhood, as her father became disabled when she was young</li> <li>• Has a younger sister</li> </ul>			
<i>Claire</i>	1971	Female	03.08.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with husband, son and daughter</li> <li>• Met her husband at the gym</li> <li>• Her husband became paralysed on one side of his body after having a severe stroke 11 years ago</li> <li>• Has an older sister with no interest in physical activity</li> <li>• Mother finds her physical activity involvement 'bizarre'</li> </ul>			

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remembers going for walks with her father during childhood</li> <li>• Mother and father divorced, and has barely seen her father for 20 years</li> <li>• Her father has Alzheimer's</li> </ul>
<i>Evan</i>	1970	Male	22.07.2016	
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single</li> <li>• Lives alone</li> <li>• Has a younger sister who lacks the same 'instinct' for exercise</li> <li>• His sister, mother and father get worried by the intensity he exercises at</li> <li>• Fears becoming decrepit like his father as he ages</li> </ul>				
<i>Paige</i>	1970	Female	25.05.2016	
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with husband and three daughters</li> <li>• Has an older sister</li> <li>• During childhood her father was 'absent', so she started running and swimming with him to spend time together</li> <li>• Recalls the family tensions caused by her father's 'selfish' need to exercise</li> </ul>				
<i>Warren</i>	1969	Male	17.07.2016	
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with wife, youngest daughter and son</li> <li>• Eldest daughter is at university</li> <li>• Both daughters are quite 'sporty', whereas his son has been less active since leaving school</li> <li>• Wife has never been especially active but became a gymnastics coach to support both daughters</li> <li>• Has an older brother who has never really been 'sporty'</li> </ul>				
<i>Harry</i>	1969	Male	09.05.2016	
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with wife and son</li> <li>• Also has two daughters</li> <li>• The eldest daughter is married with one daughter and currently expecting a second daughter</li> <li>• The younger daughter has moved in with her partner and is a lesbian, which was a 'shock to the system'</li> <li>• Has a younger brother and older sister</li> <li>• Some resentment between him and both siblings, as their father invested a lot of time in Harry's motorcycling career</li> <li>• Since he started doing other sports instead of motorcycling it has created difficulties with this father, who is disappointed that Harry no longer competes</li> </ul>				
<i>Graham</i>	1968	Male	28.09.2016	
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with boyfriend</li> <li>• Has a younger sister</li> </ul>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father is a cyclist, but no longer competes</li> <li>• Hated PE and being active throughout childhood, gradually developed interest in swimming, and now enjoys running, cycling and triathlons</li> </ul>			
<i>Olivia</i>	1968	Female	17.09.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with husband and youngest daughter</li> <li>• The two older daughters have moved out</li> <li>• Raised by her grandmother, who she refers to as her mother</li> <li>• Classes her biological mother as her sister</li> <li>• Does not know who her biological father is</li> <li>• Has two French half-brothers, who only recently discovered that she existed</li> </ul>			
<i>Henry</i>	1955	Male	24.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with wife and provides care for his unwell mother</li> <li>• Has two sons, the eldest is in the RAF and the youngest at university</li> <li>• His wife and both sons are regularly active, whereas he is not</li> <li>• Has an older brother and two older sisters</li> <li>• Was expelled from school at 15</li> </ul>			
<i>Mike</i>	1953	Male	11.08.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with wife</li> <li>• Has two sons and a daughter</li> <li>• He had two sisters, now deceased, who he had a 'separate life' from because they were female</li> <li>• Cites a 'distance' between himself and his family through being in the military for 26 years</li> </ul>			
<i>Paul</i>	1953	Male	20.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with wife</li> <li>• Has two sons and a daughter</li> <li>• The youngest son developed a sense of inferiority as he was not as good as his older brother at sport</li> <li>• Cites genetics as the reason why the males in the family are interested in sport participation and the females are not</li> <li>• Has two younger brothers</li> </ul>			
<i>Rachel</i>	1953	Female	04.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives alone, divorced from husband</li> <li>• Became close with step-son during the marriage and have kept in touch</li> <li>• Now also gets on well with step-son's biological mother</li> <li>• Met her ex-husband playing badminton</li> <li>• Her father left the family when she was 13</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father's rejection of her played a part in her becoming a successful PE teacher</li> <li>• Has a younger brother and younger sister, but was quite distant from both of them during childhood</li> </ul>			
<i>Louise</i>	1952	Female	19.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives alone, divorced from husband</li> <li>• Had two sons, but both died through lifelong degenerative illness</li> <li>• Tries to keep active but has MS and uses a wheelchair sometimes, so finds this difficult</li> <li>• Only child</li> </ul>			
<i>Kevin</i>	1951	Male	10.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with wife</li> <li>• No children</li> <li>• Has an older brother and younger sister</li> <li>• Not close with either sibling, left home at 13 to attend boarding school</li> <li>• Divide in the family growing-up, as he was very close with his father and his brother was very close with mother</li> <li>• His father was highly influential in his sporting career</li> </ul>			
<i>Helen</i>	1950	Female	30.09.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with husband</li> <li>• Has two sons</li> <li>• Had three older brothers, the middle one has passed away</li> <li>• Did not feel as though she had any siblings during childhood, as she is eight years younger than the youngest brother</li> <li>• Disliked and avoided PE at school and was bullied based on her weight</li> <li>• Sees family as more important than physical activity and loves being a grandmother</li> </ul>			
<i>Fiona</i>	1950	Female	23.05.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives with husband and eldest son</li> <li>• Has two sons</li> <li>• Husband is currently in poor health</li> <li>• Cites some unfairness in how her husband has always had time to play golf, while she found herself in more of a housewife role</li> <li>• Has two older sisters and one younger sister</li> <li>• Cites how it was easier to be active as a child in her generation, as it was a 'freer' time, although there was not as many opportunities for organised sport participation</li> </ul>			
<i>Julian</i>	1943	Male	07.07.2016
<b>Family and Household Context, Intimacies &amp; Recollected Socialisation</b>			

- Lives with wife
- Has married twice previously, both ended in divorce
- No biological children, but has a step-son and a step-daughter
- Had two older brothers and an older sister, the younger brother passed away
- He and his siblings were active during childhood, but only he continued to participate as an adult because he didn't have children

Zara	1940	Female	24.04.2015
------	------	--------	------------

**Family and Household Context, Intimacies & Recollected Socialisation**

- Lives with second husband
- Previous husband passed away
- Had two sons with previous husband
- A shared interest in cycling is how she became close with her current husband
- Has more freedom to be regularly active in her current relationship compared to the previous one

## **5. The Absence of Wellbeing and the Discovery of Happiness**

When participants were asked to consider why they thought physical activity was conducive to wellbeing they struggled with unravelling and interpreting this concept. Moreover, participants were unable to draw on any specific wellbeing experiences of their own despite having already recalled their physical activity careers by this point in the interview. In the vast majority of the interviews, due to the intended ordering of topics within the flexible interview schedule, wellbeing was the final area discussed and directly followed participants' intimate memories of interactions between family membership and physical activity involvement. Again, interviewees did not make reference to these potentially evocative memories to make sense of their wellbeing. After initially grappling to situate wellbeing within their own lives and prior experiences, participants either resorted to generalising about wellbeing in a hypothetical fashion or diverted attention away from the precariousness of this concept and towards their more easily perceivable feelings of happiness. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the legitimacy of wellbeing as a concept to the perceptions of the interviewed participants, and to some extent, qualitative research more generally. Following the fundamental criticisms levelled at popular conceptualisations of wellbeing, the value of 'happiness' as referred to by interviewees is championed as providing the thesis with the context that wellbeing was expected to.

### **5.1 The Absence of Wellbeing within Lived Experience and Human Perception**

Initially, Charlotte attempted to make a distinction between physical and mental wellbeing, '*Do you mean physical wellbeing or mental, or both?*', but then wrestled with attempting to put them back together,

*I think they're... they're probably linked. Errr... I'm not really sure (laughs) erm... I guess if you feel healthy about yourself... about your body and about... if you're fit and healthy... physically you're gonna feel better about yourself mentally.*

Kevin also conceptualised wellbeing as something that needs to be broken down before having any immediate relevance to his perceptions, 'Er, on what level? Physically? Emotionally? Mentally? Spiritually?'. After making several brief comments about how physical activity is beneficial for mental wellbeing, Olivia found these benefits difficult to explain with any further detail or meaning,

JD: You mention it being good for people's mental wellbeing as well, so what do you mean by that?

*I think that, erm... I don't know how to put it into words really.*

A number of participants, such as Paul, viewed wellbeing as more of a generic umbrella term, rather than something they sensed and identified with through lived experience,

*I can eat, I can drink, I can do whatever I like, and still keep, erm, reasonably, er, you know, twelve and a half stone, or eleven and a half stone as I am now, it's... it's good general wellbeing.*

As indicated by Paul, participants expressed a shared consensus that body weight is representative of physical wellbeing. Harry was particularly explicit, in this regard, and suggested body shape is also symbolic of physical wellbeing, 'if you've got... the physical wellbeing, you know, you're a good shape, you know, you're not overweight'. As well as being elusive in an empirical form, Chris explained that wellbeing is an external idea imposed upon you during adulthood about how to live well, and prior to this, had no place in his childhood physical activity experiences,



JD: what would you say the contribution, or the value, of physical activity to wellbeing is when you're younger?

*I don't think you can kind of look, I don't think you can put a name to it, if ya know what I mean, you just... speaking from a grown-up's point of view... it's just so much fun.*

This argument is further reinforced by Claire's failure to cajole her children into being more physically active on the grounds that it would improve their wellbeing, which did not seem to resonate with them,

*I always promote the benefits of exercise, erm, to them, wellbeing, mentally and physically, but it's something they just sort of, at this age, just sort of... roll their eyes and aren't really that interested.*

While Kevin perceived wellbeing as an idea that you had to 'buy into' for it to hold any relevance to everyday life. The interpretation of wellbeing as concept that is detached from immediate and direct human perception was also emphasised by Graham, whose awareness of wellbeing was heightened only due to being 'tied-up with the wellbeing agenda at work'. Of the 30 participants, only the lives of Graham and Paige engaged regularly with the notion of a 'wellbeing agenda', and again, this was only because they were encouraged to believe in the concept of wellbeing by the vested interests of those around them. Paige's husband, a financial consultant specialising in pensions and retirement, advises people approaching the transition of retirement from work to think about their wellbeing prior to, during, and after this phase of life. Although, probably more significant, was how Paige identified that her hypothetical interpretation of wellbeing aligns closely with their Christian upbringing and beliefs,

*We're also Christians actually, so, erm, we're both brought-up by Christian parents, and, so looking at the bible there's a lot of, erm, information about, erm, on wisdom, and, erm, it's funny 'cos in my teens I sort of like, pushed*

*it all away, I couldn't be bothered with it, and ignored it all and years later I came back to it and read some stuff and I thought 'do you know what, this really makes sense, it's really wise'... and it's almost, like... well if there is a God and if we've been made, then he's made human-beings with a certain, you know... we tick, we work in a certain way... so we've got that aspect of physical, emotional, spiritual, so all dimensions add up together, and if you ignore one of them, it's like you seem to breakdown, and you can get unhealthy and unwell, so... if we looked at it from a religious perspective, and you said well if God says, you know, 'drink wine because it's, it makes the heart glad', you know, and it's good for your stomach, but don't get drunk, because... you'll say things you regret and you'll have an affair and you'll wreck your marriage and it's basically, you think 'well that makes sense, you know?'... so I think, you know, we looked at the whole, the whole package.*

In making sense of the generic package of wellbeing, Paige's conceptions were more of a justification of her religious position, imposed upon her during childhood, than a clear explanation of the meaning of wellbeing to her everyday experiences and existence.

Recent qualitative research has also found that participants do not tell stories about their subjective experiences of wellbeing in ways that align with popular approaches represented in psychological conceptualisations, especially the type theorised by proponents of SWB (White, 2017; White & Jha, 2018). Rather, within context sensitive research involving human interaction between the researcher and the researched, participants present themselves as moral beings with identities to uphold to the self and others (White & Jha, 2018). Ongoing relational negotiations between how people are seen and want to be seen tell us that while they may possess moral sensibilities about right and wrong, they do not always behave in the 'right' way when situated within their everyday ways of being, as they become more morally

aware in formal research settings (White & Jha, 2018). As soon as the audio recording device was switched off when Chris's interview finished, he asked '*Right... so, how much of a fuck-up am I then?*', to reveal the morally evaluative self he acted out and maintained during the relational interaction with the interviewer throughout the formal interview context. Wellbeing, like the thoughtful and emotional people it emerges from, is always relational (White, 2017). 'The autonomous individual', who acts entirely of their own freewill 'is a cultural myth', just as the person who acts only according to social expectations is 'a fantasy' (White, 2017; p. 129). Depending upon the relational context people find themselves in, which existed prior to their arrival, wellbeing is individual and collective to varying degrees, and thus interdependent, rather than divisive or fixed somewhere between 'subjective' and 'objective' conjecture (White, 2017).

In light of participants' limited subjectivities about wellbeing functioning as no more than an umbrella phrase, the qualitative study of wellbeing carries with it some fundamental empirical drawbacks. This is not the long-standing criticism aimed at wellbeing surveys by qualitative researchers because 'a degree which is quantitatively higher or lower than another is also qualitatively different' (Znaniecki, 1934; p. 310), but more of a pessimistic appraisal of how relevant and meaningful the concept of wellbeing is to qualitative enquiry. It would seem that the relatively novel criticism of the value of wellbeing to qualitative research, offered here, arises out of trying to get at experiences of wellbeing in a manner which draws upon people's recalled memories of their entire lives. This is of significance for physical activity research because the widespread use of wellbeing surveys in this field rests on the assumption that participants are able to locate and identify wellbeing within their everyday experiences,

which serves as the primary justification for measuring participants' wellbeing scores against their physical activity participation.

Wellbeing was a largely meaningless and impractical phrase that seemed to be imposed upon participants by the researcher (White & Jha, 2018). The workings of power relations, illustrated through this interaction between researcher and participant, are reflective of a push from nation states in the West to improve the individual wellbeing of their citizens (Zevnik, 2014). Despite the shift of interest from the GDP to the importance of public wellbeing amongst economists, the tendency for economics research to favour the interests of the powerful has remained (Offer, 2006). This is problematic, because the individual actors of a society live in search of happiness for nothing other than the sake of happiness (Dolan, 2014; Layard, 2011; Vernon, 2008), whereas the state in which they live is more interested in using SWB to monitor the progress of their society (Offer, 2006; Zevnik, 2014). As such, the term 'wellbeing' appears to have become a concept that belongs primarily to political and academic thought, rather than emerging from everyday perceivable experiences (Zevnik, 2014). Within the scholarly arena, particular disciplines defend, develop and reproduce their own subject-specific forms of wellbeing, thus maintaining insular conceptualisations and ensuring the absence of self-critical awareness (White & Jha, 2018). Overall, it would appear that the language of wellbeing is in the process of being claimed and absorbed into a political and scientific rhetoric aligned with ideals about social progress, congruent with the preferences of those relatively more powerful, wealthy and privileged. Along these lines, it is perhaps understandable that participants were uncertain and unspecific about the nature, value and meaning of wellbeing within their lived experiences.

### *5.1.1 The Perceptual Flaw in the Concept of Wellbeing*

Some of the conceptual criticisms of wellbeing offered so far have also been considered more comprehensively in Blumer's (1969) evaluation of the nature and use of concepts in scientific research. As a component of the scientific act, the concept arises from what is conceived from perception and, in doing so, offers a more thorough account of the experience through which an activity is perceived (Blumer, 1969). For Blumer (1969), the way in which one conceives a situation, fashions, changes and guides their perception of it, giving them a new orientation from which to approach the situation. Thus, the function of the concept, in both its common sense and scientific form, is to give an understandable character to perceived experiences. Perception of something indicates its existence, conception of it brings us closer to understanding its character by seeing it from a broader and more common orientation (Blumer, 1969). This is the unique value of the concept, it

Permits one to catch and hold some content of experience and make common property of it... By identifying such an isolated content... (1) this content may become the object of separate investigation and reflection, (2) it may enter into the experience of others and so become common property. (Blumer, 1969; p. 158).

These interactions between perceived and conceiving, perception and conception, and the isolated and the common are not merely theoretical musings, but evident in some of the most notable and revered scientific breakthroughs. Such as how Galileo established that motion is a separate entity from the object it acts upon, essential to the development of gravitational laws (Blumer, 1969). Tying together Blumer's appraisal of the use of concepts in academic research with the difficulties encountered in attempting to draw upon the concept of wellbeing in the current study, the

fundamental issue appears to be how participants were generally aware of wellbeing as a common conception, but not within their perception of wellbeing as an experience that can be grasped.

The criticism which can be levelled at wellbeing research, using Blumer's (1969) assessment, is that much of our knowledge about the concept of wellbeing has been manufactured out of the heads of academics, rather than being grounded or tested in empirical experience. In one respect, wellbeing research is constrained by SWB surveys, where the potential sources of wellbeing are predetermined by the researcher, and in another, any potential for the practical usefulness of wellbeing suffers from pompous and unhelpful philosophical speculation about eudaimonia and flourishing. In both cases, the meaning of wellbeing is drawn exclusively from the perceptions of academics, giving both conceptualisations of wellbeing a hollow structure, detached from common sense perception and experience. As Blumer (1969; p. 168) asserts, 'most of the improper usage of the concept in science comes when the concept is set apart from the world of experience, when it is divorced from the perception from which it has arisen and into which it ordinarily ties.' The SWB surveys used as the instrument of investigation in physical activity research, reveal only associations, predictions and correlations of the negative or positive direction of items of wellbeing proposed by the researcher. The 375 children and their parents who were assessed on a variety of physical activity and wellbeing items by Holder *et al.* (2009) revealed positive correlates between children's leisure physical activity and their wellbeing, parental involvement in children's physical activity and children's wellbeing, and children's athletic ability and their wellbeing. Although interesting, Grant and Kluge (2007; p. 404) are critical of the limitations of such findings for similar reasons as Blumer (1969), because 'although empirical findings of health, well-being, and quality

of life provide information about activities of daily life and lifestyle, they are devoid of an insight into the individual's own experiences'. At some point during the SWB survey, participants will be asked to place a score against items which they do not consider to be sources of wellbeing, and items they do consider sources of wellbeing, but which merit a fuller explanation of the contextual experience than that offered by a single number. Thus, the continued scholarly 'refinement' of wellbeing instruments, such as the UK's Office for National Statistics (2018) wellbeing survey will remain inadequate because, regardless of how sharp and accurate this measurement of wellbeing is, it is the initial conceptual perspective of wellbeing which is inadequate. In this respect, Blumer (1969; p. 170) refers to experts carrying out this form of research as 'bookkeepers of facts', who 'play with mental toys in the belief that the manipulation of these empty terms constitute science' but are more representative of 'stereotyped methodological notions' than useful concepts.

Whereas, wellbeing experts who take a more philosophical stance are guilty of what Blumer (1969) sees as overlooking any perceptual basis to a concept in favour of a style of pontification derived from ancient Greek scholarship. Drawing upon Aristotle, the likes of Vernon (2008) purport that wellbeing possesses intrinsic ethical meaning, with no necessity for this claimed theoretical character to be tested in the empirical world. Such empty elaborations serve only to stifle conceptual and perceptual understandings, which are of use to metaphysics, but not rigorous evidence-based research (Blumer, 1969). Bloodworth *et al.*'s (2012) position that sport and physical activity participation are objective constituents of a good life and requisites for human flourishing is not supported by the data collected here. Summarising some of the conversations he had shared with his sister on this topic, Evan pointed out,

*My sister, erm, freely admits that something in her brain tells her it's too much trouble, so she doesn't have, er, an instinct to... sometimes even do light exercise, she might walk for an hour after school, she's a school administrator, but she'd much rather stay at home, watch television and read or listen to music, be with her husband.*

The perceptual gap between this empirical evidence and Bloodworth *et al.*'s philosophical theorising about the place of physical activity within a life which allegedly allows one to flourish, means that the scepticism eudaimonic philosophers have about the value of ordinary human perception to the conceptualisation of wellbeing is mirrored by their empirical counterparts (Dolan, 2014). This reasoning is symptomatic of how Blumer (1969; p. 170) came to label the ancient Greek philosophers of our time, who invent concepts entirely through their own cogitation, as 'spinners of metaphysics'. Blumer (1969) further argues that to better exploit the instrumental nature of the use of concepts in empirical research, the solution is not to strike a common ground between the metaphysical and factual, but to approach and utilise concepts from a different direction entirely. Along such lines of practicality, this problem deserves further discussion, not least because establishing a clearer position regarding wellbeing and happiness, following the complications which ensued from attempting to study wellbeing qualitatively, sets the foundation for the rest of thesis. A discussion of this kind is also timely and may have broader implications for the field, given that happiness is now conceived to be 'real' following advances in neuroscience (Layard, 2011).



### 5.1.2 Discovering Feelings of Happiness

In contrast to wellbeing, participants were more comfortable in relaying their experiences of happiness, which they referred to freely. Telling, was how a number of participants immediately reverted to exploring feelings of happiness when directed towards the wellbeing aspect of the interview by the researcher, *'Er, I think... if people do that, they, they feel happier within themselves and then they can, er, spread their happiness better'* (Maria). The interview with Helen was also noteworthy in this respect, as she referred to 'good wellbeing' throughout, but without ever explaining or going into any further detail about what this meant. Towards the end of the interview, when asked what 'good wellbeing' consisted of, she replied,

*Erm, well, feeling, feeling health, healthy, being healthy... mostly being happy really.*

Unintentionally, by attempting to study wellbeing using a qualitative approach, the data, and thus the study, became characterised by feelings and experiences of happiness.

Until recently, happiness was seen as a speculative and trivial area of study by many, as no means existed through which solid proof could be produced to confirm happiness was anything more than a description of fleeting feelings and emotions (Layard, 2011). Developments in neuroscience now mean that happiness is more than a transient subjective term, as statements about feeling happy are consistent with activity on the left side of the brain, which is now studied using standardised measures (Layard, 2001). These advancements may also eventually allow for a clearer differentiation between feelings of happiness and the concept of wellbeing. Being and feeling 'happy' and 'happier', were aspects of memories and experiences that

participants were more immediately aware of and able to recall. Data of this kind also has a contemporary relevance, as 'We are in the midst of a massive cultural revolution in which feelings are accepted as important and legitimate in a quite new way' (Layard, 2011; p. 267). The participants interviewed here were reluctant to offer a universal definition of happiness, but they were able to pick out from their experiences what made them feel happy, as Yasmin recalled from her physical activity involvement,

*when I kind of start to feel the sweat going into my eyes, I'm like 'yeah, I've worked really hard, I'm happy now' (laughs), erm, and I just... I do feel like it can become a bit of an addiction, that kind of... I suppose it's the hormones that's released when you're... pushing yourself to that, to those kinds of extremes really.*

Beth, who was less driven by pushing her body to the limit, suggested that the happiness from physical activity was more about relational experiences with others (White, 2017), and physical activity participation was often an incidental element of this,

*I think there's like... different ways you can explain happiness, like I could say I'm happy now and that's like, the moment, but whether I'm happy with my life, whether I'm happy, like overall, erm, I don't think I can explain 'what is happiness?'... I think sports makes me happy at the time, but it doesn't make me happy with my life... It has no difference on, like when I'm 80, I'm not gonna look at, look back at my life and be like 'oh, I'm happy with my life because I played tennis, or I'm happy with my life 'cos I, erm, went to the gym', I guess it's like... maybe what comes from me going to the gym, like I'm, erm, developing friendships with certain people or, erm, if I'm going walking, then I get to see new places, I might look back and think about 'oh, I'm happy because I got to do all these cool things with certain people', but I'm not gonna be like 'I'm happy because I went on a walk every weekend'... Lasting happiness comes from when I'm doing, erm, active things with other people.*

Through being active, Grant described how he had a happier disposition, even though his physical activity participation sometimes caused his body to ache,

*I remember it especially after rugby practice, a couple of tackles, the next morning, like without, without fail, I'd just ache all over, and just like be limping, just around the house... like, I'd wake-up and just be like aching, erm... but yeah, I think I just, I'd just be a lot happier, a lot more focused, so it's not just kind of, being happy without knowing why, but I think... I think when I go for a run I'm able to just... handle daily life better... it just seems like, because I'm happier, you, like no matter what happens, or even if it's like a bad day, I still feel like I can handle it more, erm... yeah, it's really hard to explain... it's not like a super burst of happiness, like if someone cracks a joke, and like you're laughing and like, you just like have that feeling... it's just a lot more of a slow-burner, where just slowly throughout the day you're able to, erm... just have like a better disposition.*

Stuart, who had recently experienced depression, offered an account of how regular physical activity participation over a period of time, made him feel less unhappy and, eventually, happier,

*Once you've realised how unhappy you can be, then you realise how happy you are, and it's the weight coming off, and then you start to think 'actually, I am happy', yeah, you can always look for extra bits and pieces that ya, ya think you should be chasing, but... nah, just sort of gettin' content is good.*

This data about feeling happy touches upon suggestions that future happiness research should focus increasingly on experiences, everyday feelings, memories, and the context of people's own lives, to give more of a lifespan perspective (Dolan, 2014).

Dolan (2014) and Layard (2011) champion happiness research by arguing that happiness is unique and the only end to which there is no other goal. As we are hard-wired to seek out good feelings, we are motivated to pay greater attention to those

things within our everyday lives that make us happier (Layard, 2011), or at least those things we think will make us happier (Dolan, 2014). Thus, it could be argued that while the concept of wellbeing is informed by ancient classical philosophy and has developed various theoretical strands and its own set of statistical measures, it is the study of feelings, experiences and memories of happiness across the life course that really count. Furthermore, now some evidence exists that happiness is real and we can get at it through both neuroscience and qualitative interviews, as illustrated here, it calls into question the relevance of the concept of wellbeing in researching people's everyday lives. Not least, because eudaimonia cannot be accessed in any empirical form (Vernon, 2008), the epistemology of SWB surveys is flawed (Zevnik, 2014), and elsewhere, the big moral ethical debate of 'how best to live' that began during ancient history, remains largely academic (Riordan, 2011; Zevnik, 2014).

## *5.2 Happiness: being an involved actor and impartial spectator of previous experiences*

If SWB's main claim for being a useful measure is that it is the scientific equivalent of happiness (Zevnik, 2014), now that feelings of happiness can be identified as existing independently (Layard, 2011), it could be argued that the usefulness of SWB is under threat. Contextualised within the conspicuous distance between the perception and popular conceptualisation of wellbeing, calls for more experience-based ways of studying feelings of happiness over the life course (Dolan, 2014), and the need for a more multi-disciplinary narrative in happiness science (Riordan, 2011), the qualitative recollections of happiness gathered in the current study are probably of some value. Citing Adam Smith's (1759) seminal work, *The*

*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Offer (2006) and Layard (2011) propose there is a moral element to our experiences and feelings of happiness, which is a hard-wired component of the human psyche. They argue that this moral sense, which also manifests itself in our reciprocal feelings of sympathy for and from others, allows us to take-up the position of an 'impartial spectator' to inform how we conduct ourselves. Our behaviour is thus always interdependent with the behaviour of others, and, as impartial spectators, we are able to make choices with an awareness of how our actions might influence the happiness of others (Layard, 2011; Offer, 2006).

In conjunction with the life history methodology, interviewees referred to lived experiences retrospectively, thus assuming the position of relatively impartial spectators of their own lives. Upon the conclusion of the interview, Harry said,

*It's been quite a good therapy session (both laugh) yeah, it makes, it, it's quite strange 'cos it's not until the question's asked you sort of have to think about it... you do think about your life and there's a lot of things that you've... not forgotten about because obviously they come out, but... you know, they go to the back of your head and you don't think about it and... ya suddenly think, 'actually, yeah that'd probably be why that is, and that's why that is' and it sort of helps to... put things into place really.*

A retrospective approach provided opportunities for participants to become relatively detached from their own lived experiences and life course trajectories by making judgements about which choices and decisions had given rise to happier consequences, and those which had not,

*I was quite empowered when I got divorced so I'd be... free again and I started to... think about myself more and, er, I started thinking 'actually, I don't look that bad and I'm not that bad, I'm actually alright' and, you know, you only have one life, so why, if I wanna do something I should be able to do it. Umm, so I started thinking 'well does it really matter what they think*

*up the road if they see me, you know, doing something daft, does it really matter?' So then I started to, to be happier going out, walking and doing things. (Emma)*

Some interviewees, such as Helen, were also able to be relatively impartial about how decisions they had made in recent years were still influencing their current happiness. At a number of points in the interview, she referred to how retirement had turned out to be something of a disappointment,

*I'm not really happy with how I am, really (laughs), no, no... I just don't seem to have the drive to do much about it nowadays, since I've retired, my husband's not active, he's not an active person... and we seem to have got a bit in the doldrums, since we've retired, you're not really, although we do our holidays, we don't seem to do a lot with ourselves when we're at home, which... we should do more, maybe I should up my swimming, but then I find it difficult sometimes to fit that in, with having the children and other social events that I've got on.*

Like Helen, participants were also able to detach themselves from stages of their life which had not turned out so well and relive them in a composed manner, despite some of the uncomfortable memories that retelling these parts of their lives must have evoked. As Stuart described when relaying the series of events that led to him becoming depressed,

*I didn't, realise I was unhappy 'til, I think it was a few things last year, I, I was in a relationship and that ended and about the same time was, my mate's mum passed away who, who I grew-up with, er, she were like a second mum, like you, you do when you're kids, don't you, you're always at other people's houses and it was all the way through that, and I think stress with work, there was a few things that it triggered it and it, it did, it brought on depression, I didn't realise how long I'd had it, there was sort of underlying, it must have been for years and year and years... and that convinced me to get help, but it was about the same time that I had started*

*doin' sport, like the running and things and it sort of, I just threw myself more into it, er, it sort of, when I started reading up on it, you think, do more of this, and I thought well... 'why not?, you know, what's, what harm's it guna do?'*

The episodes and memories of people's lives that were emotionally distressful to discuss were those where people that they cared about were unhappy or in pain. Becky got upset when remembering what her father had said to her as he lay in a hospital bed after heart surgery,

*he had to have the operation, so we went to see him afterwards, I mean he recovered fine, he's, he's fine, erm, but he was like in the intensive care unit, like, and he was just lying there and he was, I remember him saying to, erm... (cries)... sorry... (cries)... like he said to me... (cries) he said to me and my sister... 'I don't want, ever want you two girls to be like in this position', erm... and it's not like... it's not something that I like think about, like on a daily basis... but I think from seeing that and... I just, that makes me think about the, the importance of staying like fit, and active as well.*

Becky's emotional response to her own reliving of this evocative family memory illustrates that our regard for others is, for most people, a natural part of being human. As becoming upset about something that had happened six years previously was not something that she had envisaged herself doing, and she remarked, '*that was really random, a random outbreak*'. As Offer (2006; p. 367) elucidates, 'each individual earns sympathy by being worthy of sympathy... the regard of others is earned by providing them with our own regard, directly or indirectly'. Despite our feelings for those close to us, Maria also highlighted how it is possible to adopt the position of an impartial spectator with respect to your own involvement within everyday family life and those that you care about deeply, and design and implement scenarios through which everyone is likely to gain more happiness,

*Selfish is such a negative word, but to some extent I think everyone should be a little bit, selfish, so that they do things they enjoy doing, and then they can be happy they've done those things... I think, erm, if you start... looking at, you know, what other people only want and, erm, you might start resenting... your life... so I think maybe to some extent I'm selfish because... I do find my time for exercising, so... I would say, now the children are bigger... that's a sort of, maybe selfishness, you know... I don't think about them only, but I think about myself too... I see that as a good thing, yeah because then I'm, er, happy... and, you know, I have to give them happiness, if I... if I couldn't exercise, I think, if I couldn't be active... I think I would resent... I would resent my life, and that wouldn't be good for anybody (laughs)... I try to make sure that there is a balance, so if I have to spend more time working, then again, I go exercising at six o'clock in the morning, I, I guess I have shorter sleeps (laughs), but I do it, just so that I am happy to, erm... to do whatever I need to do normal activities of my life, like family and work.*

Maria's explanation of the contradictions between making herself happier in a 'selfish' way, with the intention of sharing this happiness with her family, was indicative of some of the stories relayed by other participants, in that not everything is always what it seems when thinking about some of the uncritical indicators and commonplace assumptions of 'being happy'. Some of Paige's struggles with the way she perceived her body as a teenager and young adult had served to heighten her awareness of striving to be the 'perfect' weight,

*Then you sort of think, 'well, is it better to be a stone overweight and happy, rather than to be the perfect weight and so miserable you might be suicidal? or to be so extreme with your diet, that you're actually causing yourself harm?'... it's not about actually what you look like, but actually what's going on inside, so looks are very deceiving.*



Born in 1970, Paige's experiences across her life course, as both an involved actor and impartial spectator, had also led her to develop a wider perspective of how our everyday lives have become more sedentary in a physical sense, yet more psychologically stressful and demanding in terms of time. With both trends acting as potential constraints upon our happiness,

*it's almost like we're just, we're getting busier and busier and busier... accumulating stuff, to help us have an easier life, but then when we're... sitting down relaxing, we're not actually very happy, we're actually feeling... a bit ill, because, I think, you know, we're either, we're wearing ourselves out mentally, with the stress of running around, keeping it all, doing it all, juggling all the balls and all the rest of it, and actually physically... we're sitting in cars... and we're, we're not, like gardening and washing clothes... everything's kind of effortless... almost like we've done a disservice to ourselves, we've made life so cushy... and then the people who don't bother to do the exercise, I think are the ones who are actually quite ill, erm, because we're not supposed to be sedentary beings, we're supposed to run, and lift and carry and walk.*

These types of statements by participants illuminate a gap between what we envisage will make us happy and what actually does (Dolan, 2014). Subsequently, Dolan (2014) proposes that the interaction essential for happiness occurs between our attention and our behaviour. Much of the data accumulated here also underlines the importance of behaviour to feeling happy, which, for Grant, was about what you do,

*I think strongly that, like what you're doing is what makes you happy... what you do and the choices you make, to kind of create I guess, like the life you want, like you're living with the people, you're going out with the people you wanna go out with, and... yeah, you're just, doing what you wanna do.*

Although Grant's idea of how to be happy is party to many of the same criticisms as notions of hedonism, it does mark out the importance of behaviour, which was a

fundamental tenet to how participants remembered and relived feeling happy. The attention feature of Dolan's (2014) thesis was also evident in participants' stories, but this was of secondary importance to, and dependent upon, people's experiences. In short, participants were only able to pay attention to those things they had experience of doing and unable to pay attention to those aspects of life they had yet to experience. Maria articulated this by explaining how she sees people who have yet to feel the happiness she gets from being regularly active due to their lack of experience, as similar to those who have yet to experience the happiness she also gets from being a parent,

*They don't know they would feel even happier, but that's like when people have children and they don't have children, they don't know what they're missing, so they're happy anyway, without children... I'm sure they're happy (laughs), because maybe they've got other things in their life, like, erm, some artists, they like, erm, creating a nice picture... that would make them very happy, rather than feel like, er, going for a run (laughs).*

Understood in this manner, experiences of feeling happy offer a type of 'practical wisdom' to be acquired by each person 'afresh by a kind of apprenticeship to life' throughout their life course (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918; pp. 6-7). In some ways, Dolan's (2014; p. 19) work also appreciates how crucial previous experiences are to his theory of attention and behaviour, by making comments such as, 'memories of the past are important experiences of happiness *in the present*. Happiness includes good memories of good experiences.' Indeed, Dolan's (2014; p. 3) very definition of happiness focuses specifically on 'experiences of pleasure and purpose over time'. However, Dolan (2014) then proceeds to trivialise the role of lived experience, as it emerges that his definition of happiness is more of a crude calculation to be used solely within economics, probably better expressed as,

$$\text{Happiness} = (\text{Pleasure} + \text{Purpose}) \div \text{Time}$$

Aside from this criticism, Dolan's (2014) use of the terms pleasure and purpose are more inclusive to a variety of academic perspectives, open to multi-disciplinary analysis, and meaningful within everyday perceptions. Claims that cannot be made for much of the wellbeing and happiness terminology used by most scholars in the field (Riordan, 2011). Accordingly, 'purpose' was a phrase used by participants,

*If you do physical activity, your whole outlook on everything... changes... errr, the wife would probably agree that 'cos I spent my... literally my whole life involved in a form of physical activity, I know that if I'm not doing something... that's physical activity, I'm a miserable bastard (laughs) you know what I mean, that I get quite depressed, you know, when I haven't 'bin able to run, when I haven't been able to do something, you know, I feel like... there's, in a strange way, there's no, there's no purpose... you know, because it sort of drives me, and it has shaped how I've done... stuff in my, in my life. (Harry)*

Harry perceived his involvement in physical activity as purposeful and essential to his identity, which is indicative of the associated positive feelings of 'fulfilment, meaning, and worthwhileness' that Dolan (2014, 2014; p. 7) refers to as characterising this form of happiness. For Dolan (2014; p. 7), the pleasure component of happiness is manifested in positive feelings such as 'joy, excitement, and fun'. It was these sorts of feelings that Evan could remember experiencing when being active during childhood,

*the freedom of the activity, and feeling that you have boundless energy, and the thing that I always admire about kids is they never need, they never know when to stop, they're like puppies aren't they, they just carry on 'til they fall over... of course, you're not in school, you don't have anything to worry about, erm, the sun's beating down and the sea's warm and it's, you know, people are screaming with laughter, so physical activity for me seemed to be a really happy thing to do.*

Conceptualising happiness as positive feelings which fall into two broad categories of experience may appear fairly simplistic. Yet this is precisely the point, because conceived in this way, experiences of feeling happy possess an understandable character derived from, and grounded in, human perception. There is clear overlap between pleasure and hedonism and between purpose and eudaimonia, but to use either of these ancient Greek terms is unnecessary. As Blumer (1969) infers, there is no need to translate words into scholarly terminology if they are already understood in their current, simpler form of language. From a pragmatic point of view, feelings of pleasure and purpose belong to lived everyday experiences and mean something to the people who express them (Dolan, 2014), rather than being an invention of academic rhetoric. It is therefore argued, that if happiness were to be spoken about and studied in this fashion, these words would serve ‘the distinctive methodological purposes of the relevant disciplines, from economics to theology, while at the same time being open to the considerations raised from other perspectives’ (Riordan, 2011; p. 208). Informed by the same data it seeks to further explain, this conceptualisation of happiness is used to structure the thesis.

A possible limitation to this approach is if happiness is no more than the experience of positive feelings then such experiences are open to the possibility that, over time, we might adapt to particular experiences so that they no longer bring us as much happiness, especially in the case of pleasure (Bloodworth *et al.*, 2012). This process of adaptation is often referred to as the ‘hedonic treadmill’ and contends that the happiness we derive from a specific activity will eventually return to a base level, regardless of whatever else happens to us (Bloodworth *et al.*, 2012; Layard, 2011). The nature of the data collected here suggests participants are already aware of this possibility, and that it is life course stage which might reduce the amount of happiness

that can be gained from doing a particular activity, not some inevitable return to a 'normal' level. The significance of a specific life course stage was that people became conscious they might be happier if they were doing something else. With this outlook, Harry reflected upon when he decided to stop rowing competitively,

*Quite a nice point, you know, you finish one season and I did, well, I was club captain at the time and we'd had probably the most successful season that the club had had for a long time, so it was almost like 'Yeah, I'm quite happy with that' even though I wanted to carry on rowing, 'cos I felt like I could do more, but it's like 'yeah, ok I'm, I'm happy with that 'cos I've won a bit, as a captain... I can walk away from that'... I think he, they were disappointed I didn't come back... there was actually a couple of people that didn't talk to me after I left... people thought 'what you doin'?, you know, this, this is rowin'', they seemed to get the hump that I didn't understand, which is strange 'cos a few years before, when there were guys... in that position, I finally found myself, when our James Brown has gone 'I can't row anymore', I'm 'Wot ya doin!!?', you know, 'What are you doing that, ohhhh tell her...', you know, 'cos you're young, free and single, you know, and then suddenly ya get to that point, you think 'ah actually, I realise, I understand why they're, they're, they're doin' that', because there are other things to life, you know, everyone gets involved in a little bubble, dun't they, and think it's the be all and end all but when you... get outside that bubble you think 'actually, there is more to life than that' you know, 'you can move on and still do other stuff'.*

In most instances participants were able to recollect how they felt during episodes of their lives and recall themselves as being relatively detached observers. This also included their current stage of life and how they were continuously appraising whether their existing form of physical activity involvement was worth it, with feelings of pleasure and purpose as the arbiters of this appraisal. In this vein, Harry also contemplated his current physical activity career as a cyclist,

*There may come a point... when there's like... I've had enough now, I, you know, I haven't got that drive, and then funnily enough there's a guy at work and he's done road racing all his life, or pretty much most of his adult life... of a high level, competitive, and he's, he's literally just said, the other day, 'I've, I'm retiring, I've had it, can't, can't do it', he said 'I can't', he said 'I just wanna enjoy it, without the competitive edge'... he's just like at that point where it's like 'I don't, don't need it', you know, 'There's no point to it', but I don't feel I'm there yet (laughs), you know, there are points when you think 'Why do I do this? What's the point?', you know, but then you have a good race or you, you know, you, you go out and you feel really good, you have a good ride and you think 'Yeah, I know that's, I know why I do it', so, yeah I'm not that, I'm not ready to retire yet... if I didn't have that, there'd be a sort of an element missing from my life, but I said that may not be there forever 'cos... everybody's got a different cut-off point... I do have those moments where you think... 'Why don't I just sit down and have a glass of wine? (laughs) have a takeaway! Just be like a normal person!'*

Hence, a retrospective method gave participants the freedom to be reflective about their experiences of feeling happy across their lives so far, and so, if there is such thing as the hedonic treadmill, the people studied here seemed to be continuously and critically self-aware of their happiness, limiting potential adaptation effects. A potential issue to arise from the extent and detail with which participants spoke about their own happiness could be seen as encouraging what Layard (2011; p. 5) refers to as the 'rampant individualism' that has come to typify the intensification of the rat race in contemporary capitalist societies. However, this possibility has already been ruled out, due to the regard participants often expressed for the lives and happiness of others.

To summarise, the conceptualisation of happiness to emerge from the data rests upon recollected lived experiences from stories participants told as defined by self-regard, regard for others, and positive feelings of pleasure and purpose. These tenets of happiness are by no means new but given the life history research design

from which they have been collected are of 'real significance' to people's retrospective interpretations of their lives so far and how they will act in the future (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1918; p. 84).

## **6. The Retrospective Pleasure of Physical Activity Involvement**

***Working hypothesis audit trail:*** *The potential contribution of physical activity to human happiness across the life course within a range of family contexts*

*This research objective is broken down into two chapters. The first chapter discusses the potential contribution of physical activity to human happiness per se and the second then places explicit focus upon the contextual influences of life course and family.*

As interviewees responded to questions about wellbeing with storied experiences concerning feelings of happiness, the intended investigation of wellbeing was redefined as happiness to reflect participants' own meaningful terminology and interpretations. Three categories of data essential to the potential contribution of physical activity to human happiness were shared most frequently amongst the sample. These were the pleasurable bodily sensations experienced after doing physical activity, the sense of achievement and pride from success in competitive sport, and physical activity as a liberating pastime at epiphanal moments and stages of life.

Despite some participants identifying sporting success as the aspect of physical activity that brought them the most elevated experiences of happiness, other participants enjoyed physical activity in the shape of competitive sport but did not cite previous accomplishments as notable experiences of happiness. Around a third of the sample, especially those who were least regularly engaged in physical activity, also actively disliked and avoided the environment of competitive sport. Regardless of whether participants thrived in competitive sport or avoided it, there is logical flaw in proposing that success in competitive sport is the most essential way in which physical activity contributes to happiness. The nature of sport means that for every winner there



is a loser and not everyone will possess the natural attributes required to be successful. As also highlighted by data of this type, those who were physically active by training regularly to improve their performance in their chosen sport also revealed that, at times, they questioned whether or not such investment of their time was worth it, as although physical activity in this form brought some happiness, it was not the aspect of their life which brought them the most happiness. Thus, the happiness experienced through sporting success is by no means unique, but the very structure of sport ensures that such experiences are exclusive and limited to few people by demanding varying combinations of natural ability and extensive training.

Whereas deploying physical activity as a technique for liberating oneself at epiphanal moments and stages of life held more traction and broader resonance across the sample of participants by producing memories of happy experiences and a sense of freedom at crucial times. Nevertheless, this was also problematic to forward as the final working hypothesis for this research objective in that such a liberation of the self relied upon a period of inactivity beforehand. The life events of relationship breakdowns and changes to the number of people in a household as well as the transitions of leaving the childhood home or becoming a parent instigated changes in everyday routines and identity adjustment amongst many of the participants. These life changes were not always conducive to greater involvement in physical activity, but physical activity did always feature when the changes were appraised as positive and attached to a sense of increased freedom and a new lease of life. It is therefore argued that physical activity can enhance feelings of happiness when passing through a liminal phase of life so long as an individual already perceives physical activity participation to be a liberating experience. However, to get the most out of physical activity and maximise their sense of freedom, interviewees told stories about how they

created a 'new' identity for themselves by leaving their less physically active selves behind. That is, most participants were only able to appreciate how physical activity was an elementary part of being a happier self by being without regular physical activity for a phase of their lives. The length of time less active phases of life persisted differed remarkably amongst participants, from being an aspect of romantic relationships lasting around two decades to two months during the transition of moving out of one's childhood home and becoming more independent. However, the life story of Julian, who at 74 years of age had been regularly active for his entire life, represented a competing argument. In the form of his sporting careers in football, running, hockey and duathlon, Julian illustrated that breaks in a physical activity career are not essential to appreciate the freedoms of being regularly physically active. In addition, his extensive and lifelong physical activity involvement in the shape of sport also displayed facets of the previously dismissed argument that feelings of happiness are best achieved via sporting achievements.

Upon further inspection, rereading his transcript with the shortcomings of the two rejected hypotheses in mind, it was noted that Julian was still liberated to some degree by his participation in physical activity, but this sense of freedom and individual agency was not concomitant with any type of identity adjustment, as previously theorised from storied experiences of other participants. As a pleasurable consequence of being physically active, Julian, like other participants, was liberated by the agency of his active body and the bodily sensations which followed. This classification of experiencing happiness through physical activity transcended both competitive sport and less intense, more self-regulated activities such as walking. This interpretation also engenders and is agreeable with some of the bodily sensations experienced by those going through a liberating identity transformation initiated by

significant life events and transitions, where physical activity was central to the process of feeling 'freer' and 'lighter'. The only exception to the working hypothesis of how physical activity participation contributes to happiness through pleasurable interpretations of physical activity involvement was found amongst those participants who found no pleasure in being physically active and were not regularly active at the time of interview. Although, as the research objective is aligned with the contribution of physical activity participation to happiness, such cases fall outside of posing a valid alternative explanation, as no personal experiences of happiness were exhibited to test and rework the proposed hypothesis against. Subsequently, the final working hypothesis of the retrospective pleasure of being physically active is the subject of discussion in this chapter.

### 6.1 Getting Bitten by the Endorphin Response

The pleasure of physical activity participation was perceived by participants through the structure of the body and its natural response to being active, a commonality amongst all participants who experienced 'the buzz' of being physically active,

*after the run you just feel like really good about yourself, you feel really tired, but it's like a good kinda' tired, where, like even if you've like pulled muscles and all the rest of it... you just, I don't, I don't know if it's the adrenaline or, or what it is, but you do feel better. (Grant)*

*you just, just feel lighter, and... I don't know, just freer. I mean they say about endorphins, don't they, and all that and it releases things. (Emma)*

*the endorphins always make you feel a lot better, don't they, if you've done a bit of exercise. (Claire)*

Participants experienced post-participation pleasure through their body's response to being physically active, although there were marked differences in people's interpretations of the experience of doing physical activity. Yasmin gained great pleasure from the bodily sensations she experienced during extremely intense physical activity,

*A real kind of adrenaline buzz off sprinting up the hills, erm, and just kind of generally pushing my body to, the max, really and then... like in my HIT class, erm, and I get such a buzz off, like that, I, I literally, I'm like, I feel like I'm going crazy, like I love it!*

Whereas Stuart, regularly active and an enthusiastic triathlete, indicated that he did not always enjoy the experience of training and racing,

*I just feel... better about myself... you know yourself, if you run and things, them endorphins are fantastic and you get those afterwards, you might not enjoy... the run, or the, the training at the time, it might be, you know, you're halfway through a marathon and you'll quite easily throw in the towel, but it, it's that thing at the end, that you've finished and you feel, feel happy with that.*

Harry produced a similar but more detailed elaboration than Stuart about the 'twisted way' he takes great pleasure in competitive physical activity because of how much it hurts,

*Yeah... in a twisted way, again, you know, as you're doin' the time trial... it hurts like hell, you don't enjoy it at all, you know, for the whole 20, 20 minutes or so 'ya doin' it, it, it's not enjoyable, but it's, it's the adrenaline, it's the endorphins at the end... I've had those two voices on my shoulder, where ya' like 'Why ya' doin' this? just stop, you don't need to run anymore', and the other one's goin' 'Come on! What ya doin'? Keep runnin', keep goin'', you know, ya' get through it, you know, and at the end of it, ya' go 'That was really good... I've pushed me-self there'... and ya' sit down and*

*you have ya' drink, you've had a shower and you think 'Yeah, I've achieved something today... and I think... that's what keeps me goin'.*

The retrospective enjoyment of the hurting involved in pushing the body to 'the limit' through physical activity is representative of what Atkinson (2016; p. 47) refers to as the 'pleasurable suffering' of fell running. Although the experience of pushing the body to the limit is pleasurable for some people, all regularly active participants were retrospectively happy as a consequence of enduring these experiences. There are some similarities to be drawn here between what Atkinson (2008; p. 168) terms the 'pain communities' of triathlon and fell running and those participants in the current study, who frequently participate in intense physical activity. Although, like Harry, men may also blur any distinctions between pain and pleasure, as it has been illustrated that it is socially unacceptable for men to verbalise feelings of pleasure derived from competitive sport involvement in extensive detail (Gard & Meyenn, 2000).

There was a clear 'us and them' attitude at play between those who were physically active and those who were not, especially amongst those regularly active.

Kevin boasted,

*it's just brilliant that you are, erm, you've bin' out there in whatever the weather is, that other people have been in bed at six o'clock, erm, that you had triumphed over man and nature, erm, you're freshened up, you're bright and sparky... I think there's also a bit of a self-righteousness that slips in as well, which I think it, erm, I probably wouldn't want to admit, erm, at how, that there is a certain, erm... that 98% of the world remains in bed whilst 2% are out there keeping fit, er, or getting fit, or, erm or being sensible with their bodies.*

While Kevin took great delight and some pleasure in telling of how he belongs to the minority of the population who are regularly active, Mike, frequently active at the gym,

positioned himself as a detached observer to explain some of the difficulties of being an outsider trying to enter into the culture of physical activity,

*It's uncomfortable, definitely, you come in the gym for the first day, you're muscles are aching and all of that, you've gotta go through that, you've gotta fight through that... through physical activity's mobility, health, erm, a clearer mind, take away the stress, stress-relief as well, 'cos the endorphin release and that, there's a lot of benefits but someone just coming in through the door, won't see those, erm... getting the benefits of it, but it's that first bit, is uncomfortable and painful, and it's a new lifestyle change.*

The crucial point here is that seeing the benefits of physical activity is not enough, one must also feel them and appraise the body's response to being active as pleasurable, whether that be during or after participation. The case of Harry's wife was of interest in this vein, as she had recently taken-up running,

*Funnily enough my wife has said the same, she's, you know, 'cos she's just getting into it, she goes 'That first bit, when you first, the first mile', she goes 'It's horrible', you know, you can't breathe, you can't catch ya breath, you know, you can't settle down, and then she says 'I get to a point... ya know, suddenly it's nice', she said 'When ya come back, it's that, when you've finished, that flushed feeling'.*

The respect for the uncomfortable feeling as the body adjusts to the experience of running and her positive interpretation of the flushed feeling afterwards, indicate she is becoming immersed in the process of assembling an active identity. Nonetheless, it was something else Harry said that implied she had started to derive pleasure from being active,

*She is enjoyin' it, she's sort of getting quite into it... she's not ever guna be like, competitive or... fast, but it's nice that she's... got bitten by it and, yeah, so we do, do talk about it quite a bit, you know, so it's, it's quite good.*

Getting 'bitten by it' was widely representative of the pleasurable contribution of physical activity to happiness across the sample. In a comparable manner, Emma expressed this as getting 'a buzz', 'hooked on', and 'a taste for' physical activity, based on her own experiences and from observing her son,

*I've seen how Joe does his exercise and then it's almost like as if he's gettin' a buzz for it... but until you can get hooked on it, or you can get a taste for it, no-one can motivate you to do it. Until you've tried it and you've got goin' on it, and like now I wouldn't want to not go out every night walkin', errr I wouldn't want to not do that again, but at one point in my life I, I, you know I was like 'noooo'.*

Regardless of the intensity of the physical activity that participants engaged in, all regularly active participants who derived pleasure from the body's response cited the paramount importance of experiencing a drug-like high. In agreement with previous research, it would seem that as long as physical activities are appropriately physically demanding for the participants involved, then pleasurable bodily experiences can be sensed, meaning that highly intense activities are not an essential prerequisite (Bennett, Clarke, Kowalski & Crocker, 2017). This was evident in Emma, Paul and Olivia's need to go walking every day, but most eloquently described in Chris's recollection of doing a heavy weights session at the gym,

*It's like a release and a way to forget about everything else and it, it just gives you like an hour or two hours depending on how long ya gym sessions are, of... nothing else really matters... Ya just focusin on, on getting ya heart beatin and, ya know, making your muscles sore, ya know, and working yaself and it just feels, it just feels good, it's just a nice feelin, I can't really describe it, it's just a good feelin. It's almost like being on drugs, when you have like a, when you do a really heavy set so like, it's ya personal best and you, and you do it, you beat your personal best and put the weight down and then all the blood rushes out, ya know, rushes into the muscle and you*

*can, you can feel your heart like screaming at ya, it's just a, it's just such a buzz... It's just a lovely feeling, when ya just like "yeah, I've just done that, look what I've done, that's brilliant." And then, obviously, it just gradually whittles down again, and you come back to reality (laughs).*

Much like a drug addiction, withdrawal symptoms were also prevalent in this section of the sample. Something Henry had to put-up with, as the only member of his family household not regularly active,

*My wife will actually get grumpy if she doesn't go out and do something, it changes her personality, yeah, the same with Harry (son), same with Michael (son), they have to get some physical sort of release, release of endorphins... whereas I am fortunate, I don't get that (laughs), I don't get anything, you know, I don't get any yearning to go running into, 'round the quarry... or something like that.*

As the data presented so far highlights, often, it was what participants perceived to be endorphins which were most sought after to interpret the overall physical activity experience as pleasurable.

Participants' recollections of the experience of doing physical activity were not always immediately pleasurable, especially amongst those participants who cited part of their involvement as painful and hurting. The dominant aspect of pleasure always occurred after being physically active, whether that was immediately following a specific activity, such as when Chris 'put the weight down' and 'all the blood rushes out', or when returning home from a run and getting 'that flushed feeling', like Harry's wife. The drug-like comparison of the pleasurable feelings participants experienced from the body's hormonal response to being active was explicitly referred to by Chris, and Yasmin acknowledged that 'pushing yourself' to 'extremes... can become a bit of an addiction... because of the hormones that are released'. Although such



recollections tended to come from those participants who engaged in more intense and vigorous forms of exercise, all regularly active participants recalled withdrawal symptoms regardless of activity intensity. Similar to Henry's wife getting 'grumpy' when she needs a 'release of endorphins', Claire indicated that she gets 'ratty' without regular exercise,

*Whilst doing it I don't enjoy it, but I look forward to doing it and I enjoy the after-products of it, and if I don't exercise I get really ratty and my husband will say 'go to the gym, or go for a run', 'cos you're driving me mental'.*

Olivia, who takes no pleasure from pushing her body to the limits through intense bouts of physical activity, experiences withdrawal symptoms if she misses out on her daily walk,

*I don't understand people, like my Daughter that does this bootcamp and everything, erm, and the gym, I don't see the enjoyment out of giving yourself a beating! (laughs), but that's just me, but certainly going out for a walk, or a, a gentle run... I love walking and, and I do walk, I said I could walk for miles, I do walk for miles, I walk at least seven miles every day, every single day... often ten miles, and, erm, yeah, I think I would be grumpy if I didn't go out for a walk every day.*

Walking might not always elicit the 'buzz' of an endorphin response, but interviewees still cited something happening at a physiological level, which consisted of the clearance of stress. As Paul, another avid daily walker, explains,

*Once a week I'll do... ten, twelve, sixteen miles in a day, just to, erm... er, enjoy a, a whole day out, erm, I suppose it's a stress reliever as well in, in sort of taking you away from day-to-day chores around the, erm, around the house and something different and something away from everything else.*

The need to do some form of daily physical activity, for participants like Claire, Olivia and Paul, to avoid becoming 'grumpy', 'ratty' or provide relief from the stresses of

everyday life were more prevalent than the pleasurable experiences attached to the quest for endorphins essential to those participants who revel in frequently pushing their bodies to the limit.

While it is one of the main research objectives of this thesis to focus on the positive aspects of physical activity in bringing about feelings of happiness, it thus also emerged that, for those people who value physical activity involvement as a part of everyday life, the 'need' to be physically active meant that a large majority of those people studied were dependent upon physical activity to provide a foundation for their everyday happiness. This is an opportunity in one sense, but a constraint in another, as without physical activity participants were also aware of how this could be detrimental to their general disposition and their relationships with those around them. The preference of some participants to do something rather than nothing was discussed by Grant, in the context of happiness,

*I think there's just something, something like the way you're designed, like you're meant to, like, just be doing the running, and even, like, let's say someone who, erm, like hasn't been doing physical exercise, it's so much easier just to sit on the couch and have like a night in... erm, I think... you're always gonna be happier, or like feel better, by doing the run, actually like doing something as opposed to just like not doing anything... so many people aren't physically active, like... like today... you can still be completely happy but it's, I'd say it's a very different kind of happiness.*

There are also contrasting interpretations to be made about what Grant means by the 'different kind of happiness' experienced by those who live more active and those who live less active lives. In one way, Grant is expressing a regard for others who, based on his own lived experiences, might be happier if they became more active, but in another way, his position is also indicative of the ethnocentric Western and middle-

upper class moral judgements made by many physical activity researchers and their participants, that an active lifestyle is a superior lifestyle. All participants possessed some experience of being active through playing as a child and varying degrees of engagement with compulsory physical education while at school. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that Grant offers a perspective which is original and unique on the grounds that his lived experiences allow him to be sympathetic to both those who live more and less active lifestyles, even though his pattern of physical activity participation is casual and inconsistent. Nevertheless, it is argued that Grant's perspective is unique and original in the sense that he has found ways of re-engaging with and experiencing physical activity as an adult, a claim which cannot be made for all participants in the sample.

As already alluded to, for those participants who expressed a 'need' to be regularly active and experience the body's pleasurable hormonal response, when this vital source of happiness could not be accessed, the repercussions were withdrawal symptoms that detracted from their general mood and impacted negatively upon their everyday relationships with others. As a result, regularly active participants were savvy to the potential consequences for themselves and others if they should miss out on any physical activity in which they would usually participate, and so had some form of pre-arranged physical activity schedule that they were reluctant to change, to avoid such consequences. This is probably best illustrated through Charlotte's physical activity schedule, comprising specific gym classes and training for and competing in regular running and some cycling races,

*I think that some people think that I do too much... My mum mainly. She says, probably... 'you're a bit skinny' than she wants me to be... and maybe a bit bulky and... she thinks I... put too much stock in doing my gym stuff*

*and my exercise stuff and not flexible enough around that... so I know where, pretty much know what I'm guna do each day... and booked-in and I do it and then... maybe... they wanna do something else, then I'll just say 'well I can't do it until I've been to the gym class, and then I'll do it'... and my friends think that as well, definitely.... they think I erm... I'll arrange seeing them around my exercise schedule... I think people think I sacrifice social relationships... to do it.*

Charlotte saw her physical activity schedule as being inherently connected to her identity, brought about by the way in which she places more 'value in' physical activity than the majority of those close to her. Nevertheless, the lack of flexibility around Charlotte's physical activity schedule is designed around deriving as much pleasure as possible, while limiting the possibility of withdrawal symptoms. Taking this necessity for a structured pattern of regular physical activity participation into account, Dunning and Waddington (2003) have previously considered the addictive potential of some aspects of sport and exercise. In reviewing a qualitative study of the possibility of exercise dependence amongst females, which reported no evidence of primary exercise dependence (see Bamber, Cockerill, Rodgers & Carroll, 2000), they concluded that 'compulsion' might be a better term to use than 'addiction', as there is also no substance-ingestion involved in the 'buzz', withdrawal symptoms and relationship disruption that can result from sport and exercise participation (Dunning & Waddington, 2003; p. 364). Yet the data collected and analysed here, as well as elsewhere (Atkinson, 2008; Esch & Stefano, 2004; Shipway, 2010), Shows that Dunning and Waddington (2003) may have been somewhat conservative in their verdict that compulsion is a more representative descriptor than addiction for the social, bodily and psychological responses to physical activity outlined above. By Dunning and Waddington's (2003; p. 354) own admission, one of the common ways in which most people legitimate and prefer to think of their everyday dependence on

medically prescribed drugs, is through referring to them by the more socially acceptable term of *medicines*. Yet the authors seem unaware that a similar social stigma is also attached to the terms 'dependence' and, especially, 'addiction'. It is likely, that for this reason, participants in qualitative research may be reluctant to 'admit' an addiction to or dependence upon particular activities or substances. As displayed in the current study through the data examined so far, participants were more likely to cite the experience of pleasurable hormonal responses, feelings of withdrawal and relationship disruption, and less likely to refer explicitly to addiction. In a similar vein, Paige offered an insight into her fear of being diagnosed by her doctor as having a 'problem' due to doing too much exercise,

*A few weeks ago my ankle was playing-up and I said to someone 'I'm not gonna go to the doctor and tell them I've got a sore ankle, cos they will say to me 'how much exercise do you do?'" (laughs), and I will tell them and they'll... 'bring the men with the white coats' (laughs), cos they'll say 'oh, you're over-exercising, what's your problem?'*

Other studies have unearthed adrenaline addiction amongst triathletes (Atkinson, 2008), runners' addiction to pushing their minds and bodies to the limit, and cases of post-marathon depression (Shipway, 2010). Although these consequences are not necessary conducive to increased happiness, they remain essential because they reveal something about the potential pitfalls of getting used to and becoming dependent upon physical activity induced pleasures. Therefore, data of this type also feeds into discussions about the complexities of the pleasures of physical activity, which have been too often narrowly and uncritically defined (Atkinson, 2011; Booth, 2009; Phoenix & Orr, 2014; Wellard, 2012). Moreover, while the association at play here between the pleasure, withdrawal symptoms and relationship disruption to emanate from physical activity is clearly of a sequential nature, it is worth, initially at

least, to evaluate these associations simultaneously, to properly weigh the value of these more essential elements in the potential contribution of physical activity to happiness. Accordingly, the discussion that follows examines the complexities between the pleasure, withdrawal symptoms and disruption to personal relationships brought about by regular physical activity involvement, situated in the context of widespread, but uncritical perceptions that physical activity is a morally responsible, respectable, courageous and healthy thing to do (Booth, 2009).

For the most part, pleasurable experiences of physical activity have been largely ignored (Booth, 2009), rationalised (Atkinson, 2011) and overlooked as being insignificant in comparison to health-related outcomes (Wellard, 2012). Given that happiness often manifests itself through feelings of pleasure (Dolan, 2014; Layard, 2011), and leading academics in economics and the behavioural sciences have made claims such as 'Happiness is all that matters in the end' (Dolan, 2014; p. 189), the trivialisation of the pleasures of sport and physical activity is strikingly odd. Booth (2009) has theorised that pleasure is not seen as being rational enough to be taken seriously within the realm of competitive rule-governed sport, while the remnants of Puritanism in the corporeal sphere of physical activity mean that hard work, health consciousness and social cohesion are celebrated, yet expressions of pleasurable impulses and spontaneity are treated with suspicion. Subsequently, Atkinson (2011) has argued that despite this dominant Western structure of sport and physical activity, contemporary physical-culture studies researchers could perform a pivotal role by offering an alternative, and thus some resistance, to any further attempts to rationalise the pleasures of sport and the active body. For Booth (2009), the standout problem is the clear and unnecessary split between 'good' and 'bad' physical pleasures that have persisted since the mid-nineteenth century. Connecting the

biological body with the social body through the pleasure of physical activity would re-appraise, and likely do away with, the morally charged divisive labels of 'good' and 'bad' pleasures (Booth, 2009). Judged through the experiences of the participating actor, pleasures would be a matter of interpretation through bodily responses to physical activity involvement, rather than a socially constructed moral judgement about true and false pleasures (Booth, 2009).

Interpretations of immediate and delayed bodily responses to physical activity on display in the data collected here, were what participants perceived to be pleasures brought about by endorphins, adrenaline, the 'buzz' and a screaming heart. Whether or not it was precisely these physiological responses which 'really' occurred is beside the point, as people live their lives by what they interpret to be true, not scientific facts (Denzin, 2014). Furthermore, framed by happiness, as opposed to the reduction of illness and suffering, the data of the current study has a salutogenic orientation, which allows for a more complex appreciation of what constitutes 'acceptable' human behaviour than the narrow pathogenic explanations that dominate much physical activity research (Booth, 2009). This is indicative of how, as an inherently multidisciplinary area of research, the field of physical activity may also unlock bespoke and especially detailed knowledge about the experience of pleasure *per se*, if willing to look beyond the pathogenic (Booth, 2009).

More recently, Phoenix and Orr (2014) have outlined a typology of physical activity pleasures, which conceptualises these embodied experiences as sensual, documented, habitual and immersive. Most relevant to the data collected in the current study are the sensual experiences of physical activity. The timing of this type of pleasure is categorised by the authors as occurring instantly, while doing physical activity (Phoenix & Orr, 2014; p. 100), whereas the data in the current study suggests

that the embodied experience of doing physical activity was ambiguous when ‘in the moment’ of being active and only interpreted as pleasurable retrospectively. Grounded in the feelings induced by the response of the body, at times the retrospections happened within a few seconds of completing a physical activity, but always when the body was at rest. In many cases, and especially in respect of the most common and intense pleasure of the endorphin response there was sometimes a delay of couple of hours, which could produce a pleasurable sensation that endured for the rest of the day. There is also an important distinction to be made between the scope of pleasure offered here and that theorised by Phoenix and Orr (2014). Given the theoretical and thus more general orientation of Phoenix and Orr’s (2014) paper, pleasurable experiences extend to how the body is connected to the immediate environment through the performance of doing physical activity. Though some of the participants referred to this variety of pleasure in the current investigation, it was the recalled experiences of how interviewees experienced their own body which took centre stage, in respect of the intense and lasting ‘buzz’ they derived from participation. Nonetheless, sensual pleasure serves as a valuable point of entry for explaining how participants learned to interpret physical activity as pleasurable or not.

### *6.1.1 Learning to Interpret the Body’s Response as Pleasurable*

Howard Becker’s (1973) study of the ambiguous physical experience of becoming a marijuana user is novel in the sense that it considers the perspective of the actor involved in producing such behaviour without resorting to a morally-charged predetermined interpretation of what many people, who have no such experience with the drug, would consider a ‘bad’ pleasure. Also applying the technique of AI to the



data, Becker found the most essential element of this experience to be the perception of pleasure, which determined whether one became a marijuana user, and if they did, the rate at which they ceased use and re-engaged with the drug. In short, to become a marijuana user and continue using the drug, one had to learn to conceive as pleasurable, the ambiguous experience of taking the drug (Becker, 1973). Without this pleasurable interpretation of the physical experience of the effects of marijuana, engagement with the drug would not continue. Becker's (1973) study serves as an example of how the effects of a largely ambiguous physical experience becomes interpreted as entirely pleasurable and positive by the participant. Wellard (2014) makes a similar point in the context of physical activity, in that one can only come to conceive physical activity as pleasurable by learning to do so through their own experiences. As Becker (1973; p. 53, 56) explains, one 'must learn to enjoy the effects he [sic] has just learned to experience... the taste for such experience is a socially acquired one... enjoyment is introduced by the favourable definition of the experience that one acquires from others'. In the case of Harry's wife, she was not simply 'bitten' by physical activity independent of influence from others, as Harry actively encouraged her continued participation,

*She's always talking about, you know, goin' out for a run, and then it's funny 'cos you, I go out for a run with her... 'I dunno why you come out for a run with me, I'm just really slow', you know, so, yeah, 'No, I come out with you 'cos I wanna come out with 'ya, and I, I wanna, you know, I'm tryin' to help you'... so it's good, 'cos, you know, I do encourage her and she seems to be... she is enjoyin' it, she's sort of getting quite into it.*

As part of an initiative at his triathlon club to get relatively inactive people to run for 5,000 metres without stopping, Stuart was also involved in the process of endorsing

the ambiguous physical experience of running as pleasurable to those who have yet to perceive this themselves, and promote the idea of frequent participation,

*You've got people moaning that it hurts to run, I said 'well, it will', and they're like, the questions when you're running 'when does it get easier?', I went 'Never', he's 'Well what do ya mean, 'never'?', I says, 'Well... cos you'll get to a certain point, we're guna get you up to running 5k, at whatever pace is your 5k pace, and you'll be happy you've done 5k, and you'll think it's fantastic, end of eight weeks you've come from sitting on your arse... to doing a 5k, brilliant, you'll get to that point now and you'll be thinkin 'I actually wanna run that faster', so you'll try, you'll then train to try and get your time down... or, you'll think 'I want to do a 10k, I can do 5k, what do I have to do?'"*

The argument that the potential bodily pleasure of physical activity is always experienced post-participation, because the experience itself, especially in more intense forms, is often mixed and uncertain was best summarised in Olivia's account of her daughter's physical activity involvement,

*Even if you were doing it to lose weight or whatever, you would still get some form of enjoyment, even if you hated it when, when you were doing it, I mean Gemma does this bootcamp and, and she says... sometimes she feels like she's guna be sick 'cos they really... do it, go so hard at it, but she feels brilliant when she's done it, at the end of it, so you might not get the enjoyment when you're actually... doing it, but the sense of 'yeah, well yeah, I've done something, that was really good', afterwards would give you that enjoyment. Gemma always says, yeah, she feels the benefit, she can see it 'cos she is overweight, so she can see that she's, she's lost some weight, erm, and she can see that she is, you know, getting fitter by doing it, she's not feeling quite as bad (laughs) as she was the first time, so yeah, she, she really enjoys it, but I'm not saying she enjoys it while she's doing it, I think she enjoys it... in the car on the way home (laughs).*

The data indicates there is nothing inherently pleasurable about the experience of doing physical activity. Following participation, however, the possibility exists to derive pleasure from the body's response to being physically active. These pleasurable responses can be experienced immediately after engagement and also in a more delayed manner, which may last for a considerable time afterwards and give someone a more favourable and content everyday disposition, meaning they feel happier.

Conversely, of those participants who were relatively inactive, Louise commented on how being regularly physically active was something in which she had 'never really been interested' and 'never thought about'. Helen, who only makes a conscious effort to be active when on holiday, was aware of the potential health benefits after losing a considerable amount of weight around 15 years ago through attending the gym regularly, but struggled to continue her involvement due to a lack of enjoyment,

*I didn't enjoy the gym, I hated it, never ever, when these people say 'oh, it's like a buzz', I never ever got that (laughs)... I think to go, be in a gym and sweat, no, that doesn't... doesn't inspire me at all... although it is important for my health, it's not overall that important, the important thing is your family being ok... those that do it, fine, they enjoy it, great, but it's not for everyone, just standing in a gym and sweating.*

Whereas Henry was more sceptical of the health benefits, as his wife is regularly active, but also 'seems to have more illness and more problems' than he does. The perspectives of Louise, Helen and Henry demonstrate that it is not uncommon for people to place greater value in aspects of life other than physical activity, and that to derive pleasure from physical activity involvement people must have been through the process of learning to interpret the feelings produced by their body following physical activity as pleasurable. That is, feelings of pleasure are the consequence of a process

of interpretation drawn out from recollections of previous physical activity experiences (Wellard, 2014), and by no means a completely 'natural' and automatic reaction. The greater relative strength of pleasurable motives as more pivotal to physical activity engagement than the opportunity to improve health or fitness has also been found by other researchers (Lenneis & Pfister, 2017). Furthermore, In Becker's (1973; p. 49) study, the process of learning to interpret and conceive a behaviour as pleasurable is likely to cease and not be completed, if, following ambiguous experiences of engaging in the behaviour, one concludes that a particular activity "does nothing" for them. In such an instance, Helen eventually gave up exercising at the gym, as without being able to reach a pleasurable interpretation one will eventually lose the motivation to continue and see themselves as 'different' to those who do derive enjoyment from similar practices. In other instances, such as Brett's early experiences of cross country, the absence of pleasure in these initial experiences meant that a non-pleasurable interpretation was formed almost immediately,

*I hated cross country with an absolute passion, that was... the worst, that was like a punishment more than anything, doing cross country. I just didn't enjoy it... it was always cold and miserable, wet, running along in like a field (laughs)... and it was, it was just terrible, like I just hated, hated it... I was shit, I was awful at it, but like I got into, represented the school at like county level, and I just, I, I faked an injury and just stopped because it was, like they, they started off and they were, they weren't sprinting but they were running, like at a pace I run at like 400 metres, and I thought 'I can't, I can't, I can't do this', so I faked an injury and stopped. I actually hate that so much, like, even now I think about it, I just remember just... how much I disliked it, I think 'cos it was just, it was cold, it was always, it was always in winter, it was never summer cross country... and I just remember, like, I can clearly remember just being on that field, like people just running off, thinking 'oh, I just don't wanna do this'.*

Although Brett never 'gave up' on all forms of physical activity, and at the time of interview was intermittently active through attending the gym, it does illustrate how people such as Henry can be relatively happy without engaging in regular physical activity. The superior value that Helen places on her family over health and physical activity also tells an important tale. Such a position is supported by the happiness economics argument, which uses data taken from the World Values Survey to conclude that family relationships are the most important factor that affect people's happiness, while health is fifth most important (Layard, 2011).

Therefore, from the perspective of those participants who were relatively inactive, physical activity does not seem to be able to make a meaningful contribution to their happiness. In short, they do not participate because their recollected interpretations of their previous experiences were not consistent with feelings of pleasure, and in the absence of a pleasurable interpretation, they are more likely to prioritise other areas of their life that are more meaningful to them, despite also being aware of the potential health benefits of physical activity involvement. Those who interpreted the feelings that their body produced as pleasurable also became aware of how, through continued participation, they could become happier and regular involvement in physical activity became a preferred way of being (Wellard, 2014). Through their own existence, one must learn to interpret post-physical activity feelings and sensations such as the 'endorphins', 'buzz' and 'adrenaline' as pleasurable if physical activity is to make any contribution to their happiness. Whether or not these perceived feelings and responses are physiologically correct as a matter of 'scientific fact' is discretionary. Fact or fiction, all that matters is that such responses were lived and experienced as truths by the participants, as facticities (Denzin, 2014), that had real affects upon the degree to which the subsequent feelings were conceived as

pleasurable or not. As a learned interpretation, the more critical point of debate is the extent to which people might be encouraged to learn to conceive physical activity as pleasurable and live happier lives. This is of paramount significance, because although it has been underlined that regular physical activity involvement can be conducive to happiness, participants also observed that physical activity was not a vital component in the living of a happy life. Regularly active participants were sensitive to how some of their markedly less active friends and family members got pleasure from involvement in other pastimes, like Becky's work colleague, who is 'really into her art, and drawing, and sketching'. Although outside of the main focus of the current study, being inactive is also likely to be a pleasurable experience for many people, albeit one viewed as a personal temptation, rather than a socially desirable way of being (Jallinoja, Pajari & Absetz, 2010).

## 6.2 The Moral Sentiment of Regard for Others

Whilst considering their own experiences of happiness, it was prevalent for regularly active participants to use those less active as a reference point. Initially, regularly active interviewees were sympathetic toward those who might be missing out due to being relatively inactive. As Julian highlighted by expressing his condolences to those who were not part of the social environment of sport,

*If you're not good at sport, you must be so sad 'cos, to me, it's the most sociable thing... I don't think there's anything more sociable than, than knowing you play a sport, you know, not only playing it with people, you know, the people you play with, but talking about it, talking about it to other people.*

Expressing an interest in the happiness of those less active because they might be 'missing out' is in keeping with a type of authentic regard for others, as described by Adam Smith (1759). Above, Julian extends his compassion 'from the consideration of what he [sic] himself would feel if he was reduced to the same unhappy situation, and, what perhaps is impossible, was at the same time able to regard it with his present reason and judgement' (Smith, 1759; p. 8), providing the type of indirect regard for others symptomatic of happier societies (Offer, 2006). This hypothetical scenario of the person who is missing out on the happiness brought about by the social element of sport, which aroused Julian's sympathy, was followed-up with an example of lived experience, thus representing a real regard for another,

*I find it easier getting on with someone who does a sport, erm, got a friend who lost her husband, and she's got a new guy... he deals in Aston Martin's, that's how successful he is, but he doesn't do a sport and I find it very hard trying to converse with him, you know, you can't get into that banter about taking the piss out of someone... if someone says 'oh, hockey's a girl's game', I say 'yeah, you're, you're lovely in the dressing room', and things like that.*

However, regularly active participants were also eager to point out that they had superior health to those who were less active. Quickly, any sentiment for others became lost and those less active were cast as unhealthy outsiders and, in some cases, labelled as socially irresponsible.

### *6.2.1 Healthism: turning moral sentiment into moral judgement*

Mike, who initially sympathised for someone entering a gym environment for the first time, was particularly critical of people who get on well with their doctor

because they see each other frequently. This, for him, was an avoidable drain on the public health system as a direct consequence of those who choose to live more sedentary lives,

*Well, there's the health system, if we all took a view of just sitting on our arses' and watching the tele, then the system would be overloaded a lot more, I keep away from the doctor, if I go to the doctor it's probably because I'm missing out going to the gym... yeah, the National Health Service is getting worse for all our own population growth... erm, when you have these surveys by the doctor, you say 'no, I don't do that, I don't do that, I don't do that, and I go to the gym', he can see that you're not... in a sense, malingering a little bit, you're trying your bit to keep healthy, and you're there because there's something going wrong, not like you're going there because you want to socialise with the doctor every week.*

Warren's repulsion for the way unhealthy outsiders look, as they struggle to perform everyday tasks through a lack of physical function, was a motivating factor behind the maintenance of his physically active lifestyle,

*Being fitter and healthier is... is so much better, I mean, you, you see people that are, you know, obviously very unhealthy and they're, you know, struggling to, you know, even walk down the road sometimes and you think... 'I'd, I'd hate to be like that', so... for obvious reasons it's, it's good to 'um... exercise and, and be healthy.*

Kevin's 'us and them' attitude, the parameters of which he defined by separating those allegedly in the minority, like himself, who do look after their bodies through regular physical activity involvement from those who do not, acted as a motivation to remain active and avoid falling into the 'them' category with some of his friends and the other '98% of the world',



*I find myself motivated when I see other people around me who are... erm, not taking care of themselves... I enjoy taking the mickey outta people... but when I do so I also know that there's a payback time, that I need to do appropriate exercise in order that it's not going to do any detriment to my major organs, and make me the fattest boy on the planet... so when I do end-up meeting some of my friends who are not prepared to do any exercise, it provides me with a great opportunity to give 'um grief.*

This conception of superior citizenship through being regularly active and healthy, rather than less active and lazy, was also held by Paige,

*I don't know if it's a pride thing, as in... not everybody does it, so you might be, I don't know if it's a minority, or a majority, but not everybody bothers, and when you look at the media, and people having to be encouraged to workout and stuff, it's almost like 'oh, I'm...', you know, I'm up there, I've got one-up on other people who don't bother, erm, because you are actually doing something, I don't know if there's a smugness about, you know, 'yeah, I've actually got my act together, and I'm keeping fit, and I'm looking after my health', but, erm, yeah there is the worry about, erm, the future, disease, illness.*

By becoming more physically active since divorcing her husband, Emma felt as though she was no longer an outsider and superior to those who currently make more sedentary everyday choices, like she used to,

*I used to go up the stairs and that used to actually tire me out, going upstairs, and I used to think... that was normal. Now I can go up the stairs loads of times and I, in Marks and Spencer's I'll always opt to go up the stairs rather than the, erm, escalator, and yet years ago I wouldn't, I would have gone to the escalator and I look at the people on there and think 'why are you choosing to do that? why are you choosing to go up there?', I must be superior because I walk the stairs (laughs).*

Dunning and Waddington (2003) have suggested that outsiders are often perceived as, amongst other things, unhealthy and threatening by members of established groups. In the present research, attitudes relayed by regularly active participants about members of society who were significantly less active than themselves always carried a degree of sympathy and understanding with regard for their potential to be happier. Although following on from this, regularly active participants were also eager to shift the focus of the interview to the topic of health, and it was from this position that the regard for others disappeared, and subsequently, so did the reciprocation of the moral sentiments essential for happiness (Smith, 1759). As illustrated in the cases above, the labelling of those less active as inferior outsiders is grounded in the argument that they are less healthy and potentially a threatening and unnecessary strain upon the public health system, in keeping with some of the key characteristics used by members of established groups to identify those belonging to outsider groups proposed by Dunning and Waddington (2003). This type of self-labelled superior citizenship founded on the premise of better health, has also been articulated by research participants elsewhere,

*Most of my friends take the weekend to screw around the house or lie down on the couch. I couldn't think of a more retarded way to spend life. We rest on our asses all fucking week at work. If I want to be healthy and stay [mentally] sharp, I take the spare time given to me to develop as a person. No wonder why we have an obesity problem in this country, eh, when people sit and eat chips all fucking weekend because they can. I'd rather do sport than watch it at home on television. (Chris: Interviewee in Atkinson, 2008; p. 173)*

Effectively, regularly active participants perceived and positioned themselves as legitimately superior to others through the ideology of healthism. Crawford (1980; p. 368) defines healthism as 'the preoccupation with personal health as a primary – often

*the* primary – focus for the definition and achievement of well-being’. Meaning that the socially constructed, patterned and reproduced problems of health and disease are solely the fault and responsibility of the individual (Crawford, 1980). The consequence of healthism, as illustrated by the collected data, is that it permits and encourages people to make unjust moral judgements about themselves and others, as illness is viewed as a moral failing caused by unhealthy individual habits and choices (Crawford, 1980). Crawford (1980) further suggests that happiness and ‘good’ living are judged by, and subordinate to, the subjective symbols and symptoms of individual health. Therefore, the moral sentiments regularly active participants held for the happiness of those less active, turned into judgements of moral inferiority when referring to the health status of less active people.

Smith (1759) observed how sympathy for the happiness of others can be lost when one becomes resentful of others, who they perceive to have behaved or intended to behave in an unjust way. There is some evidence of this from participants, with the fashion in which those regularly active drew upon the notion that being active frequently is a requisite practice for taking *full* responsibility for one’s health, intimating it is unfair that other people ‘don’t bother’. However, this very position is informed, justified and morally-fuelled by a healthist ideology, as it is healthism which permits those regularly active to equate others not doing ‘enough’ with being lazy and essentially causing an injustice, without doing or intending to do anything of the sort. This subjective interpretation of not doing ‘enough’ physical activity carried real consequences, as some outsiders, even though they did some physical activity on a weekly basis, internalised aspects of moral labels attached to healthism, which became manifested in forming self-conceptions about the failings of their character,

*My weight has had a big impact on what I've done for physical activity, which really should be turned around, but obviously I'm not strong-willed enough to do that... no I definitely haven't got any willpower for losing weight because of the type of life we lead, we have a lot of holidays and we enjoy a glass of wine with our meal, erm, we eat out a lot... no, I haven't got the willpower to lose weight or... escalate my exercise regime... if I did, it would probably make me lose weight and I'd feel better about myself as well... I haven't got the willpower. (Helen)*

Through her everyday lived experiences and family socialisation, Charlotte had been exposed to an environment that instilled in her, and her three siblings, the value of physical activity involvement. Charlotte's brother had become less active following his entry into fatherhood, and she explained how, as a result, he had also become something of an outsider from the rest of the immediate family,

*Sometimes I find my older brother and I... we lack things to talk to him about... because he is very involved in his baby... and he doesn't come out with us and join in. So, in the summer we're all going, errr... on like a sports holiday, so all my family apart from my older brother and his girlfriend... and this is for my 30th and my dad's 60th. So, we're doing windsurfing and sailing and stuff. So yeah, it's kind... I guess that has... they have become... we love them in other ways but they are excluded a little bit from that...*

Conversely, within a family environment that did not place as much value on physical activity engagement, Evan was variably cast as an outsider by his fellow family members due to the high frequency and intensity of some of his physical activity involvement,

*It's almost as if they're another breed... I had some tensions with my parents over it in the past because we get on very well and there have been few occasions when we've been out of sync, but one of them was when I was training for Ironman, when they could see it was taking a lot out of me, and they were concerned that I was overdoing it... and I think that, that is a*

*concern for people who don't do regular sport... they don't see it as part of their daily bread... when I've come back from a run absolutely sweating, you know, I've really pushed myself and it's been great and I've, even though I look a wreck, I feel great, and they say 'Why the hell do you do that to yourself?'... you know, 'Why are you killing yourself that way?!'... I've spoken to Louise, my sister, a lot and she... psychologically she doesn't have the same instinct... in all other ways we're really similar, but in that way we're not... I think it's about... a chemical balance in the head, which is sending you some, or a feeling of, erm, physical itchiness... that your body needs to exercise, and you need to exercise to get it. My sister... she never had the instinct in her mind, to do that, er, and... still to this day she says that she's the, erm, the milkman's daughter... because she's never really wanted to exercise, she's done 5k's and stuff... I remember her finishing her first race, saying 'Why the hell do you do that?! It's too painful', (laughs).*

This variable nature in the way those with contrasting physical activity involvement tendencies are cast as outsiders in some social contexts but not others is explained by Becker's (1973) understanding of how the label of 'outsider' is shaped by an ever-changing and contested process of various groups negotiating and redefining the deviancy that comes to constitute the label. In Evan's scenario, he broke the limits of what his family perceive to be a healthy level and intensity of physical activity participation by adhering to the rules of a regular physical activity schedule, widely encouraged by the dominant ideology of healthism. Lived interpretations of deviance are central to the ideology of healthism, whereby the risks of potentially unhealthy behaviour are equated with a state of actual illness and become internalised through a persistent awareness of exposure to the threats of disease (Crawford, 1980). Therefore, regular and noticeably intense physical activity involvement can be construed as deviant according to one set of labels while, at the same time, represent an act to fit-in with idealistic notions of healthy citizenship.

This tension is especially the case within the practice of physical activity, where the promise of better health, although not as influential as the pull of pleasure, is inseparably attached to the structure of many physical activity settings (Jallinoja *et al.*, 2010). Thus, in turn, pleasurable experiences also become somewhat less spontaneous and equated with the discipline necessary to avoid inactivity (Jallinoja *et al.*, 2010). The lived experience of physical activity participation is therefore a negotiated pleasure, connected with and a response to contemporary ideas about inactivity and health (Jallinoja *et al.*, 2010).

### 6.3 Deviant by doing Nothing: sedentariness as a threat to pleasure

Due to various conceptualisations of deviance, it is difficult to discern who is being deviant and on what grounds. Those who are regularly active and have learned to define their body's response to physical activity participation as pleasurable may perceive themselves as socially integrated purveyors of healthy and responsible citizenship. Yet, they can also be simultaneously perceived by fellow family members as being too dependent upon physical activity involvement for pleasure and pushing their body beyond 'healthy' limits. Different perspectives emerge from persistent disagreement about what comprises healthy behaviour (Becker, 1973). Those participants who gain pleasure from the endorphins of physical activity hold a medicalised view of health, as they see those who do not participate regularly as encouraging disorganisation and disrupting the stability of society. Those who participate intermittently or not at all possess a less absolute and more relative view of health, which, for the most part, they contextualise within, rather than above happiness. However, the healthist ideology did creep into some of their self-

perceptions, such as Helen's admission that she lacks the 'willpower' to do more physical activity. Nevertheless, it is the experiences of those groups of people who are most closely engaged in the behaviour we are studying which are of most interest (Becker, 1973; Blumer, 1969). This is not to say the interpretations of those not regularly involved in physical activity offer no insight, but that a choice must be made as to which group of people represent the 'outsider' view, as it is impossible to make sense of both sides of the situation simultaneously (Becker, 1973). By now focusing solely on those with a physical activity-induced pleasure dependency, it needs to be established as to how healthism creeps into their perceptions of physical activity, which appears to be the mechanism by which they unwittingly subordinate happiness for health and cast others as inferior outsiders.

In abiding by and perpetuating the belief that a lifestyle without regular physical activity is indicative of various bad habits, regularly active participants frowned upon what they perceived to be the evil health consequences brought about primarily by a lack of physical activity involvement. This is reflective of a broader movement by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UK's DoH to increase physical activity levels and reduce sedentary behaviour (DoH, 2010; WHO, 2015). According to the DoH's (2010; p. 21) review of the current scientific evidence linking sedentary behaviour and obesity, independent of physical activity participation, sedentary behaviour itself represents a social ill that threatens to harm public health, as amongst adults, it 'is associated with all-cause and cardiovascular mortality, diabetes, some types of cancer and metabolic dysfunction'. The review also explains the distinction between sedentary behaviour and a lack of physical activity,

Many think that 'sedentary behaviour' is simply a lack of physical activity, but this would be misleading... Contemporary sedentary behaviour

researchers do not accept the position that sedentary behaviour is simply a lack of physical activity and, instead, prefer to define the term in respect of individual behaviours where sitting or lying is the dominant mode of posture and energy expenditure is very low. (DoH, 2010; p. 11)

It is through this line of thought that people can be cast as deviant outsiders for, quite literally, doing nothing. More importantly, what might seem an arbitrary and harmless distinction between sedentariness and physical activity encourages people to imagine and worry about the threat of experiencing the pain and misery of mortality and disease by being too sedentary. Such fear of future suffering has been described by Adam Smith (1759; p. 8) as 'poison' to our current happiness in the present. The omnipresence of imagining how the physical suffering associated with too much sedentariness would feel meant that this fear and hindrance to happiness was encountered by the most physically active of participants. Maria intimated that her motivation to remain active was framed as much by her avoidance of being too sedentary,

*I do not believe that people, if they are... if they can't move, or they have problems because, you know, they haven't been active, erm, can be really unhappy because if your body hurts (laughs), it can be unpleasant.*

Evan, 46, and four years older than Maria, was conscious of how ageing might threaten to make his lifestyle more sedentary and had already started to adjust the type and amount of his physical activity, hoping to add longevity to his participation,

*I'm also aware that ageing means that there won't be so many years that I can do the kind of things that I'm doing now, or if I do them, I'll do them less... I'm in part, about conservation... I'm thinking that I'll probably end-up doing a lot of yoga (laughs), less impact, erm, I'm hoping that I'll still be able to box because I've known people who've boxed into their sixties, erm, not fight of course, just train... I've also read a lot, always about sport, and,*



*and physical activity and what it can do for you over the long-term, and the necessity of, erm, especially for... the age group of, of fifties, late-forties, fifties and sixties, the bone density... you don't want to lose elements of your youth, even though you're ageing and by that I mean the ability to use your body and not be decrepit, erm, and I, I think the greatest physical and mental test I'd ever face, was if I was disabled, er, because that would mean that I couldn't do the things I've been doing all my life and that would be tougher than anything I've done.*

Evan's concerns illustrate how participants, especially those most regularly active, seemed trapped by the biological certainty of ageing on one side and a cultural and political environment that equates sedentariness and not being active enough with disease and the stigma of laziness on the other. For Emma, an increased awareness of illness and death was attached to entering her forties,

*As you get to 40 you start to think 'I don't want to have high blood pressure' and 'I don't want to have, erm, heart disease'... you have friends who've had problems... or relations that start to die and stuff, and you think '(gasps) they died from that' and you think well that can be prevented, and diabetes can be prevented by exercise and not having too much insulin, so you're thinkin' 'oh actually, workin' it off and not having dormant food, then...' I wouldn't want diabetes, I mean that is a really bad thing, and yet I've got friends who have got diabetes just because they're overweight!... that's almost like a criminal thing really, isn't it, when you think about it.*

Emma, like other participants who valued physical activity as an essential part of their everyday lives, perceived the behaviours of sedentariness and poor diet as the primary causes of avoidable death and disease. Removed from the social context and any form of social patterning that constrain and enable people's choices, the 'criminal' act of living a life that 'encourages' poor health, Emma also suggests could be prevented by the alternative individual choices of more physical activity and better diet.

Thus, involvement in physical activity, from which people can experience great pleasure, is also characterised, through the dominance of healthist ideology, by a fear of disease and motives of moral obligation and responsible citizenship, and the characteristics of both happiness and fear are particularly evident in those most regularly involved. Essentially, physical activity serves as a happiness practice for many participants, however, as physical activity is immersed into health policy and promotion alongside social concerns about inactivity and sedentariness, everyday personal conceptions of the value of physical activity are also framed by some of the same anxieties. By medicalising both the problem of disease as a personal failing and the health solution as an individual obligation, attention is shifted away from any responsibility of the state and the social patterning of illness, meaning that healthism manifests itself within everyday beliefs about the causes of health and illness (Crawford, 1980). To a certain extent, this demonstrates Wellard's (2014) contention that the health-related outcomes of physical activity are often emphasised over the enjoyment of doing physical activity. The collected data nuances this argument further, in that people's enjoyable experiences of being regularly active do not translate into an entirely positive conception of physical activity, because this is also shaped by a rhetoric in broader society that utilises physical activity as a vehicle for healthism. In constructing the fear that people pose a significant threat to their own health, healthism in the context of physical activity and sedentariness not only labels people as deviant outsiders for doing nothing, but also casts them as morally inferior (Crawford, 1980).

The WHO and DoH's championing of physical activity as a behaviour that can improve public health is supported by physiological evidence (Hardman & Stensel, 2009), and better health is an important contributing factor to greater happiness (Layard, 2011). However, neither of these evidence bases are fully grounded in

people's lived experiences of everyday life. For the most part, the DoH (2011) frame the value of physical activity as enabling people to avoid disease, and sedentariness as a disease factor, which, like other health-related behaviours (Crawford, 1980), situates physical activity within medicine and sedentariness as a medical problem. The consequences, as evident in this study, are that those who are regularly active cast those who are not as morally inferior outsiders, on the basis that they are incapable of looking after their own health, and although they perceive physical activity primarily as a pleasurable practice, regularly active people themselves also hold underlying fears about future disease and the decrepitude of ageing that will render them less physically capable.

That moral judgements of others are legitimated by documents produced by government health authorities is not the intention of the health experts behind the documents, but is certainly a consequence of the way in which their ideas are relayed and interpreted within the contemporary social environment. In their quest to reduce public levels of sedentary behaviour, health experts believe that such a change will produce a better way of life for people (DoH, 2011). In theory, less sedentary behaviour should improve public health (DoH, 2011), but because of identifying sedentariness as a social evil requiring urgent remedy to address the obesity crisis, the DoH (2011) simultaneously label sedentary behaviour as deviant behaviour. Thus, in practice this perspective of sedentary behaviours, like lying and sitting, has the potential to cause more harm than it remedies, through advising people to be wary of their own everyday behaviours. Although informed by scientific research, the messages public authorities transmit about desirable and undesirable behaviours carry moral and political consequences, and theoretical ideas about clear distinctions between the desirable

and undesirable are always more complex in practice, meaning such messages and labels are always political (Becker, 1973).

The moral and political position adopted and offered within this thesis, as informed by the interpretations of the lived experiences of participants, is one which champions the importance of physical activity as a happiness practice. For the most part, popular ideas drawn predominantly from survey data and laboratory studies situate physical activity as being conducive to happiness through improved health. Whereas the data collected and analysed here suggests that the body's response to being physically active can be pleasurable, but within a social context where healthism reigns, the health-based rhetoric surrounding physical activity, inactivity and sedentary behaviour inspires feelings of anxiety. Therefore, in the interests of public happiness, it is argued that within policy, physical activity should be reconfigured as a happiness practice as well as a health-related one, with the potential for improved health repositioned as an additional beneficial consequence of physical activity involvement, as opposed to the primary reason for participation. References to the health 'threats' of inactivity and sedentary behaviour should also be minimised. Booth (2009) and Wellard (2012, 2014) have previously made similar suggestions, as once the experience of doing physical activity is interpreted as enjoyable, it is this conception of physical activity which forms the most enduring and meaningful motive for continued participation. A health-focused rationale might serve as a reason for entry into more active ways of being, but is not central to the experience (Wellard, 2012). Moreover, emphasising the message that doing some intentional physical activity rather than none is likely to have significant health benefits, more so than existing directives about how much more physical activity 'inactive' people need to do to be labelled as active (Weed, 2016). Above all else, physical activity requires a fresh narrative, which is

indicative of the experience of participation and not engulfed by the dogma of healthism.

As the means by which participants structured their stories of fear about future suffering, the following chapter goes into further detail about ageing , which proposes that physical activity participation can also bring further purpose to people's everyday lives, the real consequences of healthism are also manifested in the constant anxiety experienced by parents through the fear that their children are not active 'enough' and dilemmas about how to best maintain physical activity involvement while negotiating the ageing process. Especially illuminating about the data, is evidence of a connection between the rapid emergence and growth of specific health-related physical activity guidelines in the 1990s; which occurred in the context of the expansion of parenting, a proliferation of parenting experts, and the increased popularity of lifelong leisure careers; and how being active became both more desirable and more of a health concern during this period. Through comparing the recalled childhood and parenting experiences of younger and older participants, there were stark differences at play in the perception and practice of physical activity, which also illustrates the interaction between life course expectations and generational positioning.

## **7. The Purpose of Physical Activity as a Practice**

*Working hypothesis audit trail: The potential contribution of physical activity to human happiness across the life course within a range of family contexts*

It was proposed in the previous chapter that the most essential and prevalent way physical activity contributes to human happiness is through the pleasurable interpretation of the body's response to being physically active. This rigorous working hypothesis is based on a sample of participants who relayed and relived their storied experiences from various life course positions, while situated in a range of family contexts. This chapter pays more explicit and detailed attention to the potential contribution of physical activity to happiness as informed by these life course positions and family contexts. Under the broader category of purpose, experiences of parenting and ageing were meaningful to all those participants who were conscious of them. Thus, these working hypotheses do not occur as frequently across the sample as the pleasurable interpretation of the body's response to physical activity theorised in the previous chapter but were unrivalled in terms of meaning. Specifically, connections between physical activity and ageing were essential to the stories of physically active participants in their forties and aged sixty and over. Participants in their twenties did not refer to ageing due to their current life course position, however, these findings will become relevant to them in the future as they become more aware of the ageing process. Indeed, as a shared experience encountered by all people, ageing carries a level of transferability to the broader population. In terms of parenting, providing physical activity participation for children as a parenting practice was a prominent part of family life for all mothers and some fathers of the sample. In the interests of existing and future health and happiness, parents consistently pointed out the purposeful role they played, or at least tried to play, by encouraging physical activity participation

amongst their children. Overall, it was parenthood that brought greater purpose to participants' lives and encouraging physical activity was incorporated within the practice of this role. The relatively broad elements of ageing and parenting within the data set meant that there were no alternative interpretations as such. Nevertheless, this still makes for a nuanced discussion of the lived experiences of ageing and parenting, with parenting influenced by gender and ageing affected by generational norms about life course expectations.

### 7.1 Symbolic Parenting and a Generational shift in Motherhood

Yasmin, 27 years of age and mother of two, was aware of how her love of being physically active could encourage her children to value the importance of health from an early age, but also conscious of pushing her children into physical activity rather than allowing them to make this choice for themselves,

*I've gotta have some me time, for me, to keep myself sane (laughs)... I've got to make sure that I work for my family, I stay fit for my family, I can provide for my family... I'm a good role model for my children, that being fit and healthy and active is actually really, really important in life... I don't wanna force my family into physical activity, I want it to come naturally, like it did me. So like with the riding, I didn't know that I was doing a physical activity, yet looking back now, I was, I was shattered every day, come home from the yard after mucking out, picking-up the poo, riding, it, it was an enjoyment, I loved it and I really want my children to kind of fall in love with something that.*

Representative of a reframed form of motherhood that resists the traditional notion of how being a 'good' mother is defined only by caregiving practices (Lewis & Ridge, 2005), Yasmin saw her own physical activity as purposeful for both maintaining her

own health and setting a healthy example for her children to follow. Previous research on the transition to parenthood has also found that physical activity took on further meaning within the lives of mothers and fathers, who began to explicitly model healthy behaviour through physical activity involvement for their children to observe (Mailey, Huberty, Dinkel & McAuley, 2014). In the case of mothers, Bojorquez-Chapela, Unikel, Mendoza and de Lachica (2014) discovered age-related differences in how younger women re-engaged with exercise and resumed their quest for health and beauty following pregnancy, while older women began to invest more time into their new identities as mothers at the expense of taking care of themselves. The younger women were the eight youngest of the 30 participants, aged in their twenties and early thirties. The 22 older interviewees ranged from their thirties to mid-forties. Accordingly, the authors postulate that such differences are likely to be the outcome of generational or life course variations. Suggesting that generational causes would be more structural and brought about by transformations to motherhood and societal expectations of women, whereas a life course explanation would be more short-lived, and the younger women would eventually come to mirror the older women in the study (Bojorquez-Chapela *et al.*, 2014).

In the present study, age-related differences between whether or not physical activity participation could be incorporated within the identity of motherhood occurred between those in their forties and those aged 60 years and over, rather than between those in their twenties and forties, as was the trend in the Bojorquez-Chapela *et al.* (2014) study. The female interviewees in their forties in the current study, all of whom were mothers, were also regularly active through various pursuits, such as triathlon training, gym classes or walking every day. More importantly, they went beyond the idea that physical activity participation needed to be negotiated into motherhood, and



instead saw being regularly active as an inherent and 'normal' aspect of contemporary motherhood. Physically active before becoming pregnant, the final stages of pregnancy were little more than a temporary break in their physical activity careers,

***JD: Has there ever been a period when you've not done much?***

*Only when I've been pregnant (laughs), that's about it, yeah.*

***JD: How did you find the experience of being pregnant and not being able to do as much?***

*Yeah, not too bad, I was, still did vague exercises around up until about five or six months I suppose and then just walked, erm, but it was a bit frustrating and as soon as my children were born I couldn't wait to get back and do some exercise again. (Claire)*

The only exception to this rule was Emma (43), who, as an adult, had been intermittently active prior to parenthood, but then became relatively inactive after becoming a mother. The trigger point in her life course that made physical activity a purposeful and regular part of life was the sense of empowerment and freedom it gave her during and following the break-up of her marriage,

*I was... late thirties, 37, 38... we divorced, and I decided that I wanted a different lifestyle... so I started walking to get through the stress of divorce, and I'd walk for four or five miles... you get to a point in your life where you sort of quite like being a bit different... as you get older you start to, I suppose I was quite empowered when I got divorced so I'd be... free again and I started to... think, think about myself more and, er, I started thinking 'actually, I don't look that bad and I'm not that bad, I'm actually alright'... I think divorce is a big thing, a relationship breakdown changes you... because you're with somebody for all that time and you, you, you love them and, well you think you do, and they, you think they love you and you've got into this routine and after you think 'actually, I don't think it was love... I don't think they did love me because why would they... encourage... why*

*would they have allowed me to put my life like that?... Why would they have criticised me and done that?’*

Looking back, the relationship circumstances in which she approached and then entered motherhood, imbued with traditional notions about prioritising caregiving over taking care of herself, changed her as a person in a manner that made her feel less important than the other members of her immediate family household,

*I was a different person again and then when people said ‘oh, you’re like the old person’ it was, like, as if I, I’d been... like 10 or 15 years in this... this... I might as well have been... in a concentration camp.*

**JD: So, when did the old person disappear?**

*When I was, when I was having children. Because, er, you’re having to look after them and... and a husband rather than yourself. So, you become less important.*

**JD: that’s the way you saw it then? You had children and they’re now more important...**

*Well, yeah and also there wasn’t any time for you really because you’ve constantly gotta get things ready for them and being pestered by... life, you know, sayin oh, you’ve gotta get the children ready and you’ve gotta get them to school and you’ve gotta be a good mum, so you’ve gotta do homemade food and... you’ve gotta run this nice house and you’ve gotta have all these things that they need to have... and I didn’t have any clothes, I didn’t have any, like fancy clothes or anything and when you get bigger you think ‘actually I look better in joggers and a, a top anyway’ (laughs)*

**JD: So, being a ‘good’ mum and a ‘good’ wife wasn’t particularly good for you?**

*No, I, I, I was on hold I didn’t live, no.*

**JD: I see, that’s an interesting expression, you ‘didn’t live’...**

*No, I just, well I didn't have anything really... your life was like pawned, if you know what I mean you were just, that was it, you were set away... for everyone else's gain, cos so Taylin (former husband) could go for his, his run... because that would take an hour and a half a day, I'd need to be with the children, I'd have to be cooking his meal.*

Overall, it appears the increased purposefulness of physical activity in the lives of mothers is more closely associated with the assimilation of caring for oneself within a contemporary style of mothering, which allows for such an ethic of self-care based on setting a good example of healthy behaviour for their children, than with being active per se. In terms of the purposefulness of physical activity engagement, the increased meaning of physical activity when becoming a mother was just one example of a broader collection of self-care and symbolic parenting practices, such as healthy eating and setting time aside for oneself that have become more legitimate within a type of motherhood offering an alternative lifestyle to the traditional model of self-sacrifice for others (Bojorquez-Chapela *et al.*, 2014; Lewis & Ridge, 2005).

The interpretations and lived experiences of being a mother, and grandmother where applicable, relayed by those aged sixty years and over in the current study were permeated by more traditional understandings of mothering,

*I suppose family commitments took over and I stopped all this sort of thing (physical activity). I think you just sort of forget about it because you're so busy... I was with children, then I went back to teaching as well, and then, erm, and it's the time factor, no time... it's hard to start again once you've not done it for a long time.*

**JD: Why is that?**

*Well, I just have less energy and if my energy's used up doing the sort of basics of running a home, the thought of doing something else as well... 'cos I was doing the ironing and he (husband) was going to play golf, erm,*

*he used to take the boys out, you know, when they were little... there hasn't been enough, er, teamwork I think... I don't know where I went wrong there... I remember one time, he, he would go and play snooker as well 'cos they had a snooker table at the golf club, and I remember saying (laughs), 'four nights this week! four nights' (Fiona)*

The evidence suggests an age-related split in the data between those in their twenties and forties with those aged 60 years and over. Physical activity involvement contributed greater purpose as a motherhood practice to the lives of only those mothers within their twenties and forties. However, attempting to establish clear differences between generational effects and life course changes, proposed by Bojorquez-Chapela *et al.* (2014) as a direction for future research, is unrealistic. Much like the structure and agency of societies, biographical and social history are inseparable (Plummer, 2001; Wright Mills, 1959). Memories of lived experiences are simultaneously a product of interactions between life course stage and generational positioning (Miller, 2000). The limitation within the current sample of females in their twenties, which makes identifying any generational shifts in the notion of 'good' motherhood problematic, is that Yasmin was the only mother. Yet, this factor in itself may have been caused by generational shifts in life course norms since the 1970s in the UK, which have seen a consistent increase in the age that women become mothers from around 24 years of age in 1975 to around 29 years of age by 2016 (Office for National Statistics, 2017). Over time, the life course expectations for different generations of women have therefore altered in reference to the increased average age they tend to become mothers, making it less likely for females to become mothers in their twenties, which had implications for the sample of the study. This also had real consequences for participants, as the stage within life at which one becomes a parent and the subsequent responsibility of taking care of young children constrains the

amount of freedom one has, although this freedom gradually returns as children age. Emma described this in the context of having children at a different age to her sister,

*She's stopped doin' so much now because she's got children... she's got a different lifestyle to me and... I think I'm a bit envious sometimes... I had mine when I was 24-5... now I'm reaping the benefits because... I'm 43 and still... I'm getting my life back, whereas she didn't have children until she was... errr, well 34 I think she was, or 35, so she's like 42 now and she's got a new born baby and a five-year-old and a seven-year-old.*

Additionally, the reduction in physical activity involvement by Emma's sister, once she became a mother, further emphasises the point that the purposefulness of physical activity participation is only increased through subscribing to a particular form of contemporary motherhood (Bojorquez-Chapela *et al.*, 2014; Lewis & Ridge, 2005). Being physically active seems to be a component part of a reframed type of mothering that promotes self-care and time for oneself (Lewis & Ridge, 2005), although this could also be said of other practices of freedom and self-care, which have become more legitimate within contemporary parenting identities. The way in which it could be argued that physical activity participation is unique, is that as well as being purposeful in terms of relative freedom and looking after oneself, active motherhood also embodies a symbolic parenting practice for children to model. Such positioning of the value of physical activity within family life adds further weight to the argument that family is more important to happiness than health-related behaviours like physical activity (Day, 2018), but physical activity can still be purposeful when rationalised as being in the interests of families as a whole, rather than the pleasure of a sole family member.

### 7.1.1 *Mothering Fathers? Becoming a father and establishing a physical activity routine*

There was also only one male parent in the 20-29 age group of the sample, for whom physical activity had taken on a more profound purpose since becoming a parent. Prior to fatherhood, Wayne was intermittently active, but under both the increased time constraints of being a parent and an increased consciousness of the influence his actions could have upon his son, Wayne considered it necessary to make his physical activity involvement 'a regular thing',

*The exercise helps me, but also from a point of view of just being active anyway and encouraging Chase (son) to do stuff as well... yeah... try and do it as a regular thing each week and try and keep it and maintain it, but also from the point of view of... having a family life, erm, if I fluctuate in and out of it, it's hard to keep a routine, and I'd rather try and keep a routine, and do it as a regular thing... Lois (wife) knows where I am each week, Chase knows what I'm doing... it's just easier... to keep things at a bit more of a regular pace.*

Based on his prior physical activity experiences, Wayne also brought together the significance of participation frequency and the potential health-related consequences for his son, to propose that inconsistent engagement with physical activity was indicative of not being happy with oneself,

*I find a lot of people, they go to the gym and they wanna work on certain things, it's like 'I want good abs, I want bigger arms, I want', errr, 'a bigger chest', or whatever, where, I find that's quite fickle, and quite, erm, vein, and I'm not bothered in that side of things, but I am bothered in keeping myself, erm, conscious of my health, 'cos I'd, I'd like Chase to grow-up and to be conscious of, well, not fluctuate, I, I don't like it when... people fluctuate up and down, just, it's not healthy for them, it's not good for them, and they're not happy with themselves.*

Unlike Yasmin, who made no reference to any input from her husband about setting a healthy example for their children to follow, Wayne saw this as something he and his wife did together,

*She always, er, was dancing and doing stuff 'round the house, so Chase has copied her, so he does a lot of dancing, but then obviously 'cos of all our family friends coming around he always plays football with them, so he enjoys playing football now, he always asks to play football... so he's very active.*

As was the case with motherhood, there is also the possibility of generational effects between fathers of the different age groups of the sample. In contrast to motherhood, the generational shift of setting a healthy example for their children appeared to have occurred more recently amongst fathers, with only Wayne referring to the increased purpose of physical activity participation as a symbolic parenting practice. As Wayne was the only father interviewed of those males in their twenties, this constrains any claims that can be made about how his perspective might feed into and represent a broader trend amongst fathers. Hamilton and White (2010b) found that the transition into parenthood leads to changes in physical activity behaviours, with decreases in amount, intensity and structure of physical activity most common. Although some parents, including fathers, treated the life stage of parenthood as an opportunity and became more physically active (Hamilton & White, 2010b). Yet, these fathers did not place explicit focus on the increased purposefulness of physical activity participation to set a healthy example for their children, like Wayne. It might be that the most powerful influence in the increased purposefulness of physical activity for parents comes from those mothers who negotiate motherhood with an ethic of self-care and some degree of freedom. With male partners performing a support role by also being regularly active themselves to set a healthy example for their children to follow. In

addition to spending more time taking care of their children to facilitate the relative freedom of mothers to be physically active. This explanation is supported by other studies that illustrate recent generations of fathers spend more leisure time with their children (Harrington, 2006), with an upward trend since 1975 (Faircloth, 2014a). Ultimately, the lack of clarity about where fathers fit-in likely highlights some of the uncertainty they experience surrounding the type of care they should give to children when attempting to simultaneously fulfil traditional expectations of being a relatively uninvolved household provider and more recent expectations to play a more nurturing role (Faircloth, 2014a; Kay, 2007).

Therefore, it is questionable how meaningful to fathers setting a healthy example to children through participating in physical activity really is. At a time when parenting has become especially intense (Faircloth, 2014b), Wayne's approach to caring for his son is one whereby he adopts a supporting role to his wife, as mothers still have greater expectations placed upon them to provide more regular hands-on care for children (Shirani, Henwood & Coltart, 2012). For fathers, because giving care to children is more attached to femininity than masculinity, this has become something that more recent generations have been able to do more of, but also still able to opt-out of without feeling anxious or guilty in the same way mothers might (Shirani *et al.*, 2012). In several ways, due to the seemingly impervious connection between caregiving and femininity, many care aspects of fatherhood are as much of an extension of motherhood (Faircloth, 2014a). Despite physical activity participation being a symbolic parenting practice done intentionally for children to model as opposed to hands-on caregiving, this too seems to be more attached to mothering than fathering within the current study. Research suggests that parenting through physical activity is more exclusively associated with fatherhood, through participating



with children by playing together (Harrington, 2006). Alternatively, Wayne's intention to set a healthy example for his son through regular physical activity might demonstrate a generational shift in the way fathers go about parenting, which challenges the lived, socially constructed myth that parental caregiving is largely a 'naturally feminine' task (Faircloth, 2014a). Further research is required, especially gaining a greater insight into the apparent contradiction between how the provision of children's physical activity provision falls under the remit of mothers, yet fathers are more like to play and do physical activity with their children (Day, 2018). This topic receives further attention in the next chapter.

### *7.1.2 The Purpose is in the Parenting*

When seen as a necessary aspect of parenting by those parents who value physical activity as a healthy behaviour for their children to follow, especially amongst mothers born from 1970 onwards, physical activity is also a more purposeful dimension of family life. However, physical activity as a practice in itself is not the main contributing factor upon happiness in this scenario, instead this emanates from parenting practices, which bring people happiness through increased feelings of purpose (Dolan, 2014). According to Dolan (2014), for the most part, becoming a parent has a neutral overall effect on happiness, as although parental responsibilities bring purpose to one's life, they are not necessarily as pleasurable as the activities one engages in prior to parenthood, which become less frequent, resulting in the loss of some degree of pleasure. As physical activity can induce feelings of pleasure and purpose, lifelong physical activity participation offers the potential for feelings of happiness across the life course. Although this explanation does not acknowledge the

gendered nature of parenting. In the case of becoming a mother, continued physical activity involvement also demands practicing a type of motherhood that makes a departure from intensive and self-sacrificing traditional methods, allowing for more relative freedom and an awareness of how self-care is of benefit to the family as a whole (Bojorquez-Chapela *et al.*, 2014; Lewis & Ridge, 2005). A parenting philosophy best summed up by Maria, 'I don't think about them [her children and husband] only, but I think about myself too'.

## 7.2 Physical Activity and the Ageing Process

Some of the physically active participants in their forties also cited being active as performing the bespoke purpose of enabling them to delay, and sometimes resist, age-related declines in physical health. The phase in his life at which the interview with Evan took place was particularly insightful, as for the first time he was beginning to feel the strain of regular physical activity when pushing his body beyond a certain physical limit,

*I'm forty-six and I'm feeling it more than I ever have and I think it's because I'm aware that, erm, I'll adjust my pattern of exertion and do different kinds of things, or do less... but I, I don't wanna stop because, one, it's central to who I am... but... the, the sense of return you get, psychologically, and physically when you feel better for it.*

Despite Evan's omission that his age had started to impact upon the way he experiences physical activity through his body, causing him to rethink the amount and intensity of his regular physical activity engagement, it still brought him great purpose as a fundamental part of his identity. He further explained that the role played by physical activity in his identity allowed him to hold on to some degree of his youth,

while also delaying the possibility of any decrepitude brought about through the ageing process, *'You don't want to lose elements of your youth, even though you're ageing and by that I mean the ability to use your body and not be decrepit'*.

Given the amount of meaning physical activity has likely contributed to Evan's life, his fear about the onset of frailty through ageing as a threat to his active identity and way of being is understandable. People 'know' one another through their bodies, and the body is where the process of ageing occurs and becomes visible to others (Grant & Kluge, 2007). Although the regularly active females between 52 and 73 years of age in Poole's (2001) study referred to the age-related development of an undesirable body, they still maintained a sense of being and feeling youthful through their physical activity participation. Taking this into account within the context of Evan's fear of losing elements of his youth due to physical infirmity via ageing, it seems that upholding self-perceptions of youthfulness are attached to the preservation of the body's physical function, as opposed to the maintenance of physical attractiveness. Indeed, Poole (2001) also found that any physical attractiveness benefits from regular exercise identified by the women were appraised as no more than peripheral gains. Age and gender differences between Evan and the women in Poole's (2001) research are to be expected but situating Evan's experiences of ageing within a more specific body of knowledge is problematic, as the experiences of the leisure pursuits of ageing men have been less frequently researched in comparison to the experiences of women (Minello & Nixon, 2017). Aware of this dearth in the literature, Minello and Nixon's (2017) recent study of male cyclists between fifty-two and eighty-two years of age discovered that a tension existed between their longing for youthfulness and acceptance of their age. Participants in the study disclosed how they did not 'feel' their age, but also revealed the contradiction of often worrying about ageing yet claiming

not to 'fear' it (Minello & Nixon, 2017). The authors go on to suggest that, as a concept, youthfulness is probably as obscure as that of ageing.

The meaning of physical activity involvement in preserving the functional capacity of the ageing body is limited by the biological reality of the body, which eventually results in the loss of 'normal' function (Grant, 2008a; Phoenix & Grant, 2009). At the same time, holding on to youthfulness has become increasingly desirable in contemporary society (Dionigi, 2006), meaning that ageing can be experienced 'as a betrayal of, and by, the body' (Hutchings, 2014; p. 149). Tulle (2008; p. 4) sheds some light on the apparent inconsistencies in Evan's experiences and previous research, 'The self itself is ageless; it has stopped ageing at a point much earlier in the life-course than suggested by the appearance or functioning of the body'. Accordingly, the aspects of youthfulness that Evan does not want to lose include his younger ageless self as well as the physical function of his body. In his earliest memories of physical activity outlined in the previous chapter, Evan's recollections were defined by 'freedom' and the limitless energy of being a child, which contributed towards a dialectic tension against his more recent experiences of being active. In terms of his ageing identity, the prospect of losing part of his lifelong self was also something he was especially sensitive to after observing his parents age and the current plight of his father,

*Dad's seventy-eight, mum is, erm, seventy-two, erm, mum's still very active at seventy-two, dad got unwell ten years ago, erm, he had Crohn's disease and a number of operations which took his strength away from him, but he slowly recovered it, so the most they both do now is walk a lot with our dog, but they do, they do keep active and, erm... one of the problems they're facing in life, in their generation is adjusting to the fact they don't have their physical capabilities... any longer, so I find it, I've seen in my father*

*particularly, who's always been proud, not, not overtly, but, you know, to those closest to him, he's been proud in his ability to do the things that he's been able to do, physically, erm, he's finding it hard to adjust to that now.*

In addition to sensing changes in his ageing body through physical activity, Evan referred to reevaluating the type of physical activity he does, so that his involvement becomes more about 'self-preservation'. For those like Evan, who remain physically active while becoming increasingly aware of their ageing body, concurrent lived tensions between prolonging the absence of disease and resisting stereotypes of ageing contain elements of both deficit and heroic models of ageing (Pike, 2012, 2015). The deficit model of ageing stresses the absence of disease and the heroic model rejects ideas about the limits of later life (Pike, 2012). Thus, in the context of ageing, the purpose of physical activity is multi-faceted and best understood as a form of situated embodiment (Tulle, 2008).

### *7.2.1 Active Ageing: fighting for health or adapting for happiness*

The idea of resisting ageing through the maintenance of youthfulness, which Evan also perceived to be a function of his physical activity involvement, requires one to create and tell a story to this effect which bypasses, or at least downplays, the biological reality of the ageing body (Phoenix & Grant, 2009). Within happiness theory, this resonates with the perspective that 'there is no objective truth, only your subjective interpretations. You explain your behavior to form stories about yourself that are consistent with your beliefs' (Dolan, 2014; p. 92). Evan's story of maintaining youthfulness through physical activity was also real in the sense that his experiences of being active across the life course, throughout the ageing process, had led him to interpret the purpose of physical activity participation in this fashion. This tale of

preserving one's youth by way of physical activity engagement was not evident amongst other participants in their forties who lacked the same extensive physical activity career as Evan. For example, Warren and other participants produced stories built around the deficit model of how physical activity participation promotes health and discourages illness,

*I just thought I'm not really doing much, I'm going to work, I'm coming home, sitting down, watching TV, just not really doing very much... I spose I'd put on a, a bit of weight, not much 'cos I've never really, you know, carry much weight... I just thought 'I, I need to 'um, start doing a, doing something to get myself a, a bit more in shape', and... yeah I bought a bike, and, erm, yeah started doing a bit of cycling really, just... evenings and, you know, weekends, er... a bit here and there really... a year and a half ago... I went to the doctor's just for a check-up and discovered my cholesterol levels were a bit high... you know, they needed to come down... I started, 'um, well doing a bit more cycling, and, and running as well. (Warren)*

This health/illness binary is conscious of the fleshy limitations of the body (Phoenix & Smith, 2011), with such stories structured by objective 'truths' about the active ageing body, borrowed from the dominant rhetoric of biomedical science (Phoenix & Grant, 2009). As Warren had notable breaks in his physical activity career, it appears he adopted this most dominant type of story to explain the everyday purpose of physical activity, as he did not possess an active identity during the inception of his early adult self. That is, in the transition to adulthood he did not value physical activity involvement, and consequently, did not fully embody a self able to produce an authentic and personally meaningful story of active ageing. Warren is now regularly active and was also active through play during childhood, but the sizeable break from physical activity involvement in between meant his stories about the purpose of being

active to his ageing self made reference to only the avoidance of poor health, adopted from the most prevalent and accessible rhetoric of biomedicine.

For the most part, such stories subsequently became more about age-related health fears, the deficit model of ageing and less about valuing the practice of physical activity,

*It's a slippery slope I think, really, if you start taking medications... some medications are absolutely unavoidable... you have, you know, have to take them, I think if you can... not take them in the first place... my... father, in particular has, erm, you know, has got lots of ailments... and he takes all sorts of medications, these days... there are stacks of 'um almost, and... there's always issues with 'um, you know, with one having a, you know, effecting another one, and there's side-effects... the more... medication you have, the more problems you're guna get, so if you can keep away from them in the first place, it's obviously the sensible thing to do. (Warren)*

It is reasonable to suggest that the absence of being active within Warren's identity, as he approached adulthood, was not simply down to negotiating and adjusting to the increased independence of adulthood, but also due to the minimal amount of pleasure in his experiences of physical activity at school,

*At school... I played football, er, which I didn't mind, I wouldn't say I was a... great fan of it... rugby, used to get forced to play rugby every week, which I absolutely hated, just because it was always cold, wet, windy, and it was just er, a horrible environment, and I think being forced to do it, just didn't like it... erm, from there, cricket, I played quite a bit of cricket, played cricket for the school... I quite enjoyed it but I did find it a bit boring, to be honest, especially (laughs), fielding, erm, you know, batting, bowling was my thing really... yeah I played that, well for a few years when I was at school and then... erm, intermittently after that, er, when I left school... also at school, tennis, we used to play tennis, I used to enjoy that actually, never particularly good at it, which... you know, it didn't really help.*

These initial experiences then interacted with the unfamiliar pressures of adulthood with the implication being that Warren prioritised other areas of his life over his physical activity involvement.

*I suppose from about eighteen I stopped really doing any sport at all, erm... yeah for, well, a number of reasons really, working, I used, I started working shifts, erm, and obviously at that age you start going out drinking and (laughs), pubbing and things, and obviously that gets in the, in the way with doing any sports... from then I didn't really do anything for a long time... I suppose really, about... my mid-thirties, I can't say I really did any sport whatsoever... mid-thirties... erm, I started doing a bit more cycling, just in my spare time, just to... sort of keep myself fit really... and, erm, yeah from then it wasn't until, probably... last year, when I started running.*

In summary, the evidence collected pertinent to the life course shows that when age-related health concerns instigate re-entry into physical activity, the purpose of physical activity to people's lives is limited to 'fighting off' further inevitable declines in physical health (Pike, 2012; Tulle, 2008). Whereas, when regular physical activity participation precedes the perception of age-related changes in physical function, physical activity takes on the purpose of a 'resistance' to age-related decline and is interpreted in such a way that physical activity comes to serve the purpose of the preservation of youth. In both scenarios the objective biological condition of the ageing body is party to the same process but contrasting subjective perspectives from contrasting physical activity backgrounds give rise to either attempting to diminish further loss by using physical activity to fight ageing, or by adapting one's physical activity pattern to maintain a cherished part of the self. In other words, the biological essence of the active ageing body should be similar for many people, but lived experiences reshape the essence of their interpretations and, therefore, the meaning of physical activity participation to their lives. The resulting and crucial difference



between those who fight the physical decline of the ageing process through physical activity and those who utilise physical activity to preserve aspects of their youth, is that the prior experiences of those more motivated by self-preservation are characterised by pleasure. This is a significant contrast to those who embark on a crusade to fight ageing, because this is a battle they are destined to lose on the basis of biological reality (Phoenix & Grant, 2009; Phoenix & Smith, 2011; Tulle, 2008).

### *7.2.2 The Physically Active Adult Self*

The relevance of these two varieties of active ageing to the purposefulness of happiness is that the story of self-preservation resists ageing by simultaneously accepting the reality of this process that, ultimately, physical decline is unavoidable (Phoenix & Smith, 2011). In comparison, the story of attempting to fight ageing might also initially be conducive to happiness through subjective interpretation, but participants are unlikely to remain comfortable with this story as they continue to age, as the biological ontology of ageing will eventually mean that such claims will not hold true. Dionigi, Horton and Baker (2013; p. 379) found that tales of simultaneous acceptance and resistance to ageing through being active, typified by an adaptation to becoming older, were representative of their data theme of 'Making the most of your life... with the capabilities that you still have'. In protecting the youthful and active identity components of his self via continued participation, Evan said something similar and further extended the importance of this philosophy by introducing it as his blueprint to happiness,

*Maybe the description of happiness is, is living as best I can with the, erm, resources I have, both physical and otherwise, yeah, and sport allows me to do that.*

By protecting his identity in this way, Evan held a self-regard conducive to feelings of happiness (Smith, 1759). Regard for the self and a willingness to adapt throughout the ageing process were synonymous with one another in the maintenance of physical activity involvement. Adaptation to and acceptance of ageing coincide in cases of sustained participation, where the ageing process is simultaneously resisted and accepted (Dionigi *et al.* 2013). Furthermore, Dionigi *et al.* (2013; p. 382) also recognised that drawing upon a narrative to avoid and resist age-related decline through being active might cause conflict for the self at some point in the future, 'given that physical and mental decline is inevitable for people who live long enough, these stories of resistance and avoidance may be maladaptive to an ageing identity'. A willingness to accept and adapt to the ageing process through physical activity allows being active to serve the purpose of producing a self and identity prepared to continuously negotiate further age-related declines in physical function and health. The adoption of this philosophy was prevalent amongst participants who interpreted physical activity experiences as pleasurable, which were upheld as their foremost motivation for sustained involvement, rather than attempting to avoid further deterioration as they unavoidably age. Whereas those without a well-established active identity to preserve used physical activity to try and avoid the lived realities of ageing, and in doing so conceived themselves as being able to deal with its effects, moving attention away from any physical declines they had already experienced.

Dionigi *et al.*'s (2013) participants were 56 to 90 years of age, and the data presented so far comes from interviewees in their forties. However, these variations in

perspective on the purpose of physical activity participation were also persistent amongst those participants in their sixties. Significantly, like those in their forties, no participants in this age group who saw physical activity involvement as a way of fighting the effects of ageing were regularly active. Of these three participants, Henry (61) and Louise (64) had become less active with age, and Helen (66) was only intentionally active in an inconsistent and infrequent fashion. Although interested and willing to become more regularly active, Helen found restarting her physical activity involvement difficult within older age,

*You don't make that extra effort, like when you do when you're younger, 'cos you get tired, you know, you get tired by the time you've done whatever you're doing for the day, you know, just a trip into town for a couple of hours, you go home and, you know, that's it, I've, that's my activity for the day... it's, it's very different when you're older really... if you've kept that physical activity up all the way through, then obviously you're used to it, but to suddenly start it now, I'd have to be really, train my mind to say 'right, you need to be doing this', I need somebody to push me (laughs).*

Helen's intermittent engagement with physical activity over the life course was always instigated by the desire to achieve health-related outcomes, rather than the pleasure of participation or maintaining a sense of self as she aged,

*My weight is a big issue for me... because I find I get out of breath... so, probably I could get beyond that point, if I actually put my mind to it... I did slim down, as a teenager and into my forties I was relatively slim, but then from the forties up, I seemed to have... erm, put weight on again... I haven't got the willpower to lose weight or... escalate my exercise regime... the reasons would be more for health now... I've had to go on blood pressure tablets... obviously it would help if I could lose the weight... so, yeah all, all round my health would be the thing that I would like to be fitter for, really... people don't realise how hard it is to lose the weight, once you've become*

*overweight, it's very difficult, and then if you lose it, it's very hard to maintain that, to keep it off, I've done it... so many times over the years (laughs)... the only way I've ever lost a lot of weight, I lost a stone and a half when my son was gettin' married... and that was in 2002... I was going to the gym every morning before work... and I was on milkshake drinks, to lose it, and just having the one meal a day and I couldn't have kept that up forever, so of course once I started eating normally and not going to the gym... 'cos I didn't enjoy the gym.*

Like those interviewed in their forties regularly active for health-related reasons rather than to maintain an active identity, Helen pinpoints her forties as the stage in life when her physical activity involvement trailed off. Particularly interesting, is how she eventually cites the promise of better health as not being worth sacrificing her time for, as she did not take pleasure from the experience of being active. Helen values her health, but not necessarily physical activity, which carried no other purpose than a route to desirable health consequences, suggesting that to sustain regular physical activity across the life course, improvements in health are not sufficient as the sole motivating purpose.

The purpose of practicing physical activity needs to be valued for continued physical activity involvement, rather than being perceived as a means to an end. The life course approach exposes the limitations of using physical activity as a rational instrument for health promotion, especially when understood within the process of ageing. According to participants' interpretations, people only truly come to value physical activity in a fashion that contributes to their happiness when they choose to adapt their physical activity habits to preserve the active component of their self. Of course, they also gain health benefits by virtue of doing physical activity, but despite such benefits being desirable this is not at the crux of their motivation for sustained physical activity participation. To form an active identity and sculpt the self in such a

way that physical activity acts as an essential element, involvement in physical activity needs to be experienced and interpreted as pleasurable prior to the transition to adulthood, so that when the adult self ceases ageing (Tulle, 2008) being active is cemented into one's identity while the biological ageing process continues.

### *7.2.3 The Practice of Physical Activity and the Generational Structuring of the Life Course: 'Who's that nutter?... people used to look at you and think you were strange'*

Encompassing and partly structuring these interactions between the purpose of physical activity and the ageing body are observed generational variations. This was most pertinent to those participants sixty years of age and older, because 'the older sector of the population have lived through a time when exercising for the sake of it or for *health reasons* was deemed unnatural' (Grant, 2008b; p. 164). As recalled by Julian, who had remained regularly active throughout life, despite the cultural constraints of the time that he was socialised into, when going for a run for the sake of it was viewed as peculiar,

*I used to love cross country, in fact, the, the first year, when I was... eleven, twelve, and we used to have a school cross country, each, each year had a, had a cross country and the top ones from each house, went into the school cross country and I came seventh out of the whole school (laughs), so imagine how small I was then, and there's all these guys who were sixteen... so running, to me, was lovely then, but you gotta remember... you didn't go out running on the streets in those days, you know, if you went out running on the streets, believe me John, people used to think you were, you know 'who's that nutter?'... I mean this was when I was, sort of, sixteen onwards... and I wanted to keep running... 'cos I was playing, still playing football, but people used to look at you, and think... 'you're running in the streets?! What's that?', and 'cos you never had the road races then, nothing*

*at all, you know, oh you'd have the athletes, but you'd never see, you'd never see a road race, never... I'm going back to what? Er, '59, you know, the early sixties... I tell you, I used to go out running, but people used to look at you and think you were strange.*

Julian illustrates how values about physical activity at different times in history might impinge upon physical activity engagement possibilities, but also that the exertion of freewill can overcome this. Furthermore, Julian's extensive physical activity career also reinforces the enduring significance of maintaining physical activity involvement throughout the transition into adulthood. As already made evident within some of the stories of those in their forties, when Julian experienced decline in physical function through ageing, he adapted his physical activity routine to preserve the active identity he established when becoming an adult. Consequently, he continues to play competitive hockey regularly and participate infrequently in cross country and duathlon races at 73 years of age,

*I still run now, er, I do, do a few duathlons... since my knees, I've had trouble getting' back on the bike, but I can do it now, it's just a matter of getting myself to do it... they do one on the first Sunday of the year, so can you imagine, it's a bloody cold day, and you do this... so the run bit is along the beach, and that's ok, then you get on your bike and you go 'round this swamp, it really is a swamp... then you do your run 'round the swamp, but they add a few ditches in as well, and you have no chance of getting across the ditch, you go in the water, so you're covered in mud, you're freezing cold, bikes covered in mud, absolutely covered... I mean I've not done it since I've had my knees done... because hockey's still my number one sport, and... I won't run if I know I'm guna, if I'm guna play hockey.*

In the case of Henry, now relatively inactive at 61 years of age, physical activity did not play a central part in his identity as a young adult,

*I wasn't really sort of sporty in that, that respect, erm, trying to think what else I did... it was more just leaving, you know, being kicked out of school and going straight into working down Fazeley Street... but really... you know, and facilities have changed as well, haven't they, I mean there weren't gyms or anything like that, you know, in my days, when I was growing-up.*

This was in contrast to Mike (63), who worked in the British military for 26 years once he had left school at 16 years of age. The importance of physical fitness to military identity meant that being active became a core component of Mike's self. Although not regularly active throughout his life in the same way as Julian, having a break once leaving the army, Mike then became regularly active again through attending the gym to ease the discomfort of a long-term injury.

*It's been about fifteen years ago... I had... incorrectly lifted a wheelbarrow with some stone in it... but I bent over like a crane, and lifted it up and I got a, I got that discomfort in the lower spine, er, and that was with me for... maybe ten years, I didn't do anything about it, anyway it come to a point where it was so uncomfortable I went for physiotherapy, you get your back twisted and clicked back in... and then it started to creep back so it was like this never-ending circle of forty pound to the physiotherapist, and someone said to me, off chance, 'go to the gym, get the exercise that way'... and that's where I started, I built-up my core muscles around my spine, erm, which seemed to... put the spine back where it should be and I don't get it that often, I think now is one of the reasons why I go to the gym, is that it still maintains that core.*

Mike also saw the purpose of his physical activity at the gym as a way of embracing the ageing process,

*if I look around... erm, you... don't see many sixty-three year olds like me, that can lift and push... I'm physically quite strong, erm, so that's helped me to get around at my age, and I think it does have some... effect on the way*

*you look, erm, people, and my other half as well, they think we're younger because maybe the activity generates something in the body to make you look more, dare I say, youthful (laughs).*

Mike's story indicates that following a notable gap in physical activity participation, re-entry appears to be smoother and involvement more sustained if physical activity has been established as part of the self during early adulthood. In contrast to Fiona (66), whose only regularly physical activity was dog walking, which she saw as more of a responsibility to her family than a physical activity. Commitment to her family through a traditional parenting philosophy had proved to be an obstacle to physical activity engagement throughout her adult life,

*I suppose family commitments took over and I stopped all this sort of thing... I think you just sort of forget about it because you're so busy... I was with children, then I went back to teaching as well... and it's the time factor, no time... it's hard to start again once you've not done it for a long time... I just have less energy.*

Fiona, like Henry, was also retrospectively aware of how the society into which she was born and grew-up in also came to bear upon the opportunities available for her to be regularly active,

*I grew-up in the fifties, so... there wasn't the, er, organised sports, you know. When my boys were little, I took them [to] swimming lessons every week and, erm, then there was football, every weekend, and, there wasn't any of that when I was, that I remember, erm, so... no, my mum looked after four children and my dad went to work and we went on holidays and days out, but... no formal sporting.*

It therefore follows that because Fiona did not develop an active identity during adulthood, she did not have an active identity to preserve as she aged and, at the same time, the approach to parenting she invested much time into did not include



enough focus on self-care and self-regard to bring about regular physical activity participation. Despite Fiona's awareness of the potential benefits of physical activity, she 'forgot about it'. As without a self that valued physical activity, she was unable to locate any purpose for integrating physical activity participation into her everyday life.

### 7.3 Physical Activity, Purposefulness and the Life Course

The purpose that physical activity can bring to people's lives is shaped by both life course stage and generational positioning. Physical activity took on an increased purpose within participants' lives if they entered into parenthood and when they became more aware of the ageing process, so long as they held a prior appreciation of the benefits of being regularly active. Within the context of parenting, physical activity participation carried a symbolic value in the hope children would follow this behaviour. The extent to which parents encouraged physical activity participation amongst their children depended upon gender, with this appearing to take the form of a caregiving role attached to femininity. Although, there was some evidence of a generational trend that fathers are becoming more motherly in the ways they practice parenting. Nevertheless, the encouragement and provision of children's physical activity is still not something that is expected of fathers, yet remains a demanding experience placed on mothers. Simultaneously, the continued liberation of mothers from traditional ideologies of parenting as a duty of self-sacrifice would appear to allow for regular physical activity involvement in the interests of both self-care and setting a healthy example for their children. The expansion and increasing legitimization of less traditional forms of motherhood also appeared to allow some female participants, who

initially started out as traditional caregivers, to alter their approach to parenting and attain a greater degree of freedom in their everyday lives.

Interviewees were also aware that regular physical activity is beneficial to physical health during the ageing process. Some participants acted on this by attempting to fight the ageing process and others adapted their physical activity involvement to maintain an active identity, which was a cherished part of the self and brought them much happiness. Those in the latter group, negotiating rather than attempting to reject the ageing process outright like the former group, had developed an active component to their sense of self during the initial stages of adulthood by engaging in regular physical activity. This made it easier to continuously manage the ageing process and adapt their physical activity habits to remain physically active. Whereas using physical activity to fight the ageing process was a response to the increased awareness of the ageing process made by participants who had not secured an active identity when embarking upon adulthood. For these participants, there was no clear pattern of sustained physical activity engagement, with some regularly or intermittently active and others relatively inactive. Moving along the life course, no interviewees aged 60 years or more who also saw physical activity as a way of fighting the ageing process were regularly active. Suggesting those who view physical activity as a way of fighting the ageing process in mid-life are unlikely to engage themselves in physical activity in a sustainable manner by the time of later life and will no longer be regularly active. However, during childhood and early adulthood all participants in this age group had been subjected to social norms un conducive to developing and establishing an active identity. Meaning that the significance of any generational effects might take precedence over the outlined interactions between life course stages.

Following on from the purposefulness physical activity engagement offers as a symbolic parenting practice discussed in this chapter, the subsequent chapter considers how the provision of physical activity for children emerged as a parenting task and the worry this has invoked amongst parents. The rest of the chapter then moves through various physical activity socialisation implications brought about by significant interactions between family members as recalled by participants, with fathers performing an especially prominent role.

## **8. Family Membership and Physical Activity**

***Working hypothesis audit trail:*** *The interplay between family membership and the practice of physical activity*

The richness of the data pertinent to the family membership dimension of the research uncovered specific generational laws that controlled the place and meaning of physical activity within everyday family life. As the existing literature and previous chapter indicate, participants placed much focus on the importance of parenting. The original contribution offered here is that the retrospective spirit of the data also underlines the commensurate significance of *being parented*. Accordingly, the chapter begins with an explanation of how physical activity provision emerged as a parenting task to outline the context in which recollected experiences of being mothered and fathered into physical activity occurs. The influence of fathers was remembered as being notably more powerful than the influence of mothers. Moreover, in recollecting their childhood experiences, participants were dismissive of any influence their mothers might have had upon their physical activity careers. Thus, in terms of family membership and physical activity, being fathered and being a father are proposed as carrying the most powerful impact upon participants' physical activity careers and constitute the final working hypothesis.

An alternative explanation taken from participants' oral histories was that both mothers and fathers played important roles in contrasting ways. For most participants, both mothers and fathers encouraged and supported their involvement in physical activity. Mothers did this by exposing their children to a variety of physical activities, whereas fathers tended to only involve themselves in the provision and participation of a single physical activity, usually the sport they were most comfortable with

participating in themselves. Although, such a working hypothesis overlooks the lack of real influence mothers had, and in a few cases, fathers also went out of their way to involve their children in as many physical activities as possible. Furthermore, participants did not hold any enduring or notable memories of impact from mothers upon their physical careers. On the contrary, some interviewees mocked the idea that their mother might have once been regularly active and could be perceived as a role model for a behaviour of this type. This aspect of the data also makes greater sense when presented alongside the more prominent role participants, as sons and daughters, recall fathers playing in their early physical activity careers.

### 8.1 The Emergence of Physical Activity Provision as a Parenting Task

For participants in their forties and aged sixty years and older, all born prior to 1975, there was no explicit parental influence into physical activity participation framed by a health rationale. In contrast to the absence of any health-related childhood socialisation into physical activity from their own parents, interviewees in their forties went about socialising their own children in conjunction with the axiom of improved childhood and lifelong health. In addition, some of the younger participants in their twenties, born in 1992 and afterwards, had been subjected to this type of health-focused parental encouragement to become and remain regularly active, but as young adults rather than during childhood. Maria, born in 1974 in Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic, and mother of two children, pinpointed a lack of knowledge about the benefits of regular physical activity in the 1980s as the primary reason why her father had finished his relatively short but extensive physical activity career before he was thirty years old to focus on more important aspects of his life,

*My perception... from a child's point of view and he basically stopped exercising, erm, I guess his priority laid somewhere else and he didn't consider exercising as important, but then that could be because in the eighties, it wasn't a well-known factor, not everybody was exercising, but now, these days, it seems like everyone is training.*

Maria also provided further insight into how advances in knowledge have informed the way parents of her generation are becoming increasingly likely to perceive and incorporate physical activity into their own everyday lives and the practice of parenting,

*I think my, my generation, because they read... 'cos we, if you look at, er, how many people now started to run marathons, and... perhaps they involve their children as well... I think it's taking the nation by storm because... I think the culture is changing, you know, when you go to Czech... everyone my age would be running, cycling, there are loads of cycle paths and running paths, and everybody's exercising outside, here (the UK)... we're getting there but it's... a little bit different but I think... it is changing because I see more people, like people I never thought they would exercise, they actually run the half marathon, and I was like 'What? You run half marathon?' (laughs), so it is changing.*

Helen, born in 1950, mother of two children and a grandmother, also observed that parenting has become more health-conscious and now incorporates behaviour such as physical activity as a good habit for parents to model and encourage their children to adopt,

*I've got five grandchildren, two girls, three boys, and the youngest son obviously takes his children on these cycling things whenever they can, and then one of them does the football, the other one's just joined karate, but he's, he's not very forthcoming with social things, the other child, so he, this is a new thing for him... so yeah, they do... this cycling thing whenever they can, and they walk with the children, they go to parks and things like that, and then the other son, he's, they've got canoes, they go out on them*

*sometimes, they go cycling, we go cycling with them sometimes, if they go off, erm, and, and they, they do tend to walk quite a bit as well, when they can... my Thai Daughter-in-law, she's very health conscious, she goes to the gym, she runs, slim as anything, eats, eats healthily and... I think parents are more conscious of that, with their children now, yeah, on the whole.*

Like Maria, Helen also saw increasingly health-conscious parenting as being connected to developments in health-related knowledge, but was also aware of how increased availability of fast food threatens to undermine parents' best efforts to raise healthy children,

*All the research hadn't been done into how important it was, really, you know... I think it's very difficult to understand because when I was a child, as I say, we had lots of fresh vegetables, lean meat, but then you also had your puddings and ya cakes, you didn't have all the gyms and, and all the clubs and things like that, you didn't have them, nowadays you've got all the clubs, you've got all the things you can join to be healthy but you've got all the fast food places, and kids eating chips and pizzas and stuff like that... so, to me, it's, which was the better? Really, it's difficult to say.*

As parenting has become 'a series of tasks to be achieved' (Faircloth, 2014b; p. 46), being active, like many other routine childhood behaviours is now connected to long-term developmental outcomes for children. In the UK, this trend has seen the DoH (2011) introduce physical activity guidelines for children who have yet to learn to walk to ensure that they do enough physical activity 'from birth', to gain a range of physical, cognitive, health and social benefits. The under-5 years of age guidelines are framed as a 'public health responsibility' to be carried about by those who provide care for children,

During the early years, young children undergo rapid and wide-ranging physical and psychological developments that lay the foundation for their

future health and well-being. It is therefore a key public health responsibility to provide the best possible conditions for under 5s to develop. (DoH, 2011; p. 20)

The guidelines also make clear the threatening consequences for children who are involved in too much sedentary behaviour, despite an admission about a lack of clear evidence to make such claims,

Although there is a lack of research exploring the health consequences of sedentary behaviour in children under 5 specifically, there is emerging evidence that sedentary behaviour in the early years is associated with overweight and obesity as well as lower cognitive development. (DoH, 2011; p. 21)

Unacknowledged are the consequences for the practice of parenting and how such guidelines transform the incidental physical activity involved in the enjoyment of playing with children into an instrumental parenting task to be implemented for optimal development of the child (Lee *et al.*, 2010). In one respect, a growth in physical activity guidelines and policies (American College of Sports Medicine, 1990; Health Education Authority, 1995, 1996, 1998; US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996), particularly during the 1990s (Waddington, 2000), that made specific recommendations for how much physical activity people should be doing for maximal health benefits has made possible what Macvarish (2016) has termed *The Expert Invasion of Family Life*. However, physical activity guidelines in isolation do not fully account for how various health-related practices seem to have legitimately crept into contemporary parenting practices to demand such an intense focus. It also appears that the necessity for health-related physical activity opportunities for children have not only been absorbed into the expanding remit of parenthood (Bevan & Reilly, 2011;



Macdonald *et al.*, 2004), but also the generational consciousness of parenting within the current historical moment.

Pertinent to the incorporation of health-related physical activity within the consciousness of contemporary parenting, are the apparent contrasts between Stuart's experiences of his own childhood and the range of physical activity opportunities he is attempting to integrate into the childhood of his son and only child, who lives with his ex-wife following their divorce,

*Mum and dad got divorced when I was very young, erm, so I didn't know him, erm, my mum, never very sporty at all, she didn't do anything... we've always had dogs, so it was a lot of dog walking and things, but never really encouraged to do sport, but then I... wasn't good at it, so it wasn't something I got encouraged to do... I suppose... I'm more aware of it because I've taken up the sport, but like, there's stuff like junior parkrun and things that... they've introduced, which hasn't been going that long, you know, to try and get kids to run two kilometres before they then move up, that's widely available and free, I don't remember... well, parkrun wasn't around... in hindsight I'd of loved to... and I wanna do the same with my little boy, when I have him... trying to encourage him into more things, so... I did a fun run with him, or tryin' to get him on his little bike and stuff, and get in swimming lessons, all stuff that I never had, tryin' to encourage him to, to become more healthy growing-up, so he'll, hopefully he'll not stop it, because, you know, great learning to run and stuff at forty, I wish I'd done it when I was twenty.*

Claire, born in 1971, three years prior to Stuart, also lacked any physical activity influence or interest from her parents during her childhood. She attributed this to a potential generational difference between the value many people of her generation have come to place upon physical activity as a healthy practice, compared to a general lack of interest amongst her parent's generation,

*I remember my father always used to take us on long walks... but he wasn't... neither of my parents were particularly sporty or active, they, they weren't really into it, into exercise, I dunno if that's an age thing, er, that generation, they just really weren't into activities... I think, people of that, that age... mid-seventies, it would have been... bizarre for them to go and join a gym, or to, to go for a run... it wouldn't have been something that they would have done on a daily, or weekly, or monthly basis... my mother's workout, which she would have said would be looking after us children, running around, you know, cooking, cleaning, washing, that sort of stuff... exercise was never in the forefront in my household, ever... I think she's always thought it's a bit, it was a bit bizarre, me doing exercise, I think, you know, she just thinks I should... she just doesn't... doesn't really pass comment on it, put it that way.*

Julian, born in 1943, thus around the same age as Claire's parents, adds weight to her suggestion that 'being active' as an end in itself was not something that many people of his generation were especially interested in, with the exception of sport. He also explained how playing sport used to be seen as something that only children and young adults did,

*Mum wasn't sporty at all, dad had been, erm, but I spose, my dad died when he was seventy-four, but I mean he, he'd given-up playing sport... as people have got longevity, you do sports a lot longer now, I mean people at forty weren't doing anything, in my young days, you know, they'd sort of packed-up, they'd never be playing football beyond thirty, sort of thing... He played football, yeah, erm... he was never playing football when I... I can never remember him, watching him play... he had pictures and things like that, and, er, all his family were sporty... he used to love it, when I was playing, he'd come and watch and things like that... he was quite a good runner, as I say, in his time, but, er, he just, because the way his life was he... he just didn't get involved with it at all, and he didn't, didn't discourage us at all, in fact encouraged us to play and things like that, but, er, but never did it himself, you know, well, had done... in a previous lifetime, sort of thing.*

According to Julian, people of his generation engaged in play during their childhood, then if they continued their participation as a young adult, upon becoming a parent it was expected they would finish their sporting career and subsequently stop being physically active at this point in life, as his three older siblings had,

*He (eldest sibling) joined the Navy very young... he played hockey, er, he played football a little bit, at school... but he joined the Navy so he, he, his sport was there, and we hardly, you know, he joined the Navy very young... well, sixteen year-old sort of thing, you know, so he was in the Navy for quite a, eight, nine years, more than that maybe, so his sport was there, he told me he used to play hockey and that... er, my sister played netball... and she was a keen runner, she used to run... we used to do a lot sports stuff... 800 metres and things like that... the shorter stuff, my brother, Johnny, was a very good runner, a very good short-distance runner and played football, and, and then myself, you know I, I used to do running and football... I spose we all did it... the sport was there, there was always something happening.*

**JD: and in later life are, or were they, active?**

*No, no, no.*

**JD: So, at what age did your siblings stop being active?**

*I mean probably... late twenties... once they started getting family, that was, that seemed to... they didn't want to do it, and they wasn't keen enough... they didn't enjoy it enough... they decided 'ok, don't wanna do it'.*

Despite remaining regularly active throughout his life, Julian does not serve as an exception to the rule of people of his generation giving-up their physical activity careers upon entering parenthood, as he never had any children of his own, nor ever placed in a scenario where he had responsibility for taking care of young children.

### 8.1.1 Parenthood and the Inception of 'Being Active' as Desirable

Bringing the data together, over time parental influence upon the physical activity of their children has become more explicit, intentional and health-focused in the interests of the child. In part, this shift transpired as a consequence of the emergence and growth of health-specific guidelines for physical activity participation alongside the continued expansion of parenting to include an increasing range of childhood behaviours attached to the 'optimal' development of children (Faircloth, 2014b; Macvarish, 2016). The intermingling of these factors would appear to have caused, and been underpinned by, a greater health focus surrounding the practice of physical activity, and the rise of physical activity as a legitimate lifelong leisure career, rather than one which rarely extended beyond parenthood and comprised only of playing competitive sport. It is therefore argued that over the past 30 years the very idea of 'being active' was incepted as a desirable outcome in itself, as differentiated from organised sport and childhood play. The juncture and clear break evident in shared and contrasting participant subjectivities, that the notion of 'being active' came to fruition during their lifetime is reflected in the upsurge in availability of feasible lifelong pastimes of this type by those sixty years of age and over,

*They worked very hard, my mum worked on the land, and my dad... they used to walk a lot together... and they rode their cycles in younger years... but no... not to do the physical activity that people do nowadays... by the time they'd done their full day's work and then dad did his garden and then mum had four children to bring-up, they wouldn't have had time to do all the physical activities... none of us (her and her brothers) have ever been gym people or anything like that, it just wasn't about in them days... it wasn't an option you had really... because I think people are more conscious of their health... and you've got the gyms and the availability. (Helen)*

In addition, those in their forties flexed their agency to break the generational perpetuation of ceasing one's physical activity career upon becoming a parent,

*I got to that point with life, I was probably in my mid-thirties, and erm... you know, with a young family and everything else... I was 32 when I started in the fire service and I got to that point where I started thinkin', 'well, is this, is this what life's, the next progression? I've done all my young sporting stuff, I've got a young family, and that, you know that's my life over now really'... although me dad was maybe a bit later, you know, it's like everything stopped when... our parents, the generation... you didn't really do sport... because there wasn't any older people, it was like you got to your thirties and that's you retired from sport... it wasn't seen as... having an older sportsperson, like age group range didn't exist and... me dad was a motorcycle racer... if, you was over 30 you was an old, old person, an old racer... and so no-one seemed to go past that, there was very few people who go past that certain age of 35... one day... it was a photograph that I looked at of myself and I'd put on a bit of weight... and I was like, 'this isn't right', you know I don't, I don't wanna be like this... I don't wanna give in me thirties, I've got a bit of a paunch... 'I don't like that' 'cos I'd been so fit through me young life, so I decided to do something about it... when they were young that was, like bred into 'um, wasn't it, you know, you have a family, that's your responsibility now, so that was your life... same with me dad really... like my grandad's generation and the generation before him... society was very strict about what you could and couldn't do... there wasn't a lot women were allowed to do and men were expected to be this and expected to be that... it was probably... a rarer case... that the father was doin' other stuff and still bein' able to raise a family... the next generation come along and they've got that more freedom, you know, the sixties and seventies was the hippies... and the constraints of... the family man being 'right, this is what is expected of you', you know, suddenly... 'Ok, this is what's expected of you, but... you can go enjoy your, you can do more stuff', and I think for us growin' up in the seventies... we were probably the luckiest generation... the family union was still tight, but we was involved in*

*so much more stuff, there was so many more things that we could do... With kids of my dad's generation... they didn't have really the opportunity to do what we were allowed to now... probably the most they were doin' maybe goin' to cubs or scouts... and maybe play football for the school. (Harry)*

The recollected experience of 'I decided to do something about it' is important in understanding the schism central to the development of a unique generational consciousness, as the concept of 'generation' is too often described in a fashion that implies it is imposed over people, rather than also emerging because of the collective action of the strategic actors who form part of this moment in time (Bristow, 2016). For Karl Mannheim (1952), generations are made-up of 'a dynamic interaction between cohorts of individuals, the tempo of wider social change, and cultural moments (the *Zeitgeist*)' (Bristow, 2016; p. 8). A fundamental aspect then, of how the notion of 'being active' was incepted as a legitimate leisure pursuit on its own grounds, was not simply the increased availability of opportunities to be active, but how a generational cohort of parents went about transforming physical activity into a lifelong project for themselves and their children through their own actions. Amidst ideas about raising healthy children that have characterised the spirit of parenting since the late nineteenth century (Faircloth, 2014b) and the rise of an anti-ageing agenda to convert the majority of human interests, such as leisure, education and health into lifelong projects (Katz, 2001), the introduction of health-related physical guidelines in the 1990s likely acted as the trigger for the first generation of intentionally and regularly active parents. This development was not only in the interests of their own health, but also represents the emergence of physical activity participation as a symbolic parenting practice.

Hence, prior to the 1990s, parental influence upon what we have now come to perceive as being active consisted only of supporting children to play sport. Whereas since the 1990s, from the perspective of parents, playing sport is now part of a broader

range of lifelong physical activities that parents more explicitly encourage their children to get involved with to benefit their health. Again, the stories of those participants in their forties are vital in explaining such changes, given the contrast between the way some followed their parents into playing sport with little encouragement, and the intense manner in which they now try to encourage their own children to be physically active. For Paige, time spent running with her father was a powerful memory of childhood physical activity, which influenced her in becoming a competitive runner,

*I was probably about twelve... that would have been about 1982, that... he one day said 'oh, do you wanna come for a run with me?', and I went out for a run with him and... it nearly killed me... and then we went for a swim afterwards and then it became a bit of a regular, sort of, Saturday morning thing... it was my way of just spending time with my dad, and it was the way I kind of got approval from him... it was something he recognised... and so then I did some... some running at school... when I was in senior school, I did, erm, some more long distance running... I was doing that... it was quite a solitary thing, that nobody else really wanted to do, so kind of 'oh, go on, I'll do it, I'll do the fifteen-hundred'... and I was quite good at it. (Paige)*

In encouraging her own children to be active, there was a clear long-term health rationale, and such was her enthusiasm for her children to be regularly active that Paige worried about being too intense in her approach, and potentially deterring her children,

*I actually felt like I was dragging them and making them... you know, 'oh, come on, do it, it's really fun', and it was like 'oh no, it's not', and so there's a fine line between, you know, encouraging them, and making them do something that they actually don't wanna do... at times... if they've come home and complained about, say gymnastics, which they have chosen to do, you know, we've kind of said 'look, if you don't want to do it, please be honest with us because it's a hell of a lot of money and it's a big*

*commitment... we don't mind paying, we're quite happy to pay, but at the end of the day, you know, if you're hating it or you really don't want to do it', so it's always a case of 'we don't wanna make you do anything you really hate, but on the other hand, we're really conscious that you need to be active'. (Paige)*

Some interviewees in their twenties also recalled being encouraged by parents, especially their mothers, to be physically active in the interests of their health,

*When I went to uni... in my first year I put on like a lot of weight... like eating and drinking and I wasn't doing any exercise at all... so after my first year of uni I went home and started doing like a boot camp with my mum, erm, at weekends... (laughs) so she wasn't like forcing me to do any exercise... my mum since has told me that she was shocked when, when I came home for Christmas in my first year (laughs), she was like 'I don't understand how you've put on so much weight in such a short space of time'... I was really unhappy with my weight... when I finished my first year, so she very much encouraged me to go to the gym with her and to, you know, 'well you've gotta do, if you want to change you have to do something about it' type of thing. (Becky)*

### *8.1.2 Parental Anxiety about getting Children to be Active 'Enough'*

Despite the rise of the idea of being generally active as distinct from playing sport and the increased amount and range of opportunities available for children to be physically active, participants in their forties who were also parents voiced their frustrations about how difficult it is to get their children to be regularly active and maintain their engagement. Of the eight parents in this age group, all but one cited some form of struggle in trying to influence their children's physical activity inclinations. Nevertheless, this participant, Stuart, represents only a slight exception to the rule, as



although his son enjoyed doing a variety of physical activities, he was sometimes reluctant to do as much physical activity as Stuart had intended,

*Just gotta get him to, used to walking without having a hissy fit when you have to take him more than half a mile, 'cos he's not used to doing that.*

**JD: What do you mean by a hissy fit?**

*They have small tantrums, we always go to the Wrekin and it's like we'll get halfway up and he'll say 'I'm not goin' any further'... 'well, you can stop there 'til I come back down then', you know, you get these tantrums, of him following me up the Wrekin, crying, but you're like going 'we're halfway there, you might as well come to the top, and when you get to the top... the views are great and you enjoyed it up there', it's sort of... trying to encourage a small child to do something they don't wanna do.*

Thus, from the perspective of parents, influencing their children's physical activity was seen to be problematic. A persistent issue, which all those who referred to saw as insurmountable, was the 'alternative' childhood pastime of video games, which led to parents labelling their children as belonging to a different generation. These parents valued the importance of play for their children and some screen time spent watching television was also perceived to have educational worth, but the practice of sitting in front of a screen and 'playing a video game' was one they perceived to be dislocated from their own values, and not as beneficial for their children as being physically active,

*The Xbox generation as they call it... and my lad's a prime example of it, and I've battled against it since he was a teenager, of tryin' to get him involved in stuff, and he's... given up... the Xbox world, the virtual world is their world... not interested in anything else, because... they just sit in their bedrooms and I know that's not the case for all kids... but there does seem to be... a larger number now that are not interested in doin' anything, you know, computers and gaming... is their world. (Harry)*

Maria went so far as to intimate that, in comparison to her own memories of growing-up, the video game console has started to replace the bicycle within the contemporary everyday lives of children,

*People... spend more time indoors because they're playing PlayStations and they've got different, er... opportunities I guess, erm, there was not so much to do [when she was a child] when you come back home after school, you did your homework and then you went out and played with kids and you had a bike... there was no-one... around me who couldn't ride a bike... that's what I see, especially now because I've got children, so I see that, er, their... friends, some of them... the age of ten are not so confident on a bike yet, and I find it kind of... shocking almost.*

While the virtual world of video games served as something of a stressor for parents and a constraint upon their efforts to get their children to be active, Maria also referred to how any such anxieties about video games might be misplaced within the longer-term context of children's future physical activity careers. Maria's youngest brother, 16 years her junior, who she saw as belonging to the 'PlayStation generation', did very little physical activity until he reached his early to mid-twenties,

*He... was a typical I would say the new generation person, PlayStation... absolutely... now he is 25 and he just picked-up a sport, for the first time in his own life, but he did it by himself, so maybe there is some sort of gene (laughs), in him, and he's, so now he runs, he cycles, and he goes to the gym, and he is quite fit, erm, but he didn't do anything the first... I would say 23 years of his life.*

For participants in their twenties, like Maria's brother, there was no mention of the virtual world of computers having any bearing upon their childhood physical activity or, where applicable, disrupting the socialisation influence of their parents. While the increased popularity of video games as a childhood occupation might mean that

today's children are less active than their parents were during this stage of their lives, it has not necessarily interfered with the power of parents to affect the physical activity of their children. However, while the 'threat' of the virtual world to parental influence upon children's physical activity is questionable, the anxiety amongst parents that it provokes is evidently real. As Lee (2014; p. 69) notes, 'parents today are rarely informed that they worry too much, that the situation for their children is better than they might think it is, and they are doing a perfectly fine job of rearing their children' within a twenty-first century culture of parenting experts more concerned with what God-like parents 'should' be doing to ensure the healthy development of children, than the behaviour of children themselves.

Explicit attempts by parents to influence their children's physical activity in the interests of health is a relatively recent development and unique to the current generation of parents, and not something they had experienced when they were parented, nor something that those in their sixties and older recall doing as parents. It has been suggested that the continued expansion of parenting tasks, the rise of a parenting 'expert' culture, the inception of 'being active' as a lifelong practice, and the emergence of health-specific physical activity guidelines brought about a generational shift whereby providing sufficient physical activity for children became a parenting task to be managed. That physical activity is now thought of as a potential lifelong practice, has allowed parents to break the life course expectation that one's physical activity career should cease upon becoming a parent. Yet, at the same time, with parents being made solely responsible for the behaviours of their children in contemporary parenting culture, it is difficult to see beyond the requirement to constantly manage their children's physical activity participation, especially when they perceive that their children are not active enough. Consequently, getting children to be 'sufficiently' active

is a source of unrelenting anxiety for parents within a dimension of family life that was once associated primarily with enjoyment.

## 8.2 Following Father: intimate socialisation into physical activity

Informed by and perpetuating the expert invasion of everyday family life, much of the available research concerning parental influence on children's physical activity participation focuses on what parents do to make children more or less physically active, with little consideration of the real influence of parents from the perspective of their children. This is also commonly reflected in the way that studies are designed, 'portrayed as having absolute power over the behaviours of their children, parental demographics are often used as independent variables to examine the influence that they have over the activity patterns of children' (Day, 2018; p. 305). Due to the generational and life course backdrop to the current study, the data produced is more balanced and interdependent than in much previous work, as the perspective of being parented has also been considered. Participants' recollections of being children were the exclusive site where tales of intimate socialisation into physical activity were discovered. Participants' childhood experiences revealed a gender difference between the greater strength and meaning of their father's influence compared to that of their mother. Aside from the generational discrepancy that participants in their forties and aged sixty years and over were socialised into sport, as opposed to physical activity more generally, participants who identified a parental influence and grew-up living with both parents described how their mother and father had been involved to varying degrees in encouraging and providing them with opportunities to be physically active. Nevertheless, it was only the influence of fathers which resonated with memories of

childhood experience at the start of interviewees' physical activity careers. In some cases where participants' parents had divorced, there was still evidence of a greater and enduring influence from fathers, including when their father had left the family household during their childhood. Although to continue to depict this relationship as parents influencing their children in a one-way interaction would not be representative of participants' oral histories. Instead, from the perspective of children, it was their choice to 'follow' their father's lead,

*You wanna do what your dad did... you naturally have an interest in it because you'd wanna... do the same thing and it's what you've been... been exposed to when you're young... I guess you wanna follow your dad's footsteps, as it were... I never had that in my mind, like 'ah, I have to follow my dad's footsteps'... I was always more interested in like, what he did and what he was doing... knowing what he did when he was younger... if you don't know what you wanna do, that's like the first... I guess, point of contact to go off of, like 'should I be into football or should I be into this?' (Grant)*

Sons' perceptions of following their father's physical activity behaviour or encouragement in some way were dominated by the belief that this was a 'natural' thing to do, and somewhat expected of them. In many cases, sons recalled physical activity involvement as a normative passage to develop the competence to become involved in competitive sport. In the case of daughters, fathers were also identified as being more influential than mothers, and some daughters saw physical activity as a particularly intimate part of their relationship with their fathers. Some of these stories of intimacy, which daughters saw as being attached to physical activity in some way, were meaningful and simultaneously tinged with joy and despair, more so than stories about fathers relayed by males. These gender differences were also reflected in the wider context of the function of childhood physical activity for sons and daughters, with males seeing this as a socialisation process for becoming increasingly independent in

their physical activity, whereas, for females, being active with family members carried value as an enjoyable pursuit in itself.

### *8.2.1 Lads and Dads: leaning on father to become self-dependent*

During childhood, all male participants who had a father with some degree of interest or previous involvement in sport or physical activity referred to following their father's lead in some form. Apart from the decreased likelihood of older interviewees having physically active fathers following their birth, there were no clear generational differences at play in the automatic choice to follow fathers. As well as Grant making clear reference to following his father, so did Kevin, born in 1951,

*I followed my father, who was a keen participant of lots of different sports, played to a good quality at soccer, in the local village, played good quality at cricket in... the local town and played good quality at table tennis and badminton, erm, in the county, so... my affection for my father was, was huge... when I grew-up 'I wanted to be like my daddy', as a starting point, in terms of role model.*

As did Brett, born in 1993,

*He's (father) the main... the primary reason why I played football, so... he did it when he was a kid, and I think it was just like, naturally, that he would want my brother and myself... to go into football... he would have had ways of tryin' to get me into football, like having a ball around the house and things like that... I don't think he'd ever push me to like, 'oh, you've gotta do this sport', but I reckon that if any sport was my primary sport, I think that would be his preference.*

For the most part, this replication occurred while the participants were children. The only exceptions here, were Graham and Harry. Despite his father's extensive

involvement in competitive cycling prior to his birth, Graham had no prolonged engagement in physical activity until he went to university and then picked-up cycling as an adult, which gradually developed into his current and intermittent participation in triathlon races. Harry was the only male participant who, along with his brother, had his father's sporting biography of motorcycling somewhat forced upon him, rather than 'following' his father with a greater level of freewill,

*I think my dad... I was probably about seven, when he stopped road racing 'cos he had a really bad accident, broke his back, and I think that was it, after that, me mum was like 'that's it' (laughs), 'you've had enough injuries... breaking your back's the last straw', and then I think after that his focus was on... us... he wanted to get us into motorcycle sport and... he had a motorcycle shop at the time as well so he's like 'Ok, I'm guna buy you a bike, teach you how to ride a bike and then get ya into the trials riding, and I don't want ya to do fast stuff 'cos it's too dangerous' (laughs). So that's why we started in the trials riding from about nine.*

Nevertheless, Harry's guilt since deciding to bring his motorcycle participation to an end uncovers the extent to which he valued his father's approval, suggesting that his father's influence was more of an interaction than a dictation, as Harry had initially suggested,

*It was a hard decision to make, it seemed like a natural progression at the time, and... actually it took a long time for my dad to get over it, when I said (both laugh) 'I'm not doin' it anymore', he was like, he really didn't, he wouldn't forgive me and it took... when I started gettin' into rowing and other sports he wasn't interested whatsoever... and now I'd go 'Yeah, yeah dad, I've been running today', 'Yeah, I've won me first race in the four, I've won', and he's like... 'It's not motorbikes'... 'cos motorbikes was his life, so there's probably a bit of me from that time, when I went away from that, tryin' to get his approval... like 'Oh well done, son'... like I used to get when I was a kid.*

**JD: So, what age were you then, when you were still seeking his approval?**

*(laughs) Now... (both laugh), the rest of me life... I think it, seriously it probably is... from the moment I went away from trials riding it's almost like I committed a sin... it's like, 'Well, I put all this time and effort into you for all these years and now suddenly you're sayin' your not guna do it anymore'... and then I was like, I sorta felt guilty.*

The choice by Harry to find other physical activities that he enjoyed doing once his father had introduced him to and shared his knowledge of the activity he was most familiar with was a common rule amongst all male interviewees, apart from Graham and Grant. With the latter's father having been a casual participant in a variety of sports and activities, meaning it was difficult for Grant to 'move on' to an activity his father had yet to socialise him into. In this respect, the exception was brought about by Grant's father's socialisation and is thus difficult to analyse further. In the case of Graham, because his father did minimal physical activity during Graham's childhood and he did not follow his father as such, there was no specific childhood physical activity he was able to make a departure from. Despite an initial dislike of physical activity during childhood, Graham began to engage more often with physical activity in his early adult life, which, as already outlined in the thesis, is a crucial stage in attempting to secure an active adult self.

Nevertheless, most sons of fathers who had an interest in some type of physical activity, in the shape of sport, sought their father's guidance, as further explained by Chris, who followed his father's interest in rugby and gradually become more self-dependent,

*When I got to about year nine and ten, he, erm, was kind of like didn't really have any more input. My mind was made-up what I'd do and what, what I'd*



*play [rugby]. So, even though he never forced it beforehand... He just kind of stepped back... I think it comes a bit with, erm, independence. Like I wasn't relying on him to get lifts anywhere anymore, or my mum. I'd get the bus or I'd bike... so it's kind of like, take your lead off.*

Chris then moved on to bodybuilding and then powerlifting as a young adult, as he no longer had enough time to continue with his rugby career. His father had some previous experience of weightlifting, but this was a practice that he took pride in doing in a more self-directed fashion than rugby,

*I've been a steady gym-goer since I was... about sixteen I used to get the bus to the gym from school. Got into my bodybuilding, suppose I peaked at about 21, 22 I was at my biggest... and then it's been a slow decrease from then and then I got a little bit more into heavier lifting for powerlifting.*

Boys' interest in sport, under the direct influence of their fathers, serves as what a portion of the male participants referred to as a 'natural' route into physical activity (Kay, 2007). Stories Chris was told by his father, of 'punch-ups' and 'drinking games' are symbolic of how the patriarchal structure of sport continues to survive as a male preserve (Dunning, 1986; Mauthner, 2005). This also functions as a clear path for sons to begin their involvement in regular physical activity, but whether this is conducive to sustained participation is doubtful, due to the 'masculine' practices of sport (Coakley, 2006),

*Semi-retired from rugby now... some of the guys at the club are really old, er, older than me, and they're still playing, 'oh, you can play for another five years, look at me', and I look and I'm goin', 'ya fucked... your body's knackered... you're in A and E every Saturday after you've played, you can't move 'til Wednesday', I want to stop playin' while I still can, and do something else and that's why I think I've taken-up triathlons, and I've got into it, because it's replaced my competitive nature, with, with another sport... I think it's guna be less destructive on the body, as I get older... it's*

*a young person's game, professionally you don't see many rugby players past thirty... you can play for longer 'cos you have the vet's side, where you play with people that are older, erm, the games slow down... but then I've looked at people that have had to stop playing 'cos they've had a bad tackle... or they've got that old that the doctor has said 'you can't play anymore', and then they get quite depressed about it because they've got nothing else to replace it with, now I, I sort of did the parallel activities of learning running and things separate because I knew that I couldn't play forever, logically you can't... and I thought 'I'd rather stop... when I want to stop, rather than have to'. (Stuart)*

Using a feminist approach, Harrington (2006) has rejected the notion that family leisure practices can be sufficiently understood by simplifying the inherently gendered roles of mothers and fathers to that of gender-neutral parents. In the domain of sport, Harrington (2006; p. 181) proposes that this 'is a major site for doing fatherhood as a gendered practice and a relationship that is not simply 'natural' but produces emotional connections in families'. The case studies of sons' experiences of being fathered in the current study, which underline how they feel compelled to follow their father's interests dispute Harrington's suggestion that the fathering of boys requires any great effort on the part of fathers to 'do fatherhood'. Instead, these accounts have a greater congruence with Kay's (2007; p. 80) study of fathering sons through football, where it was found that fathers' involvement 'in their children's lives did not mean being controlling or prescriptive, but being responsive to them. Fathers spoke about fatherhood in terms of shared interests and current and future friendships'. While the data collected in the current study also points toward a friendship-like relationship between sons and their fathers through a shared interest in sport, sons also possessed more strategic motives about using their father's expertise and previous experiences to become more self-dependent as participants and then 'moving on' to develop their

own somewhat unique experiences and interests. From the perspective of fathers, building a closer relationship through sport offered a comfortable way of becoming more involved in their children's lives.

### *8.2.2 Fathering through Physical Activity: comfortable 'involvement'?*

Since fathers began spending more time with their children in the 1970s (Faircloth, 2014a), the tensions that have arisen between being a traditional provider for one's family and the expectation of greater involvement in children's lives than in previous generations have received much coverage in fatherhood research (Henwood & Procter, 2003; LaRossa, 1988; Williams, 2008). Faircloth (2014a) contends there is a gendered distinction in the practice of 'good' parenting, through which men are more likely to trust their own 'common sense' and involve themselves in their children's lives in the way that they see most appropriate, with little need to consider the advice of parenting experts. In the current study, fathers who were interested in a specific sport or physical activity but waited until their son chose to follow their lead before utilising their expertise to socialise their sons into this activity, found this to be considerably less demanding and more rewarding than fathers who were more proactive in their approach. With his biological son, Harry had been proactive in trying to get him to engage in athletics,

*I tried to get 'um down to Invicta Athletics, when 'um, they opened-up at the Canterbury High School. I took me lad and me youngest one (daughter) along thinkin', 'Try and get 'um involved in the club'... 'get 'um goin'', but... (laughs) no, not interested at all... I don't think that's in any of three of them [children], I don't think it's in, in their blood at all to be honest (laughs) I may be surprised, I may be wrong, but (laughs) don't think so... all three of them*

*have just grown-up just bein' used to 'Oh dad's doin', dad's runnin', dad's cycling, dad's doin' this'... I don't think it's affected the dynamics, it's like 'Dad's always been, done crazy stuff... dad's always...wanting to go and run a six-day marathon'... (laughs) but, it, it's never been a talking point 'cos sometimes I don't... talk about it that much 'cos... they don't get it... in sport and physical activity I've always bin' active, has that had the adverse effect on him? seeing me... doin' sport and... probably doin' to a good standard in most sports and thinkin' 'Well, I'm never guna live up to that, what's the point?' and... maybe I've had a, the opposite effect... I've tried... unfortunately he's still not doing anythin'! (laughs) I'm still tryin'! and still nothing!... that may be too late for him... maybe he'll get to his late twenties, early thirties and suddenly find something to get active, I don't know, but... he never has been, none of my kids have, and you do sometimes think 'Well, I've always bin' active so, you'd think that'd follow, that they would be active' but it's not been the case.*

Although not part of Harry's family in a biological sense, his son-in-law gradually chose to follow him into cycling, which has brought an additional dimension of intimacy to their relationship, a choice not initially instigated by Harry, like he had attempted with his biological son,

*Strange enough... me eldest daughter, her husband... he sort of latched on to me, in the sports sense, um, from quite... early on really, erm, I've almost become his surrogate dad, 'cos his family dynamics are that typical, I say council house generation, the welfare generation, not worked, even though they could work... I don't think he's ever had, he's always... seeked approval... and he's never had it... he's never had that encouragement and now, when I started encouraging him... he suffered with epilepsy and at the time he couldn't, couldn't drive, so... he had to cycle to work, and he came to me and said 'Oh, you know, what do you think... bike I should get?'... he said 'I'm not wearin' Lycra... and then for the first few months... he just about managed to wear a crash helmet, he'd been wearin' jeans... and then he started realising that... it wasn't comfortable, so then the Lycra started*

*creepin' in and then he started gettin' clips for his shoes... suddenly he was like turning into a cyclist... and then it was like 'Well, the hybrid isn't good enough is it? I need a race bike'... then, I think it really happened, he started gettin' into it... and I went for a ride with him a few times, you know, and... bein' a young lad he wanted to try and beat me, so then there's that competitive edge. It's quite nice, I've... it feels like I've nurtured this... beast almost... and then he started runnin' a bit and wanted to do his duathlons and he's done a few duathlons now... there's quite a lot of banter but he's really into his cycling now... he comes out on some long rides and he's bin' out on group rides and stuff... yeah he really, really enjoys it and he's always lookin' to me now... it's like havin' another son to be honest, quite weird.*

In a similar fashion to the conclusion made by Kay (2007), physical activity in the form of sport acted as a comfortable and intimately meaningful way for fathers to spend time with their sons, while also giving fathers the opportunity to meet contemporary cultural obligations of being involved in their children's lives. At the centre of the lived experience of being a father is an uncertainty about what this 'involvement' constitutes (Henwood & Procter, 2003; LaRossa, 1988; Williams, 2008). Although the most powerful and lasting way in which male participants influenced their sons, was by waiting for their sons to instigate and seek this influence in the first instance. As the physical activity careers here illustrate, when the intimate socialisation of sons into the activity of greatest interest to their father is initiated by the son, this foundation to the relationship permits sons to detach themselves from this initial physical activity and move on to another. Meaning the physical activity socialisation begins on the son's terms but the nature of this socialisation, through the involvement of fathers, is shaped by the father's expertise. As such, sons entered into physical activity participation with the intention of extending this participation to a variety of physical activities beyond their father's level of expertise and ability, while the

'involvement' is defined by the father at a time when fathering policies are largely an afterthought that breed uncertainty, confusion and, as a result, no commonality in practice (Chambers, 2012; Faircloth, 2014a; Williams, 2008). From the perspective of physical activity promotion and parenting experts, this strategy might appear a 'risk', as some sons may never approach their fathers for physical activity guidance. However, the available evidence concerning parental influence upon children's physical activity has consistently highlighted the significance of children's modelling of parental physical activity (Bois *et al.*, 2005; Day, 2018; Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006; Pearson, Timperio, Salmon, Crawford & Biddle, 2009; Pugliese & Tinsley, 2007; Wagner *et al.*, 2004). In addition, physical activity revealed itself as serving the purpose of a symbolic parenting practice in the current study, indicating that it is rare for sons with active fathers to not express an interest in their father's physical activity participation at some point during childhood.

The various collected experiences of fathering in this domain of family life appear to benefit from an element of detachment in the first instance, which is somewhat out of sync with current policies that urge fathers to continue to become more involved in the lives of their children (Dermott & Miller, 2015; Faircloth, 2014a; Kay, 2007; Williams, 2008). Within policy, 'fathers are presented as a special case, who need particular help with enacting this "new" parenting, even in the most basic of tasks, and that professionals must make special efforts to enable' (Faircloth, 2014a; p. 195). Whether fathers themselves feel they need professional help is questionable, given they are more likely to use their own common sense judgements to engage in a more involved style of fatherhood (Faircloth, 2014a). As physical activity and the wider practice of family leisure have been recently absorbed into the remit of parenthood, there are bound to be implications for intensive motherhood and involved fatherhood,

with Shaw (2008) suggesting the management of family leisure has been disproportionately assigned to motherhood. This might be the case when considering leisure in the broadest sense, but according to the research participants here, through recalling their contextualised experiences as fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, if there was a regularly active father present within the family household, then he took equal or greater responsibility in comparison to the mother for physical activity. Moreover, during childhood, a father's influence upon physical activity was unequivocally most memorable,

*I've got no memories of discussing [with father]... we would just do it, it's what we did... dad would come along, he came along to... the football which I was involved in, erm, and he used to give me some good advice about not taking people out quite so enthusiastically... he used to come along to some of my karate championships and was really quite... impressed... but whether he was impressed or not didn't matter... it was nice that he was there... she [mother] didn't get involved in any sport whatsoever, in fact she tried to put my brother off playing hockey because... he's a bit of a wimp, he had asthma... never really grew-up strong. (Kevin)*

Mothers are still likely to have a role to play, and possibly support fathers, by suggesting children engage in aspects of leisure that are relevant to the father, which may also instigate a son's initial interest in his father's preferred physical activities (Coakley, 2006; Harrington, 2006). In most families, where the father continues to be the main provider in a financial sense, these circumstances often dictate that the father works longer hours, with the result that mothers often provide transport for younger children to access physical activity (Harrington, 2006; Shaw, 2008), especially during the traditional working week,

*My dad was obviously very football orientated to me and my brother, our mum maybe was more... tryin' to get us to try different things, so that we*

*could decide on our own... yeah, anything that was different, my mum would take us to... maybe because she wanted us to try new things... so we could find what we enjoyed, erm, she may have been the reason why... we got into tennis and did other sports, other than just football... my dad I associate thoroughly with football and not many other... activities, while mum was everything as well as football, so swimming, but then I don't know if that had something do to with just my dad's work and she was the one that was available to take us to these things. (Brett)*

As explained in the previous chapter, associated with children's physical activity becoming a component part of the expansive remit of parenting, there appears a 'need' on the part of parents to ensure their children are doing sufficient physical activity. This was something of a stressor for parents who could not 'get' their children to be more physically active. In this respect, both mothers and fathers expressed their concerns about how this might impact upon the long-term health of their children, thus representing a parenting task which was yet to be achieved. In the contrasting scenario of family households where young children were regularly active, mothers perceived the management of physical activity as a demanding parenting task,

*Saturday last, he [husband] was at cricket, so I did it, and it was nearly four hours... I stayed in town but I took two to gymnastics, then one to ballet, then brought her home from ballet, but then she wanted to be in town with a friend... so I came to pick the other one up from gymnastics, the other one was staying for an extra hour because she was doing a competition... and so I was just like in and out, and so that was basically four hours of just going from place to place, and then Sunday, the youngest had another... ballet lesson 'cos she's doing her exam soon, so it was again, out into town, come back, half an hour later go back into town, bring her back again, so it's really disruptive, and if they have a competition anywhere, or a show or anything, er, again it's, it can take a whole day, like if you have to travel, say two hours to the venue, and then you might be there for three or four. (Paige)*



However, fathers found themselves in a scenario where both the management of physical activity and the opportunity to play and be active with their children was a treasured form of intimacy that brought them great enjoyment,

*I was totally more committed to the boys than my wife was, I'd support them, I mean they used to ban me, you ask Harry [son], they've moved me from, er, the side of the pitch because Harry... he was good, but didn't ya know about it 'cos he'd score a goal... and he'd walk back, ya know, like this, with his stick, like, you know 'I'm the greatest', sort of thing... and then he'd settle down and, and I'd be there, sayin' 'What are ya doing?! They've counter-run, look they're up there! Get up there!'... and the same with Michael [younger son], you know... I used to go and watch... she [wife] said 'Now... you drive all over the county with them', I said 'I do, I, I've really got into the game', I thought it was really good, and again with Michael, when he did, er, his, his, erm, motocrossing, much as I hate motocross, I... 'cos it's everything I'm against, dirt and... and I got a van and we did it all out and all this, so, and we'd, we'd go... five o'clock in the morning on Sunday, on your only day off, you know, and travel all 'round Wales and bloody... down to different meetings and, and so I've always been a hundred percent behind them. (Henry)*

Henry went on to explain how the management of children's physical activity 'worked' within the context of family leisure at the weekend, when he took care of his sons and his wife stayed at home to do her own physical activity and carry out household tasks,

*At her weekend she used to like going running... and would... dare I say... part of the, you know, housework or whatever, on the Saturday afternoon... but I'd be the one on a Sunday, taking Mike motocrossing, or going with Harry to... say Loughborough to go and play hockey or something like that, it was always myself, 'cos it was just easy if just one of us went because other things were being done... the house, the garden all want doing, you know what I mean, you can't both go to... and I used to enjoy that... so,*

*that's probably of good way of it, of it would work... with, erm... one of ya, rather than both... something has to give.*

### *8.2.3 Missing Mothers: 'I can't imagine my mum playing sport'*

As Bois *et al.* (2005) concluded, the influence of mothers and fathers upon their children's physical activity is likely to be manifested in different ways, with fathers' influence more direct and mothers' more indirect. Whilst Bois *et al.* (2005) hypothesise that the greater a father's perception of their children's physical competence the more likely fathers are to provide their children with physical activity opportunities, the participants of the current study reveal a subtler and arguably more powerful impact from fathers in comparison to mothers. That is, lived experiences of physical activity involvement relevant to fathering or being fathered were always a meaningful, intimate interaction. Whereas, because mothers often saw their children's physical activity as another parenting task to be managed, the provision of and interaction during children's physical activity was not always meaningful. In fact, children's physical activity was referred to solely as a parenting duty by the mothers of the sample. Throughout the experiences of son and daughters only physical activity done with or under the supervision of fathers was seen as quality time spent with a parent. Thus, whether or not this quality time also legitimately constitutes caregiving in comparison to the stressful everyday household childrearing experienced by mothers, is open to feminist critique (Coakley, 2006). The only instances where mothers were present and physical activity was appraised within interviewees' recollected childhood experiences as memorable were family walks, where fathers were also involved,

*We used to go out on walks with my parents, me and my sister... at the weekend if both my mum and dad had the day off work, we'd go out for the*

*day and we'd go on a walk and we'd have a picnic... it wasn't there for like a, a physical activity, it was just us spending time together. (Becky)*

Noteworthy here, is unlike previous studies in the area that report physical activity influences as being gender-specific (Eriksson *et al.*, 2008; Ziviani *et al.*, 2006), daughters recalled only time spent with fathers as being memorable in their early physical activity socialisation. The only way in which mothers were able to have any influence upon daughters' physical activity was when daughters made a concerted effort to avoid becoming as infrequently physically active as their mothers had,

*Mum, because she's never been interested... if we went out... she said 'Oh, why do walks always have to start with a hill, why do they always have to go up?', and she wouldn't like getting out the car if it was raining, or windy, she'd be like 'Oh, my hair! I'll just stay in the car', and 'oh, I'll just have a cup of tea and a slice of cake' (laughs)... she'd rather go to the café, so... I think my sister's now... kind of a bit more like my mum, whereas my dad has always kept up his fitness and exercise. (Paige)*

Mothers were remembered to some extent, if only as their daughter's antithesis of a physically active identity,

*I can't imagine my mum playing sport (laughs). (Becky)*

Sons were also noticeably dismissive of their mother's lack of physical activity participation, and trivialised any physical activity involvement their mothers had experienced earlier in their lives,

*What we were discussing about my mum... I have a feeling like she probably doesn't get the same good feel factor as my dad does from his exercise. (Will)*

*She used to play a bit of, erm, netball, when she was younger... apart from that, she's never been into anything... it was always lookin' after dad and lookin' after us... that was pretty much her focus but I do remember her*

*when I was small, she used to play netball down on the pier in Herne Bay, erm, I'm not sure how long she played it for, to be honest, probably a few years but I don't really, I never went to watch her play, I just remember that she used to play with a, a few friends, so I don't think it was anything serious, it was, you know, just a few girls gettin' together and playin' a few games really (laughs), that's about it. (Harry)*

Fathers were unanimously prominent in this dimension of family life and memorable in participants' childhood experiences,

*Inevitably, growing-up... I favoured the company of dad, who was good fun, rather than mum, who was tired and... prudent and pragmatic and careful and wonderful, in her own way, but, which wasn't favoured by me when, when I was young... but appreciated remarkably now that she's taken off to her eternal rest... but dad was a guy who took me down to the football club, took me down to the cricket club... took me to table tennis... took me to horseshows, erm, we used to do stuff together, did daddy and I, and it was always absolutely lovely. (Kevin)*

The fundamental contrast between sons' and daughters' stories was that sons sought to replicate, and perhaps surpass, the competitiveness of their father's physical activity career, underpinned by an interest in sport, rather than being active more generally,

*Listening to his stories growing up... he played for Dartford... their first team and, er, one story I can remember cos it was just after... my first game at secondary school. I scored three tries and it kind of thumped me up into the first team, and I think it was just, like, kind of a natural ability, only because from a young age me and me dad and me brother were always throwing a Rugby ball around... one of me first tries... I come out of a ruck with the ball, and... and I was running up the, er, left-hand side of the, of the pitch at... school, and, erm, their full-back come hammering it across the pitch towards me and it was quite dry and I just kind of stopped and he flew straight past me and went out, out of touch and I just carried on running and that was exactly what my dad said afterwards, he'd done the exact same*

*thing when he was about 19, 20 when he played for Dartford... that would probably stick in my mind, and a lot of the other ones about like punch-ups that he had and the drinking games afterwards. (Chris)*

Whereas daughters revelled in the opportunity to spend time with their father, meaning that although the context of physical activity was enjoyable, it was a relatively anecdotal aspect of their experiences,

*I think 'cos my dad used to be in the club when he was younger... and just because I was a really good swimmer, so he was kind of like, 'You shouldn't be wasting that... talent'... he would have loved to like seen me racing and been able to like cheer me on (laughs)... but yeah just 'cos I'm not really competitive so... didn't really appeal to me, so... yeah just fun, I think that's probably why with the swimming... I do like swimming a bit, but when my dad was tryin' to get me to do the swimming gala... and the, join the club, I just thought 'I'm not guna find it...', it was just wasn't appealing, I think because I'm not very competitive, so... it wouldn't of been fun. (Becky)*

#### *8.2.4 The Father-Daughter Bond: reshaping the gendered practice of family physical activity?*

The more original finding is the sentimental value daughters have for the memories they hold of being socialised into physical activity by their fathers. Physical activity socialisation by fathers was less common for daughters than sons, but akin to sons, in childhood households where fathers were present, they were involved in the initial physical activity socialisation of their daughters for those female participants born in 1970 and thereafter. The lack of existing awareness about the conceivable importance of fathers in the early physical activity socialisation of daughters is symptomatic of an absence of studies that consider the quality of parent-child

relationships (Lim & Biddle, 2012). This neglect is unsurprising, given that the majority of 'family' studies of physical activity lack any analysis of intimacy (Day, 2018), the underpinning component that constitutes the nature of families (Jamieson, 1998). The implication of this finding is that influences from fathers may have the most enduring and profound impact upon daughters' physical activity careers compared to other family members.

Unlike sons, daughters learned to value the practice of physical activity through being active with their fathers and held onto these memories as adults, whereas sons' primary focus was about achievement and becoming 'better' at competitive sport. Such was the strength and depth of the lingering influence of the hero-like status bestowed on fathers by their daughters, that an unforgettable sadness and disappointment played out across the life course when fathers had not been as 'present' in family life as daughters would have liked,

*My father left us, er, when I was thirteen and my mum must have done three, three jobs at a time, to, to just keep the family together... my dad would crossover on the other side of the road, so he wouldn't have to speak... and yet he was my hero... My dad played, had trials for Manchester United, as a goalkeeper, and he could of also, probably played... cricket at international level... I mean I could go back, I could lie on the, the psychiatrists couch, and I could say to you 'It's my father's rejection of me', and... my attempt to show him what he's actually let go... there's my father that set-up with somebody else... whether my whole life has been about... proving to him, until he died, that this is what he threw away, this is what he chose to reject, I mean, it's feasible... when I, I qualified as a teacher, I wrote to my grandfather, that was my father's... father, to say 'Could you let my dad know that I've qualified as a teacher?'... I mean he never responded... but obviously there was something there about letting him know, I hadn't seen him for ten years at that point... so I*

*don't know... my father died, 'um, a long time ago... I can't even really picture him, but whether... initially he was the motivator maybe... for everything.* (Rachel)

The significance of such rich lived experiences of family intimacies barely feature in physical activity research claiming to have a family focus (Day, 2018). Dominant instead, are findings about how parents cause effects in the physical activity levels of their children. Here, contradictory claims are also rife, with mothers more influential than fathers (Zach & Netz, 2007), fathers more influential than mothers (Bois *et al.*, 2005) and parents' physical activity not as indicative of their children's physical activity as is commonly assumed (Anderssen *et al.*, 2006). Although, the most pertinent criticism is that family intimacies, as a source of happiness, are overlooked in favour of the potential health benefits of physical activity involvement (Day, 2018). Daughters' stories of their fathers in the current study support this critique and illustrate not only that statistical studies miss the lasting influence of fathers within daughters' lived experiences, but that the prominence of feelings of happiness and sadness about their relationship with their fathers bring to light the relatively incidental role played by physical activity.

Accordingly, these findings also have a contribution to make to existing discussions about both the 'involved' father and the enduring physical activity influence of physically active fathers. Active fathers, who spend time with their daughters within contexts that involve the daughter being active provide their daughters with memorable experiences, some of which prove irrevocable, with direct happiness implications, while also, incidentally, likely to be accompanied by some form of health benefit. With research suggesting that sports such as football serve as a way in which fathers feel especially comfortable in parenting their sons (Kay, 2007), supporting or

engaging in physical activity with daughters might also function as a means for active fathers to be more involved within the lives of their daughters, in a domain of life which they already take an interest (Coakley, 2006). Additionally, active fathers' familiarity with the environment of physical activity might offer some stability for the practice of fathering, at a time when policy continues to push the notion of involvement with a lack of clarity about what this means, promoting ambiguity amongst fathers (Chambers, 2012; Coakley, 2006; Faircloth, 2014a).

The data also suggests that such a shift might already be underway. Rachel, born in 1953, had already lost contact with her father by the mid-1970s, a period when fathers started spending more time with their children, in contrast, Charlotte, born in 1986, was able to retell a story from her father, demonstrating intimate knowledge sharing,

*He (dad) windsurfs still and he cycles... and occasionally just decides to run 'round the block... (laughs)... he had lots of brothers and sisters as well and I think that they... grew-up erm sort of fending for themselves and playing outside... there wasn't much control over them, so they used to go and play in the river and stuff, so (laughs) you wouldn't do it now... when his dad taught him to ride a bike he just cut a path in some stinging nettles, and then (laughs) put him on the bike and said 'Don't fall off' and just gave him a shove... that's errr, one of his favourites... I think he just learned very quickly not to fall off (laughs).*

The promise of this type of memorable physical activity-specific interaction between fathers and daughters could also permit the development of a more optimistic and constructive strand to the primarily negative discourse surrounding the intergenerational transmission of harmful adult values and behaviours to children (Bristow, 2016). The wider generational implications for women's family membership



across the life course could also see greater inclusion within family-oriented physical activity for mothers, and thus break the discovered tendency for children to ridicule their mother's physical activity involvement. Coakley (2006) might argue that the logic of any argument about how intimate sentiments constructed between daughters and fathers through sport occur in an arena of male privilege and do not encourage authentic transformation to gender relations. Nonetheless, away from the masculine environment of organised competitive sport, father-daughter socialisation during less formal physical activities such as running, walking and cycling together offer up both comfortable parental involvement for fathers and memorable experiences for daughters that endure over their lives. Not least, because daughters frequently referred to specifically these types of activities in the current study. This is an important area for further research.

That childhood memories of physical activity are sustained by participants over the life course carries implications for the popular notion that childhood physical activity is a determinant of lifelong physical activity participation. In the following chapter, the relevance of being active during childhood to physical activity participation across the life course is critically assessed by scrutinising the idea of lifelong involvement for active children. As the most prominent activity within participants' earliest memories of physical activity, walking serves as the point of reference for this discussion. Jean-Paul Sartre's (1963) progressive-regressive method is used to structure this analysis, which then leads into a critique of Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus, as this has been the preferred way of explaining and championing the significance of childhood socialisation to physical activity career trajectories.

## **9. Childhood Physical Activity and the Life Course Implications**

***Working hypothesis audit trail:*** *The relevance of being active during childhood to physical activity participation across the life course*

The working hypothesis crafted for this research objective focuses on the specific activity of walking, which featured as both a frequent and meaningful memory within participants' early physical activity careers and was practiced and relived during adulthood. Walking serves as a useful point of reference from which to ground the discussion of the data, as it represents a common experience of a specific activity. As one would expect, participants' everyday intimate lives and physical activity careers developed their own heuristic trajectories upon entering early adulthood. Prior to this, through starting school and being introduced to physical education and children with different beliefs and values, participants became influenced by various actors in a short space of time, meaning their physical activity careers also swiftly developed a uniqueness based on preferences, opportunities and constraints, producing myriad exceptions to impede the formulation of a working hypothesis. Whereas walking was not only a common experience across the sample but contained similar features in the ways that it was practiced and the aspects of the experience that participants remembered. Participants consistently told a repetitive pattern of an initial reluctance to go walking, memories of mixed feelings while walking and a retrospective enjoyment of walking. This was also predominantly an activity that the whole immediate family did together. Play was a possible alternative explanation and childhood physical activity that participants also made frequent reference to, which the final working hypothesis could have been constructed around. This was also more frequent than walking, as it was articulated by all participants. Despite this, play was not always directly connected to physical activity in terms of meaning. Instead, play was nearly

always explained in the context of childhood, as an occupation that only occurred during this stage of life, which reduced the degree of relevance it had for physical activity involvement beyond childhood. Furthermore, play no longer necessarily represents a form of physical activity like it may have in the past due to the increased popularity and prevalence of children playing video games.

Whereas experiences and memories of walking with family members during childhood were relived by participants when they recalled going walking as an adult. Pertinent to the tales of most interviewees was a false reluctance to go walking when their parents suggested it. False in the sense that participants recollected being compliant to the request despite verbalising otherwise in response to their parent's suggestion to go for a walk. Moreover, older participants, now fulfilling the role of parents, identified how their own children also express a similar initial reluctance. The series of inconsistent and contrasting responses to the idea of being physically active, experiences of doing physical activity and post-participation interpretations of being active that participants recalled acting out as children may also hold significant implications for psychological dispositions about the prospect of doing physical activity that people take into adulthood. Thus, the final working hypothesis posits that childhood physical activity has some bearing upon physical activity across the life course, as it became etched in the memories of many participants, especially in the case of family walks. However, outside of the activity of walking, the notion that physical activity can be a lifelong habit in a general sense is a temporal one, according to both phase of life and as an idea that has only been developed in recent history. Furthermore, while walking was a notable childhood activity across most of the sample and a feasible lifelong activity, only some participants were regular walkers in their leisure time. Rather than being seen as an everyday physical activity practice, walking

was remembered by most participants as a family event, the irregularity of which appeared to make it more memorable.

The repetitive irregularity of the relevance of memories of family walks during childhood seem irrepressible from adult consciousness and easily accessible when 'going for a walk' during adulthood. To explain this, the chapter draws on Sartre's (1963) progressive-regressive method to illustrate how people, in their simultaneous passing through the universal of historical time and the singularity of their life course, remain emotionally connected to and sometimes attempt to relive their early childhood physical activity experiences. Of particular relevance to interactions, similarities and contrasts between the practice of physical activity during childhood and the unfolding of the life course, is how the progressive-regressive method identifies childhood as representing "the starting conditions" of our life project (Sartre, 1963: p. 99). Then, in attempting to move beyond childhood, we find ourselves unable to escape our initial socialisation by the family group that made the social conditions into which we were and born, and to which we will forever belong (Sartre, 1963). Here, Sartre (1963; p. 106) refers to how 'a life develops in spirals' and 'passes again and again by the same points but at different levels of integration and complexity'. These uncontrollable life course repetitions of the childhood socialisation that made us in the first instance mean that we make sense of our subsequent socialisation by working backwards to the experiences that defined our childhood. This position refutes the common sense assumption that our childhood structurally defines our future, by arguing that 'we live our childhood as our *future*' (Sartre, 1963; p. 105). That is, in terms of psychoanalysis, our childhood does not connect us to our future, we connect our future to our childhood (Sartre, 1963). With the implication that any adulthood comprehensions that we make of the world are persistently troubled by contrasting interpretations we made at the

starting point, 'reflected from the future in our childhood memories and our childhood in our rational choices as mature men [sic]' (Sartre, 1963; p. 108). The commonalities evident in participants' memories of childhood walking as they interpret and relive them from the vantage point of adulthood signify the very praxis of the progressive-regressive method. The consequences of this explanation for connecting an active childhood with participation across the life course then gives rise to a critique of popular but uncritical and simplistic notions about the labelling of childhood experiences as 'good' or 'bad' factors in determining the unfolding of a life and, ultimately, children's future life chances.

#### 9.1 Walking: adult consciousness of childhood memories

Participants' stories indicated that walking, as an intentional act, was the only physical activity which remained easily accessible throughout the life course,

##### ***JD: Do they still do the walking?***

*Er, no they're, you know they're pretty elderly now... and don't, but they did up 'til, dunno about three years ago I suppose, you know, late, late seventies they were still walking, and it's, you know, that if they could, they, you know, they still would. (Warren)*

Some variety existed in conjunction with how and when participants re-engaged with walking across their lives, but all participants who referred to walking retrospectively connected this as being a memorable part of their childhood, and for some, family walks carried permanent meaning as the earliest memory and starting point of their recollected physical activity career,

*We used to go out on walks with my parents, me and my sister... we'd go out for the day and we'd go on a walk and we'd have a picnic... if we were all together, like we'd go out for the day, erm, like into the Yorkshire moors or to the coast... so the town that I live in... it's very easy for us to get onto like nice country roads, erm, so yeah probably just the fact that it was... the 'whole family', the four of us did together... we went on walks and bike rides together and we'd, we'd still go out on walks together now... that's more about us being out together and spending time together as a family, rather than it being a physical activity. (Becky)*

*We used to go out every Sunday for miles and miles and miles, erm, we, we're lucky where we used to live there, Rawtenstall, East Lancs. but it's right on the border of Yorkshire as well, so you got like Hardcastle Craggs, which is erm, oh it's a lovely place for walking, it's sort of like got stepping stones to the rivers and places for the dogs to go and play and, and things like that and you used to walk over in the hills and things in Lancashire 'cos they're just right on the doorstep. (Stuart)*

The fashion in which our starting conditions forever envelop us was evident in Beth's remembering of walking with her family as a child, which resurfaced at the forefront of her consciousness after she left the environment of her initial familial socialisation to attend university. From the point of attempting to leave behind her childhood, walking, as a childhood memory, has become etched into her consciousness, which she can act out and relive, both in the current moment and the future,

*it's not really something that you think 'Oh, let's go walking, let's drive to the... like, the lake district and climb some mountains', everyone just wants to get pissed, erm, so it's not really, like what other people really do, so until I like found people that wanted to do that, then I started doin' it again, and I never really thought I'd miss it as well, I think... when I started uni it wasn't something like 'Oh, I'm guna go for a walk', and it was only after like a few years, I was like 'Oh, I actually wanna go do this, it'll be fun'... it just brings back like good memories and you go somewhere, erm, that you've been a*

*child, it makes you think of like being with your family, 'cos... I moved down here when I was 18, so it was like... 180 miles or something, and I never really went back up to see my parents.*

The lifelong and temporal contradictions of the practice of walking, and possibly intentional physical activity more generally, were always signified by each participant's heuristic recollection of childhood, with each singular case exhibiting the same repetitive pattern of retrospective enjoyment of the activity, memories of mixed feelings while doing the activity and a reluctance to initially engage in the activity,

*I remember doing it as a kid... we used to go out for walks... you didn't like it, but you, when you get back you think 'actually, it was really quite good fun, exploring in the woods, there was me and my brother and the dogs and it was quite, yeah, I quite enjoyed it, so I, I'm wanted to get back into that myself now. (Stuart)*

*I think like as a kid, you're always guna sometimes complain about things... you don't actually really think it's that bad (laughs), so, erm, I did enjoy it, it was just... I might have said, at the time 'No, I don't wanna come on a walk', just 'cos like that's what children are like. (Beth)*

Evidently, there is a retrospective adult interpretation of walking as a 'good' thing to do, and an initial childhood interpretation of walking as unusual, a natural response to the ambiguity of initial socialisation into physical activity encouraged by parents, who possess the more extensive, developed and informed interpretation of the activity,

*My parents didn't do any sports at all really, they were... very into walking... hill walking and things, for, you know, miles and miles, which is something else, I can't say I really enjoyed when I was (laughs) forced to do it when I was a child, but, erm... saying that, you know it's, probably is a good form of exercise... just, er, cannot say I really... liked it at the time... I think it's a case if you're forced to do things, you, you sort of resent them slightly... I remember, erm... think I must have been about fifteen, we went on holiday*

*up in Scotland... and... we went for walk up... one of the Cairngorm mountains, and it was the middle of August and I remember at the top it was about three degrees and they had a thermometer up there and there was... horizontal... rain, and it was absolutely horrible (laughs), absolutely frozen, yeah I remember. (Warren)*

Yet, because the one interpretation develops from the other within the singularity of the same life, the different perspectives are never entirely distinct, and our adult comprehensions always remain troubled by the interpretations we made at the starting point. The unsettling initial interpretations we make of experiences in the first instance are not forgotten upon the development of a more 'rational' perspective informed and made relatively secure by collective and universal common beliefs (Sartre, 1963). Instead, variations between our childhood and adult interpretations stay with us and extend themselves as universal significations (Sartre, 1963). In the case of walking, as the most typical and shared case of physical activity across the sample, the sequencing of a reluctance to engage in walking followed by a retrospective enjoyment of the experience reoccurs irregularly but persistently as a repetitive spiral throughout the life course,

*I do think that everyone would feel better if they got out and potted 'round the garden or, or went for a walk, or, yeah had some kind of fresh air... I don't think anyone comes back from a walk and thinks 'Oh, I feel horrible now, I wish I hadn't gone for that walk, I feel horrible' (laughs), I just don't, I think that you always feel... it's like when I walk the dogs, sometimes when it's really miserable, I think 'Oh god, I've gotta get them out', but once I'm out there, it's brilliant. (Olivia)*

An occasional reluctance to involve oneself in physical activity even held amongst those who usually participate most regularly in more intense and less sporadic ways than walking,



*I do enjoy being active... sometimes, errr, some days you go to the gym where you don't really feel... sort of, that into, into the workout session... I still do it because afterwards I, get that feeling... there are occasions where like you finish work and I just think 'Ok... er, like I really don't, don't fancy it', but I think that's the difference between the sort of people who aren't active and people who are, is that you sort of just remember, or, because you get that, that better feeling... say if I leave work and really don't wanna go to the gym, I'm really tired after work... just don't fancy it, I just think of the, the benefit I'll feel afterwards... but the majority of the time, it's not too difficult to sort of motivate myself to go. (Will)*

Studies of childhood physical activity are often justified through the notion that an active childhood increases the likelihood of lifelong physical activity participation (Day, 2018). Located principally within behavioural epidemiology and the aim of producing health promotion implications, such research is frequently conducted with no acknowledgement of studies elsewhere that have reported little to no link between childhood and lifelong physical activity (Day, 2018). All participants within the current study were physically active during childhood, not because of any explicit physical activity provision, but because being active through play is an inherent part of being a child. Albeit that for more recent generations of children, play as a childhood occupation may be more restrictive and consist of less physical activity,

*In recent years... I think parents are more safety conscious... but, as I say... many years ago, when I was a child, there was more freedom and we did used to go off for long walks and picnics... so I do remember... that sort of free play. (Fiona)*

Nevertheless, by working backwards using the collected data, it is clear how some people, in real terms, have been influenced by their active childhood and others have not, thus providing evidence for both those studies that predict a statistical link between childhood and lifelong physical activity and those studies that do not support

such a connection. The upshot of this is that neither argument is sophisticated enough to inform a relatively conclusive argument useful for health promotion, as the one rule represents an antithetical exception to the other. Applying a greater scrutiny to the notion of promoting lifelong physical activity participation using the data collected in the present study, the claim that physical activity involvement can become a lifelong habit is entirely temporal.

### 9.2 Childhood Physical Activity: there's nothing good or bad about it

In the thesis it has been identified that people tend to drop in and out of intentional physical activity at different stages of life, the experience of being physically active 'does nothing' for some people, and both ardent and casual physical activity participants experience doubts and a degree of reluctance about continuing with their involvement. None of the above findings or collected data give rise to the proposal that once physical activity becomes a regular and valued aspect of someone's routine that it is the type of pursuit which can become an automatic behaviour. Nor do 'good' or 'bad' early experiences of physical activity participation have any straightforward influence on one's inclination to be active one way or another across the life course. Rachel, the most active interviewee of the females aged sixty years and older is passionate about her participation in sport and is employed as a Physical Education teacher, but her most prominent early memory of physical activity was almost drowning, a 'bad' experience that functioned as a reason for learning to swim later in life,

*I nearly drowned at the age of twelve and I remember doing my, er, finals, literally just not breathing, doing one length of each of the strokes, so every*

*year I like to, erm, learn a new skill, so I decided to join a triathlon club to... learn to front crawl properly... I lived, erm, at Rhyl, at the sea, and we used to go nearly all the time to the beach and there's a place called splash point, where the two currents meet, and we were sort of playing... we used to throw a can out into the sea and then just throw stones at it, for hours and hours... and, erm, I just slipped and... was taken straight out, the lifeboat was called out, but fortunately there was a lady in a dinghy... out, and she pulled me in.*

Instead, the alternative and less simplistic argument about the importance of childhood, developed here, is one that rejects the idea that childhood experiences create a fixed future for us. Childhood is important because, as the starting point, the way we remember it repeats on us at various junctures in our lives, but without ever defining us in totality (Sartre, 1963). As we live out our lives, various social divisions are subject to structural and historical transformation and some manipulation at the level of individual agency, while the childhood memories that made us remain unchangeable (Sartre, 1963).

Dominant ideas about childhood experiences within current parenting cultures often depict childhood as an entirely toxic experience, instigated by adult fears about children as they engage with 'risky' everyday aspects of contemporary childhood, such as outdoor play and the internet (Bristow, 2014). Moreover, the commercialisation and medicalisation of children's socialisation during the second-half of the twentieth century within and outside of parental influence have been fundamental in rapidly transforming the child-centred ethic of the twenty-first century into a child-obsessed one, causing much intergenerational estrangement in contemporary Western societies (Bristow, 2016). The division between the worlds of children and adults manifests itself at the level of human agency, with parents dedicating much of their emotional capital to protect their children from the threats of the adult world in which they are involved

(Bristow, 2016). Nevertheless, outside of the double bind of existing parenting cultures and expectations, bleak interpretations of childhood experiences are not indicative of children's real experiences, and ideas of the moral pollution of childhood are instead fed by adult anxieties about parenting and the hypothetical future lives of children (Bristow, 2014).

Quarmby and Dagkas (2010) have argued that single-parent households are more likely to socialise children into sedentary habits, intimating this will likely disengage children from physical activity involvement as they reproduce such sedentary dispositions during the unfolding of their lives. The purpose of the research was to 'provide further insight into the concept of "family structure" as a determinant within physical activity and leisure research' (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; p. 64). This research aim was justified by 'concerns over the development and socialisation of young people', and more specifically, the prominent role played by parents in childhood socialisation and the implications for 'children's current and future physical activity participation' (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; p. 54). This resulted in framing the methodology of the study around the number of parents residing in a household, which constituted the only differentiation in the contrasting 'family structures' studied. While offering some originality by focusing data collection on the experiences of children rather than adults, the study still falls into the trap of preserving intergenerational estrangement by perpetuating the notion that the structure of the adult world somehow pollutes childhood socialisation, with single-parent households limiting the future life trajectories of children.

Any proposition that such 'undesirable' socialisation of children by adults into a lifestyle of insufficient physical activity and excessive sedentariness will lead to a reproduction of these tendencies throughout the life course would be ill-founded, as

the authors did not collect data of this type, and within previous research there are many exceptions to this assumption (Day, 2018). Furthermore, data from the current study, where a life history orientation was captured, suggests that claims about an obvious connection between childhood and lifelong physical activity are temporal and far from straightforward. Of importance, in this regard, were those participants who had negative childhood experiences of being active or showed little interest at this early stage of life, yet at the time of interview regularly participated in competitive physical activities as adults. This is not to say that childhood experiences are not important and do not stay with us as immovable reference points, but Quarmby and Dagkas' (2010) reproduction thesis, inspired by the work of Bourdieu (1984), appears misplaced and overly simplistic in understanding the fluctuating nature of physical activity inclinations beyond childhood and over the life course. Graham's reluctance to see himself as anything other than his 'non-sporty' childhood self, despite having recently competed in various triathlon races, reveals why Bourdieu (1984) and Sartre (1963) make strong claims about the significance of childhood socialisation in the early structuring of identity,

*I don't drive so I, er, walk everywhere... so I cycled to work... started doing some charity rides, erm, and in my spare time would just... go longer and longer... around the west coast of Scotland, where there was lots of nice rides right on my doorstep, erm... at that time I was working in the hotel industry, so I was working sort of eighty, ninety hours a week... so... doing races wouldn't have been an option because I was always working weekends... I left the hotel industry to... join immigration and customs, got posted back down south... from there I had a lot more... spare time, there were people at work that were involved with, erm, triathlons and I kind of thought about it, but thought 'My swimming's not good enough, I don't run'... I thought that a triathlon club was guna be... it would be like being back at school, so I just didn't... 2005 signed-up for the London Duathlon*

*at Richmond Park, I thought 'Ok, well if I can cycle, that's fine'... 'Well, let's see if I can run as well', so in 2004, 2005 a group of people at work signed-up to do a 10k in Hyde Park, a couple of people dropped-out, so I did it... survived, quite enjoyed that, did the duathlon, erm, enjoyed that, and on the back of that, gave me the confidence to go to the London triathlon in 2006... that was a sprint distance, I gradually moved up to Olympic distance... and culminated in a full Ironman in 2013... I can remember the first time I did cross country [at school], and just feeling physically sick, it was just horrible, erm, which is bizarre now... because for the past... crikey, seven years, we've been doing cross country as part of the, part of the club, and there's kind of a perverse... enjoyment to that, it's hard, it's off-season, it's cold, it's muddy... you get up early on a Sunday morning and it's freezing, and you know ya guna get yourself muddy... my mum's just... not sporty at all, I suppose I'm more like her in that respect.*

Graham's entry into regular physical activity as an adult, while maintaining his non-sporty childhood identity, aligns closely with Sartre's (1963) notion of the spiralling of childhood experiences throughout the life course, which allows for an element of choice and freedom at progressive-regressive existential moments of being. This contrasts with Bourdieu's (1984) more rigid theory of the social reproduction of early childhood experiences. Rather than reproducing his childhood inclinations of being relatively inactive during adulthood, the spiralling of Graham's life course trajectory meant he had become torn between his inactive childhood identity and his adult disposition for physical activity involvement. This was signified during his interview through his current retrospective regret at not being as regularly active as his other family members during childhood, while simultaneously continuing to see himself as his non-sporty childhood self.

The implications of this seemingly illogical mismatch between Graham's inactive identity and his inclination to become regularly physically active during

adulthood are quite profound for stakeholders attempting to promote regular and sustained physical activity participation across the life course. This is best emphasised in Graham's distaste for cross country running during childhood and the pleasure he now seeks and derives from the same activity as an adult. There are additional factors that interacted with the transformative unfolding of his favourable perspective toward physical activity participation, such as Graham's social class and sexuality. Based on his education and occupation, Graham appears to have been well-integrated within middle-class society throughout his life, with the connotation that sudden entry into physical activity would have been less feasible if immersed within an environment of lower socioeconomic standing (Evans & Davies, 2010; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2013). Whereas, as a homosexual, Graham may not have exhibited the masculine type of embodiment expected of men within numerous sport and physical activity cultures (Wellard, 2009), thus making adult entry to physical activity more constrained. The intertwining of Graham's sexuality and social class positioning are reflected in his initial entry into structured physical activity involvement, in the form of aerobics classes while studying at university,

*Went to university... and there was... aerobics... late-80s aerobics was big... I quite enjoyed that... I think I probably went to university from a position of having kind of being bullied at school to having no self-worth at all... we had a good gang of people... it was a kind of a group... activity, some of my flatmates started going... and we kind of went along... to start with there was a bit of 'Oh, you know, this'll be a laugh'.*

Despite the complex intersectionality of Graham's progressive-regressive physical activity experiences and trajectories as a child and adult, his physical activity career still illustrates that one can re-orientate their perspective of physical activity following undesirable childhood experiences. Overall, it can be argued that the process of

'becoming an adult' is more pertinent to the propensity for lifelong physical activity engagement than experiences of 'being a child', although our starting conditions of childhood socialisation remain relatively inescapable throughout the spiralling of the life course (Sartre, 1963).

By investigating the research objective of the relevance of being active during childhood to physical activity participation across the life course, it has been discovered that a straightforward deterministic connection is too simplistic, and widespread claims of this ilk are not entirely misplaced, but certainly temporal in nature. Nevertheless, a crucial observation has still been made by trying to better understand this uncritical and everyday assumption; that ways of being as a child have some consequences for lifelong physical activity, but this is superseded in significance and relevance by the retrospective understanding of the ways in which people become adults. This also indicates that the unclear and blurred break in the life course between childhood and being an adult (Sartre, 1963) carries real consequences for types and levels of physical activity participation across the life course. The contribution to knowledge being offered here queries the relevance of childhood identity construction to how people act as adults, even though their childhood identity may remain etched within memory. However, in the context of being intentionally physically active, which is largely a middle-class practice (Evans & Davies, 2010; Lim & Biddle, 2012), fluctuations into and out of physical activity participation may only be possible for those who belong to this social class group. In the case of Graham, adopting a pastime such as physical activity as a young adult was congruent with his middle-class lifestyle. Thus, while a relatively inactive childhood or 'bad' childhood experiences of physical activity involvement do not necessarily translate into being inactive across the life course, it is considerably more likely that a positive reorientation towards physical



activity might only be realistic for those who belong to the middle-classes. This would also mean that Bourdieu's (1984) work concerning class-related tastes and habits are more useful to understanding physical activity participation across the life course in a structural sense than his ideas regarding the role of human agency in structuring structures as a reproduction of childhood experiences. Instead, utilising Sartre's (1963) progressive-regressive method of the life course complexities of childhood experiences within Bourdieu's notion of social class distinctions in taste might provide a more nuanced understanding of what is possible in terms of 'lifelong' physical activity engagement, adoption and re-entry for specific social class groups. Although any further understanding cannot be developed here, as the study did not properly account for social class, and it is likely that most participants were middle-class, as is often the case within physical activity research (Lim & Biddle, 2012; Pike, 2015). Overall, in regard to post-childhood lifelong physical activity involvement, class-based identities appear to hold more sway than 'bad' childhood experiences of physical activity involvement, a lack of childhood sporting identity, or being raised primarily by one parent.

## **Conclusion**

This final part of the thesis brings the study to a close and considers the extent to which the intended research objectives of the project were addressed. Such considerations lead to reflecting upon the sampling process and the core ethical issues of conducting life history interviews that examine stories of family intimacy and the risk of moral judgement surrounding the topic of physical activity participation. These reflections then form the basis of proposed directions for future research.

### *Research Objectives*

By way of attempting to investigate the research objective of the potential contribution of physical activity to human wellbeing across the life course within a range of family contexts, the concept of wellbeing did not appear to resonate with participants' recalled experiences of physical activity. Almost half of the participants also struggled with untangling what this term represented. This was unexpected, as the order of the interview schedule had been designed intentionally for participants to navigate their physical activity careers and oral histories of family membership before considering the positive contribution that physical activity can have upon wellbeing. By this point, it was expected that participants would have several storied experiences from earlier in the interview that could now be elucidated in greater detail for the purposes of explaining their interpretations of wellbeing. However, almost all participants referred directly to their feelings of happiness and were more comfortable in using this concept as one that was closely grounded within their perceptions of experience. The interview question about why they viewed physical activity as conducive to wellbeing was put to participants in a direct fashion, although at this stage

of the interview a rapport had been built with interviewees, most of whom had been speaking at length for between 45 and 70 minutes. A critique of wellbeing as a legitimate concept for unpicking lived experiences in qualitative research was put forward based around Herbert Blumer's (1969) appraisal of scientific concepts and the need for useful academic conceptualisations to also be situated within everyday perceptions. As this was an unintended finding of the study, further investigation of the potential gap between the perceiving and conceiving of wellbeing warrants further discussion in the field of qualitative research.

Thus, participant responses meant this research objective became about investigating the potential contribution of physical activity to human happiness across the life course within a range of family contexts, as opposed to human wellbeing. Through storied experiences participants identified and explained the significance of pleasurable retrospective interpretations of the response of the body to physical activity participation. While the experience of being physically active might be unsettling for some people and generate feelings of ambiguity at the time, it was found that the interpretation of the body's post-participation response to being active is the crucial factor in whether one's involvement is recalled as pleasurable or not. Thus, the main potential contribution of physical activity to happiness is one of sensual pleasure through the lived experience of the body's response following participation. Meanwhile, those participants in the sample who were not regularly active had interpreted their prior ambiguous physical activity experiences as unpleasant. In some ways, physical activity involvement may offer unique features compared to other enjoyable pastimes, as the pleasurable post-participation response of the body can be an enduring experience after participation has ceased and there are also associated health benefits to be gained. Although the contribution of physical activity to happiness

via sensual pleasure held across the life course and was not influenced by interviewees' family contexts, the intention to recruit participants and voices from a range of family contexts is worth reflecting on further.

Within the sampling strategy, apart from the exclusion criteria of no two participants being from the same family or residing together, no further method for ensuring a variety of family contexts were represented in the study was established. This proved detrimental to robustly evidencing that a sufficient range of family contexts had been sampled to demonstrate this research objective had been fully achieved. Nevertheless, when conducting the interviews and analysing the data, each family appeared to have a unique context of its own. When each interviewee brought a new character and family member into their story the plot gained greater depth, the data became richer and the implications for how the participant's life had unfolded from the family contexts they had been socialised into became more particular. Yet, at an intimate level, relationships between brothers and sisters, heterosexual couples, homosexual couples, and step-parents and their step-children were littered with comparable experiences of closeness, distance, uncertainty and belonging. In this way, many of the methodological complexities of doing qualitative family research remain undisturbed by the current study. Although 'simultaneously a familiar and strange point of collective reference' (Day, 2018; p. 299), there appears to be considerably more value in focusing the future research agenda around stories of intimacy, rather than using the composition of family households to identify, and make presumptions about, the socialisation experiences of potential participants. The current study illustrates that intimacies do not differ according to household type, with the connotation that using specific 'types' of household to identify and recruit participants bears little resemblance to the diverse range of family intimacies that will

exist under a single roof. Yet attempting to recruit participants from a 'range of family contexts' proved just as sterile but without detracting from the overall richness of the data. Caught between trivial approaches to family focused research in the sport and exercise sciences and tactful analyses of the concept of family in the social sciences, this thesis emphasises the need for the former to engage with the latter in the interests of producing more useful and relevant knowledge about physical activity participation.

Physical activity also brought added purpose to many of the participants' lives in conjunction with the ageing process and becoming a parent. For those participants who valued physical activity prior to parenthood, especially mothers, physical activity was a symbolic behaviour which children could model in the interests of health. Being physically active therefore brought increased purpose to an already purposeful element of parents' lives. There were also generational differences at play here, not in relation to the dominant perception that physical engagement was a healthy activity to encourage amongst children, but a transformation to 'good' mothering held by younger mothers to justify being active, which was in contrast to more traditional ideologies articulated by older mothers, who equated motherhood with the type of intensive and constant caregiving that did not allow enough time to be physically active. Previous research suggests that mothers with more traditional beliefs refer to regularly active mothers with a more contemporary parenting style as selfish (Lewis & Ridge, 2005). This was not the case in the current study and some of the older and more traditional mothers implied that, in hindsight, a less self-sacrificing approach to caregiving and greater self-care when starting out as a mother might have been in their best interests.

Physical activity involvement also served the purpose of negotiating the ageing process for participants in their forties and older as they became increasingly aware of their ageing bodies. For some, this negotiation represented an attempt to fight the

ageing process and delaying the onset of disease, whereas others, more motivated by the idea of prolonging their physical activity careers, were willing to adapt the intensity of their physical activity to sustain their regular engagement for as long as possible. Although in both cases, physical activity was the medium through which participants were aware of the ageing body and the solution to managing and slowing down this inevitable process. Thus, both such narratives contained elements of the absence of disease, but it was only those who had valued being regularly physically active for most of their adult lives who went beyond this and offered some resistance to widespread ageist notions about the limits of later life. Upon further analysis, it is theorised that these narrative differences also had real consequences, as noticeable across the eldest subgroup of participants was the lack of regular physical activity participation by those who held beliefs that the main and sole purpose of physical activity was to fight the ageing process by dodging the onset of disease. Whereas participants at this stage of life who remained regularly active had done so through their intentions to continue with their physical activity careers in conjunction with this integral part of the self.

The interplay between family membership and the practice of physical activity emphasised the relative power held by fathers within the physical activity careers of their children. As such, this supports some of the existing literature available in quantitative research. The original contribution offered here concerns the contrasting way fathers influenced the physical activity careers of sons and daughters. Sons saw fathers as an avenue for their initial socialisation into physical activity in the form of sport and held more long-term motives about using their father's expertise to develop their own sporting abilities and gradually expand their repertoire of participation, to include sports and physical activities their father might not be familiar with. This could

also indicate that more recent generations of physically active sons might participate in a broader range of physical activities than their fathers did as children. Daughters also looked towards fathers in terms of physical activity but sought these experiences to spend time with their father and valued this time, with no intentions to further enhance their physical activity careers. Moreover, for daughters, physical activity was largely an incidental aspect of spending time with their fathers. The role of mothers in the practice of physical activity was not only reported as being insignificant by participants, but they were often missing from stories of physical activity that included all other members of the immediate family, while participants also belittled the physical activity participation of mothers. The richness of the data that resulted from capturing storied experiences of physical activity and family life from 30 participants of various ages, with the youngest born in 1994 and the eldest in 1940, also allowed for the study to trace the emergence of children's physical activity provision as a parenting task, which like many other aspects of contemporary parenting associated with child development serves as a constant source of everyday anxiety for parents. This is an important finding because it illustrates how making parents responsible for their children's health-related behaviours has come to detract from what was once perceived as an entirely enjoyable aspect of parenting. Nevertheless, physical activity may still represent the most comfortable dimension of parenting for fathers to become more closely involved in their children's lives, although whether this is as regular or intensive as the parenting practiced by many mothers is open to feminist critique. Finally, sibship was not seen as being especially significant by participants in terms of physical activity influence. Brothers and sisters were sometimes mentioned as being present in childhood experiences of physical activity and regularly participated

together as adults in a few instances, but interviewees did not afford siblings the same important socialisation status as fathers.

Walking, the only feasible lifelong physical activity engaged in by most participants as children and adults was used to explore the relevance of being active during childhood to participation across the life course. Most memorable and meaningful to participants, as children and parents, was the repetitive irregularity of family walks as an intentional leisure activity. To guide the discussion of this repetitive irregularity, Sartre's (1963) progressive-regressive method was used to explain the spiralling of participants' childhood memories of family walks into and out of their consciousness. Although this was arguably the most ambitious research objective of the project, situating lasting memories of the specific activity of walking within the progressive-regressive method as a framework of understanding allowed this objective to be addressed in a fashion befitting of the complexity of physical activity over the life course. Furthermore, Sartre (1963) emphasises the significance of the starting conditions of childhood in the way we think backwards to connect our future experiences to childhood. Thus, contrary to the dominance of one-directional socialisation theories about how the structuring of childhood defines our future, this leads into a broader discussion and criticism of doomed narratives surrounding future participation prospects for children who had 'bad' experiences of physical activity, were relatively inactive during childhood, or were raised primarily in single-parent households. This argument was reinforced by drawing on illustrative cases within the collected data. Furthermore, aside from walking, only the physical activity career of a single participant resembled any form of pattern which could be feasibly considered as lifelong.



On the whole, it would appear that social class may have a more profound impact than the developmental damage allegedly done to children who are less active, have unfavourable experiences of being active, or live with a single parent. Although social class was not explicitly factored into the analysis of the study, participants contextualised their physical activity careers within their lifestyles, thus mentioning their occupations. It was evident that middle class interviewees, who probably account for most of the sample, were able to re-enter, begin and drop-out of regular physical activity involvement during adulthood. Therefore, using the work of Bourdieu (1984) in physical activity research to make deterministic predictions about the consequences of childhood would appear to be misplaced. More important, is the social class group children are socialised into, which will likely predispose middle class children to the type of everyday life compatible with and conducive to physical activity involvement. Although middle class socialisation and an active identity are hence indicative of regular physical activity engagement, as a lived experience very rarely does this constitute a lifelong habit, with even the most active interviewees expressing doubts about the need to sustain their physical activity careers in such an intense fashion and making comparisons with 'normal' intermittently active people in the process.

### *Research Process Reflections*

Some attention has already been given to attempting to sample participants from a range of family contexts. The conventional and popular approach to sampling in family research is to recruit the entire family household. However, this study intentionally sampled people from different biological families and family households to increase the transferability of the findings. After synthesising existing studies, the

narrative of the literature review drew out the need to recognise family life as a process of continuous change, which has too often been represented as a static entity and depicted the actions of parents as the sole determinant of children's life chances. As many adults have some form of experience of family membership, even if this consists only of being a son or daughter, three adult age categories were initially used as the inclusion criteria. Upon reflection, once initial participants had been recruited across all three age groups, it would have been of benefit to the 'range of family contexts' aspect of the research to then actively seek out and recruit 'missing' varieties of family membership. Like the age-related sampling strategy that was implemented, this could also have been achieved by snowball sampling. However, in the original form of analytic induction outlined by Znaniecki (1934), the parameters of the entire sample to be recruited need to be identified prior to commencing data collection, as this allows for easier classification and comparison of data later in the research process. Whereas grounded theory, a more recent derivative of AI, especially evident in the comparative analytical strategies incorporated into the method by previous proponent of AI Anselm Strauss (1916-1996) (see Becker *et al.*, 1961), allows for researcher manipulation of the sample as data collection proceeds, so the most interesting and pertinent cases of data can be collected to address the research objectives. In summary, it would have been worthwhile to modify AI in this way in the current study, to go after the less traditional family memberships missing from the sample. This approach would constitute a modified type of AI as opposed to a variant of grounded theory, as AI is eagerly concerned with the pursuit of experiences yet to be accounted for and widening the search for negative cases, whereas iterations in grounded theory sampling procedure tend to be based upon looking within the existing data set to justify where to look next to recruit further participants.

### *Study Limitations and Future Research*

Despite it being highly likely that most participants of the study were middle-class, which tends to be the case in physical activity research (Lim & Biddle, 2012; Pike, 2015), it was never the intention to gather data from a sample of participants representative of a broad range of socioeconomic positions, although a greater variety of people in this respect would have still benefited the research. The more troubling critique which can be levelled at the study is that it could be adjudged to represent the same ethnocentric ideals of happiness that preside in the Western world, condemned in the literature review. The demand for 'progress' by nation states in the West has shifted from the GDP to become manifested in crude and dehumanising wellbeing measurements (Zevnik, 2014). Even though this research did not utilise such methods, the consistent reference to participants' pleasurable interpretations and self-gratifying experiences of physical activity participation might still be guilty of the continued rise in rampant individualism amongst those citizens governed by the world's economic superpowers (Layard, 2011). Moving forward, future studies might want to further test the working hypotheses developed here across a participant sample comprising greater ethnic variety.

### *Ethical Issues*

Conducting and analysing life history interviews as a lone researcher was an emotionally demanding task, particularly when listening, transcribing, reading and analysing participants' personal, intimate and emotional storied experiences of family life. In most instances, the richer the story the more evocative and troubling it was to collect and use as data. Keeping these stories to myself also impacted upon my own

family relationships. I stayed at my parent's house when interviewing participants who they had initially contacted on my behalf. Upon returning to their house after conducting these interviews, they often asked 'So, how did it go with [participant]...?'. My response was always quite brief, but during the first few instances of this scenario my parents followed-up by asking more direct and interrogative questions about the content participants had discussed with me and whether information had been disclosed about events which my parents were already aware of. I informed my parents that my position as a researcher meant I could not reveal anything which had been discussed and they eventually stopped asking me about the interviews.

Although I harboured the best intentions of empowering the voice of participants during interviews, the topic of the study and the location in which interviews took place sometimes influenced this. In the early stages of interviews with less active participants, I got the impression that interviewees felt as though they were being judged as they disclosed their lives as a series of factual events, making only brief interpretations of what these events meant to them. As such interviews progressed it became clear to participants that I was only going to ask non-judgemental questions and I also made it apparent that I had been listening to what they had been saying with interest and in detail by structuring questions based around what they had already told me. In most of these cases, interviewees soon relaxed and became more expansive in their answers and understood that I was keen to know about their interpretations of the world and the important people and events of their lives, rather than interrogating them about the frequency of their physical activity involvement. This was more problematic and took longer to overcome when one participant opted to be interviewed at the university campus within the sport and exercise science department. Although the interview took place in a private room where no-one outside could hear

what was being said, seeing some of the fitness testing equipment and briefly noticing that a CrossFit session was taking place on their way to the interview room appeared to intimidate the participant and it took longer for them to open-up to me once the interview had commenced. Following this interview, when future participants indicated a preference for the interview to take place at the university, I agreed to this request but booked a room away from the sport and exercise science department. This experience as a researcher made me aware that there is no such place as a 'neutral' interview setting and the private space of an interview room is not a vacuum which removes the participant from what is taking place outside.

When writing-up the thesis, a participant I stayed in touch with passed away after being diagnosed with a terminal illness, leaving behind a husband and three young children. She documented the last two of weeks of her life in an online blog written from her hospice bed, which I have since read many times. This is the type of event that cannot be accounted for when considering potential ethical issues at the beginning of a research project.

### *Concluding Comments*

Finally, it is worth noting that the ideology of healthism crept into the study throughout. Participants' retrospective interpretations of physical activity experiences across their entire lives indicate that the increasingly strong health focus surrounding all forms of physical activity is detrimental to the happiness possibilities. To some degree, Crawford's (1980) paper on healthism and the medicalisation of everyday life, published almost 40 years ago, has already highlighted this problem. Importantly, this thesis also extends beyond Crawford's commentary about the dangerous

subordination of happiness to health. The more empirical contribution offered by this research is that, in the context of people's lived experiences, anxiety about doing 'sufficient' physical activity is something of a burden, not least because it is often promoted alongside the threat of disease and suffering brought about by insufficient engagement. Crucially, the way people interpret facts and policy messages guides the way in which they choose to act upon them, more so than the facts themselves (Denzin, 2014). Emphasising this in the design of future policy could lead to physical activity being more widely perceived as a happiness practice as well as a health-related one. Physical activity participation accrues health benefits through our natural physiological responses and adaptations, but when physical activity involvement is motivated by the avoidance of being labelled deviant, if one does nothing too frequently, the more complex and delicate happiness benefits are lost.

## Appendices

### Proportionate Ethical Review of Study



For Research Office Use

Checklist No:

Date Received:

### PROPORTIONATE ETHICAL REVIEW

#### ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST

Sections A and B of this checklist must be completed for every research or knowledge transfer project that involves human or animal<sup>1</sup> participants. These sections serve as a toolkit that will identify whether a full application for ethics approval needs to be submitted.

If the toolkit shows that there is **no need for a full ethical review**, Sections D, E and F should be completed and the checklist forwarded to the Research Governance Manager as described in Section C.

If the toolkit shows that **a full application is required**, this checklist should be set aside and an **Application for Faculty Research Ethics Committee Approval Form** - or an appropriate external application form - should be completed and submitted. **There is no need to complete both documents.**

Before completing this checklist, please refer to *Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants* in the University Research Governance Handbook.

The principal researcher/project leader (or, where the principal researcher/project leader is a student, their supervisor) is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review.

**N.B. This checklist must be completed – and any resulting follow-up action taken - before potential participants are approached to take part in any study.**

Type of Project - please mark (x) as appropriate

Research

X

Knowledge Exchange

#### Section A: Applicant Details

A1. Name of applicant:	John Day
A2. Status (please underline):	Undergraduate Student <sup>2</sup> / <u>Postgraduate Student</u> / <u>Staff Member</u>

A3. Email address:	john.day@canterbury.ac.uk
A4. Contact address:	3 Gilton Cottages, Durlock Road, Ash, Canterbury, CT3 2HT
A5. Telephone number	07817702907

- 1 Sentient animals, generally all vertebrates and certain invertebrates such as cephalopods and crustaceans
- 2 Checklists for Undergraduates should be retained within the academic department concerned



## Section B: Ethics Checklist

Please answer each question by marking (X) in the appropriate box:

		Yes	No
1.	Does the study involve participants who are particularly <u>vulnerable</u> or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities), or in unequal relationships (e.g. people in prison, your own staff or students)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to any <u>vulnerable</u> groups or individuals to be recruited (e.g. students at school, members of self-help groups, residents of nursing home)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without usual informed consent procedures having been implemented in advance (e.g. covert observation, certain ethnographic studies)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.	Will the study use deliberate deception (this does <u>not</u> include randomly assigning participants to groups in an experimental design)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.	Will the study involve discussion of, or collection of information on, topics of a sensitive nature (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) <u>personal to the participants</u> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to human or animal participants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.	Does the study involve invasive or intrusive procedures such as blood taking or muscle biopsy from human or animal participants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Is physiological stress, pain, or more than mild discomfort to humans or animals likely to result from the study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9.	Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences in humans (including the researcher) or animals beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10.	Will the study involve <b>interaction</b> with animals? (If you are simply observing them - e.g. in a zoo or in their natural habitat - without having any contact at all, you can answer "No")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11.	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12.	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13.	Is the study a survey that involves University-wide recruitment of students from Canterbury Christ Church University?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

14.	Will the study involve recruitment of adult participants (aged 16 and over) who are unable to make decisions for themselves, i.e. lack capacity, and come under the jurisdiction of the Mental Capacity Act (2005)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
15.	Will the study involve recruitment of participants ( <b>excluding staff</b> ) through the NHS?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
16.	Will the study involve recruitment of participants through the <b>Department of Social Services</b> of a Local Authority (e.g. Kent County Council)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Now please assess outcomes and actions by referring to Section C 

## Section C: How to Proceed

C1. If you have answered '**NO**' to **all** the questions in Section B, you should complete Sections D–F as appropriate and send the completed and signed Checklist to the Research Governance Manager in the Research and Enterprise Development Centre for the record. **That is all you need to do. You will receive a letter confirming compliance with University Research Governance procedures.**

*[Master's students should retain copies of the form and letter; the letter should be bound into their research report or dissertation. Work that is submitted without this document will be returned un-assessed.]*

C2. If you have answered '**YES**' to **any** of the questions in Section B, you will need to describe more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your project. This does not mean that you cannot do the study, only that your proposal will need to be approved by a Research Ethics Committee. **Depending upon which questions you answered 'YES' to, you should proceed as follows**

(a) If you answered '**YES**' to any of **questions 1 – 12 ONLY** (i.e. not questions 13,14, 15 or 16), you will have to submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) using your Faculty's version of the **Application for Faculty Research Ethics Committee Approval Form**. This should be submitted as directed on the form. The *Application for Faculty Research Ethics Committee Approval Form* can be obtained from the Governance and Ethics pages of the Research and Enterprise Development Centre on the University web site.

(b) If you answered '**YES**' to **question 13** you have two options:

(i) If you answered '**YES**' to **question 13 ONLY** you must send copies of this checklist to the Student Survey Unit. Subject to their approval you may then proceed as at C1 above.

(ii) If you answered '**YES**' to **question 13 PLUS any other of questions 1 – 12**, you must proceed as at C2(b)(i) above and then submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) as at C2(a).

(c) If you answered '**YES**' to **question 14** you do not need to submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee. **INSTEAD**, you **must** submit an application to the appropriate external NHS or Social Care Research Ethics Committee [see C2(d) below].

(d) If you answered '**YES**' to **question 15** you do not need to submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee. **INSTEAD**, you must submit an application to the appropriate external NHS or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (REC), *after* your proposal has received a satisfactory Peer Review (see *Research Governance Handbook*). Applications to an NHS or Social Care REC **must** be signed by the appropriate Faculty Director of Research or other authorised Faculty signatory before they are submitted.

(e) If you answered '**YES**' to **question 16** you do not need to submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee. **INSTEAD**, you must submit an application to the appropriate external Local Authority REC, *after* your proposal has received a satisfactory Peer Review (see *Research Governance Handbook*). Applications to a Local Authority REC **must** be signed by the appropriate Faculty Director of Research or other authorised Faculty signatory before they are submitted.

### IMPORTANT

Please note that it is your responsibility in the conduct of your study to follow the policies and procedures set out in the University's Research Governance Handbook, and any relevant academic or professional guidelines. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question,

design or conduct over the course of the study should be notified to the **Faculty and/or other Research Ethics Committee** that received your original proposal. Depending on the nature of the changes, a new application for ethics approval may be required.

## Section D: Project Details

D1. Project title:	Physical Activity Careers, Oral Histories of Family Membership and the Well-being Implications
D2. Start date	January 2016
D3. End date	August 2017
D4. Lay summary (max 300 words <i>which <b>must</b> include a brief description of the methodology to be used for gathering your data</i> )	<p>For the most part, family-based studies of physical activity habits have focused on parental influence upon the extent of their children’s involvement. Quantitative investigations have identified numerous trends and correlates, while qualitative studies have often presented parent-child relationships as a one-way dictatorship. Using a bespoke life history interview approach, this study draws on contemporary discussions in human well-being and family sociology with a view to better understanding connections between family relationships and physical activity engagement. Although the social context of families are influential in people’s early socialisation pertinent to the value of physical activity within family life, physical activity does not constitute a widespread family practice. This is regularly overlooked in much of the existing literature, which implies an ethnocentric bias by researchers that people ‘should’ be regularly active. The interview methods to be employed in the study directly address this uncritical assumption by integrating people’s physical activity careers with their oral histories of family membership, as opposed to collecting comprehensive life histories. To take full advantage of the longitudinal qualitative perspectives that will be derived from interviewees, participants will consist of groups aged 20-29, 40-49 and 60+ years of age. This will provide both prospective and retrospective narratives of the location of physical activity within family relationships and memberships across the life course. Those participants 20-29 years of age will be responsible for their own household and no longer reside with their parents. It is estimated that around 30 participants from different families will be required in total, consisting of a comparable number of males and females within both the whole study and the age-related subgroups. Participants will initially be recruited from residents of East Kent. Snowball sampling will then be employed to generate further participants. The interviews will be analysed using analytic induction (Znaniecki, 1934) with a view to developing and testing universal generalisations and statements that can be tentatively applied to the emergence of further subgroups from each individual case.</p>

## Section E1: For Students Only

E1. Module name and number or course and Department:	MRHPDSPRTSC PhD Sport and Exercise Science
E2. Name of Supervisor or module leader	Professor Mike Weed
E3. Email address of Supervisor or	mike.weed@canterbury.ac.uk

Module leader	
E4. Contact address:	Head of School of Human and Life Sciences

## Section E2: For Supervisors

*Please tick the appropriate boxes. The study should not begin until all boxes are ticked:*


The student has read the relevant sections of the University's Research Governance Handbook, available on the University web pages at: <a href="http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/centres/red/ethics-governance/governance-and-ethics.asp">http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/centres/red/ethics-governance/governance-and-ethics.asp</a>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The topic merits further investigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The student has the skills to carry out the study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The participant information sheet or leaflet is appropriate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The procedures for recruitment and obtaining informed consent are appropriate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check is required, this has been carried out	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<p>Comments from supervisor:</p> <p>This is a checklist only form for lodging, and I'm happy that all issues have been considered and the form has been accurately filled out. This is an important and original study.</p>
---

## Section F: Signatures

- I certify that the information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
- I certify that a risk assessment for this study has been carried out in compliance with the University's Health and Safety policy.
- I certify that any required Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check has been carried out.
- I undertake to carry out this project under the terms specified in the Canterbury Christ Church University Research Governance Handbook.
- I undertake to inform the relevant Faculty Research Ethics Committee of any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over the course of the study. I understand that such changes may require a new application for ethics approval.
- I undertake to inform the Research Governance Manager in the Research and Enterprise Development Centre when the proposed study has been completed.
- I am aware of my responsibility to comply with the requirements of the law and appropriate University guidelines relating to the security and confidentiality of participant or other personal data.
- I understand that project records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future and that project records should be kept securely for five years or other specified period.
- I understand that the personal data about me contained in this application will be held by the Research and Enterprise Development Centre and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act.

As the Principal Investigator for this study, I confirm that this application has been shared with all other members of the study team	(please tick) ✓
--	--------------------

Principal Investigator	Supervisor or module leader (as appropriate)
Name: John Day Date: 09/12/2015	Name:  Prof Mike Weed Date: 11/1/2016

## Section G: Submission

This form should be returned, as an attachment to a covering email, to the Research Governance Manager at [roger.bone@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:roger.bone@canterbury.ac.uk)

**N.B. YOU MUST include copies of the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form that you will be using in your study (Model versions on which to base these are appended below for your convenience). Also copies of any data gathering tools such as questionnaires, and a COMPLETED RISK ASSESSMENT FORM.**

Providing the covering email is from a verifiable address, there is no longer a need to submit a signed hard copy version.





## CONSENT FORM

**Title of Project:** Physical Activity Careers, Oral Histories of Family Membership and the Well-being Implications

**Name of Researcher:** John Day

**Contact details:**

Address: Sport & Exercise Sciences, School of Human & Life Sciences, Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, CT1 1QU

Tel: 01227 782940 ext 3139

Email: [john.day@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:john.day@canterbury.ac.uk)

**Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential
4. I agree to take part in the above study.


\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

---

Name of Person taking consent  
(if different from researcher)

---

Date

---

Signature

---

Researcher

---

Date

---

Signature

Copies:     1 for participant  
              1 for researcher

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAREERS, ORAL HISTORIES OF FAMILY MEMBERSHIP AND THE WELL-BEING  
IMPLICATIONS**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by John Day.

**Background**

This is an interview-based study of the relationships between being physically active and experiences of being a family member. With the objectives of:

- Better understanding the connections between family relationships and physical activity habits.
- Exploring notable memories of being active in terms of family relationships and well-being
- Evaluating the possible contribution of physical activity to human well-being at various points of the life course within a range of family environments

**What will you be required to do?**

Participants in this study will be required to participate in a one-to-one interview at a suitable location of their choice. It is not a requirement of the study for participants to be regularly active.

**To participate in this research you must:**

Be between 20 and 29 years of age, have responsibility for your own household and no longer reside with your parents

**OR**

Be between 40 and 49 years of age

**OR**

Be 60 years of age or older

**Procedures**

Participate in a one-to-one interview with the lead researcher, responding to their questions with as much detail as possible.

**Feedback**

Participants are welcome to request copies of the audio file of the interview and/or the interview transcript if they wish.

### **Confidentiality**

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by John Day. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

### **Dissemination of results**

Interview transcripts will be analysed and relevant data included in John Day's PhD thesis and/or further academic publications.

### **Deciding whether to participate**

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

### **Any questions?**

Please contact John Day on 01227 782940 ext 3139 / [john.day@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:john.day@canterbury.ac.uk) / Sport and Exercise Sciences, School of Human and Life Sciences, Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, CT1 1QU.

## Example Interview Transcript

**(30/09/2016) 1950, Female**

**JD: To start, you could just outline the physical activities you've been involved in throughout your life so far?**

*Throughout my life?*

**JD: Yes...**

*As a child I didn't do a lot of physical activity, apart from, when I learnt to ride a bike, 'cos I used to ride my bike a lot, erm, I was very underweight up until about the age of seven and the somehow or other I seemed to become overweight and I've battled with that for the rest of my life. That, in turn, as far as PE was concerned at school I didn't want to do PE because I was overweight and used to be ridiculed, and you had to have showers in them days, in the secondary school, so I didn't want to shower in front of other people, so my weight has had a big impact on what I've done for physical activity, which really should be turned around, but obviously I'm not strong-willed enough to do that*

**JD: When you left school and finished doing PE, did you do anything then?**

*Erm, I used to, we used to play tennis for a while and cycle, and, erm, we'd do a lot of cycling years ago, but the roads have got busier and I've got more nervous 'cos I've fallen off a few times, so, erm, I don't cycle, we tend just to cycle now when we're on holiday in France, er, because the roads are much quieter and I feel happier doing it there, so yeah, I enjoy the cycling, erm, my weight is a big issue for me, erm, trying to escalate my activity, because I find I get out of breath... so, probably I could get beyond that point, if I actually put my mind to it, but...*

**JD: Why, in your childhood, was cycling the particular activity you started with?**

*Erm, I think because I... learnt how to ride a bike without having the two wheelies on it and enjoyed it and obviously living in, I lived in the country, so you did cycle a lot then, and walked to school, did all those sorts of things, erm, and then into adulthood, I think... with, with, when I had two sons, they had bikes, so we always used to go off as a family, cycling and then my husband and I kept, kept it up after the boys grew-up really, and we used to cycle a lot more than what we do now, 'cos, as I say, the roads are so much busier*

**JD: You mention it's something you regularly do on holiday, do you go on holiday regularly?**

*We go on holiday quite a lot, but the actual, when we actually use our bikes is usually when we take our caravan down into France and all our, and Austria this year, we did, erm, we cycle then, not, you know, probably twice a week, we go for a nice long cycle ride, and, but not exerting one, it is just a leisurely cycle ride*

**JD: Do you choose a particular area to stay, where you can cycle?**

*Er, no 'cos most areas of France have got good cycling pistes, as they call them, erm, so it's not really an issue in France, whereas here, I think it is an issue, cycling on the roads*

**JD: So, it's not necessarily because of less traffic in France, it's that they've got cycle pistes setup?**

*They've got, they have, but also the roads in the country areas, the roads are much quieter anyway, yeah, it's a much bigger country (laughs), so, yeah*

**JD: So, how come when you were younger that you enjoyed cycling but not PE?**

*Erm, PE you were doing, cycling you were doing with just your immediate friends or family, whereas in PE you were doing it with a classroom of girls and the teacher was not a very nice teacher, she'd got her favourites then, put it that way, and in fact I got ridiculed very often, in PE, er, of any sort of sport, because of my weight, so, and that stays with you...*

**JD: What was it that made some students favourites?**

*Because they were very agile, very fit and they enjoyed the PE and they did well, you know, whereas I would rather sink in the background and not be noticed sort of thing*

**JD: So, it had something to do with physical ability?**

*Yeah, yeah, really*

**JD: Was there a group of favourites, or a hierarchy?**

*Erm, there were particular groups, I think, yeah, yeah, I wasn't one of the crowd at all, and, and not into PE or, and, and like high jumps, long jumps, things like that, it was more difficult to do 'cos you were overweight, so, but in them days, you, you ate what food was given you, you know, you didn't get your choices, like children get now, you didn't have the fast food either, so that was a better thing, but, yeah, erm...*

**JD: What do you mean by being ridiculed about your weight in PE 'stayed with you'?**

*Erm, the, the ridicule of being overweight and, and not feeling comfortable with it and that*

**JD: and that first started in PE classes?**

*Oh definitely started when I was at school, yeah, definitely yeah*

**JD: So, school generally, PE specifically, or both?**

*Erm, in school generally I used to get, you know, they used to sing out, it was sing 'roll out the barrel' and things like that to me, yeah, so that stays with you, it makes you self-conscious, but I did get, I did slim down, as a teenager and into my forties I was relatively slim, but then from the forties up, I seemed to have... erm, put weight on again*

**JD: Why was it that you slimmed down?**

*I was cycling to work, er, ten miles every day, to and fro to work from the village where I lived, and so that probably helped, erm, working full-time all, all day, in a, in a, er, a, a busy jobs, would have been, er, it wasn't an office job, it was, er, in a factory and it was hard work, so that probably all helped*

**JD: You also mentioned that now you haven't got enough willpower...**

*Erm, no I definitely haven't got any willpower for losing weight because of the type of life we lead, we have a lot of holidays and we enjoy a glass of wine with our meal, erm, we eat out a lot, we socialise a lot, go to other people's houses and eat, erm, and no, I haven't got the willpower to lose weight or... escalate my exercise regime, which probably would, if I did, it would probably make me lose weight and I'd feel better about myself as well*

**JD: So you see losing weight as beneficial because it will make you feel better about yourself?**

*Well, and health wise, health wise really is the main thing, you, you get to my age, you don't actually care too much what other people think about you, you just enjoy life and you're thankful for each day you're given*

**JD: I see, so there's been a change in the way you think about it, even though you'd always like to lose weight, the reasons are now different?**

*Oh definitely, yeah, yeah, the reasons would be more for health now, yeah*

**JD: So, at what point in your life did that change?**

*Erm, probably when I got into my sixties, yeah, late fifties, sixties*

**JD: Was there a particular turning point you remember?**

*Erm... not a, not a specific thing, no, but I've lost friends over the years that didn't make fifty and, so it makes you think, you're, you're glad to be here still, sort of thing, erm, but, no, no, nothing in particular... I've had to go on blood pressure tablets, that's one thing with being overweight, well and, and no, actually it doesn't follow through 'cos some people are not overweight and on blood pressure tablets, but, erm, obviously it would help if I could lose the weight, with, with that issue... so, yeah all, all round my health would be the thing that I would like to be fitter for, really*

**JD: So, that's in later life, but how about earlier on, you suggest that you cared more about what people thought of you...**

*Errr, oh definitely, well as a teenager Twiggy was all the fashion, so, oh yeah, she, yeah, I always like to keep myself smart, you know, even so, but you feel more comfortable if you were a smaller a size*

**JD: Is that the case generally for young people?**

*Oh definitely, there's definitely a big stigma attached to being overweight, yeah. People don't realise how hard it is to lose the weight, once you've become overweight, it's very difficult, and then if you lose it, it's very hard to maintain that, to keep it off, I've done it... so many times over the years (laughs), erm, but yeah, obviously if I upped*

*my exercise regime, then it would be better, but it's just gettin' your head 'round, and, and also I have a busy life, I look after grandchildren, I volunteer at the school, we go away a lot, and it would be actually setting yourself a definite day for doing these things, you know, so, making excuses really (laughs),*

**JD: Why is it hard to maintain it, once you've lost the weight?**

*Well it doesn't happen... the only way I've ever lost a lot of weight, I lost a stone and a half when my son was gettin' married... and that was in 2002, I think it was, erm, was I was going to the gym every morning before work, so I started work at 8.30 and I was going to the gym every morning and I was on milkshake drinks, to lose it, and just having the one meal a day and I couldn't have kept that up forever, so of course once I started eating normally and not going to the gym, 'cos I didn't enjoy the gym, I hated it, never ever, when these people say 'oh, it's like a buzz', I never ever got that (laughs)*

**JD: Did not enjoying the gym have anything to do with your bad experiences of PE?**

*I just don't, I just did not enjoy sweating and working hard and... out for a long walk somewhere out in the open, enjoying it, or cycling, enjoy the outside... fine, erm, swimming up to a point, I think that can get, 'cos I'm not a very good swimmer, but I, I do swim twenty minutes each time I go and I don't stop, erm, but I think to go, be in a gym and sweat, no, that doesn't... doesn't inspire me at all*

**JD: You said you were never going to be able to keep it up, why was that?**

*Because I haven't got the willpower, basically is what it boils down to, I'm not... I think, I think you get to my age and I've got a lovely family 'round me... erm, and it doesn't become so important, although it is important for my health, it's not overall that important, the important thing is your family being ok, you know, and you enjoying as far as you can, you know, without all that sort of thing... not keep worrying about what, what am I guna eat today and what I'm guna, you know, I can't have this and I can't have that, erm, yeah, it's, it gets hard going (laughs)*

**JD: So, at various points in your life, other things are...**

*More important, yeah like socialising with people and if you go to their house you can't say 'I can't eat this and I can't eat that', you know, ok, you can say no to the glass of wine, but why should I? Yeah, so, you think very differently when you're older... you think life's, you know, you've got all your life ahead of you when you're young, but when you get to our age...*

**JD: Is there a particular age when you start to think differently?**

*Oh definitely when you hit your sixties and then when you retire, and when you retire you feel a bit redundant, really, erm, you know, there's lots of things you can get involved with, where, as I say, I do some voluntary work, erm, but you don't, you don't have that camaraderie of your workmates and you don't have that feeling of being need and, erm, doing an important job, I mean obviously I am 'cos I'm looking after*



*the grandkids, so that's (laughs), but, erm, it's not the same as being at work and actually being rewarded... by praise by people at work and things like that*

**JD: You've said that retirement left you feeling a bit redundant, did you think that was going to be the case before you retired?**

*Erm, I knew I'd got to fill my time, I, I was prepared for that but, erm, I wouldn't have left as early as I did, except my, the school I was in changed over to an academy, and the conditions was a lot different, so that why I left a bit earlier than I should have done, so I probably wasn't prepared for it totally in that respect, erm... but I don't know, I, I just think, erm... when you're at work it's something to get up for each day and, and go off to, you know, and like when the, 'cos I was a science technician in a secondary school and, you know, the teacher will say 'oh, that experiment worked really well', you know, 'thanks ever so much for...', that type of thing, you don't get all that, you don't get anything like that, once you've left, left that environment*

**JD: So, you had a purpose beyond your family life?**

*Yes, yeah, which, which, you know, erm, my family's everything... but, you do need that extra outside as well I think, you know, definitely*

**JD: What's your earliest memory of being active?**

*... Trying to roller-skate on one skate (laughs),*

**JD: Why is it that you remember that?**

*Well, because I could never do it on two and all my friends could (laughs), no, cycling really was my main thing as a child, that we did in the country 'cos it was safe enough to do it then, erm, we used to have to walk everywhere, my dad, my parents didn't have a car until I was about thirteen, so we always walked everywhere as a child, erm, and, yeah cycling because we used to, I used to cycle to where my dad worked sometimes, with my mum and, and things like that, so it would be the cycling I think, yeah*

**JD: Did you always do it with your mum?**

*Nah, I did it with friends, friends and like, yeah we used to cycle... go into the next village and things like that and take picnics*

**JD: Was it always a social activity?**

*Yes, oh yes, definitely, I didn't, rarely did it on my own, you know, erm, and as I say, I used to cycle to work and that was with friends, work, work colleagues, we used to meet-up and cycle, and cycle home at night, all weathers, didn't matter what the weather was like, we still did it, and I think then, then they started running a coach, to and fro to the work, where I worked and, erm, that sort of put paid to the cycling thing really, and then I got married, moved away and, er, had the children and, as I say, when I got to about my late-forties, went through the, like the change of life, and that's when the weight started piling back on again, so, probably wasn't as active, active*

*then, but then my job was very active, up and down stairs, I'd got ten, erm, eight laboratories that I was in charge of and that was up and down stairs and a long corridor, so that was an active job, by the time I got home at night, I didn't really wanna be doing something else, and then you very quickly get out of that habit of doing outside activity, really... and I went for a long time where I didn't cycle, erm, and now, as I say, it is only just sort of holiday thing, really, that we tend to do*

**JD: Growing-up, were your parents active?**

*They worked very hard, my mum worked on the land, and my dad... when I was very young, my dad used to be a wood catcher in the winter and a cherry picker in the summer, erm, but then when I was about eleven, he got a job on the local council, so he did, like a... they used to walk, they used to walk a lot together, erm, and they rode their cycles in younger years, erm, but no, not to go out, not to do the physical activity that people do nowadays, they wouldn't have had time, you know, by the time they'd done their full day's work and then dad did his garden and then mum had four children to bring-up, they wouldn't have had time to do all the physical activities*

**JD: So, they didn't go out of their way to do anything active, but their whole day was quite active anyway?**

*Active, yeah, yeah, and then they would go for walks at weekends, yeah*

**JD: Did your parents remain active as they got older?**

*No 'cos my, my dad had a stroke so he wasn't able to be active after that, and mum looked after him, so*

**JD: So, he was active until he had the stroke?**

*Yeah, yeah, and then he couldn't, he couldn't walk properly after that really, so*

**JD: How many siblings did you have?**

*I've got three brothers, all older than me*

**JD: What are their ages?**

*Erm, my eldest brother is... he's 78, the next one's 76 and the next one's 74, erm, the middle brother lives in Australia, and he was always into running, he used to go into the marathons and half marathons and things, erm... he now still does a lot of walking, he, he's probably the one out of... no, my eldest brother's quite fit as well, but he does, erm, bowls and things like that now, and walking, erm, my youngest brother did road racing, so that was really not so much a physical activity I suppose really, but yeah my middle, the middle brother, he did a lot of cross country running and that, but then he, his son died suddenly, erm, from a heart disease, and it's one that could be in the family, erm, hokum, I don't know if you've heard of it, erm, and after that he, he, erm... it was found that he'd got, got traits of this, we all had to be checked, erm, and he does, he still does his walking, but he doesn't do his running anymore, because they did say that his, some of his arteries could have been hardened by the physical exercise that he'd done over the years, so, he actually came here and did the Canterbury, was it half marathon? That you do here, yeah, years ago he came here*

*and did that, once, yeah, but, yeah so he, really my middle brother was probably the one that as most active out of three brothers, but the eldest one is still very active in his retirement, but it's more gardening, bowling, erm, he still maps out sections for Sittingbourne trials, motorbikes, and... so that type of thing and the youngest brother, erm, he did road racing, so he wasn't so much into the running or, none of us have ever been gym people or anything like that, it just wasn't about in them days, like it is now, you know, it wasn't an option you had really*

**JD: Why do you think it has come about?**

*Well because I think people are more conscious of their health and their, erm, physical wellbeing, then equally a lot of jobs now aren't physical, a lot of jobs more, you know, a lot of people worked on the land then, or... it was all, more physical work, erm, nowadays a lot people are brought up just to sit and watch the TV, erm, and they don't do the physical activity until they suddenly realise they, they want to be doing something more, and you've got the gyms and the availability, and obviously they've got the money as well to do it, they wouldn't have had the money to join all these things either, so that would have been another issue*

**JD: You refer to children just sitting and watching TV as though they are missing out on something...**

*Oh, erm, I don't think children should be sat in front of a TV from a young age, definitely not, they should be, they can watch TV, but it should be limited, like the games, that should all be limited, they should still do outdoor physical activities as well, of some sort, even if it's just a walk with the family, you know, which my family, luckily, they do do with their kids, I mean my youngest son's very much into cycling and his whole family, the whole family go now, they do the Bedgebury red route and, if you know what that is (laughs), erm, so they're very much into it and, er, yeah, they're all pretty good, they try and get the balance right for the kids*

**JD: So it's the balance between all of those things, rather than TV being a problem in itself?**

*Oh definitely, yeah, I think television can be educational, in some ways, for them*

**JD: So, kids aren't active enough for reasons other than watching too much TV?**

*Oh, definitely, definitely and I think the, the safety issue of it is another thing, whereas when I was a child you'd get on your bike with your friends, or you'd walk, and in fact walk to the next village, it wasn't a problem, ok, there was still things you heard of, but nothing like you do nowadays, so that's another issue I think, nowadays as well, but yeah, I think it's, a lot of children should be more active, and I don't think all these fast food shops should be allowed to open either (laughs), you just didn't have takeaways and things when I was a child, I think you had the fish and chip van come 'round once a week, that was about it (laughs), yeah*

**JD: How active were your brothers when they were growing-up?**

*As teenagers, they were into motorbikes, erm... but my brother didn't get into his running until he was probably in his thirties, yeah, I would have thought*

**JD: What was that like, growing-up with three brothers, as the only sister?**

*Got, erm, tormented (laughs), a lot of the times, but, yeah, because there was an eight-year gap between my youngest brother and myself, half the time I didn't feel as if I'd got brothers or sisters, sort of thing because of that, by the time I was old enough to play with them, they was off doing their own thing sort of thing, but, yeah, I often wished I'd had a sister, but didn't, so (laughs), erm, but no, it was... I'm close, very close to two of them now, the other one chooses not to be close to the family, but I still love him (laughs),*

**JD: So how about now? Who's in your household now?**

*Just myself and my husband, yeah and then my, one son lives along the road with his wife and two children and the other son lives down the hill with his wife and three children, so we're all very, we're a very close family, but we're not in each other's pockets, we've all got our own lives, and we get together as often as we can, but we don't interfere with each other, so*

**JD: You said you go cycling with your husband, is cycling something he's always been interested in?**

*He, he, yeah I mean we've actually got the power-assisted bikes now because we find the hills a bit dodgy, get, get off and walk up them, erm, but yeah, he enjoyed, when we were in France, he enjoys goin' off cycling as well, yeah*

**JD: Has been active across his life?**

*No, not at all, he wasn't in a job that was active either, and, and at the moment now, since he's retired, I can't shift him out the house, it's a bit of an issue at the moment (laughs),*

**JD: So, how did he get into cycling then?**

*I think when we were, when the boys were young, we started then, and then when they got older, we'd got friends that had got bikes, so it was a social thing we did then, we just went off and... used to bike along, there was a towpath that went from, erm, where we lived at Cliffe Woods up to Gravesend, that area, erm, it was just something we did socially, and then we used to perhaps sit and have a drink, and then decide to go home again and then have dinner together, sort of thing, so... and you can cover more ground on a bike, can't you, than walking, yeah*

**JD: How about encouraging your children to be active, is that something you did?**

*Erm... I've never really... yeah, I've encouraged them to do things, but I've insisted they do things, they, they've chose their own way in life, erm, but yeah, as, as children we always took them out and about, having two boys you've got to, you can't be shut indoors with two boys, it's a disaster, so we always went out for walks, or, took them on their bikes and cycled, we lived right out in the country still then, and the roads weren't too bad in those days, so, and they had motorbikes, they used to go to*

wasteland, and we'd take them there and, yeah, but, but nothing over and above that, they didn't, he hadn't got the money for them to join lots of different clubs, they'd go, one did football and the other one was in cubs and that was about the limit we could afford sort of thing, so

**JD: Did they stay with those activities as they grew-up?**

*Erm... no, my youngest son, who did the football, erm, he's now very much into it with his son, his son's a very good footballer, so he's very keen to go along with him and, and that and encourages him, erm, the eldest son... no, he didn't really do any activities, he, he... a bit spasmodic, joined a gym, left it, and yeah, so, not, not so much, but he, he does go running sometimes, but it's nothing regular*

**JD: So, the son who played football and now encourages his son, does he do any activity now?**

*Yes, he's into cycling, he cycles to work, he's, whenever he gets chance to cycle, he cycles*

**JD: Is that some of your influence?**

*No, he gave up smoking, erm, I'm not sure how many years ago now it was but, erm, it's probably about eight years ago, I should think now... erm, and then he seemed to, the cycling seemed to kick-in and that seemed to be his, his interest now, and he takes his two sons cycling, his wife's recently lost a lot of weight, and she's got into the cycling, so they go as a family, and the, the little one, he's got a seat thing on the front of his bike, with his little one on there, a three year-old, so, yep, he very, very much, he'd love to do more of it, but obviously family commitments don't allow, and money don't allow him to (laughs), yeah, he's very much into it*

**JD: Bringing everything together then, would you say that physical activity is conducive to wellbeing?**

*... it, it, yeah definitely, as far as your health is concerned, erm, but you, I think not, it's not for everybody, not, not to... it depends what you do, I think if it's an enjoyable activity, like I've said, the walking and the cycling, but something like going in the gym, is not for everybody, those that do it, fine, they enjoy it, great, but it's not for everyone, just standing in a gym and sweating and... no, I think to join, I mean, over the years I've joined others clubs, I've done, erm, erm, step, and I think joined a Rosemary Conley weight group once, and that involved exercise, so like, what do you call it, not aquaerobics, aerobics, I used to do all that, in my forties, I did lots of different things like that, clubs, but never to keep it up for years and years, it was a bit spasmodic really*

**JD: So, what's different between the clubs and classes, that you enjoy, and the gym, that you don't like?**

*It's different because you were socialising more with other people, erm, and it was a once a week thing, for a... for the gym, if you paid a membership, you'd be making yourself go twice a week 'cos you've paid that membership and, and I think it's more*

*of a solitary thing, going to the, I, I feel, you know, you wouldn't get chatting to people the same as, like we did used to in, with an exercise class, so I did, I did do lots of exercise over the years, but it was... I suppose as the boys got older I did more... erm, yeah in recent it's tailed off a bit, really, it is just down to the walking, the walking and the cycling, and the swimming*

**JD: You said at the start that you've exercised and lost weight and it makes you feel good about yourself, so what is that feeling good about yourself, what does that mean?**

*Well, you just feel more comfortable in your clothing, really, yeah, feel more, feel more comfortable... I seem to have lost, completely lost track at the moment (laughs), I have too many holidays, that's the trouble (laughs),*

**JD: What is good wellbeing for you, what does that consist of?**

*Erm, well, feeling, feeling health, healthy, being healthy, erm, I don't my blood pressure will ever be lowered now, now it's gone up, I don't think, I think you're on tablets for the rest of your life, once you've gone on them... mostly being happy really, I suppose, which I'm not always, I'm not really happy with how I am, really (laughs), no, no*

**JD: Why?**

*... I just don't, I don't know, I just don't seem to have the drive to do much about it nowadays, since I've retired, my husband's not active, he's not an active person... and we seem to have got a bit in the doldrums, since we've retired, you're not really, although we do our holidays, we don't seem to do a lot with ourselves when we're at home, which... we should do more, maybe I should up my swimming, but then I find it difficult sometimes to fit that in, with having the children and other social events that I've got on, erm,*

**JD: So, you say that leaving work has had an impact...**

*Frame of mind, I think, yeah, frame of mind, you don't... you don't make that extra effort, like when you do when you're younger, 'cos you get tired, you know, you get tired by the time you've done whatever you're doing for the day, you know, just a trip into town for a couple of hours, you go home and, you know, that's it, I've, that's my activity for the day... erm... it's, it's very different when you're older really, unless you've kept that up, if you've kept that physical activity up all the way through, then obviously you're used to it, but to suddenly start it now, I'd have to be really, train my mind to say 'right, you need to be doing this', I need somebody to push me (laughs),*

**JD: How many grandchildren do you have?**

*I've got five grandchildren, two girls, three boys, and the youngest son obviously takes his children on these cycling things whenever they can, and then one of them does the football, the other one's just joined karate, but he's, he's not very forthcoming with social things, the other child, so he, this is a new thing for him, erm, so yeah, they do this cycling thing whenever they can, and they walk with the children, they go to parks and things like that, and then the other son, he's, they've got these, they've got canoes,*

*they go out on them sometimes, they go cycling, we go cycling with them sometimes, if they go off, erm, and, and they, they do tend to walk quite a bit as well, when they can, so, more my daughter-in-law and the two children, rather than the son really, yeah, so they... not, not, again, not, they can't do things that they can't afford to do, do you know what I mean, they do things that they, within their reach*

**JD: and do you see too much TV as a problem for any of your grandchildren?**

*Too many games played, that is the boys, definitely, but, erm, one, they do try and limit them, you know,*

**JD: That's the parents trying to limit them?**

*Yeah, yeah, especially my Thai Daughter-in-law, she's very health conscious, she goes to the gym, she runs, slim as anything, eats, eats healthily and (laughs)... I think, I think parents are more conscious of that, with their children now, yeah, on the whole*

**JD: So, parents didn't used to be like that?**

*Well, all the research hadn't been done into how important it was, really, you know*

**JD: What do you think came first, the research or the health conscious parenting?**

*I, I think it's very difficult to understand because when I was a child, as I say, we had lots of fresh vegetables, lean meat, but then you also had your puddings and ya cakes, you didn't have all the gyms and, and all the clubs and things like that, you didn't have them, nowadays you've got all the clubs, you've got all the things you can join to be healthy but you've got all the fast food places, and kids eating chips and pizzas and stuff like that... so, to me, it's, which was the better? Really, it's difficult to say, which was better.*

## References

- Adamo, K., Langlois, K., Brett, K. & Colley, R. (2012). Young children and parental physical activity levels: findings from the Canadian health measures survey. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 43, 168-175.
- Alderman, B., Benham-Deal, T. & Jenkins, J. (2010). Change in parental influence on children's physical activity over time. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 7, 60-67.
- Allan, G. (1999). Introduction. In G. Allan (Ed.), *The sociology of the family: a reader* (pp. 1-7). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Allan, G. & Crow, G. (2001). *Families, households and society*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- American College of Sports Medicine (1990). The recommended quantity and quality of exercise for developing and maintaining cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness in healthy adults. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 22, 265-274.
- Anderssen, N., Wold, B. & Torsheim, T. (2006). Are parental health habits transmitted to their children? An eight year longitudinal study of physical activity in adolescents and their parents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29, 513-524.
- Archbold, V., Richardson, D. & Dugdill, L. (2009). Looking beyond parametric measures to understand children and families physical activity behaviours: an ethnographic approach. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 12, S77.
- Aston, J. (2001). Research as relationship. In A. Cole & J. Knowles (Eds.), *Lives in context: The art of life history research* (pp. 145-151). Oxford: Altamira Press.
- Atkinson, M. (2008). Triathlon, suffering and exciting significance. *Leisure Studies*, 27, 165-180.
- Atkinson, M. (2011). Fell running and voluptuous panic: on Caillois and post-sport physical culture. *American Journal of Play*, 4, 100-120.
- Atkinson, M. (2016). The loneliness of the fell runner. In I. Wellard (Ed.), *Researching embodied sport: Exploring movement cultures* (pp. 47-62). London: Routledge.
- Atkinson, R. (1998). *The life story interview*. London: Sage.
- Bamber, D., Cockerill, I., Rodgers, S. & Carroll, D. (2000). "It's exercise or nothing": a qualitative analysis of exercise dependence. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 34, 423-430.
- Bath, P. & Morgan, K. (1998). Customary physical activity and physical health outcomes in later life. *Age and Ageing*, 27(S3), 29-34.
- Beck, U. & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. London: Sage.
- Becker, H. (1966). Introduction. In C. Shaw, *The jack-roller: a delinquent boy's own story* (pp. v-xviii). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Becker, H. (1973). *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. New York: The Free Press.
- Becker, H., Geer, B., Hughes, E. & Strauss, A. (1961). *Boys in white: Student culture in medical school*. London: Transaction Publishers.
- Bennett, E., Clarke, L., Kowalski, K. & Crocker, P. (2017). From pleasure and pride to the fear of decline: exploring the emotions in older women's physical activity narratives. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 33, 113-122.
- Bernardes, J. (1987). 'Doing things with words': sociology and 'family policy' debates. *The Sociological Review*, 35, 679-702.



- Bernardes, J. (1988). Whose 'family'? a note on 'the changing sociological construct of the family'. *The Sociological Review*, 36, 267-272.
- Berniell, L., de la Mata, D. & Valdés, N. (2013). Spillovers of health education at school on parents' physical activity. *Health Economics*, 22, 1004-1020.
- Bertaux, D. (1981). From the life-history approach to the transformation of sociological practice. In D. Bertaux (Ed.), *Biography and society: the life history approach in the social sciences* (pp. 29-45). London: Sage.
- Bertaux, D. (1995). Social genealogies commented on and compared: an instrument for observing social mobility processes in the 'Longue durée'. *Current Sociology*, 43, 69-88.
- Bevan, A. & Riley, S. (2011). Mothers' efforts to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their preschool children. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 26, 395-403.
- Biddle, S., Mutrie, N. & Gorely, T. (2015). *Psychology of physical activity: Determinants, well-being and interventions* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: Routledge.
- Blomstrand, A., Björkelund, C., Ariai, N., Lissner, L. & Bengtsson, C. (2009). Effects of leisure-time physical activity on well-being among women: a 32-year perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 37, 706-712.
- Bloodworth, A., McNamee, M. & Bailey, R. (2012). Sport, physical activity and well-being: an objectivist account. *Sport, Education and Society*, 17, 497-514.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. London: University of California Press.
- Bois, J., Sarrazin, P., Brustad, R., Trouilloud, D. & Cury, F. (2005). Elementary schoolchildren's perceived competence and physical activity involvement: the influence of parents' role modelling behaviours and perceptions of their child's competence. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 6, 381-397.
- Bojorquez-Chapela, I., Unikel, C., Mendoza, M. & de Lachica, F. (2014). Another body project: the thin ideal, motherhood, and body dissatisfaction among Mexican women. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 19, 1120-1131.
- Bokemeier, J. (1997). Rediscovering families and households: restructuring rural society and rural sociology. *Rural Sociology*, 62, 1-20.
- Booth, D. (2009). Politics and pleasure: the philosophy of physical education revisited. *Quest*, 61, 133-153.
- Boschma, G. (2007). Accommodation and resistance to the dominant cultural discourse on psychiatric mental health: oral history accounts of family members. *Nursing Inquiry*, 14, 266-278.
- Boufous, S., Finch, C. & Bauman, A. (2004). Parental safety concerns – a barrier to sport and physical activity in children? *Mothers, Children and Adolescents*, 28, 482-486.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Bristow, J. (2014). The double bind of parenting culture: helicopter parents and cotton wool kids. In E. Lee, J. Bristow, C. Faircloth & J. Macvarish (Eds.), *Parenting culture studies* (pp. 200-215). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bristow, J. (2016). *The sociology of generations: New directions and challenges*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bruner, E. (1984). The opening up of anthropology. In E. Bruner (Ed.), *Text, play, and story: the construction and reconstruction of self and society* (pp. 1-18). Washington: The American Ethnological Society.
- Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18, 1-21.

- Casella, E. (2012). "That's just a family thing, you know": memory, community kinship, and social belonging in the Hagg Cottages of Cheshire, North-West England. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 16, 284-299.
- Chambers, D. (2012). *A sociology of family life: Change and diversity in intimate relations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Cheal, D. (2002). *Sociology of family life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Coakley, J. (2006). The good father: parental expectations and youth sports. *Leisure Studies*, 25, 153-163.
- Cole, A. & Knowles, J. (2001a). What is life history research? In A. Cole & J. Knowles (Eds.), *Lives in context: The art of life history research* (pp. 9-24). Oxford: Altamira Press.
- Cole, A. & Knowles, J. (2001b). Making sense of and representing lives in context. In A. Cole & J. Knowles (Eds.), *Lives in context: The art of life history research* (pp. 112-128). Oxford: Altamira Press.
- Cole, A. & Knowles, J. (2001c). Beginning a life history research project. In A. Cole & J. Knowles (Eds.), *Lives in context: The art of life history research* (pp. 45-69). Oxford: Altamira Press.
- Corder, K., Crespo, N., van Sluijs, E., Lopez, N. & Elder, J. (2012). Parent awareness of young children's physical activity. *Preventive Medicine*, 55, 201-205.
- Crawford, R. (1980). Healthism and the medicalization of everyday life. *International Journal of Health Services*, 10, 365-388.
- Davies, A. & Fitchett, J. (2015). In the family way: bringing a mother-daughter (matrilineal) perspective to retail innovation and consumer culture. *Environment and Planning A*, 47, 727-743.
- Davis, C., Blackmore, E., Katzman, D. & Fox, J. (2005). Female adolescents with anorexia nervosa and their parents: a case-control study of exercise attitudes and behaviours. *Psychological Medicine*, 35, 377-386.
- Day, J. (2018). Physical activity, families and households. In J. Piggin, L. Mansfield & M. Weed (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of physical activity policy and practice* (pp. 298-310). London: Routledge.
- De Craemer, M., De Decker, E., De Bourdeaudhuij, I., Deforche, B., Vereecken, C., Duvinage, K., Grammatikaki, E. Iotova, V., Fernández-Alvira, J., Zych, K., Manios, Y. & Cardon, G. (2013). Physical activity and beverage consumption in preschoolers: focus groups with parents and teachers. *BMC Public Health*, 13, 278.
- De Souto Barreto, P. (2014). Direct and indirect relationships between physical activity and happiness levels among older adults: a cross-sectional study. *Aging and Mental Health*, 18, 861-868.
- Denzin, N. (2001). *Interpretive interactionism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage.
- Denzin, N. (2014). *Interpretive autoethnography* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage.
- Department of Health (2010). *Sedentary behaviour and obesity: Review of the current scientific evidence*. UK: DoH.
- Department of Health (2011). *Start active, stay active: a report on physical activity for health from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers*. London: Crown Copyright.
- Dermott, E. & Miller, T. (2015). More than the sum of its parts? contemporary fatherhood policy, practice and discourse. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 4, 183-195.
- Diener, E. & Suh, E. (2000). Measuring subjective well-being to compare the quality of life of cultures. In E. Diener & E. Suh (Eds.), *Culture and subjective well-being* (pp. 3-12). London: MIT Press.

- Dionigi, R. (2006). Competitive sport as leisure in later life: negotiations, discourse, and aging. *Leisure Sciences*, 28, 181-196.
- Dionigi, R. (2007). Resistance training and older adults' beliefs about psychological benefits: the importance of self-efficacy and social interaction. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 29, 723-746.
- Dionigi, R., Horton, S. & Baker, J. (2013). Negotiations of the ageing process: older adults' stories of sports participation. *Sport, Education and Society*, 18, 370-387.
- Dolan, P. (2014). *Happiness by design: Finding pleasure and purpose in everyday life*. London: Penguin Books.
- Dollman, J. (2010). Changing associations of Australian parents' physical activity with their children's sport participation: 1985 to 2004. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 34, 578-582.
- Dregval, L. & Petrauskienė, A. (2009). Associations between physical activity of primary school first-graders during leisure time and family socioeconomic status. *Medicina (Kaunas)*, 45, 549-556.
- Dunning, E. (1986). Sport as a male preserve: notes on the social sources of masculine identity and its transformations. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 3, 79-90.
- Dunning, E. & Waddington, I. (2003). Sport as a drug and drugs in sport: some exploratory comments. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 38, 351-368.
- Dwyer, G., Higgs, J., Hardy, L. & Baur, L. (2008). What do parents and preschool staff tell us about young children's physical activity: a qualitative study. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 5, 66.
- Edwards, R. & Weller, S. (2014). Sibling relationships and the construction of young people's gendered identities over time and in different spaces. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 3, 185-199.
- Edwardson, C. & Gorely, T. (2010). Parental influences on different types and intensities of physical activity in youth: a systematic review. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 11, 522-535.
- Eriksson, M., Nordqvist, T. & Rasmussen, F. (2008). Associations between parents' and 12-year-old children's sport and vigorous activity: the role of self-esteem and athletic competence. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 5, 359-373.
- Esch, T. & Stefano, G. (2004). The neurobiology of pleasure, reward processes, addiction and their health implications. *Neuroendocrinology Letters*, 25, 235-251.
- Evans, J. & Davies, B. (2010). Family, class and embodiment: why school physical education makes so little difference to post-school participation patterns in physical activity. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23, 765-784.
- Faircloth, C. (2014a). Intensive fatherhood? The (un)involved dad. In E. Lee, J. Bristow, C. Faircloth & J. Macvarish (Eds.), *Parenting culture studies* (pp. 184-199). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Faircloth, C. (2014b). Intensive parenting and the expansion of parenting. In E. Lee, J. Bristow, C. Faircloth & J. Macvarish (Eds.), *Parenting culture studies* (pp. 25-50). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Farrell, B., VandeVusse, A. & Ocobock, A. (2012). Family change and the state of family sociology. *Current Sociology*, 60, 283-301.
- Faulkner, G. & Biddle, S. (2004). Exercise and depression: considering variability and contextuality. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 26, 3-18.
- Ferrarotti, F. (1981). On the autonomy of the biographical method. In D. Bertaux (Ed.), *Biography and society: the life history approach in the social sciences* (pp. 19-27). London: Sage.

- Flick, U. (2007). *Managing quality in qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Garatachea, N., Molinero, O., Martínez-García, R., Jiménez-Jiménez, R., González-Gallego, J. & Márquez, S. (2009). Feelings of well being in elderly people: relationship to physical activity and physical function. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 48, 306-312.
- Gard, M. & Meyenn, R. (2000). Boys, bodies, pleasure and pain: interrogating contact sports in schools. *Sport, Education and Society*, 5, 19-34.
- Giddens, A. (1992). *The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilding, M. (2010). Reflexivity over and above convention: the new orthodoxy in the sociology of personal life, formerly sociology of the family. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61, 757-777.
- Gilgun, J. (1995). We shared something special: the moral discourse of incest perpetrators. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57, 265-281.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goldenberg, S. (1993). Analytic induction revisited. *Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie*, 18, 161-176.
- Goodson, I. (2001). The story of life history: origins of the life history method in sociology. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 1, 129-142.
- Gorely, T., Atkin, A., Biddle, S. & Marshall, S. (2009). Family circumstance, sedentary behaviour and physical activity in adolescents living in England: project STIL. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 6, 33.
- Grant, B. (2008a). An insider's view on physical activity in later life. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 9, 817-829.
- Grant, B. (2008b). Should physical activity be on the healthy ageing agenda? *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 33, 163-177.
- Grant, B. & Kluge, M. (2007). Exploring "other body(s)" of knowledge: getting to the heart of the story about aging and physical activity. *Quest*, 59, 398-414.
- Gustafson, S. & Rhodes, R. (2006). Parental correlates of physical activity in children and early adolescents. *Sports Med*, 36, 79-97.
- Hamilton, K. & White, K. (2010a). Identifying parents' perceptions about physical activity: a qualitative exploration of salient behaviour, normative and control beliefs among mothers and fathers of young children. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 15, 1157-1169.
- Hamilton, K. & White, K. (2010b). Understanding parental physical activity: meanings habits and social role influence. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 11, 275-285.
- Hamilton, K. & White, K. (2012). Social influences and the physical activity intentions of parents of young-children families: an extended theory of planned behavior approach. *Journal of Family Issues*, 33, 1351-1372.
- Hammersley, M. (2010a). Aristotelian or Galileian? On a puzzle about the philosophical sources of analytic induction. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 40, 393-409.
- Hammersley, M. (2010b). The case of the disappearing dilemma: Herbert Blumer on sociological method. *History of the Human Sciences*, 23, 70-90.
- Hammersley, M. (2011). On Becker's studies of marijuana use as an example of analytic induction. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 41, 535-566.
- Hardman, A. & Stensel, D. (2009). *Physical activity and health: the evidence explained* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Routledge.
- Harrington, M. (2006). Sport and leisure as contexts for fathering in Australian families. *Leisure Studies*, 25, 165-183.

- Hart, K., Herriot, A., Bishop, J. & Truby, H. (2003). Promoting healthy diet and exercise patterns amongst primary school children: a qualitative investigation of parental perspectives. *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*, 16, 89-96.
- Hassmén, P., Koivula, N. & Uutela, A. (2000). Physical exercise and psychological well-being: a population study in Finland. *Preventive Medicine*, 30, 17-25.
- Hatch, J. & Wisniewski, R. (1995). Life history and narrative: Questions, issues, and exemplary works. In J. Hatch & R. Wisniewski (Eds.), *Life history and narrative* (pp. 113-135). London: The Falmer Press.
- Health Education Authority (1995). *Moving on: a summary*. London: HEA.
- Health Education Authority (1996). *Promoting physical activity in primary health care: Guidance for the primary healthcare team*. London: HEA.
- Health Education Authority (1998). *Young and active?* London: HEA.
- Helliwell, J. & Putnam, R. (2005). The social context of well-being. In F. Huppert, N. Baylis & B. Keverne (Eds.), *The science of well-being* (pp. 435-459). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Henwood, K. & Procter, J. (2003). The 'good father': reading men's accounts of paternal involvement during the transition to first-time fatherhood. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 42, 337-355.
- Hesketh, K., Crawford, D. & Salmon, J. (2006). Children's television viewing and objectively measured physical activity: associations with family circumstance. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 3, 36.
- Hesketh, K., Hinkley, T. & Campbell, K. (2012). Children's physical activity and screen time: qualitative comparison of views of parents of infants and preschool children. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 9, 152.
- Hoefler, W., McKenzie, T., Sallis, J., Marshall, S. & Conway, T. (2001). Parental provision of transportation for adolescent physical activity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 21, 48-51.
- Holder, M., Coleman, B. & Sehn, Z. (2009). The contribution of active and passive leisure to children's well-being. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 14, 378-386.
- Hutchings, J. (2014). *"Life is good. Life is what you make it" The significance of a third place: an ethnography of masters swimming* (Doctoral dissertation, Bournemouth University).
- Jago, R., Fox, K., Page, A., Brockman, R. & Thompson, J. (2010). Parent and child physical activity and sedentary time: do active parents foster active children? *BMC Public Health*, 10, 194.
- Jallinoja, P., Pajari, P. & Absetz, P. (2010). Negotiated pleasures in health-seeking lifestyles of participants of a health promoting intervention. *Health*, 14, 115-130.
- Jamieson, L. (1998). *Intimacy: Personal relationships in modern societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jolly, M. (2015). Voices in movement: feminist family stories in oral history and sound art. *Life Writing*, 12, 139-159.
- Kantomaa, M., Tammelin, T., Näyhä, S. & Taanila, A. (2007). Adolescents' physical activity in relation to family income and parents' education. *Preventive Medicine*, 44, 410-415.
- Katz, J. (2004). On the rhetoric and politics of ethnographic methodology. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 595, 280-308.
- Katz, J. (2015). Situational evidence: strategies for causal reasoning from observational field notes. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 44, 108-144.
- Katz, S. (2001). Growing older without aging? Positive aging, anti-ageism, and anti-aging. *Generations*, 25, 27-32.

- Kay, T. (2007). Fathering through sport. *World Leisure Journal*, 49, 69-82.
- Kenter, E., Gebhardt, W., Lottman, I., van Rossum, M., Bekedam, M. & Crone, M. (2015). The influence of life events on physical activity patterns of Dutch older adults: a life history method. *Psychology & Health*, 30, 627-651.
- Kilgour, L. & Parker, A. (2013). Gender, physical activity and fear: women, exercise and the great outdoors. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 5, 43-57.
- Kim, Junh., Heo, J. & Kim, Jun (2014). The benefits of in-group contact through physical activity involvement for health and well-being among Korean immigrants. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 9, 235-17.
- King, N, Horrocks, C. & Brooks, J. (2019). *Interviews in qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage.
- Kull, M. (2002). The relationships between physical activity, health status and psychological well-being of fertility-aged women. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, 12, 241-247.
- Kupferberg, F. (1998). Humanistic entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial career commitment. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 10, 171-188.
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage.
- LaRossa, R. (1988). Fatherhood and social change. *Family Relations*, 37, 451-457.
- Layard, R. (2011). *Happiness: lessons from a new science* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Penguin Books.
- Lee, E. (2014). Experts and parenting culture. In E. Lee, J. Bristow, C. Faircloth & J. Macvarish (Eds.), *Parenting culture studies* (pp. 51-75). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lee, E., Macvarish, J. & Bristow, J. (2010). Risk, health and parenting culture. *Health, Risk & Society*, 12, 293-300.
- Lee, Y. & Park, I. (2010). Happiness and physical activity in special populations: evidence from Korean survey data. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 11, 136-156.
- Lenneis, V. & Pfister, G. (2017). Health messages, middle-aged women and the pleasure of play. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 20, 55-74.
- Lewis, B. & Ridge, D. (2005). Mothers reframing physical activity: family oriented politicisation, transgression and contested expertise in Australia. *Social Science & Medicine*, 60, 2295-2306.
- Lim, C. & Biddle, S. (2012). Longitudinal and prospective studies of parental correlates of physical activity in young people: a systematic review. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 10, 211-220.
- Macdonald, D., Rodger, S., Ziviani, J., Jenkins, D., Batch, J. & Jones, J. (2004). Physical activity as a dimension of family life for lower primary school children. *Sport, Education and Society*, 9, 307-325.
- MacDonald, R. & Shildrick, T. (2013). Youth and wellbeing: experiencing bereavement and ill health in marginalised young people's transitions. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 35, 147-161.
- Mack, D., Wilson, P., Gunnell, K., Gilchrist, J., Kowalski, K. & Crocker, P. (2012). Health-enhancing physical activity: associations with markers of well-being. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 4, 127-150.
- Macvarish, J. (2016). *Neuroparenting: The expert invasion of family life*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mailey, E., Huberty, J., Dinkel, D. & McAuley, E. (2014). Physical activity barriers and facilitators among working mothers and fathers. *BMC Public Health*, 14, 657.

- Mannheim, K. (1952). *Essays on the sociology of knowledge*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Martin, M., Dollman, J., Norton, K. & Robertson, I. (2005). A decrease in the association between the physical activity patterns of Australian parents and their children: 1985-1997. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 8, 71-76.
- Marx, K. (1867/2004). *Capital: a critique of political economy*. (Vol. 1). London: Penguin Books.
- Matiss, I. (2001). Moments in time. In A. Cole & J. Knowles (Eds.), *Lives in context: The art of life history research* (pp. 223-229). Oxford: Altamira Press.
- Mauthner, M. (2005). Distant lives, still voices: sistering in family sociology. *Sociology*, 39, 623-642.
- Mead, G. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miller, R. (2000). *Researching life stories and family histories*. London: Sage.
- Minello, K. & Nixon, D. (2017). 'Hope I never stop': older men and their two-wheeled love affairs. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 20, 75-95.
- Moriarty, M. (2013). Sport and children's spirituality: an Australian perspective. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 18, 103-117.
- Ochieng, B. (2011). Factors influencing the diet patterns and uptake of physical activity among black families. *International Journal of Health Promotion and Education*, 49, 140-145.
- Offer, A. (2006). *The challenge of affluence: Self-control and well-being in the United States and Britain since 1950*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Office for National Statistics (2017). Births by parents' characteristics in England and Wales: 2016. *Statistical Bulletin*. UK: ONS.
- Office for National Statistics (2018). *Methodology: Personal well-being in the UK QMI*, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018. UK: ONS.
- Olmedo, I. (1997). Voices of our past: using oral history to explore funds of knowledge within a Puerto Rican family. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 28, 550-573.
- Pang, B., Macdonald, D. & Hay, P. (2013). 'Do I have a choice?' the influences of family values and investments on Chinese migrant young people's lifestyles and physical activity participation in Australia. *Sport, Education and Society*, (ahead-of-print), 1-17.
- Pascoe, C. (2015). Mum's the word: advice to Australian mothers since 1945. *Journal of Family Studies*, 21, 218-234.
- Pearson, N., Timperio, A., Salmon, J., Crawford, D. & Biddle, S. (2009). Family influences on children's physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 6, 34.
- Phoenix, C., & Grant, B. (2009). Expanding the agenda for research on the physically active aging body. *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, 17, 362-379.
- Phoenix, C. & Orr, N. (2014). Pleasure: a forgotten dimension of physical activity in older age. *Social Science & Medicine*, 115, 94-102.
- Phoenix, C. & Smith, B. (2011). Telling a (good?) counterstory of aging: natural bodybuilding meets the narrative of decline. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 66, 628-639.
- Pike, E. (2012). Aquatic antiques: swimming off this mortal coil? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 47, 492-510.
- Pike, E. (2015). Assessing the sociology of sport: on age and ability. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 50, 570-574.

- Plummer, K. (2001). *Documents of life 2: An invitation to a critical humanism*. London: Sage.
- Poole, M. (2001). Fit for life: older women's commitment to exercise. *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, 9, 300-312.
- Pugliese, J. & Tinsley, B. (2007). Parental socialization of child and adolescent physical activity: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 21, 331-343.
- Quarmby, T. & Dagkas, S. (2010). Children's engagement in leisure time physical activity: exploring family structure as a determinant. *Leisure Studies*, 29, 53-66.
- Quarmby, T. & Dagkas, S. (2013). Locating the place and meaning of physical activity in the lives of young people from low-income, lone-parent families. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 18, 459-474.
- Ramanathan, S. & Crocker, P. (2009). The influence of family and culture on physical activity among female adolescents from the Indian Diaspora. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19, 492-503.
- Rettig, K., Tam, V. & Magstad, B. (1997). Using pattern matching and modified analytic induction in examining justice principles in child support guidelines. *Marriage & Family Review*, 24, 193-222.
- Riordan, P. (2011). Human happiness as a common good. In J. Atherton, E. Graham & I. Steedman (Eds.), *The practices of happiness: Political economy, religion and well-being* (pp. 207-215). London: Routledge.
- Robinson, W. (1951). The logical structure of analytic induction. *American Sociological Review*, 16, 812-818.
- Ruseski, J., Humphreys, B., Hallmann, K. & Breuer, C. (2011). Family structure, time constraints, and sport participation. *European Reviews of Aging and Physical Activity*, 8, 57-66.
- Rutkowski, E. & Connelly, C. (2011). Obesity risk knowledge and physical activity in families of adolescents. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 26, 51-57.
- Ryff, C. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 1069-1081.
- Sartre, J. (1963). *Search for a method*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Schinke, R., Yungblut, H., Blodgett, A., Eys, M., Peltier, D., Ritchie, S. & Recollet-Saikkonen, D. (2010). The role of families in youth sport programming in a Canadian Aboriginal reserve. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 7, 156-166.
- Seale, C. (1999). *The quality of qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Schluter, P., Oliver, M. & Paterson, J. (2011). Perceived barriers and incentives to increased physical activity for Pacific mothers in New Zealand: findings from the Pacific Islands Families Study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 35, 151-158.
- Shaw, C. (1930). *The jack-roller: a delinquent boy's own story*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shaw, S. (2008). Family leisure and changing ideologies of parenthood. *Sociology Compass*, 2, 688-703.
- Shipway, R. (2010). *On the run: Perspectives on long distance running* (Doctoral dissertation, Bournemouth University).
- Shirani, F., Henwood, K. & Coltart, C. (2012). Meeting the challenges of intensive parenting culture: gender, risk management and the moral parent. *Sociology*, 46, 25-40.



- Shropshire, J. & Carroll, B. (1997). Family variables and children's physical activity: influence of parental exercise and socio-economic status. *Sport, Education and Society*, 2, 95-116.
- Silverman, D. (2017). *Doing qualitative research* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Sage.
- Sjögren, T., Nissinen, K., Järvenpää, S., Ojanen, M., Vanharanta, H. & Mälkiä, E. (2006). Effects of a physical exercise intervention on subjective physical well-being, psychosocial functioning and general well-being among office workers: a cluster randomized-controlled cross-over design. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, 16, 381-390.
- Skobba, K. (2016). Exploring the housing pathways of low-income women: a biographical approach. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 33, 41-58.
- Smith, A. (1759). *The theory of moral sentiments*. Great Britain: Pantianos Classics.
- Stewart, M. (2013). Exploring family reactions to life story recordings. *Oral History*, 41, 51-62.
- Telama, R., Laakso, L., Nupponen, H., Rimpelä, A. & Pere, L. (2009). Secular trends in youth physical activity and parents' socioeconomic status from 1977 to 2005. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 21, 462-474.
- Thomas, W. & Znaniecki, F. (1918). *The Polish peasant in Europe and America: Monograph of an immigrant group* (Vol. 1). Boston: The Gorham Press.
- Thomas, W. & Znaniecki, F. (1918-1920). *The Polish peasant in Europe and America: Monograph of an immigrant group* (Vols. 1-5). Boston: The Gorham Press.
- Thompson, J., Jago, R., Brockman, R., Cartwright, K., Page, A. & Fox, K. (2009). Physically active families – de-bunking the myth? a qualitative study of family participation in physical activity. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 36, 265-274.
- Thompson, P. (2000). *The voice of the past: Oral history* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tulle, E. (2008). The ageing body and the ontology of ageing: athletic competence in later life. *Body & Society*, 14, 1-19.
- US Department of Health and Human Services (1996). *Physical activity and health: a report of the surgeon general*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.
- Vernon, M. (2008). *Wellbeing*. Durham: Acumen.
- Waddington, I. (2000). *Sport, health and drugs: a critical sociological perspective*. London: Spon Press.
- Wagner, A., Klein-Platat, C., Arveiler, D., Haan, M., Schlienger, J. & Simon, C. (2004). Parent-child physical activity relationships in 12-year old French students do not depend on family socioeconomic status. *Diabetes Metab*, 30, 359-366.
- Weed, M. (2016). Evidence for physical activity guidelines as a public health intervention: efficacy, effectiveness, and harm – a critical policy sciences approach. *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine*, 4, 56-69.
- Wellard, I. (2009). *Sport, masculinities and the body*. London: Routledge.
- Wellard, I. (2012). Body-reflexive pleasures: exploring bodily experiences within the context of sport and physical activity. *Sport, Education and Society*, 17, 21-33.
- Wellard, I. (2014). *Sport, fun and enjoyment: an embodied approach*. London: Routledge.
- Wheeler, S., Green, K. & Thurston, M. (2019). Social class and the emergent organised sporting habits of primary-aged children. *European Physical Education Review*, 25, 89-108.
- White, S. (2017). Relational wellbeing: re-centring the politics of happiness, policy and the self. *Policy & Politics*, 45, 121-136.

- White, S. & Jha, S. (2018). Towards an interdisciplinary approach to wellbeing: life histories and Self-Determination Theory in rural Zambia. *Social Science & Medicine*, 212, 153-160.
- Williams, S. (2008). What is fatherhood? Searching for the reflexive father. *Sociology*, 42, 487-502.
- Wilson, P. & Pahl, R. (1988). The changing sociological construct of the family. *The Sociological Review*, 36, 233-266.
- Wood, L. (1997). The family in the fifties: hope, fear, and rock 'n roll. *OAH Magazine of History*, 11, 36-38.
- World Health Organization (2002). *Active ageing: a policy framework*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization (2015). *Physical activity strategy for the WHO European region 2016-2025*. Regional Committee for Europe, 65<sup>th</sup> Session. Vilnius, Lithuania, 14-17 September 2015.
- Wright Mills, C. (1959). *The sociological imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wynn, J. (2011). *The Hobo to Doormen: the characters of qualitative analysis, past and present*. *Ethnography*, 12, 518-542.
- Zach, S. & Netz, Y. (2007). Like mother like child: three generations' patterns of exercise behavior. *Families, Systems, & Health*, 25, 419-434.
- Zecevic, C., Tremblay, L., Lovsin, T. & Michel, L. (2010). Parental influence on young children's physical activity. *International Journal of Pediatrics*, 2010, 468526.
- Zevnik, L. (2014). *Critical perspectives in happiness research: the birth of modern happiness*. London: Springer.
- Ziviani, J., Macdonald, D., Ward, H., Jenkins, D. & Rodger, S. (2006). Physical activity and the occupations of children: perspectives of parents and children. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 13, 180-187.
- Znaniecki, F. (1934). *The method of sociology*. New York: Rinehart & Company.