

**THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY STRUCTURE IN SHAPING YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
ENGAGEMENT IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

**By**

**THOMAS CHARLES QUARMBY**

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College of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis reports on research regarding the influence of family structure on young people's engagement in physical activity. It focussed on understanding how young people's physical activity dispositions were constructed within wider structural forces that impacted on their everyday lives. A socio-cultural theoretical perspective was adopted and the data were collected using a mixed methods approach. Participants were young people from three inner city comprehensive schools in the Midlands, UK, who completed questionnaires ( $n = 381$ ) and paired, semi-structured interviews ( $n = 62$ ). All schools were from low socioeconomic areas since this provided a greater diversity of family structures. As such, three family types were most prominent in this study: intact-couple, lone parent and stepfamily. The data took the form of surveys and interview transcripts and were analysed using PASW Statistics and inductive and deductive procedures respectively. The analytical framework was influenced by the social theory of Bourdieu, recognising the importance of structure and agency. Family was recognised as a social 'field' that shaped young people's dispositions towards specific activities. Moreover, the transmission of an intergenerational habitus within families was bound by their cultural, social and economic resources, which differed according to family structure and contributed to existing societal inequalities.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated first and foremost to Michelle, whose continuous love and support afforded me the patience and enthusiasm to complete it. It is also dedicated to my parents and grandad whose support and encouragement made this journey a very real possibility. I can not express enough gratitude for all that they have done.

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Please note that the full appendix (including all interview transcripts) is not included here in the printed version of the thesis due to the large volume of pages.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This first chapter provides an overview of the thesis, setting the foundations for what follows. Initially, it outlines some of the key justifications for the study by drawing on prominent figures from within the field and their arguments for research that explores the family and adopts a specific methodology. In so doing, it identifies gaps in the literature and some of the key research that informs this study. Following this, the study aims and research questions are presented. Thereafter the background to the research is explored, involving a short discussion of relevant research and the specific theoretical perspectives adopted for the study coupled with an overview of the methodology employed. Finally, the chapter presents an outline of the thesis structure, highlighting key chapters in an effort to present the reader with an idea of the thesis design and content.

“Other things may change us, but we start and end with family”

Anthony Brandt

## **1.1 Rationale for the Study**

For many, the words of Anthony Brandt may well ring true with family playing a vital role in shaping their lives. This may be especially apparent for young people who tend to rely heavily on their family for support, nurturance and guidance throughout their upbringing. Indeed, the family is one of the most important influences on both young people’s physical activity, sedentary behaviours and thus, overall health (Saelens and Kerr, 2008). Relationships within the family, especially those between parents and young people have long been identified in numerous worldwide studies as an important element in young people’s continued participation in physical activity (Anderssen et al., 2006; Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006; Loucaides and Chedzoy, 2005; Ommundsen et al., 2006; Raudsepp and Viira, 2000; Timperio et al., 2006; Trost et al., 2003; Yang et al., 1996). That said, there is a tendency to view ‘family’ as a singular, static concept, a space in which substantial research is conducted but without much thought to its character. Whilst the family has been recognised as a key site for young people’s engagement in physical activity, Kay et al. (2008) argue that we have been slow to recognise that contemporary families are changing and are doing so in ways that adversely affect activity involvement. As early as 1997, Shaw identified the need to recognise that there was no single reality of family life arguing that researchers must “look beyond middle class, two parent heterosexual families” (Shaw, 1997, p.109). Similarly, Freysinger (1997, p.1) argued that there was a need to redefine the notions and concepts of family, to “open [our] eyes to the multiple ways that families are enacted and constructed”. With regard to sports related research in general, Kay (2004, p.53) has argued against an “uncritical



treatment of the concept of family” and suggested the broadening of empirical research to reflect the accelerating growth of ‘non-traditional’ family forms (Kay, 2000) in all aspects of research that place a central focus on families.

These calls stem from the growing diversity in people’s domestic arrangements and living patterns that are less and less adequately captured by conventional models of family (Allan and Crow, 2001). Now, many children are being born into more diverse family structures, with even more likely to experience transitions from one family type to another (Jenson and McKee, 2003). In truth, recent demographic shifts would suggest that family can no longer be seen as a static social entity, with today’s society supporting a host of different family structures (Allan and Crow, 2001). To put this in perspective, a report published by the Office for National Statistics (McConnell and Wilson, 2007) highlighted that the proportion of married couple families has declined, with a corresponding rise in lone parenthood so that lone parent families now make up 1 in 4 of the total number of families in the United Kingdom (UK). Furthermore, more than 1 in 10 young people live in reconstituted stepfamilies (Smallwood and Wilson, 2007). In fact, a report by UNICEF (2007) that focused on 24 developed nations placed the UK second last to the United States with regard the overall proportion of lone parent families.

The issue of family structure has also gained a great deal of attention and recent recognition in all forms of media, with programmes aired in the UK such as the American ‘mockumentary’ *Modern Family* taking a satirical look at the daily trials and tribulations of three different families (traditional, same sex and stepfamily). Given its prevalence in society, it is even more perplexing to think that family structure has not yet featured prominently in

physical activity research, particularly in those that place an emphasis on the family as a vital influence on participation.

Previously, Duncan et al. (2004a) have suggested that the interactive effects of family relationships and young people's physical activity require further consideration. However, the dissolution of more common two parent families and an increase in lone parenthood through death, divorce, separation and child birth outside of marriage may have altered, or in some cases weakened, family bonds, the quality of relationships and lifestyles (Haskey, 1998). Thus, such changes may affect the influence that parents have on their children in terms of what behaviours they adopt and the choices they make and are allowed to make. As such, Macdonald et al. (2004) and Wright et al. (2003) have called for future studies to take into account the different contexts that shape young people's lives, as well as the circumstances that may prevent them from participating in various physical activities.

To date, several quantitative studies have explored the associations between family structure and young people's physical activity levels, though the findings are somewhat conflicting. Findings from the United States (Sallis, Alcaraz et al., 1999; Sallis, Prochaska et al., 1999), Canada (O'Loughlin et al., 1999), Australia (Bagley et al., 2006; Hesketh et al., 2008; Salmon et al., 2005) and England (Gorely et al., 2009) have reported no association between young people's activity in lone and two parent families. In contrast, further US studies (Duncan et al., 2004a; Lindquist et al., 1999; Sallis et al., 1992) stated that those in lone parent families were more active whilst additional international studies (Hesketh et al., 2006; McVeigh et al., 2004; Tremblay and Willms, 2003) found that young people in two parent families were typically more active than those in lone parent families. For the majority of these studies though, no distinction was made between traditional intact couple families

and stepfamilies. In order to fully understand the context in which these conflicting behaviours occur (and gain perspectives from the full range of family structures evident in society), further research is needed and particularly qualitative research, as there are currently not enough studies to permit robust conclusions about the influence of family structure on young people's activity (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006).

Qualitative research in this domain therefore has the potential to foreground individual nuances and allow for additional understanding of factors that influence young people's physical activity choices. It has been argued that it could be of value to adopt a qualitative perspective to "add to the somewhat hollow stories of participation statistics and to contribute to a greater understanding of inequalities and differences in participation in physical activities" (Lee et al., 2009, p.74). Whilst some studies have touched on issues of family structure and physical activity as a feature of an alternative focus (Dagkas and Stathi, 2007; Dwyer et al., 2008; Macdonald et al., 2004; Thompson et al., 2010; Wright et al., 2003; Yang et al., 1996) certainly more in-depth research is required that explores the influence of family structure and the ways in which different facets of individual families intersect to influence behaviour.

Although very few studies have sought to explore the influence of family structure from a qualitative perspective, so too have few explored family through the eyes of young people. While there is growing recognition of the potential that young people and children in particular can offer to the research process with regard to both their present perspectives and experiences (Jeanes, 2006, 2009), in general, family life has been explored from the perspectives of the adults. Jeanes (2009, p.212) has even suggested that it is a "dubious venture" to omit young people from the research process. There is therefore a need to give

voice to children, to listen to their experiences of physical activity within the context of and in relation to their families (Freysinger, 1997; Macdonald et al., 2005). Certainly more research is required that explores the influence of family structure on young people's physical activity engagement but also, that provides recognition of young people's role as social actors, who are *also* active participants within the family.

## **1.2 Aims of the Study and Research Questions**

This thesis sought to place an emphasis on understanding how young people's physical activity dispositions were constructed. However, there remained a focus on the wider structural and institutional processes that impact on young people's lives since there is significant evidence to suggest that their lives continue to be constrained by very real material limits and lack of opportunities which are more evident in some families than others. As such, Bourdieu's work building upon notions of structure and agency helped to understand how individual choices pertaining to activity were constrained by wider structural forces. The purpose and overall aim of this study was therefore to develop a micro and macro level understanding of the influence of family structure on young people's engagement in physical activity. Importantly, there was a focus on different families from low socioeconomic status backgrounds only, since this allowed for a greater diversity in family structures. Moreover, in contrast to higher socioeconomic status individuals, young people from low socioeconomic status backgrounds are considered more likely to engage in activities in and around the home, with family members (Lee et al., 2009; Ziviani, Wadley et al., 2008), making them an ideal group in which to explore the influence of family structure. The focus on families from low socioeconomic status backgrounds also allowed for greater comparability between family structures and provided an insight into the lives of these, arguably more disadvantaged,

groups. In addition, the study aimed to provide further insight into the concept of ‘family’ as a pivotal space within the lives of these young people from different social upbringings.

Given the focus of the thesis and theoretical concepts informing the research, the *main research question* driving the study was:

- **How does family structure affect young people’s dispositions towards and engagement in particular forms of physical activity?**

Derived from this overarching question were the following key *sub-questions*:

- Does family structure mediate the amount of time young people spend engaged in specific types of activities?
- Are young people in certain family structures exposed to more joint activities with immediate family members?
- Does family structure affect the amount of time parents are able to spend with their offspring?
- What types of support are provided by families for young people with regard to physical activity?
- What barriers to physical activity do young people from different family structures experience and how do they impact on physical activity choices?
- To what extent is physical activity valued within families and how are those physical activity beliefs and values transmitted to children and adolescents?

Each of these sub-questions was explored through different elements of the research methods. For instance, the first sub-question was answered by a combination of the quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interview data (sections 5.2.1 and 5.3.3), as was the second sub-question (5.2.2 and 5.3.3). The third sub-question was answered by questionnaire data only (5.2.3). In contrast, the fourth and fifth sub-questions were addressed by interview data (5.3.1

and 5.3.2 respectively), whilst the final sub-question was also answered by interview data and detailed in sections 5.3.4, 5.3.5 and 5.3.6. In keeping with the mixed method approach, a combination of these quantitative and qualitative questions then helped to explicate a deeper understanding of the issues and provided a more complete picture in response to the original research question.

### **1.3 Background to the Research**

As previously mentioned, relatively few quantitative and qualitative studies have sought to explore the influence of family structure on young people's physical activity. However, some of those exploring the influence of family as a whole have drawn on similar concepts to those employed here to understand how individual actions are shaped by families. Those studies that explore the family influence on young people's agency and choices with regard to physical activities (Coakley, 2006; Fitzgerald and Kirk, 2009; Lee and Macdonald, 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Macdonald et al., 2004; Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010) all indicate that family is an important arena for nurturing physical activity tastes, preferences and interests and is influential in developing young peoples emerging habitus.

In order to give full consideration to all of the aspects of the family environment in which individuals act, this study drew from a socio-cultural perspective to explore young people's physical activity engagement. A socio-cultural perspective involved the consideration of:

“...physical activity issues that highlights social (power relations, political and economic factors, dominant and subordinate groups) and cultural (shared ways of thinking and acting such as ideas, beliefs, values and behaviours) aspects and influences” (Cliff et al., 2009, p.179).

Such an approach allowed for various elements of a social environment, in this case the family, to be explored critically in relation to the numerous forces involved and uncovered with regard to young people's own experiences and lives (Cliff et al., 2009). In order to illustrate the socio-cultural aspects of young people's lives that impact on activity, this thesis drew on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu to guide the analysis and discussion, viewing the family as a particular social field.

For Bourdieu the family can be viewed as a social field (1996), a site in which capital is accumulated and dispositions (of habitus) are acquired. As such, families are key environments of social reproduction, playing a vital role in maintaining social order, by reproducing the structure of social space and social relations. Bourdieu (1998) regards the family as a key field in which dispositions of habitus, associated with taste, interests, behaviours and attitudes are embedded in young people. According to Bourdieu (1990, p.52) the habitus is socially developed "systems of durable, transposable dispositions" enabling individuals to act in a certain way in response to familiar and unusual situations. Essentially, habitus shapes appropriate action within given fields and thus may determine preferences and practices for physical activities. Capital on the other hand includes social, cultural or economic forms and offers a perspective on the ways in which a person's resources are privileged, marginalised, traded or acquired within a given field (Bourdieu, 1986). Importantly, the key element of both habitus and capital is that they operate and evolve in relation to a specific field, in this case within an individual's family.

Though the habitus helps to organise behaviour towards specific activities, it is also susceptible to change. An individual's habitus is flexible, with the ability to adapt to its social circumstances and as a result, is continuously restructured by its encounters (Reay, 2004).

Since habitus operates with regard to specific fields, changes in fields (such as changes in family structure) may result in changes in an individual's habitus and thus alter behaviour with regard to physical activity. In broad terms, physical activity participation is seen to be shaped by social structures and essentially, how young people's habitus is shaped may affect their initial and ongoing involvement in physical activity.

To fully comprehend social phenomenon and explain events or patterns, Bourdieu suggested it is necessary to explore the make up of individual agents and the particular field in which they operate, coupled with the particular conditions that shape social space (Wacquant, 2008). The family was therefore explored here in relation to how it develops and affects young people's physical activity habitus. Essentially, Bourdieu's concepts place an emphasis on structure and agency and were incorporated to provide a means of analysing the workings of the social world. The structural factors considered are those of family and in particular, three different family structures: intact-couple, lone parent and stepfamily, and provided a means of contrasting young people's social situations. Agency on the other hand refers to an individual's ability to make free choices, to control how they shape their lives (Woolley, 2009) and with regard to this thesis, manifests in the type of physical activity behaviours they adopt.

Adopting such concepts suggested that the research should be conducted within a specific methodological framework. Working with habitus' duality as both collective and individualised, the research employed a mixed methodology to explore micro and macro issues, thus offering a two-dimensional picture of the phenomenon being studied. The research was sequenced into two distinct quantitative and qualitative phases as these were thought to be capable of establishing a picture of structure and agency. The quantitative



element was designed to reflect an overview of agency at a macro level for those who share similar social conditions allowing comparisons to be made between family structures. The qualitative element allowed for an individualistic perspective to emerge and investigated agency by exploring and comparing how young people reported on their present lives, past experiences, and future possibilities. Bourdieu's concepts were used to work between these binaries and provide a more complete response to the overarching research question. As such, quantitative data were collected from 389 young people aged between 11 and 14 years from three schools across the West Midlands, UK. This detailed demographic information and family structure together with the type of activities young people engaged in outside of school and with whom they engaged. Additional qualitative data were then collected via paired semi structured interviews from 62 students using purposive sampling. This sample included young people from intact couple families, stepfamilies and lone parent families. The paired interviews sought to explore how young people's engagement and choices for activities were shaped within certain family structures. All individuals invited to take part were drawn from schools selected from close geographic wards in an effort to select a sample with similar socioeconomic backgrounds, based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score. Selecting families from low socioeconomic status backgrounds therefore ensured a greater diversity in family structure and presented a sample of young people who were thought to engage in more activities in and around the home with immediate family members (Lee et al., 2009; Ziviani, Wadley et al., 2008).

#### **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is structured around chapters that allow the reader to gauge an understanding of the research informing the study, the processes involved in data collection and analysis, and

the findings that emerged. Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter explores an extensive review of the current national and international literature pertaining to the research topic. The literature here first discusses the family and in particular, changes in society that have led to the prominence of various family structures, all of which are defined and discussed. Thereafter, young people's engagement in physical activity is explored. There is a special emphasis here on the relationship with family as a mediating factor for participation and importantly, with regard research pertaining to different family structures.

The third chapter of this thesis provides an interrogation of the theoretical perspectives that have informed the research questions, methodology, data analysis and discussion. In particular, this chapter outlines Bourdieu's key concepts of habitus, field and capital and details how Bourdieu viewed the family as a particular social field and key site of social reproduction. After this, a critique of Bourdieu's work is presented before finally, these key concepts are explored in relation to their use within other physical activity related research.

The methodology chapter initially considers different types of research and their philosophical assumptions. After this, a justification is provided for the specific methodological framework employed alongside the main research question and use of Bourdieu's conceptual tools. Then, the specific research focus and research questions are discussed along with the methodology and methods employed. These methods are critically analysed individually in accordance with the sequential nature of the study. Details from the pilot study are also discussed before the procedures and sampling for each method of the main study are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analysis process, consideration of legitimisation issues (validity and reliability) as they relate to mixed methods research, and finally, a reflective account of the research process.

Given the sequential nature of the mixed methods approach, the results chapter then presents data from the quantitative and qualitative elements independently and in the same order that data collection was undertaken. For the quantitative results, the focus is on the types of activities done, the amount of joint family activities and the frequency of meals eaten together as a family. The qualitative results then present data that links with the quantitative findings and includes first, the types of support and barriers to activity, then data relating to the types of activities and importance of family meals, and finally, data that reveal how young people's habitus is constructed and affected by family structure.

The penultimate chapter then draws together the quantitative and qualitative data with the latter illuminating the meaning behind the former. Here, the discussion is split into three main sections that sequentially build upon each other. First, the influence of the family on young people's physical activity with regard to support, barriers and the types of activity they engage in are discussed. Building on the types of support and barriers mentioned previously, the next section then outlines the importance of family meals in helping to construct health related dispositions and the effect of family structure on mediating the amount of meals eaten together. Finally, the different sources of support and barriers to activity, along with the construction of health related dispositions are linked to explore how young people's overall habitus and physical activity tastes are shaped by family structure and how this subsequently impacted on individual behaviour.

Finally, the concluding chapter draws the thesis full circle, back to this chapter (the introduction) outlining the original aims and research questions after which the main findings are summarised. This is followed by a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study before future research directions are presented based on the relevant literature and findings from this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter sets out to identify the national and international research that informs the current study. Since the focus of this thesis is on the family in its various forms, the opening of this chapter sets out to inform our understanding of the family and how it has changed over recent decades. In doing so, it recognises and defines the different family structures that are evident in society today. Following this, the chapter next explores our understanding of physical activity and its basic principles; the different types of physical (and sedentary) activities and its association with health in young people. This is important since justifications of ‘physical activity for health’ are widely used to promote activity across various domains. Thereafter, the different opportunities for physical activity are detailed before the focus shifts to the influence of the family in support of young people’s activity engagement. Here, because research pertaining to family structure and physical activity in particular is relatively sparse, the majority of the research findings relate to the family in general, before family structure and physical activity is explicitly explored from both scientific (quantitative) and sociological (qualitative) perspectives.

## **2.1 The Family**

Within everyday life our understandings of ‘families’ are often taken for granted. Yet, closer examination reveals a good deal of uncertainty about their character and how they are changing. The UK and most westernised countries over the last three or four decades have witnessed major shifts in the demographic constitution of families especially in aspects of their formation and dissolution (Jensen and McKee, 2003). As a consequence, there is now far greater diversity in people’s domestic arrangements and living patterns which are less and less adequately captured by conventional models of family (Allan and Crow, 2001). More and more families and children in particular, are also likely to experience transitions from one family structure to another (Jensen and McKee, 2003; Kay, 2004). This trend is not only prevalent in the UK but also other developed countries including Australia (Wise, 2003) and America (UNICEF, 2007). Against this backdrop of change is a need to explore and clarify what we mean by the term family. Existing understandings for instance do not always capture the diversity of family forms and thus extending our understandings of these terms will ensure that marginalised families are reflected in mainstream research, policy and practice. As such, the first part of this chapter explores the concept of the family in its entirety, unearthing the main types of families evident in the UK today.

### ***2.1.1 Defining the Family***

Within sociology, the family is a concept that has received much attention over the past few decades. Most of us live in families and most of us live in households containing one family. To understand ‘family’, it is first important to distinguish it from what we would term a ‘household’. What may cause confusion is that often, many family activities are household based; that is, they arise through interaction and engagement with people sharing a home.

However, students at university or young children at boarding school who share a home, often without much adult supervision, can not be considered a family in the conventional sense of the term (Allan and Crow, 2001; Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). Definitions of *households* essentially refer to social groupings that typically share a range of domestic activities (McConnell and Wilson, 2007). As such, a household may contain more than one family. In 2006 for example, more than two thirds of households contained one or more families and of those, 0.2 million households were multiple family households (McConnell and Wilson, 2007).

In contrast, there remains some variation in understanding what is meant by the term *family*. McConnell and Wilson (2007, p.94) define family as “a married or cohabiting couple with or without their never married child or children (of any age), including couples with no children and lone parents with their never married child or children”. They also state that children within a family may be dependent (under the age of 16 or 16 – 18 years in full time education) or non dependent (older than 16 and living with their parents) (McConnell and Wilson, 2007). Allan and Crow (2001) argue that unlike a household, the family is usually one in which partnership and parenthood was given greater priority than other kinship relationships and, while family obligations extended to wider kin, they were most significant where family members lived in the same household. What holds these notions of ‘family’ together is the theme of kinship; that family is essentially about the solidarities which exist between those who are taken to be related to one another through ties of blood or marriage (Allan and Crow, 2001). However, there are limitations to this and similar definitions of ‘family’. For example, they often fail to include families living apart, in multiple homes and by only drawing on co-residential relatives, Tillman and Nam (2008) argue that we are constrained in our ability to fully examine patterns of exchange and support. The standard

definition of the family (used in many censuses and demographic surveys) restricts the family unit to persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption, living in the same residence. Thus, if we are to better understand the structure and function of families, in future we must develop definitions of family that more adequately tap into the everyday experiences of family members (Tillman and Nam, 2008).

Despite definition, the family has always been seen as a key social institution providing a stable bedrock for society which infused children with traditional values and beliefs. However, families have been changing in response to the social and economic milieu in which they are embedded, as well as experiencing changes in the nature of relationships within families (Pryor and Rodgers 2001). As such, recent demographic shifts in family formation have meant that the family is no longer “so readily seen as a static social entity” (Allan and Crow, 2001, p.3), something that has proved significant in framing contemporary understandings of the family. Family forms are now many and varied, beyond the boundaries of those defined through partner and blood relationships. It is therefore important to understand first, the social and economic changes shaping families and second, the different types of family evident in society today and the effect they have on the agents acting within them.

### ***2.1.2 Demographic Change and Family Structure***

To make sense of the relationship between family and young people’s physical activity choices, careful consideration of the variety of family forms is required. For example, over the past few decades, various changes in the economy, social legislation and societal attitudes have had an impact on the formation of families meaning families are changing at a rapid

pace and becoming increasingly diverse. Aspects of economic restructuring, including higher levels of unemployment, greater job insecurity and stronger competition in the labour market have all affected family life and family relationships both in the U.K. and abroad (Turtiainen et al., 2007), leading to changes in parental working patterns. Economic changes have subsequently brought about a decreased dependency of women on partners, coupled with an increasing need for both partners to work (Allan and Crow, 2001; Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). As a result of an increase in dual earner families, family life has become less gender segregated with mothers' and fathers' roles often reversed leading to a much more egalitarian family orientation (Jenson and McKee, 2003) and a far greater involvement by fathers in childrearing (Kay, 2004; Yeung et al., 2001). This has led to an increase in the total amount of time parents spend in work which may reduce their time and energy available to support their child's activity.

Moreover, societal ideas about family are becoming more diverse. Since the early 1970's, there has been a steady decline in the number of recorded marriages with the total falling to its lowest number since 1895 (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2009). Individuals and families are now more able to exercise personal choice over domestic and familial arrangements than previously; their opinions no longer as constrained by social convention or economic need. Current ideas about marriage, cohabitation and divorce for example, can be understood as an element within a generational shift expressing fresh aspirations as to what 'normal' family life should be like (Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). For instance, the Office for National Statistics (2004) argued that the proportion of married women aged 18 to 49 has declined continuously since 1979, from almost three quarters (74 per cent) to less than half (49 per cent) in 2002 while during the same period, the proportion of single women more than doubled. The *Divorce Reform Act 1969*, subsequently



consolidated into the *Matrimonial Causes Act 1973*, removed the concepts of a ‘guilty party’ and ‘matrimonial offence’ and introduced the idea of ‘the irretrievable breakdown of marriage’ (ONS, 2009) which meant that divorce was much easier to attain, resulting in rising divorce rates (ONS, 2009).

Coupled with the decline of marriages and the increasing incidence of divorce, the delay of childbearing has also influenced the formation of families in recent times. According to the Office for National Statistics (2009, p.13) “this partly reflects the choices many women make to live independently, to continue their education and to participate more fully in the labour market rather than follow the more ‘traditional’ route of early marriage”. This is in addition to an increase in the number of births outside of marriage. Figures published by the Office for National Statistics found that there were 320,800 live births outside of marriage in 2008 - accounting for 45 per cent of all births that year (ONS, 2009), all of which suggests there is a strong possibility that the child could be brought up in a non traditional family form. Finally, the development of Britain as a more ethnically mixed, multicultural society has fostered the emergence of more divergent family formations (Kay, 2004), all of which highlight the inappropriateness of conceptualising family and family life as though it were static.

The household in which an individual currently lives is therefore no longer necessarily seen to be synonymous with their ‘family’. For many people, their close relationships extend to other households formed through dissolved marriages, cohabitation and broader kin relationships (Finch, 2007). Modern family relationships are thus in a state of flux, paving the way for a host of different **family structures** to come to the fore. Wise (2003, p.1) defines family structure in terms of “parents’ relationships to children in the household (for example, biological or non-biological), parents’ marital status and relationships history (for example,

divorced, separated, remarried), the number of parents in the family, and parents' sexual orientation". Given the range of elements included in this definition, family structure can clearly incorporate a host of different formations. However, as mentioned earlier, the standard definition of family used in the U.K. and most Western countries has predominantly been defined on a biological basis, with definitions choosing to describe the biological relationship between adult and child within a household, which may exclude some family formations. Despite these definitions potentially limiting description and analysis of families, adopting a biological basis to define family structure was seen to be the most common and most reflective of its use within society today. Hence, the term family structure used throughout this thesis will therefore relate to the composition of a family on a biological basis with regard to number of parents in a household and their relationship to the child involved in the study. This definition aligns with those prominently used to inform policy and national statistics. For example, in 2007 prominent government reports indicated that approximately 64 per cent of families in the UK consisted of dependant children living with both biological parents (intact couple families), 24 per cent consisted of children living with only one biological parent (lone parent families), and 12 per cent of families consisted of those living with a biological parent and their partner (stepfamilies) (McConnell and Wilson, 2007).

While the definitions of the different family structures outlined below are not the only types of family that exist, they are the most prominent that appear in census data, surveys and media reports. It should be noted that from this point forward, any reference to 'family structure' refers to the biological structure of the family at a meso level. However, it is acknowledged that different family structures will ultimately give rise to different conditions of existence and structural social influences on a macro level. In many cases, it is the structural social influences mediated by family structure that effectively construct and

constrain individual agency in particular ways. As such, the following discussion of different family structures also takes into account the different material circumstances that are more closely related with some types of family than others.

### **2.1.3 *Intact Couple Families***

Perhaps the most obvious family formation is that which is more commonly known as the nuclear family – the *intact couple family*; whereby all children are the biological children of two non divorced parents (Wise, 2003). Marriage is not a prerequisite of this definition, rather it requires the child lives with both biological parents whether married or not. In the UK in 2009, almost 8.3 million dependent children lived with married parents and around 1.7 million lived with cohabiting parents (ONS, 2009), though cohabitation may be a precursor to marriage (Allan and Crow, 2001; Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). These ‘traditional’ family units are considered to be most common in higher social class groups and among white populations (Kay et al., 2008). It is therefore argued that these ‘traditional’ family structures are, unlike others, relatively well resourced (Kay, 2004) in supporting young people’s physical activity engagement.

### **2.1.4 *Lone Parent Families***

Though not the only contributing factors, the heightened incidence of divorce and drop in marriage rates have been an important source of influence on the increasing rise of *single or lone parent families* (Haskey, 1998, 2002). Wise (2003, p.21) defines single parent families as families “in which all children are the biological children of a non-married, non-cohabitating man or woman” (Wise, 2003). However, Allan and Crow (2001) argue that there should also be a distinction made between ‘lone’ and ‘single’ parent families since the term

‘single’ connotes ‘unmarried’ (that is, *never* married). As such, it may be more appropriate to use the term ‘lone parent’ when referring to the broader category of all one parent families as it avoids identifying parents solely by marital status (Allan and Crow, 2001; Higgins et al., 2006). Henceforth, the term lone parent families will be adopted when referring to this type of family in the forthcoming literature.

Lone-parenthood now forms a distinct part of the overall composition of families with children. At the turn of the millennium, there were an estimated 1.75 million lone parent families in the UK (Haskey, 2002) roughly equating to one in four of all families with dependent children (Haskey, 2002; McConnell and Wilson, 2007). Furthermore, lone parenthood remains largely the preserve of women, with lone father families accounting for around 1 to 3 per cent (0.3 million in 2009) and lone mother families approximately 24 per cent (1.8 million in 2009) of the total number of families with dependent children (ONS, 2009).

Lone parent families are also most likely to experience social and economic deprivation especially with regard to their material circumstances and are therefore more likely to be associated with lower social class groupings (Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). Perhaps this is not surprising since divorce more often than not impacts on the amount of economic capital per family due to the loss of income from a departing partner (Allan and Crow, 2001; Coltrane and Collins, 2001). However, lone parent-hood remains highest for low educated mothers though overall, lone parent families in general tend to be severely disadvantaged (Save the Children, 2011). Astonishingly, approximately a quarter of all children living in lone parent families are classed as being in severe poverty (Save the Children, 2011). This is particularly apparent for lone mother families in comparison to lone fathers (ONS, 2004). Furthermore, as

well as being disadvantaged financially, lone parent families, and especially lone mothers, tend to be deprived with regard to their housing, often living in smaller homes with less space and fewer household amenities (Allan and Crow, 2001). These factors have important implications as lone parent families may face greater barriers with regard to their ability to support young people's physical activity. This is considered in further detail later in this thesis (see section 2.5.2).

Even though ethnicity is not a prominent focus of this study, it is equally important to acknowledge several differences with regard to various cultural groups, particularly some black and ethnic minority communities. For instance, the majority of Black Caribbean families with children are headed by a lone parent (54 per cent), while in contrast two-parent families are in the minority (34 per cent) (Kay et al. 2008). This figure is twice as high as for the country as a whole and seven to eight times more than the British Indian community (ONS, 2003). Lone parent families from ethnic minority groups may also be vulnerable to low income and poverty as a result of structural inequality in labour markets, while they may also experience barriers to supporting their child's physical activity since they face further disadvantage from social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000).

### **2.1.5 *Stepfamilies***

Increases in marital divorce and cohabitation breakdown have also led to a rise in the number of stepfamilies. Wise (2003, p.21) identifies *stepfamilies* as "families in which the study child is the biological child of one parent but biologically unrelated to the other parent": usually formed when people with children remarry or cohabit with new partners. Using data from the 2001 Census (the first census to allow the identification of stepfamilies), 0.7 million stepfamilies with dependent children were identified, of which 0.4 million were married

couple stepfamilies and 0.3 million were cohabiting couple stepfamilies (McConnell and Wilson, 2007). In the formation of stepfamilies, it is however debatable as to how established the cohabitation has to be in order to fit the earlier definition and as such, may generate different responses from the different adults and children involved (Allan and Crow, 2001). A stepfamily may also include one or more set of step children as well as half siblings born to new partnerships. It is generally acknowledged that stepfamilies may be more complex organisations than other family types due to the parents' relationship histories and the number and ages of dependent and non dependent children involved (Wise, 2003).

Like lone parent families, stepfamilies are also more common in low social class groups (Kay et al. 2008). Despite relatively high employment rates among adults, new stepfamilies (with both adults working) may face a period of increased cost whereby members are having to contribute to the cost of a previous home as a result of the dissolution of a previous relationship (Kay, 2004). Thus, for some stepfamilies, low income may be a transitory feature as a result of the new family formation, though for many, there is relative consistency that living in a stepfamily is associated with lower income (Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). Coincidentally, a UNICEF report on child wellbeing indicated that "there is evidence to associate growing up in lone parent families and stepfamilies with greater risk to well-being, including a greater risk of dropping out of school, of leaving home early, of poorer health and low skills" (UNICEF 2007, p.23). Hence, these factors may contribute toward the potential for a child to continue to engage in physical activity.

In addition, the formation of stepfamilies also evokes concern with regard to the relationships between the actors involved. Following parental separation immediate family ties are not necessarily confined to one household causing complications regarding

commitments of individuals to resident and non resident family members. For children in stepfamilies, commitments to family members are no longer defined by blood relationships and their role within the family may have changed, whereby management within families is by negotiation rather than command (Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). The arrival of a step parent can disrupt the previous balance in the family in terms of cohesion and the distribution of free time which can lead to conflict between all parties that ultimately impact on the children (Jenkins, 2009). Furthermore, stepfamilies reportedly spend less family time together, particularly with regard to activities outside of the home (Allan and Crow, 2001; Pryor and Rodgers, 2001), although this may reflect the fact that children in stepfamilies spend part of their time with the non resident parent (Jenkins, 2009). Since stepfamilies are normally transitions from lone parent families, Allan and Crow (2001) suggest that a child may generate feelings of resentment about the amount of time the biological parent is spending with the step parent or, that their involvement in family decisions is reduced. For many children then, family relationships may need to be redefined and positively established (which may take some time) on a more regular basis as new partnerships are formed (Finch, 2007).

#### **2.1.6 Same Sex Families**

Recent demographic shifts, coupled with a growing acceptance of divorce and sexual relations outside of marriage have diluted the prevalence of the heterosexual two parent family and allowed for a more open view and existence of same sex parents adopting and raising children (Sullivan, 2004). Wise (2003, p.21) defines *same sex families* as “families in which children are parented by two adults in a gay or lesbian relationship who have either biological or social links with the study child”. In the UK more than 16,000 gay and lesbian couples were married in the first full year following the creation and legalisation of civil partnerships (Smallwood

and Wilson, 2007). However, figures for the amount of same sex families are difficult to comprehend since parents will differ in the extent to which they are open about their sexuality and, fearing discrimination, some may choose to hide their sexuality from their familial, professional and wider social networks (Sullivan, 2004; Wise, 2003). Like many stepfamilies, Wise (2003) argues that a large proportion of children are likely to have been born or adopted in the context of a heterosexual couple relationship that later dissolved. However, as same sex couple families are choosing parenthood through a variety of means, the extent to which family members are biologically related can differ, contradicting the many narrow and inaccurate definitions of what constitutes family. In addition, like many ethnic minority families, same sex families may also face discrimination and disadvantage (Sullivan, 2004) in supporting their child's physical activity. Though this family type was not a focus of this study, given that it is considered extremely difficult to develop feasible methods of recruiting representative samples (Wise, 2003), it was still important to highlight another formation in which families exist in society today.

### **2.1.7 Summary**

Regardless of formation or perceived definition, the family remains a key institution within social life in which young people are socialised. Families are also routinely viewed as a key site of personal achievement and identity (Allan and Crow, 2001). It is therefore important to note that despite the family structure, family remains a site in which young people experience and ascribe their own positions of self and thus their dispositions and behaviour are shaped accordingly. The Children's Society (2007) even suggests that families are *the* most powerful influence on children's lives. For many children their family is their sole source of survival and nurturance (Pryor and Rodgers, 2001) and thus changes in family structure may greatly



affect their present and future health and behaviours (Jensen and McKee, 2003). Indeed, families that rely on welfare benefits (lone parent and some stepfamilies) may face greater barriers to supporting young people's activity, while increasing diversity in family structures (as a result of family breakdown, separation, divorce and step-parenting) may produce particularly complex lifestyles in which young people's participation in physical activities are especially constrained. In addition, different family structures may add to the complexity of understanding how young people make choices alone, and in relation to, significant others.

That said, as family composition is a fluid and dynamic feature for many children, Pryor and Rodgers (2001) argue that comparisons are often based on a snap shot of the type of family children are in at the time such outcomes are assessed. Therefore, any assessments are often specific to that time and place and are difficult to generalise to wider populations or times. However, this diversity in family structures presents a unique opportunity for this study to observe how changes in society and specifically the family, affect social relations and practices of young people, in company with how parents in different family structures manage their offspring's activity and communicate messages of physical activity and health.

## **2.2 Understanding Physical Activity**

Having discussed the different family types that are evident in society today, the following discussion of literature seeks to explore the basic principles associated with physical activity. There is a widely held belief that physical activity in childhood and adolescence has the potential to contribute to important health outcomes. So too is it assumed that physical *inactivity* may have an adverse affect on health. In fact, today's society is preoccupied with interrelated issues such as obesity and increasingly sedentary lifestyles and within numerous institutions (governments, schools, families) the practice of promoting physical activity is

based on its associated links with young people's health. This section therefore aims to provide an understanding of what constitutes physical activity before exploring the different types of activity (physical and sedentary) that young people might undertake. Finally, this section considers the current state of physical activity in young people, how active they are and why there is a need to explore their engagement from an alternative, sociological perspective.

### ***2.2.1 Defining Physical Activity***

Physical activity is generally defined as “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure” (Caspersen et al., 1985, p.126). This has probably become the most widely accepted definition within academic and policy circles. Caspersen et al. (1985) argue that if physical activity requires energy expenditure, then everyone performs physical activity in order to sustain life. This definition therefore places physical activity behaviour on a continuum that ranges from minimal movement such as fidgeting, right through to maximum movement such as sprinting; although the amount and intensity is largely subject to personal choice and will very much vary from person to person. However, some experts argue that this definition is too broad and does not do justice to the amount of bodily movement and thus energy expenditure that is required to produce health related benefits. Anderssen et al. (2006, p.514) for example define physical activity as “voluntary habitual movements of the skeletal muscles performed during leisure time producing a lack of breath or sweat”. They adopt a definition that points to activities with at least a minimum degree of intensity in accordance with the current literature put forward by public health practitioners. The definition also highlights the complexity of physical activity. In most cases it is frequently categorised by the context in which it occurs and can include occupational

activity, everyday household chores, transportation and leisure activity. Leisure time activity can then be further subdivided into competitive sports, recreational activities and planned exercise (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). The context or domain in which physical activity is carried out may be important in generating an understanding of the purpose or intent behind the activity.

In contrast, the concept of physical *inactivity* is less straightforward with some authors suggesting that physical inactivity is a major contributor to the burden of disease (Timperio et al., 2006). However, Marshall and Welk (2008) argue that physical inactivity implies an absence of physical activity and, given the definitions presented earlier, can only really occur during sleep. As such, physical inactivity essentially refers to those who do not meet specific levels of physical activity. Instead, Marshall and Welk (2008) contend that the term sedentary behaviour may be more appropriate as it includes a range of activities that can be considered *inactive*.

### **2.2.2 Types of Physical Activity**

Given the broad definition of physical activity presented above, there is a need to briefly explore the range of activities that physical activity might include. Moreover, one of the research sub-questions sought to specifically explore differences in the types of activities young people engage in and so providing a clear breakdown of the different types of activity is imperative. Several authors (Coalter, 1996; Fairclough et al., 2002; Green, 2004, Green et al., 2005) have previously attempted to classify certain forms of physical activity. The categories that these authors have suggested were specifically designed with regard to activities within a Physical Education curriculum, though the nature of the activities are

common outside of this environment and do help provide a better understanding of the types of activities that young people may engage in.

Perhaps one of the most common forms of physical activity is as organised sports activities. However, these types of activities can be further subdivided. Team games for instance can fall into different categories of invasion games (such as hockey or rugby) and striking and fielding games (such as rounders or softball) (Fairclough et al., 2002). Overall, the defining purpose of team games is that they are competitive in nature, with the aim being to outscore the opponents. Team sports (of any kind) are also considered to be a more social activity as they usually require several players to make up a team (Fairclough et al., 2002).

However, some individual activities don't fit this definition and instead are what Coalter (1996) refers to as *lifestyle* activities or what Fairclough et al. (2002) term *lifetime* activities. These are "characteristically individual or small group activities which are flexible in nature, usually less competitive and tend to be pursued more recreationally" (Smith et al., 2004, p.460). Such activities include swimming, cycling, jogging or walking. In that sense, they can be freely undertaken when and how individuals choose, with whom and wherever they want (Green et al., 2005) and are not restricted to particular contexts unlike most team games. Hence, Fairclough et al. (2002) argue that because of their nature, requiring limited organisation and minimal equipment, these types of activities are more readily carried over into adulthood.

Though not a definitive, set in stone, categorisation of activities, it does help better understand the different types of activities that children engage in. However, in the home environment in particular, children can also engage in physical activity in the form of household duties or domestic chores and responsibilities. Activities such as cleaning,

gardening or walking the dog, which meet the definition of physical activity discussed earlier, are also valuable forms of activity.

### ***2.2.3 Sedentary Activity***

As well as various physical activities, young people are also prone to engage in sedentary activities. The word ‘sedentary’ derives from the Latin verb ‘sedere’ which means to sit and helps classify sedentary behaviours as those that commonly involve sitting (Marshall and Welk, 2008). However, not all sedentary behaviours are inherently ‘bad’ with behaviours such as talking with friends and doing homework, important for social and cognitive development (Marshall and Welk, 2008). Despite this, there is growing concern that free time traditionally spent on active play is increasingly being spent on sedentary behaviours. Opportunities for such behaviours have increased with recent social, environmental and technological advances influencing children’s activity choices (Daley, 2002; Telema et al., 2005). Within the home, readily accessible sedentary opportunities include the number of television sets, access to the internet, a personal computer and electronic games consoles (Biddle et al., 2009; Salmon et al., 2008). For many young people, sedentary behaviours are more readily accessible and tend to be more reinforcing than physical activity alternatives (Gorely et al., 2004; Marshall et al., 2002). As such, young people appear to choose sedentary activities even when physical activities alternatives are freely available (Gorely et al., 2004; Marshall et al., 2002).

### ***2.2.4 Benefits of Physical Activity***

As mentioned previously, the notion that regular physical activity may influence the health of children and adolescents is a driving force behind justifications for promoting it within popular culture. To understand why this is, a brief explanation of the epidemiological benefits

is required. Physical activity is thought to affect the causes and relative incidence of particular diseases during youth with one of the most prominent being overweight and obesity. Government documents would argue that obesity and associated Type II diabetes are fast becoming more prevalent among young people (Department of Health, 2004, 2009; McPherson et al., 2007; NHS Information Centre, 2009) with regular physical activity seen to counter these effects. Moreover, it is suggested that regular physical activity reduces blood pressure which acts as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease (British Heart Foundation, 2009; Hardman and Stensel, 2003, Riddoch, 1998) and helps young people's bone development and thus overall skeletal health (Department of Health, 2004). Finally, there is some evidence to suggest that physical activity in young people helps to improve self esteem and cognitive ability (British Heart Foundation, 2009; Stensel et al., 2008), whilst also helping to reduce depression and anxiety (Cavill et al., 2001; Hardman and Stensel, 2003). In fact, compared to those who are inactive, physically active children and adolescents typically have higher respiratory fitness, stronger muscles and bones, lower body fatness and demonstrate reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression (British Heart Foundation, 2009; US Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).

#### ***2.2.5 The State of Physical Activity in Young People***

Despite its benefits it is difficult to assess the habitual physical activity of children and young adolescents, not least because of the inherent weaknesses within the numerous methods of assessment, but also because physical activity is a multidimensional construct that varies according to type, duration, intensity and frequency (Armstrong and Welsman, 2006; Ridley et al., 2006). What must also be considered is that it remains difficult to compare across time and place since different measures of physical activity have been employed and the criteria

for ‘sufficient’ activity has changed (Biddle et al., 2004). That said, the *Health Survey for England 2008* (Craig et al., 2009) used, for the first time, an objective measurement of physical activity (accelerometers) alongside a subjective (self report) measure to provide an overview of how active children in England were. Self report data found that 32 per cent of boys and 24 per cent of girls met recommendations of at least 60 minutes moderate intensity activity a day (Craig et al., 2009). This was supported by similar data from the objective measure (Craig et al., 2009). However on closer inspection, accelerometer data found that 47 and 61 per cent of boys and girls respectively achieved less than 30 minutes physical activity per day (Craig et al., 2009). Overall, the *Health Survey for England 2008* highlighted that alarming numbers of young people were not participating in the recommended levels of physical activity, potentially missing out on the associated health benefits (Craig et al., 2009).

Regardless of the type of activity (physical or sedentary), Biddle et al. (2003) argue that it is vital that further research tries to identify what young people *choose* to do in their free time and, importantly, why they opt to engage in certain behaviours above others. In essence, choices for physical or sedentary activities may be determined by the different opportunities that are presented to them within a given environment. For that reason, quantitative, epidemiological research may not provide the answers. However, sociological research that explores young people’s actions and the wider constraining factors that impact on their choices may help identify why individuals engage in certain physical activities and sedentary behaviours.

### **2.3 Opportunities for Physical Activity**

Physical activity can encompass a wide range of daily activities and takes place in different contexts, at different times, for different durations and intensities (Stathi et al., 2009). As such, it can include numerous activities that occur in daily life, such as walking, cycling or engaging in certain domestic activities (NICE, 2009). Perhaps the most obvious context in which young people's physical activity occurs is at school during break time, physical education classes and during extra curricular activities and, as free play outdoors and at home. The following section therefore briefly profiles the opportunities young people have to engage in both physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

### ***2.3.1 Physical Activity during School***

The school day has long been the focus of children's physical activity and is therefore an important context that provides three unique opportunities for children to engage in some form of physical activity: during break time, during physical education (PE) lessons and during extra curricular classes (Daley, 2002). Break time, is classed as non curricular school time allocated between lessons that allows children to engage in leisure activities and unstructured play (Stratton et al., 2008). This time provides a unique opportunity to engage in active play with peers, enabling young people to develop socially, emotionally and cognitively through interactive activities (Pellegrini and Bohn, 2005). A recent review indicated that break time periods ranged between 14 and 46 minutes (Ridgers et al., 2006) but despite the disparities in length, it still represents one of the main opportunities, while in school, for children to be active daily (Ridgers et al., 2006; Stratton et al., 2008).

Physical education is perhaps the most obvious avenue for providing opportunities for children to engage in physical activity. The United Kingdom (UK) government are increasingly recognising the role of schools and physical education in particular in the



promotion of physical activity in support of tackling the increasing rise of obesity (Cale and Harris, 2005; Kirk, 2006). Physical education has the potential to affect young people's physical activity in two ways. First, PE can make an important contribution towards recommended activity levels for children (Cavill et al., 2001; Stratton et al., 2008) and in fact, it "is the only form of physical activity undertaken by almost all children" (Trudeau and Shephard 2008, p.265). Second, positive PE experiences can introduce children to a wide repertoire of sporting activities and encourage lifelong participation in physical activity (Bailey, 2006; Bailey et al., 2008; Cavill et al., 2001; Green, 2004; Stratton et al., 2008).

However, Fairclough and Stratton (2006) argued that students in PE classes are regularly instructed to cease activity to receive feedback or watch demonstrations, which made maintaining activity levels difficult due to the pedagogical content of the lessons (Fairclough and Stratton, 2006). More importantly, they have suggested that the average lesson time (of the studies they reviewed) was 33.7 minutes which, given that students were active for approximately 34 per cent of the time, meant that on average students spent just 12.6 minutes per lesson engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity. Similarly, Fox et al. (2004) argue that there is insufficient time available in physical education lessons to make an impact on children's daily and weekly energy expenditure. Moreover, with physical education rarely occupying more than one per cent of a child's waking time (Fox, 2004) it is inappropriate to expect it to provide sufficient opportunity to engage in enough physical activity to account for recommended daily levels and contribute to health.

### ***2.3.2 Physical Activity after School***

Schools also provide an opportunity to engage in extra curricular activities, though Daley (2002) maintains that many young people choose not to take part. This is unfortunate since

these activities provide an important link between curriculum PE and leisure time activity (Green and Thurston, 2002). Despite their best intentions, extra curricular activities are often run by teachers who voluntarily give up their free time and in many cases, staffing constraints prevent the development and provision of such activities (Daley, 2002). Fox et al. (2004) have indicated that children are most active and record nearly half of their daily energy expenditure in the hours immediately after school. This provides further contrasting evidence to assumptions that schools provide the best opportunities to be physically active, with the majority of children's time in school spent sitting (Fox et al., 2004). In fact, a recent study of in and out of school physical activity, found that consistent across age, gender and weight, children's in school activity was significantly lower than their out of school activity levels (Gidlow et al., 2008).

### ***2.3.3 Physical Activity as Organised Sport***

Organised sport is also seen as one of the most crucial vehicles for the promotion of physical activity and ongoing involvement in health enhancing lifestyles (Smith et al., 2004). Organised sport relates to all types of competitive sport opportunities for young people that are structured by adults (Brustad et al., 2008). Since organised sport is often organised by adults, it is them who ultimately determine who participates and who is excluded, the length of that exclusion, the number of training sessions that are held and the number of competitions they are entered into (Brustad et al., 2008). As such, while sport provides a unique opportunity to engage in physical activity, the amount and levels that children can participate in, is often mediated by the adults involved.

### ***2.3.4 Physical Activity at Home***

While children in Britain spend between 40 and 45 per cent of their waking time in schools, the majority of their time is spent in the home environment (Fox, 2004) where arguably most physical activity occurs in the form of unstructured leisure time play. For younger children, weekends (when children are typically at home) are particularly important times for high levels of physical activity to occur (Fox et al., 2004; Macdonald et al., 2004). Moreover, Macdonald et al. (2004, p.322) contend that physical activity presents itself in the form of unstructured, informal activities and “backyard play” that is often deliberately introduced by parents. The features of the home environment that can support such informal, unstructured activities include the provision of sports or play equipment, the facilities within and around the home and the amount of surrounding play space (Salmon et al., 2008), which are ultimately influenced by the choices made by parents. A qualitative study by Hume (2005) using photographs and drawings to map 10 year old Australian children’s perceived environment indicated that the home plays an important role in their lives. They also suggested that those children who had limited home environments also demonstrated low levels of activity (Hume, 2005).

This environment clearly provides numerous opportunities for young people to engage in physical and sedentary activities. While several elements both within and around the home may influence physical and sedentary activity opportunities, the evidence for such influence is not well established (Salmon et al., 2005). The provision of appropriate equipment, facilities and play space is often determined by the family and parents in particular and, given that such a large proportion of their time is spent in and around the home (with the family), clearly the opportunities to engage in physical activity within this context need to be further explored. The family must also be explored in relation to how young people learn and acquire certain

dispositions to engage in activity. Moreover, the family and its pedagogic practices, is clearly important in examining the production of specific beliefs and values as they relate to physical activity and indeed health. The following section therefore begins to explore the influence of the family in relation to young people's physical activity.

## **2.4 The Influence of the Family**

As was discussed previously, the home environment provides numerous opportunities for children to be active and therefore plays an important role in shaping the health practices of young people (Spence and Lee, 2003). The influence of the family within this environment is of specific concern as research suggests that parents in particular can positively influence children's health behaviours and physical activity engagement (Anderssen et al., 2006; Davison, 2004; Dwyer et al., 2008; Raudsepp and Viira, 2000; Welk et al., 2003). Though children's physical activity is influenced by a multitude of factors, the family, as a particular social influence on activity participation is becoming increasingly important. Saelens and Kerr (2008, p.267) argue that one of the most important sources of influence on both, children's physical activity and sedentary behaviours appears to be the family, with only "biological factors or children's own cognitions, attitudes and affect about activity (themselves likely impacted by the family)... considered more proximal factors". In fact, the family is one source of multiple environmental influences in which the behaviour of each family member impacts on the behaviour of other individuals within that setting (Duncan et al., 2004a). The following literature therefore discusses the multiple ways in which the family and parents especially, influence and affect young people's engagement in structured and unstructured physical activity. It gives specific reference to empirical studies that explore causal links between certain family influences and young people's activity levels, whilst also

recognising the growing body of qualitative research in this area too. For the intention of this thesis it should be noted that the research reviewed here on ‘the family’ includes data collected about young people and their parents, siblings and other relatives. Since the majority of research does not define, differentiate or identify between parents, step parents or guardians in any detail, then it is argued that to some extent, ‘the family’ is seen here as a general and inclusive term.

#### ***2.4.1 Socialisation of Children***

First, it is perhaps important to establish how and when children develop knowledge and attitudes about physical activity. One of the most utilised concepts for understanding this process and for focusing on families and socio-cultural activities in general is the concept of socialisation. While it is not the intention of this literature review to examine this concept in great detail, it is to acknowledge its importance and links to emanating concepts that influence physical activity and social theories that help to understand participation. In its most general form, socialisation can be defined as:

“A process of learning and social development, which occurs as we interact with one another and become acquainted with the social world in which we live”

(Coakley and Pike, 2009, p.100)

When exploring the process of socialisation, Albert Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory is often the framework used to understand how individuals receive messages about their role within society. This focuses on the learning that occurs within a given social context suggesting that people learn from one another through different concepts such as observational learning, imitation, and modelling (Vilhjalmsson and Thorlindsson, 1998). Socialisation is therefore a process through which children acquire the values, beliefs, skills,

knowledge and behaviours that are regarded as appropriate for their present and future role in their particular culture. This is not, however, a one way process of social influence. As children develop, so they actively participate in their own socialisation; forming relationships and in turn influencing those who influence them (Yang et al., 1996). It is an interactive process through which they connect with others, acquire information and make informed decisions that shape their lives and the world around them (Coakley and Pike, 2009).

One of the primary social institutions is the family, with parents thought to be most influential for young children's early learning experiences (Armstrong and Welsman, 1997; Kirk, 2005). In general families have a significant social responsibility for the reinforcement of the existing patterns of social stratification and status, and the reproduction of the normative structures of order and control that characterise the society. Within the broader works of sports socialisation, Zeijl et al. (2000) point out that the influence of the primary socialising agent declines with age. In their Dutch study of 927 young people, they identified that younger children (aged 10 – 12) spent a substantial part of their leisure time with their family; parents and sibling particularly. However, children aged 13 they termed "transition children" (Zeijl et al., 2000, p.297) in that they divided their time between parents, peers and being alone, and took an intermediate position between children and adolescents, with adolescents developing increasing contact with peers. Armstrong and Welsman (1997) also suggest that as children age, adult influence declines and same sex and then opposite sex peers begin to impact on behaviour. Noting that children's interaction with the family begins to decline at adolescence, Baranowski (1997) highlighted one possible reason for these findings. He argued that families continually act within a broader social environment and, as children age and become more independent, this social environment exposes them to the influence of peer groups with whom they spend the majority of their time during the day (i.e.

in schools), and after school (i.e. when playing in the neighbourhood with friends). However, Zeijl et al. (2000) concluded that no matter their age, parental influence was still high, though it was most prominent prior to the age of 13.

With regard to physical activity and for young children especially, the family is responsible for making decisions about the type and scope of the child's activities (Stroot, 2002). Parents organise opportunities for very young children to participate in formal and informal physical activities, and provide financial and emotional support (encouraging, watching the child's activity and talking about it with them) to influence their involvement. According to Baranowski (1997) parents can influence the behaviour of children in a range of possible ways. Mechanisms relating to role modelling, social influence and social support have all been studied, though with largely mixed results (Sallis et al., 2000; Welk et al., 2003). However, there is growing consensus that parents shape their child's physical activity through direct (e.g. provision of finances and transport) and indirect (such as support and encouragement) forms of socialisation (Welk et al., 2003) and thus, the family deeply influences the type of activity young people will experience.

#### ***2.4.2 Parental Modelling***

Social theorists' views regarding the importance of the family and parents especially as an agent of socialisation largely draw from empirical studies that demonstrate relationships between parent and child activity levels (Kay, 2004). Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory indicates that observational learning occurs when observers, in this case, children, acquire new patterns of behaviour by watching the actions of significant others, namely parents. As such, the modelling of certain actions by parents works to strengthen or weaken children's inhibitions about recently learnt behaviours. For young children, parents are

thought to be more influential than siblings, whilst peers become increasingly important for adolescents (Armstrong and Welsman, 1997). Since children are frequently exposed to contact with parents, it is perhaps not surprising that parental modelling of physical activity has received the majority of attention with regard to family factors (Saelens and Kerr, 2008). It is argued that when parents model positive activity behaviours, so too will their children (Bandura, 1986). The theory posits that more active parents will ultimately have more active children, just as more sedentary parents will have more sedentary children. However, in their review of documented determinants to physical activity, Sallis et al. (2000) found that from 29 studies of children aged 4 – 12 years old only 38 per cent of the total findings showed a positive association between parent and child physical activity. This was similar for adolescents aged 13 – 18, whereby parental physical activity levels failed to show any associations with children's activity levels (Sallis et al., 2000). Ferreira et al. (2006) also contend that, without separating between the mother and father, there are mixed results when observing studies that examined the relationship between young people's physical activity levels and those of their parents. Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) also conducted a review of parental correlates of children and early adolescent's physical activity. In reviewing 24 studies between 1985 and 2003 they reported mixed findings for the correlation between parent and child physical activity with only six studies reporting a moderate association. The authors of this review did however note that methodological differences in measuring activity levels may account for many of the inconsistencies reported (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006).

Interestingly, a 12 year follow up study by Yang et al. (1996) with Finnish children aged 9 – 15 years found that father's activity was significantly related to their children's activity in present and later life. This tracks with more recent findings from Estonia (Raudsepp and Viira, 2000) and Iceland (Vilhjalmsson and Thorlindsson, 1998) with



adolescents aged 13 – 14 and 15 – 16 respectively and the review by Ferreira et al. (2006). In these studies, fathers' physical activity was significantly related to activity levels of their offspring, regardless of gender, whilst mothers' activity was only moderately related to their daughters' activity. Eriksson et al. (2008) also concluded that parent's physical activity was strongly related to 12 year old Swedish children's physical activity and that it was particularly important for parents of the same sex as their children. In addition, they argued that if both parents were active there was an even greater likelihood of increased activity in boys (Eriksson et al., 2008). Yang et al. (1996) have argued that fathers exert the most influence on both boys and girls with regard to physical activity and may therefore be a more important socialisation agent.

The effect of modelling however is not only related to physical activity but additional behaviours that have connotations for health. A recent Australian study exploring the associations between parental modelling and physical activity and the frequency of consumption of fruit and vegetables for children aged 10 – 12 suggested modelling impacts on a host of health behaviours. For instance, Pearson, Timperio et al. (2009) found that high parental modelling was associated with high physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption for both boys and girls.

Despite these findings, recent longitudinal studies have indicated that the relationship between parent activity and child activity may be weaker than initially thought. A study by Anderssen et al. (2006) tracked changes in parents' and their offspring's activity over time. From the age of 13 to 21, adolescents' activity was not found to track with changes in parents' activity, indicating that "levels of activity among young adults are not directly affected by parental levels of physical activity" (Anderssen et al., 2006, p.520). In addition, Trost et al.

(2003) argued that parental modelling of physical activity behaviour by itself may be an insufficient influence on physical activity as it fails to remove important barriers that children and adolescents still face. Thus, when it is considered alongside other forms of influence such as parental beliefs and parental support, the overall importance of modelling may be reduced (Trost et al., 2003, Welk et al., 2003).

### **2.4.3 Parental Beliefs and Values**

The importance of the family in this discussion is inevitable. The family is a key site and ‘pedagogical environment’ where personal histories and social circumstances exert a strong influence on engagement in physical activities (Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010). Within the family, parents in particular are seen to determine every aspect of their children’s lives, health and behaviour, from whether they play truant from school to whether they develop diabetes in old age. The “responsibilisation of family” (Burrows and Wright, 2004, p.90) in and through neoliberal and neoconservative governments in recent years has been documented in many official ‘texts’ and media campaigns, along with the notions of good and bad parenting (Evans et al., 2008) and the inculcation of good and bad children. An example of this is in the *Every Child Matters – Parenting Support* policy which advocates that for children, “parental involvement, particularly in the form of good parenting in the home, has the biggest impact on their achievement and adjustment” and that “the effect is greater than that of school itself” (Department for Education and Skills, 2006, p.4).

Parents are therefore seen to be responsible for transmitting the right values to their children and, without doubt, the transmission of parental beliefs and values regarding physical activity is a vital component of the process of socialisation. In fact, children’s health habits develop within the home environment and are highly dependent on parents’ actions and

attitudes regarding physical activity, eating and exercise (Arredondo et al., 2006). In Wright and colleagues work (1999), Australian parents were seen to place a high value on physical activity for both themselves and their children. They recognised the importance of physical activity as a health enhancing behaviour that also carried various social benefits (Wright et al., 1999). This was echoed in findings from Shaw and Dawson (2001) who found that parents were particularly concerned about the health and fitness benefits of their children's physical activity leisure pursuits. Further qualitative Australian work by Macdonald et al. (2004) indicated that parent's positive beliefs about activity led to the purposeful introduction of physical activity in the lives of their children through informal play or the purchase of activity related services. However, regardless of parents' own beliefs, values and motivations, their investment in their child's activity (through physical, emotional or financial means) may be restricted simply due to the nature of the family structure in which those children reside. Surely then, different family structures will affect children's learning of appropriate physical activity and health related behaviours and dispositions, and impact on parents own ability to transmit such values and provide the necessary types of support to maintain engagement in activity.

#### ***2.4.4 Parental Social Support***

As well as transmitting physical activity beliefs and values and in modelling an active lifestyle, parents also provide support in a variety of forms. In fact, recent quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that the family is vital in providing social support to promote and facilitate children and adolescents' physical activity and that these provided the most consistent relationships with activity levels (Davison, 2004; Springer et al., 2006; Trost et al., 2003). In reviewing adolescent girls' correlates of physical activity, Biddle et al. (2004) found

that total parental support was consistently related with physical activity levels. Moreover, in reviewing 19 studies that explored this component of family influence, Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) demonstrated a strong, positive association between parental support and young people's physical activity levels. In doing so, they argued that the three most important types of parental support were *involvement*, *encouragement*, and *facilitation*.

One form of social support closely linked to the modelling of behaviours is parental joint participation and *involvement* in activity with their children. Unlike parental modelling of behaviour, the review by Sallis et al. (2000) highlighted more positive effects when considering joint parent-child participation with five out of ten studies indicating a positive significant relationship between activity levels. Springer et al. (2006) also found that, as well as increasing the likelihood of engaging in more activity, the frequency of family joint participation in physical activity was important in reducing the amount of time spent in sedentary activities. More recently, a qualitative based UK study found that parents considered joint family engagement to be very important in sustaining parent child communication, spending time together and improving health and wellbeing (Thompson et al., 2010). Hence it would appear that parents who participate in physical activity with their child are more likely to positively influence their child's activity patterns (Ornelas et al., 2007). Pearson, Biddle et al. (2009) also argued that being physically active and even eating meals together as a whole family provided parents with important opportunities to be positive role models to their children.

In Shaw and Dawson's (2001) leisure based qualitative study with Canadian families, joint family leisure activities were seen to provide parents with time together to "develop a sense of family and to teach children about values and healthy lifestyles" (Shaw and Dawson, 2001, p.228). They also suggested that parents engaged in joint participation with their

children in a range of physical activities with some degree of urgency; spending time together before their children got older (Shaw and Dawson, 2001). However, while Trost et al. (2003) acknowledge that this form of support is important, their study reported that parent's only performed physical activity with their children on average, less than twice a week. Though valued and worthwhile, given today's busy lifestyles, this raises questions about how often this effect might occur.

Another form of social support that influences children's activity is emotional support, specifically *parental encouragement*. In their review, Sallis et al. (2000) discovered that verbal encouragement from parents was related to physical activity outcomes in children in only 31 per cent of studies dealing with this issue. In addition, Springer et al. (2006) found that encouragement was important for mean moderate to vigorous physical activity for American girls aged 10 – 14, in that the greater the encouragement, the higher their mean minutes in reported activity. Similar findings were recorded in another American study with children of the same age, whereby Duncan et al. (2005) reported overall social support to be positively associated with youth physical activity levels. Moreover, the most significant type of encouragement or emotional support was seen to be parents watching the activity of their child; when children perceived parents to be watching their activity, they reported higher levels of physical activity (Duncan et al., 2005). It was therefore suggested that emotional support of these types, was more important than instrumental support, for example in the form of transport (Duncan et al., 2005). In echoing these findings, Bauer et al. (2008) also argued that emotional support was especially influential when coming from a same sex parent. In their longitudinal study, young and older males and young females, participated in greater

hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity five years later if encouraged by their same sex parents (Bauer et al., 2008).

The final type of parental support reported by Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) was *facilitation*. Indeed, parental facilitation is one of the most prominent forms of social support and includes the provision of equipment, access to, or opportunities to be active, coupled with the transportation of children to venues and the payment of fees. It is even argued by some that parental facilitation is the most important predictor of a child's interest in physical activity and overall activity levels (Welk et al., 2003). In their review, Sallis et al. (2000) found that 25 per cent of studies that explored the relationship between children's activity and facilitation (in the form of logistical support), including transportation (2 of 8 studies) and payment of fees (1 of 4 studies), demonstrated a significant, positive relationship. This is perhaps not surprising since children, especially young children, tend to rely on their parents for access and transportation to physical activity settings. In exploring perceptions of physical activity in a qualitative study, 9 and 10 year old children suggested that they rely on their parents' or their parents' social networks for transportation (Gosling et al., 2008). For both boys and girls in Pearson, Timperio and colleagues (2009) study with 10 – 12 year old children, and in Davison's (2004) study with American children of a similar age, high transport related support for activity was also associated with high physical activity levels. However, for slightly older children (up to the age of 14) transport was not seen to be particularly influential (Duncan et al., 2005). This may, as they age and gain greater independence, reflect an ability of older children to support their own activity, independently of their parents.

On the other hand, parental support can have a detrimental affect on overall physical activity. Biddle and Mutrie (2001) suggest that many parents' safety concerns prevent their children from taking part in some form of physical activity. Where parents perceive a risk of danger (such as cycling or walking on busy roads) they are likely to transport their children instead, thus reducing the opportunities to engage in such forms of physical activity. Furthermore, it may be that overall parental support and its association with children and adolescents' physical activity is context specific. While parental support was positively associated with leisure time physical activity in a study by Ommundsen et al. (2006), it did not influence young people's school based games activity or play. Instead, situational reinforcements from peers at school had more influence in that environment (Ommundsen et al., 2006).

Within a specific family context, there are however subtle differences in the types of support that parents provide. A study of parental social support for children's (aged 8 – 11) outdoor activity by Beets et al. (2007) suggested that fathers who engaged in activity with their sons on a weekend positively affected their child's activity levels. However, Beets et al. (2007) also indicated that the type of social support afforded by parents differed by gender. Whereas fathers participated directly with their sons, mothers were found to provide more assistive support. By planning outdoor activity and play, such as riding bikes, walking or playing in a playground, mothers also positively influenced girls' activity (Beets et al., 2007). Their work mirrors previous findings that suggest there is a tendency for fathers to act as playmates with children, engaged in more vigorous "rough and tumble games" (MacDonald and Parke, 1986, p.368), whilst mothers undertake house management responsibilities and engage in less demanding forms of activity with their child (MacDonald and Parke, 1986). Davison (2004) also suggested that mothers provided higher levels of logistical support than fathers, whereas fathers provided higher levels of modelling. Qualitative research by

Macdonald et al. (2005) and Shaw and Dawson (2001) also suggested that while both parents demonstrated equal commitment and responsibility to their children's activity, it was usually mothers who were found to be particularly important in planning and making decisions about their child's activity. This gendered pattern of support by parents means that children are likely to be influenced in different ways and at different times though despite research consistently demonstrating that girls are less active than boys, several authors here have indicated that parents provide equal levels of support to both boys and girls (Davison, 2004; Trost et al., 2003).

Of the features of family influence that have been discussed so far, parental modelling is one of the most researched components of the family environment, though several authors have argued that it is perhaps more important for parents to support children and provide an environment that encourages physical activity rather than simply exerting an active influence through direct role modelling (Ferreira et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 1994; Welk et al., 2003). However, for young children and to some extent adolescents, their involvement in structured physical activity is dependent on their family's ability to invest the necessary resources of time and money (Coakley, 2006), something that may be mediated by family socioeconomic status.

#### ***2.4.5 Family and Social Class***

As has already been alluded to, parents play an influential role in determining which activities young people engage in and the resources they have available. Such resources may ultimately depend on a family's social class. Social class has been identified as an environmental and social factor which may have a positive or negative influence on an individual's participation in physical activities. Evans and Davies (2006, p.798) define class, as "a set of social and



economic relations that strongly influence, if not determine and dominate, people's lives". Socioeconomic status has been used as a synonym for social class, representing groupings in society based upon occupation, education and housing. Household income then, a primary measure of socioeconomic status, may be particularly important for young people's physical activity opportunities since organised activities require equipment and money. In essence, low income often results in a "lack of private transport and the likelihood of living in less affluent neighbourhoods with few high quality facilities" (Kay 2004, p.42), which makes parental support in terms of facilitation, more problematic. Overall, socioeconomic status, in its various components (e.g. family income, parent education and occupation) is one of the more extensively studied influences on physical activity behaviour of children (Brockman et al., 2009; Dagkas and Stathi, 2007; Duncan et al., 2002; Kelly et al., 2006; McVeigh et al., 2004; Romero, 2005; Voss et al., 2008; Ziviani et al., 2006; Ziviani, Macdonald et al., 2008) though definitive conclusions regarding its association with physical activity are hard to come by.

Previous studies have measured socioeconomic status via a number of different means. Duncan et al. (2002) for instance used free school meals and found British children's activity to be positively associated with socioeconomic status. A South African study by McVeigh et al. (2004) also found that children from low socioeconomic status backgrounds engaged in high levels of low activity and more time watching television. Physical activity for this study was assessed by means of validated questionnaire and socioeconomic status by parental interview. Parental education was seen to positively influence leisure time physical activity for adolescents; children of parents with a higher level of education reported more involvement in organised sport, structured exercise and games played in their leisure time (Ommundsen et al., 2006). These findings confirm more recent research conducted in

Australia whereby Ziviani and associates (2008) assessed children's physical activity levels by counting the total number of steps reported on pedometers and noted a positive association with socioeconomic status. Using annual family income as a measure of socioeconomic status, they found it to be a strong predictor of the number of steps taken by both boys and girls at weekends. This echoed results from their previous study (Ziviani et al., 2006) that argued more disposable income might mean that families are more able to pay higher fees (including registration fees), and for the purchase of equipment and uniforms that are usually associated with organised sports at the weekend. Furthermore, they suggest that parents in higher socioeconomic status families purposely create and produce a culture of physical activity engagement consistent with their economic achievements (Ziviani, Macdonald et al., 2008).

However, the findings of Ziviani et al. (2006, 2008) are in direct contrast to other UK studies (Kelly et al., 2006; Riddoch et al., 2007; Voss et al., 2008). Riddoch et al. (2007), in a comprehensive analysis of 11 year old children's activity noted no association with activity levels. Kelly et al. (2006) worked with primary school Scottish children and measured socioeconomic status using geographical location whilst physical activity was assessed with the use of accelerometers across two studies, for a six and seven day period respectively. Like Riddoch et al. (2007) they too reported no association between socioeconomic status and habitual physical activity or for that matter, sedentary behaviour. Furthermore, Voss et al. (2008) found no difference in physical activity levels between children from lower income and higher income families. That said, boys and girls from higher income families did attend significantly more sessions of structured physical activity, suggesting that what poorer children lack in access to structured physical activity, they make up in the form of unstructured activity. However, with regard to socioeconomic status and sedentary

behaviours, Gorely et al. (2004) found parent education and household income to be negatively associated to children's television viewing, whilst Gorely et al. (2009) later found that girls from lower socioeconomic backgrounds reported higher levels of sedentary behaviour than those from mid or high groups.

To further demonstrate these mixed findings, several reviews of determinants have been conducted that explore such issues from a broader perspective. In an earlier review of correlates, socioeconomic indicators were not associated with children or adolescents' physical activity (Sallis et al., 2000). Building on this review, Ferreira et al., (2006) found mixed conclusions with regard to parental socioeconomic status. Of the studies they reviewed, measures of socioeconomic status included one or a combination of variables such as some quantification of family income, parental education and occupational status, but never all three. Higher parent education, according to Saelens and Kerr (2008) might reflect a better understanding of the health benefits associated with physical activity and may act as a proxy for participation. Reviewing each variable independently, Ferreira et al. (2006) found a consistent relationship between mothers' education level, family income and adolescents' physical activity only. This however, was not the case for children. As well as demonstrating the importance of separating such aspects of socioeconomic status, Ferreira and colleagues (2006) also suggest that socioeconomic status may not be such a prominent factor for young children since their activity is more informal and unstructured and may not incur direct costs. Instead, when children reach adolescence, activities become more elaborate and financial (involvement in sports clubs) and hence lower income families may be more restricted in their choices and opportunities (Ferreira et al., 2006). Despite this, many of the studies reviewed in the previous two papers and in those reviewed by Gustafson and Rhodes (2006), lacked a consistent measure of socioeconomic status and failed to control for its many factors and

thus, due to the limited studies reviewed, definitive conclusions about the association with physical activity are simply not possible (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006).

However, qualitative studies have helped to shed more light on the relationship between socioeconomic status and children's physical activity especially with regard to how it mediates the type of support provided by parents. For instance, Duncan et al. (2005) have argued that higher social class children engage in more joint family activity. A recent qualitative, British study by Brockman and colleagues (2009) with 10 – 11 year old children indicated that the extent to which physical activity is engaged in together as a family was often determined by socioeconomic status. Their findings track with previous research that suggest participation in joint family physical activity was reported more often by children from middle/high socioeconomic status schools than those from low socioeconomic status schools (Brockman et al., 2009; Dagkas and Stathi, 2007). In contrast, Lee et al. (2009) suggest that lower socioeconomic families invest more in their children's activity through joint participation and that this acts to reinforce social class positions. One barrier consistent across the socioeconomic divide to further joint participation was reported by children to be their parents' lack of free time (Brockman et al., 2009), whilst children from the lower socioeconomic status schools more readily reported cost as a barrier to family based physical activity (Brockman et al., 2009; Dagkas and Stathi, 2007). This is echoed by Sener et al. (2008) who found that out-of-home leisure time activity was more frequent for children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, while those from low socioeconomic backgrounds tended to engage in more in-home activities, as they lacked the family resources to do otherwise.

Verbal encouragement as a form of emotional support is also more apparent in lower socioeconomic status groups as Brockman et al., (2009) suggest that those from higher

socioeconomic status groups are encouraged more through logistical and financial support. Equally, Duncan et al. (2005) and Lee et al. (2009) support this claim suggesting that those from higher income families reported being watched more, along with perceiving more support from siblings and greater transportation support, compared with those from lower income families.

In addition, Brockman et al. (2009) found that children from middle/high socioeconomic status schools tended to engage in organised activities based around after school and/or weekend sports clubs whilst in contrast, children from lower groups engaged in more unstructured physical activity. This finding may help explain the inconsistencies in empirical reports. It also tracks with previous findings (Wright et al., 1999; Dagkas and Stathi, 2007), whereby available income and resulting geographic location was seen to impact on the different types of activities that children from different socioeconomic backgrounds engaged in. However, the impact of socioeconomic difference in physical activity preferences and choices isn't necessarily apparent at an early age, with Macdonald et al. (2005) arguing that such differences may not manifest until children are slightly older. A recent Australian study on the meaning of physical activity in the lives of young people provides further justification for the differences in activity preferences. Research by Wright et al. (2003) and particularly Lee and colleagues (2009) that draw on detailed case study data with four boys from two distinct socioeconomic backgrounds, suggest that children (and boys especially) in the lower class bracket are subject to narrower physical activity experiences than their upper class counterparts.

Despite empirical studies providing inconsistent links between activity levels and socioeconomic status, qualitative findings do indicate that the opportunities for, and types of activity that children engage in are influenced by their family's socioeconomic status.

Furthermore, socioeconomic status may mediate the types of support that parents can provide which may ultimately impact on children's continued engagement in certain physical activities. However, for young children especially, their parents' ability to provide such opportunities and support may be countered by the sporadic and unstructured nature of their physical activity involvement. In turn, this may help to explain the inconsistent empirical reports; some children don't need such investment to be physically active. Instead, activity for those whose opportunities are restricted may take a different form to those whose opportunities are not.

#### **2.4.6 Siblings**

It would be remiss not to include the influence of siblings alongside parents, as they too play a vital role within the family and in influencing children and adolescents' physical activity. Sallis et al. (2000) noted that sibling physical activity was consistently related with adolescents but not children's physical activity. However, few studies specifically explore the role of sibling activity (Ferreira et al., 2006). In those that have, (Bagley et al., 2006; Hesketh et al., 2006) it is suggested that children with siblings spend more time engaged in higher levels of physical activity. Boys with older siblings were even more likely to engage in high intensity activity suggesting that older siblings may serve as active role models for younger siblings (Bagley et al., 2006). In contrast, boys without siblings spent more time watching television than those who had siblings (Bagley et al., 2006) while Hesketh et al. (2006) suggest that those children without siblings may have more restrictions on their activity coupled with greater access to sedentary alternatives.

In unique studies that examined physical activity among youth from within the same family, Duncan et al. (2004a, 2004b) found that siblings had similar activity patterns across

families and that, contrary to typical findings that demonstrate an activity decrease with age, older siblings participate in more activity than younger siblings. Independently, Duncan et al., (2004a) also presented data that suggested higher levels of family social support and family income were related to higher levels of sibling activity. A separate study by Duncan et al., (2005) indicated that general sibling support was not an independent correlate to activity of 10 – 14 year olds. However, when siblings, parents and peers watched children engage in activity, high physical activity levels were reported (Duncan et al., 2005). Furthermore, older children perceived less support from parents and siblings than younger children, but more verbal encouragement and related conversations which suggest that sources of support change as children get older (Duncan et al., 2005). Finally, in a qualitative study from Australia, Macdonald et al. (2005) suggested that siblings were involved in the family decision making process regarding physical activities based on their previous enjoyment. As such, children may be encouraged to try different activities by their siblings which may ultimately increase the breadth of activities they are exposed to.

Macdonald et al. (2005) therefore suggest that the role of the family as a major influence upon children's physical activity is undisputed. Indeed, many have argued that the nature and extent of young people's physical play opportunities depends greatly upon the set of beliefs and expectations held by the parents (Macdonald et al., 2005; Raudsepp and Viira, 2000). Despite the numerous types of effect that the family exerts, non familial factors can still mediate and moderate familial influences. It is likely that age, gender and ethnicity among other things, will moderate family influences on young people's physical activity and so it is important to acknowledge that such factors may be interrelated and therefore unique to specific individuals, at specific times, in specific contexts.

## **2.5 Physical Activity and Family Structure**

There is no doubt that there is “overwhelming evidence that the family is a major influence on young children’s involvement in sport” (Stroot, 2002, p.130). Although this may seem fairly obvious, it must also be stressed that the family, often founded on inherited blood ties, is itself a social construction and therefore amenable to change. As has been expressed previously, social change has, and continues to have, a major impact on the structure of families in Britain. Today it would be wrong to assume that what people call their family refers to what sociologists term the ‘nuclear family’. The conventional nuclear family of a married male and female couple with a number of dependent children is no longer the dominant family setting (Craig and Mellor, 2008). Unmarried couples, lone parent families, reconstituted stepfamilies, and gay and lesbian family units all make up a complex and diverse set of family settings for the upbringing of children. These points noted, in recent years relatively little attention has been paid to how the diversity of family units impacts on how children become engaged in physical activity (Bagley, 2006; Duncan et al., 2004a). There has however, been a recent proliferation of research addressing this issue from a leisure (Harrington, 2006; Jenkins and Lyons, 2006; Jenkins, 2009; Kay, 2006) and elite sport perspective (Kay, 2000, 2004; Kay et al., 2008). With regard to physical activity, more studies are slowly emerging on this issue, although the majority tend to address it from an epidemiological perspective measuring differences in physical activity levels between groups (Bagley et al., 2006; Duncan et al., 2004; Gorely et al., 2004, 2009; Hesketh et al., 2006, 2008; Lindquist et al., 1999; McVeigh et al., 2004; O’Loughlin et al., 1999; Sallis et al., 1992; Sallis, Alcaraz et al., 1999; Sallis, Prochaska et al., 1999; Salmon et al., 2005; Tremblay and Willms, 2003). Some of those have



focused on family structure as the key research issues while others have used it as one of several correlates of the family influence.

In keeping with the mixed methods approach adopted for this study and because in general, few studies have addressed issues of family structure, the following literature provides an overview of the aforementioned quantitative studies that explore family structure with regard to both physical activity and sedentary behaviour. After this, the few sociological studies to explore family structure and physical activity from a qualitative perspective are also discussed (Dagkas and Stathi, 2007; Dwyer et al., 2008; Howard and Madrigal, 1990; Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010; Wright et al., 2003).

#### ***2.5.1 Family Structure and Physical Activity – Scientific Evidence***

In contrast to the family as a whole, indicators of family composition have been less widely investigated and have produced conflicting results for physical activity. In an extensive review of 150 articles that presented an empirical association between young people's physical activity and one element of environmental correlates, Ferreira et al. (2006) reported that family structure variables (such as lone parent status) were not related to adolescent physical activity. This finding supports research from a range of different countries. Exploring the effect of family configuration, two studies from the United States with Grade 4 and 5 children (Sallis, Alcaraz et al., 1999) and Grade 4 – 12 (Sallis, Prochaska et al., 1999), both reported no association between the number of parents in the home and children's physical activity. Moreover, a Canadian study that assessed correlates of activity among 2285 students aged 9 – 13 again found no significant association with children's physical activity and whether they reside in lone or two parent families (O'Loughlin et al., 1999).

In a study that assessed family structure, television viewing and physical activity with children aged between 5 – 6 and 10 – 12 years of age, Bagley et al. (2006) also failed to find any real association between boys or girls in a lone parent family and those in a two parent family with regard to physical activity. Interestingly, using accelerometers to assess physical activity over an eight day period, Bagley et al. (2006) did find that boys in lone-parent families with a brother, spent more time in moderate to vigorous physical activity compared to those without a brother. In contrast, there was no difference in the number of minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity for boys with or without a brother in two parent families. They did maintain however that family structure may be an important source of influence on children's physical activity and sedentary behaviour and required further investigation (Bagley et al., 2006).

More recently, using parent and child recall to assess after school activity patterns of Australian children aged between 8 – 13 years, Hesketh et al. (2008) found no association between family structure and children's physical activity. However, data was only obtained for 1 or 2 days after school which might not be representative of a child's general or overall after school activity level. Another Australian study of 878 children aged between 10 – 12 years (Salmon et al., 2005) reported on the family environment, children's television viewing and low levels of physical activity. These families were drawn from a mix of high and low socioeconomic status areas with the sample consisting of dual or lone parent families of which only eighteen percent reported being lone parent families. However, the study had to drop parental status and thus family structure from its findings due to collinearity of results. Furthermore, an Australian study that focused on active commuting to school, as a form of physical activity, found no association between lone parent and two parent status for children aged 5 – 6 and 10 – 12 years (Timperio et al., 2006). In one of the few studies to be conducted

in England, Gorely and colleagues (2009) also found no association with family structure and sports or exercise for girls, yet inconsistent findings for boys. Participants in their study reported in ecological momentary assessment diaries every 15 minutes for 3 weekdays outside of school and one weekend day (Gorely et al., 2009). There were also no significant associations between family structure and active transport (as a form of physical activity) for either boys or girls (Gorely et al., 2009).

Finally, a study by Ornelas et al. (2007) reported on a range of family structures including: two-parent families (including biological or adoptive parents), step parent families, lone-mother families, lone father families and “other” families (e.g., adolescents in foster families or group homes, and emancipated minors). There were however, no differences between two parent, step parent, or lone parent families with regard to the likelihood of offspring achieving five or more bouts of high intensity activity per week. Those in the ‘other’ family structure category, most often foster families, were though, less likely to achieve recommended levels of activity than those in two parent, step parent or lone parent families.

However, other studies have reported that children in lone parent families are more active. An American study by Sallis et al. (1992) showed that boys (9 years of age) from lone parent families had higher physical activity levels, measured by accelerometer, than boys from two parent families. However, they emphasised that the effects were weak and that further research was needed in this area. Studies by Duncan and colleagues (2004a; 2004b) that adopted a multilevel analysis of sibling physical activity (aged 10 – 14) across the family environment found that siblings in lone parent families had higher activity levels than siblings in two parent families. Yang et al. (1996) argued that this relationship might depend on the passivity of the parents: children from two-parent families with passive fathers had lower

levels of activity participation than youth in lone-parent families. In addition, they found that children with a lone parent were significantly more active than children with a passive father, or even with a moderate-activity father in the case of boys. Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) have therefore argued that having only one role model is better than having two negative (inactive) role models of physical activity, though these interactive effects in relationships between family variables and physical activity require further exploration (Duncan et al., 2004).

A further study by Lindquist et al. (1999) focused on the socio-cultural determinants of activity among 107 children (mean age of 10) from Birmingham, Alabama, USA. Their study found that only lone parent status was a significant correlate for the number of days per week that children engaged in exercise, with children in lone parent families reporting more exercise than children in dual parent families by almost one day per week. Consistent with higher amounts of exercise, Lindquist et al. (1999) also suggest that children from lone parent families had higher levels of aerobic fitness. Although this pattern is perplexing and contrary to many other studies, Lindquist et al. (1999) argue that it may reflect decreased amounts of parental supervision, which is likely to increase various types of play outside of the home; activities which may be associated with stronger barriers for children with two parents who are able to monitor activity more frequently.

In contrast, studies from across the world have found that children in dual-parent families (Tremblay and Willms, 2003) and those with married mothers (McVeigh et al., 2004) are typically more physically active and less sedentary. The former study by Tremblay and Willms (2003) was conducted with 7216 Canadian children aged 7 – 11 and indicated that children living in a lone parent family were more likely to be obese than those living in two

parent families, while the latter study of 381 South African children found that highly active behaviour was more prevalent among children from married households than among children from lone parent households (McVeigh et al., 2004).

Similarly, drawing on data from 2458 children across two separate populations (mean ages 6 and 11) in Australia, Hesketh et al. (2006) found that in general, the type of family structure was more consistently related to children's physical activity than were socioeconomic indicators. Using an objective measure of physical activity and a large sample from a broad range of socioeconomic and family backgrounds, Hesketh et al. (2006) argued that children in two parent families tended to engage in less low level physical activity and more in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity than those in lone parent families. Subsequently, they argued that children in smaller families have fewer opportunities for companion play and therefore may spend more time in solitary pursuits, many of which may be sedentary (Hesketh et al., 2006).

Finally, in an American report, Kimm et al. (2002) followed 1213 black girls and 1166 white girls enrolled in the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Growth and Health Study, from the ages of 9 or 10 to the ages of 18 or 19 years. Using a validated questionnaire to measure leisure time physical activity on the basis of metabolic equivalents, they also found that living in a lone-parent household was a risk factor for a decline in activity among older white girls but not older black girls, particularly in adolescence.

Despite these findings, a review of parental correlates of children and early adolescents' activity, (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006) suggested that there were not enough studies to draw conclusions about the effect of lone-parent families. Most importantly, they argued that there is a need for a larger volume of research in this area due to an increase in the number of lone-

parent families in recent decades and the potential difference between how they function compared with two-parent families.

#### **2.5.1.1 Family Structure and Sedentary Behaviours**

Whilst family structure and physical activity has produced conflicting results from a scientific, quantitative perspective, the association with sedentary behaviours and television viewing in particular, appears to be more conclusive. Much of the previous research on family structure and physical activity also looked at sedentary behaviours, in some instances with sedentary behaviour being positioned as the antithesis of physical activity. A review of the literature published in England by Gorely et al. (2004) found that television viewing was consistently, inversely related to the number of parents in the home. That is, young people between the ages of 9 – 13, from lone parent families consistently watched more television than those from two parent families. They argued that TV viewing in young people is positively associated with parental viewing habits (Gorely et al., 2004) and therefore may reflect the most common activity within the household.

More recent studies in England have also reported similar findings. Gorely et al. (2009) found that the implications of living in a lone parent family, for boys, was associated with greater total time in sedentary pursuits both during the week and at the weekend than for boys living in a two parent family. Interestingly, they found no difference for girls. When sedentary behaviour was broken down further, they found that boys from lone parent households reported significantly higher levels of weekend television viewing and higher computer usage on weekdays (Gorely et al., 2009) than those boys in two parent families. In fact, this study also took into account social sedentary behaviour which included “hanging-out, using the telephone, sitting and talking” (Gorely et al., 2009, p.2), subsequently reporting

that boys from lone parent families engaged in higher levels of social sedentary behaviour at weekends. There was however no association between family structure and girl's sedentary behaviour of any kind reported from this study.

Australian studies by Hesketh et al. (2006) and Bagley et al. (2006), both drawing on parental reports of sedentary activity also support this conclusion. Hesketh et al. (2006) found that children in two parent families tended to spend less time watching television than those in lone parent families. Similarly, Bagley et al. (2006) reported that girls from lone parent families spent significantly more minutes per day watching TV compared with girls from two parent families, though girls from lone parent families watched more TV per day if they had siblings compared with girls who were an only child (Bagley et al., 2006). However, there was no association between boys' TV viewing across family structures.

In addition, Lindquist et al. (1999) found the only significant predictor of television viewing was lone parent status, with children from lone parent homes reporting more time spent watching television. In fact, children from lone parent homes reported watching around 30 minutes more per day than children who live with both parents. This is surprising since lone parent children in their study were also the most active, engaged in the most amount of exercise and had higher levels of aerobic fitness, thus dispelling the assumption that sedentary behaviours displace physical activity behaviours.

### ***2.5.2 Family Structure and Physical Activity – Interpretive Evidence***

In many of the scientific, quantitative studies above, only lone parent families along with married, two parent families, were taken into account and few studies sought to explore the full range of families evident in society today. Moreover, those empirical studies do not account for young people's dispositions to physical activity, their knowledge of health and

fitness, nor how different and changing family structures “impact upon children’s lifestyles, habitus and physical activity patterns” (Dagkas and Stathi, 2007, p.380) or choices.

A recent UK based study by Dagkas and Stathi (2007) for example, suggest that family structure plays an important role in shaping children’s habitus and taste for physical activities. Adolescents aged 16 years, from lone parent families in their study portrayed greater freedom in decision making than their two parent family counterparts. However, earlier American work by Howard and Madrigal (1990) suggested that children from two parent families demonstrated greater influence in recreational decisions than children from lone parent families. The decision making process regarding children’s physical activity and recreational pursuits appears to be a collaborative process between the parent(s) and child (Macdonald et al., 2005), and, if families are becoming more egalitarian, then children might expect, and be expected, to have some influence on the decisions made. Indeed, despite their contradictory findings, Howard and Madrigal (1990) did contend that family structure might affect children’s potential influence in family decisions since certain family structures have “less parental time available to devote to family decisions and consequently children’s influences increases” (Howard and Madrigal, 1990, p.246). Certainly though, further exploration is needed.

In a similar Australian study, family structure was identified as an important influence in framing the potential choices that young people make with regard to physical activity (Wright et al., 2003). Interviewing 28 female and 34 male students, Wright et al. (2003) highlight a young female student who indicated that her physical activity and sports participation during a holiday period or weekend was dependent on what her lone parent (father) said, and whether her brothers where ‘being good’. They argue that “her chances of pursuing the physical activities she enjoyed seemed to be limited by the social circumstances



of her life” (Wright et al, 2003, p.27). This however, was the only example of their study that was related directly to family structure.

In addition to the restrictions on choice and decisions for children in certain family structures, parents also face barriers in supporting children’s involvement in physical activity. Adopting an ecological approach, Dwyer et al. (2008) identified several interpersonal factors and specifically family structure, as a barrier to parents supporting preschoolers’ physical activity. Their study highlighted the difficulties faced by lone parents in trying to provide physical activity opportunities for their young children. Parents of children aged between 2 and 5 years identified a lack of social support, making it difficult to encourage their children to be physically active (Dwyer et al., 2008). A recent study by Quarmby and Dagkas (2010) also suggested that the amount and type of encouragement varied across family structures, with children from intact couple families receiving greater support to engage in activities than children in lone parent families.

It was also evident in Dagkas and Stathi’s (2007) study that children from lone parent families had more limited experiences of physical activity since they took on responsibilities as carers of younger siblings to help support their parents. Adopting the family systems theory approach, Baranowski (1997, p.183) suggested that “family is something more than the sum of its parts and that because the family can act as a unit, family members can compensate for the strengths and weaknesses of other family members in response to certain events”. Hence, when a family experiences a transition from one family structure to the next, older siblings may attempt to balance this event by stepping into the role vacated by a parent, providing the necessary support for younger siblings to maintain their normal behaviours. In support of this, Bagley et al. (2006) suggest that older siblings from lone parent families might try to

compensate in part for the absence of a parent by being active with his or her younger sibling, whilst also making activity related decisions on their behalf.

As has been mentioned previously, lone parent families are particularly susceptible to low incomes and poverty and hence financial limitations have also impacted on children's ability to engage in structured physical activity contexts (Dagkas and Stathi, 2007; Macdonald et al., 2004). In their study of 12 diverse families (including a mix of lone parent and two parent families) within a total of 13 children, Macdonald et al. (2004) found that children's physical activity was a task to be managed within the family that often impacted on daily family routine and transport arrangements. Further, the cost of activities was found to be prohibitive for some lone parent families and often resulted in lone parents sacrificing their own engagement in activity to try and accommodate that of their child. Macdonald et al. (2004) also argue that lone parent families and those with low incomes (often mutually exclusive) are severely disadvantaged in supporting children's engagement in physical activity.

Whilst family structure and physical activity per se, have received only limited attention in recent times, family structure and structured sport has been subject to a recent proliferation of interest with Kay (2000) and Kay et al. (2008) indicating that children who come from certain family types are much more likely to achieve success in sport. Those children from higher socioeconomic groups and from traditional two parent families (Yang et al., 1996) are more likely to go on to achieve high levels of performance in sport. Parents play a key role in introducing and sustaining young children's involvement in sport and are required to meet the financial costs, provide practical (in the form of transportation) and emotional support, as well as adapting family routines to help ensure children can progress in their chosen sport (Kay,

2000; Kay et al., 2008). However, recent changes in family structure may have led “some sub-groups [to] experience material difficulties” (Kay et al., 2008, p.8) that ultimately impact on the children’s ability to maintain participation in sport. Increasing levels of lone parenthood, which is strongly associated with low employment and low income, lead to reduced financial and time resources that are required to support children’s sport participation, particularly at high performance level (Kay, 2004; Kay et al., 2008). This lack of time is echoed in work by Dwyer et al. (2008) whereby parents reported not having enough time to eat meals together as a family. They argue this is particularly concerning as, without eating in a positive social context such as the family, children may fail to adopt healthy attitudes and behaviours, especially with regard to healthy eating (Dwyer et al., 2008).

For many families whereby the custody of children is shared between lone parents living in different households following divorce or separation, family activity patterns for structured sport or joint physical activity is likely to become fragmented and much more complicated, especially when lone parents can not come to a mutual understanding or agreement (Kay, 2004). In one of the most comprehensive reviews of the family’s influence in sports participation overseen by Sport England, Kay (2004, p.47) argued that “the resident parent may actively obstruct the contact parent’s access to the children, and/or the contact parent fail to turn up for their arranged access” making it difficult for households and children in particular to plan and use their free time for physical activity. This, coupled with the restrictions mentioned above (limited money and time), only increase the obstacles that children in lone parent families face in attempting to participate in structured activity on a regular basis. In several studies that explore the effect of non resident fathers, leisure activities enabled lone fathers, who had limited contact with their child(ren) to share experiences (Jenkins and Lyons, 2006; Jenkins, 2009). However, the type of activity was often restricted

due to time constraints and allowances (Jenkins, 2009). Hence, with lone parenthood the fastest growing family type in many western states and with the majority of non resident lone parents being lone fathers, disruption to their contact with children may also greatly affect their ability to forge strong parent-child relationships (Jenkins and Lyon, 2006; Jenkins, 2009). The Sport England review also highlighted the difficulties faced for children in stepfamilies. Often, stepfamilies have a lower income than intact couple families (Kay, 2004) especially early on in the reconstituted relationship and, as previously mentioned, they tend to spend fewer time and participate less in out of home sport and physical activities that would incur direct costs (Kay, 2004; Pryor and Rodgers, 2001).

However, with the exception of a few, Kay (2004) suggests that recent studies on sport and physical activity participation fail to account for different family types, resulting in a significant gap in the literature. She argues that future research must tackle this issue by allowing *quantitative* research to include specific indicators of family circumstance and in particular family structure (Kay, 2004). Whilst such analysis would identify relationships between young people's physical activity participation and family structure, it would not be able to explain them. Instead, Kay (2004) argues for more *qualitative* research into the role of family life on children's physical activity though this work would not need to be on such a large scale with "typical sample sizes of less than 100 and sub-samples of 20 – 30" (Kay, 2004, p.54), allowing for more in-depth, detailed and information rich data to be drawn. Furthermore, Macdonald et al. (2004) and Wright et al. (2003) have also called for future studies to take into account the different contexts that shape young people's lives, as well as the circumstances that may prevent them from participating in such activities.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

Before the methodology is discussed, it is first important to outline the theoretical perspectives that were used to inform the research. In particular, this included the seminal work of Pierre Bourdieu. The following chapter therefore provides an overview of Bourdieu's conceptual framework and specifically his contribution to the social study of sport and physical activity. Thereafter, his key concepts (habitus, field, capital and practice) are carefully considered. Within the discussion of 'field' and especially relevant to this thesis is an explanation of how Bourdieu viewed the family as a particular social site of reproduction in which an individual's habitus and taste for particular activities could be formed. Following this, a critical review outlining some of the main concerns with Bourdieu's conceptual tools is addressed before finally, physical activity research that adopts Bourdieu's key concepts in relation to the family is discussed to see how they have been used in practice.

### 3.1 Bourdieu's Conceptual Framework

An increasing number of qualitative studies are beginning to adopt a socio-cultural perspective examining health and physical activity with consideration of the social and cultural environments and circumstances in which individuals act (Cliff et al., 2009). Many of these draw on Pierre Bourdieu's work in an effort to understand social practice with specific attention to physical activity and health in given situations (Coakley, 2006; Dagkas and Stathi, 2007; Fitzgerald and Kirk, 2009; Lee and Macdonald, 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Macdonald et al., 2004; Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010). The increasing interest in using Bourdieu's concepts derives from one of his most important works, *Distinction* (1984). Though not exclusively focused on sport or physical activity, *Distinction* drew major attention to sport and physical activity practice in the context of different lifestyles. Moreover, Bourdieu's earlier and later articles, *Sport and Social Class* (1978) and *Program for a Sociology of Sport* (1988a), offered suitable suggestions for the adoption of his key concepts within the sociology of sport. As such, Richard Light (2001) suggested that Bourdieu's conceptual tools offered a powerful means of investigating the social dimensions of sport and physical activity practices. With regard to this thesis then, and in order to explore young people's physical activity experiences from their own perspective, this work adopts Bourdieu's (1984) key concepts in an effort to understand particular social practices and the effect of family as a social environment and determinant to participation in physical activity. Bourdieu's (1984) concepts are incorporated to provide a means of analysing the workings of the social world, in this case the interplay of social factors, family structure and parental influence on children's engagement in structured and unstructured physical activity settings. Integral to this is the notion of habitus which Bourdieu views as key to the social reproduction of certain behaviours. For Bourdieu (1984,

p.101) it is the interaction of habitus, field and capital that generates the logic of practice and is outlined in the following formula:

$$“[(\text{habitus}) \times (\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}”$$

This section therefore explores Bourdieu’s contribution to the analysis of sport and physical activity before carefully considering his key thinking tools, with specific attention given to the interwoven nature of habitus, field and capital and how they can be applied to explore the physical activity choices of children and adolescents.

### ***3.1.1 Bourdieu’s Contribution to the Analysis of Sport and Physical Activity***

Clement (1995) recognised the contribution that Bourdieu’s work has had, and continues to have, on the social analysis of sport and physical activity and the sub discipline of sport sociology overall. However, Bourdieu denied and avoided working with ‘a theory’ and was instead essentially concerned with the ‘practice’ of social science research (Ball, 2006). Whilst Bourdieu does not offer a social theory, he does offer a sociological method and set of analytical concepts through which culture and society can be examined and understood. Bourdieu was particularly concerned with dualisms and in particular those of structure and agency and whilst many other approaches explore such dualisms independently, reducing “practice to one dimension of a dichotomy, such as either the individual or the social” (Maton, 2008, p.61), Bourdieu’s concepts provide a means of maintaining and relating such dualisms. Bourdieu made a conscious effort to avoid working in dualisms and instead aimed to work between binaries, to dissolve the oppositions and provide a means of linking the past, present and future; the individual and the social; the objective and the subjective; and importantly, structure and agency. More specifically, through socialisation, his concepts help explain how social agents incorporate “the system of relationships that structure society” and “how agents

participate in the social construction of these very structures” (Laberge and Kay, 2002, p.243). Used correctly and together, Bourdieu’s key concepts provide a method for simultaneously analysing “the experience of social agents and of the objective structures which make this experience possible” (Bourdieu, 1988b, p.782).

For Bourdieu, a key implication was that sport, and for that matter physical activity in general, could not be fully comprehended in isolation, without consideration of cultural practices and other social influences. Indeed, Bourdieu viewed individual action as being deeply situated in social and cultural contexts although he avoids reducing it to either one (Light, 2001). He argues that action or practice is linked to the reproduction of social structures and the maintenance and reproduction of unequal social relations. His framework outlines the substantial links between structural conditions at the macro level and individual actions on the micro level, particularly as related to the reproduction of class practices, behaviours, tastes and values (Koca, 2009). This was most evident in *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984) with his analysis of different lifestyles and in his article *Sport and Social Class* (Bourdieu, 1978) whereby he identified distinctive class preferences for sport and physical activity that could be explained through differences in an individual’s perceptions and appreciations of the investment required and benefits expected (Laberge and Kay, 2002). In order to further explore how Bourdieu sought to provide a simultaneous view of both individual action and the structure of society, each of his key concepts is discussed in detail below.

### **3.2 Habitus**

As previously mentioned, key to how habitus operates is its link with individual agency. According to Bourdieu (1977a, 1984, 1990, 1993), individuals exercise agency within



existing social conventions, meaning behaviour is socially constructed with interactions already influenced by social predispositions and rules. However, it should be noted that the Latin word *habitus* is an old philosophical concept that was used intermittently by Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Weber, Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, among others (Wacquant, 2008). Similar to Bourdieu, Mauss used it in his study of body techniques as a specific term to identify the shaping of the individual by the community and because it conveyed, better than 'habit', the idea of being acquired (Laberge and Sankoff, 1988). Whereas Mauss used *habitus* only with reference to physical demeanour or behaviour, Bourdieu broadened the notion to form a "dispositional theory of action" (Wacquant, 2005, p.315); expanding the scope of the term to include a person's beliefs and dispositions so that it represented a generating principle of the totality of habits that make up lifestyle (Laberge and Sankoff, 1988). Furthermore, Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* was able to account for the "dialectical relation between the social structure and individuals' practices and preferences" (Laberge and Kay, 2002, p.246). As a concept, *habitus* is therefore intended to be used through empirical investigation to provide a means of analysing the workings of the social world (Maton, 2008) and to help understand how individual agency (an individual's capacity to act and make free choices) can be reproduced and regulated without being the product of obedience to rules.

As Bourdieu (1990, p.52) defines it, the *habitus* is socially developed "systems of durable, transposable dispositions" enabling individuals to act in a certain way in response to familiar and unusual situations. Formally, Bourdieu defines *habitus* as a property of social agents that comprise a "structured, structuring structure" (Bourdieu, 1984, p.170). In essence, it is *structured* by one's past and present circumstances (such as family upbringing) (Maton, 2008). Thus, the *habitus* is a product of early childhood experiences, in particular socialisation within the family and various other social groups (e.g. schools, neighbourhoods) (Reay,

2004). Moreover, it is *structuring* “in that one’s habitus helps shape one’s present and future practices”, and finally, it is also a *structure* “in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or un-patterned” (Maton 2008, p.51). Bourdieu (1984, p.170) suggested that habitus is “internalised and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning giving perceptions; it is a general, transposable disposition which carries out systematic, universal application”. This structure therefore comprises a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and ultimately practice. Bourdieu contends that habitus is a mediating construct shaped by the living conditions characteristic of a particular social space, whilst also operating as a “generating principle, of classifiable practices and judgements of taste” (Laberge and Kay, 2002, p.247). The habitus is thus both structured by conditions of existence and generates particular practices in accordance with its own structure.

Through the process of socialisation actors acquire this system of dispositions that can generate a wide repertoire of possible actions which causes them to act and react in a manner suitable for given situations. In relation to this study, the dispositions (which make up habitus) to engage in physical activity arise from a complex interplay of various economic, cultural and social factors. All these factors constitute an individual’s habits, identity and outlook towards physical activity. Dispositions comprising an individual’s habitus are thus socially constructed, acquired through interactions across a range of social contexts. Furthermore, these dispositions operate on a subconscious level and are therefore embodied and hence, are only evident as a feature of the way a person appears or acts (Bourdieu, 1999). Thus, a key feature of Bourdieu’s notion of habitus is that it contributes towards the development of the body (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990, 1998). Bodies are also formed through the development of ‘tastes’ which are infused in individuals through their upbringing and social locations (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Shilling (1993, p.129) has identified ‘taste’ as the “process

whereby individuals appropriate as voluntary choices and preferences, lifestyles which are actually rooted in material constraints”. While the different habitus can not be readily seen or identified, they are expressed through practices and in particular, through the development of taste, “which can be seen a conscious manifestation of habitus” (Shilling, 1993, p.129). Tastes are therefore embodied and affect people’s orientation to their bodies and thus, their orientations to particular forms of physical activity. As such, Maton (2008) suggests that because dispositions are embedded within individuals, they are durable and can last over time. In summary, habitus generates a set of choices that constitute a lifestyle, whilst taste is a distinctive lifestyle since lifestyles are the systematic products of habitus (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990).

Habitus therefore characterises the beliefs, values, speech, action and appearance of individuals (Bourdieu, 1984), encapsulating within them their history, which enables individuals to make choices to act in certain ways rather than others. As habitus is socially constructed, Fernandez-Balboa and Muros (2006) suggest it can be understood as the manifestation of a huge but unconscious, matrix of embodied values and actions carried out by people in similar ways. Habitus also manifests itself in personal habits although the two are not the same. “[A] habit is something one person does with certain frequency, whereas habitus emerges in generalised action” (Fernandez-Balboa and Muros, 2006, p.201) and something many people do frequently. In relation to sport and physical activity, Laberge and Kay (2002) provide a succinct summary statement. They suggest that habitus helps us to understand that different tastes, which individuals express in relation to physical activity, are generated by different perceptions of one’s own body and importantly, the social conditions that mediate individual agency. However, whilst habitus is reproduced at an individual level, Bourdieu (1984) suggests that shared experiences of the social world will tend to produce a

collective habitus; in that individuals within a common social space who share social conditions will likely have similar experiences, embodied dispositions and tastes. Hence, habitus may be common to all members of the same group or class who exhibit a collective social history. Central to how habitus works as an explanatory tool is the relationship between habitus and social space, or as Bourdieu terms it, *field*.

### 3.3 Field

In order to understand interactions or to explain social phenomenon, Bourdieu suggested it was necessary to examine the social space in which such interactions or events occurred, rather than simply look at what was said (Bourdieu, 1984, 1989; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). For this reason, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) have suggested that we are not pre-programmed to act in certain ways but rather practices are the result of an unconscious relationship between a habitus and a field. All human actions take place within what Bourdieu terms social space or *fields*, and Laberge and Kay (2002) argue that like habitus, field is also a relational concept, in that it draws attention to the relationships between various social agents occupying different positions within a given social field. Formally, Bourdieu (1984, p.101) summarises the relation using the following equation:

$$\text{“}[(\text{habitus}) \times (\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice”}$$

However, Laberge and Kay (2002) suggest that this formula should be considered with caution as, though not intended by Bourdieu, it creates an image of a reductionist comprehension of social reality and objectifies his theory. Instead, it should be unpacked to stress the critical role of social fields and their interconnected nature with habitus in the production of social practice. Ultimately, Bourdieu’s concept of field highlights the importance that he places on macro as well as micro structures.

Bourdieu's concept of field can be defined as a social arena and site of social interaction within which the struggle and contestation over resources takes place (Light, 2001). This is a critical characteristic of the field concept. More specifically, a field is a site in which certain beliefs and values are established and imposed on the people within it through the various relationships and practices that occur. In that sense, fields are sites of ideological reproduction (Bourdieu, 1993). Wacquant (1992, p.17) argues that a field "is simultaneously a space of conflict and competition", structured internally in terms of power relations. Each field is therefore constituted by the relational differences between the positions of the social agents within it and as such, agents are defined by their relative positions within a given field (Bourdieu, 1985). The relative power that determines positions of dominance and subordination and locates individuals and groups within fields is determined by the distribution and accumulation of capital in the form of cultural, social, or economic resources. Individuals and other agents try to distinguish themselves from others and acquire capital that is useful or valuable within that arena and as such, fields are seen to be hierarchical. Individuals are seen to struggle to increase or maintain their account of capital and hence improve or keep their position within the hierarchy of the field (Laberge and Kay, 2002). However, the distribution of capital is not fixed but sensitive to the struggles between agents, which leads to fields being constituted by a fluid system of social positions as individual positions continually move in a field, both as the outcome of the struggle for ascendancy or in some cases due to the entry of new agents (Laberge and Kay, 2002). In fact, the entry of new agents into a field may transform the internal structure by altering the power relations between various agents already occupying that space.

Specifically, Shilling (2004, p.475) argues that a social field is a "patterned set of organising forces and principles imposed on all those entering its parameters". Each field is

therefore possessive of a relative autonomy from other fields and “prescribes its particular values and possesses its own regulative principles” (Wacquant, 1992, p.17), evaluating those within it according to its own internal structure or “rules of the game” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.99). In so doing, the boundaries of a particular field are demarcated by where its effects end. Consequently, such boundaries can be difficult to locate and thus, overlapping fields can affect the internal dynamics within them (Laberge and Kay, 2002). Moreover, where multiple fields overlap, they are interrelated to make up the larger space of society (Light, 2001).

As mentioned previously, those who occupy the same field may share similar habitus and reproduce the culture of their shared social fields through practice. It is here that the interconnected nature of habitus and field is most prominent. In particular, the concept of field adds to the possibilities of Bourdieu’s conceptual framework and gives habitus a dynamic quality. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.127) explain that “when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a ‘fish in water’: it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted”. In other words, habitus can be replicated through encountering a field that reproduces its dispositions (Reay, 2004). Since such dispositions are embedded, the habitus develops momentum that can generate practices for some time after the original conditions which shaped it have vanished. However, when habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar, it is like a fish out of water and the resulting disjunctures can generate change and transformation. Reay (2004, p.438) argues that “such disjunctures between habitus and field occur for Bourdieu when individuals with a well-developed habitus find themselves in different fields or different parts of the same social field”.

However, Shilling (2004) argues that the fit between habitus and field does not guarantee social reproduction but insists that while social fields locate themselves on the bodies of those entering their space, they do not completely determine action. “Instead, they are characterised by a measure of contingency: the rules structuring a field can be reflected upon, negotiated and struggled over” (Shilling, 2004, p.478). While the habitus is creative and inventive, it tends to operate within the limits of its original structures, “which are the embodied sedimentation of the social structures which produced it” (Wacquant, 1992, p.19). For Bourdieu, the day to day activities that people take part in are produced by an interaction of agency and social structure (Light, 2001). Bourdieu places an emphasis on social structures which he balances with the notion of agency; an individual’s capacity to act and make free choices. “However, acting as an agent may be mediated by influences that are beyond their conscious realisation” (Hunter, 2004, p.176), leading agents, and with reference to this thesis, children and adolescents, to reproduce the structures that limit them. In doing so, they are ultimately “trapped... within the limits of the system of categories” they owe to their upbringing (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.126).

To help understand this concept, Thomson (2008) reminds us that Bourdieu drew analogies with a football field in helping to describe how fields operate. This is not so far fetched as Bourdieu often discussed his concepts and life in general as a game; in particular, he makes continuous reference to the “rules of the game” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.99). Though certainly more tangible, a football field is also a boundaried site in which a particular game is played. That game (football) is played out by the actors on the field who have set positions marked in predetermined places (Thomson, 2008), much like social life and social spaces (fields) in which positions are occupied by social agents. As with other spheres of life, so too, the game of football has specific rules and skills that novice players must learn

as they begin to play and progress (Thomson, 2008). Furthermore, what players can do and where they can go during the game depends on their field position. As Bourdieu describes fields as competitive, so in continuing the football analogy, players use different strategies to maintain or improve their position in pursuit of the accumulation of certain forms of capital and to achieve their desired goals. In reality, Bourdieu sees fields as “fields of conflict” (1984, p.244) in which occupants try to preserve and improve their social position by struggling over cultural goods; thereby attempting to impose a hierarchical structure. Just like Bourdieu’s concept of field that places limits on the operations of habitus, there are also boundaries to a football field (though in this case clearly marked) and thus there are limits and restrictions as to what can be achieved (Thomson, 2008).

In essence, this two way relationship between habitus and field ensures that while the field tends to structure the habitus, the habitus tends to structure perceptions of the field (Bourdieu, 1988b). In other words:

“The relation between habitus and field operates in two ways. On one side, it is a relation of conditioning: the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field (or of a hierarchically intersecting set of fields). On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and with value, in which it is worth investing one’s energy” (Wacquant, 1989, p.44).

Importantly, though structured and systematic, habitus is only activated when it encounters a particular field. Wacquant (2005, p.318) suggests that habitus “operates like a spring that needs an external trigger” and therefore can not be considered in isolation from the particular fields in which it evolves. Thus both Bourdieu’s key concepts of habitus and field are related



as they tend to “**function fully, only in relation to one another**” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.19). Overall, Bourdieu’s concept of field encourages the researcher to investigate what is at stake in a given arena and to uncover the latent patterns of interest and struggle (Laberge and Kay, 2002). In short, it helps to understand how the structure of a field produces inclusion or exclusion among its members and how this then impacts on the production of certain practices in accordance with the habitus.

### ***3.3.1 The Constitution of the Family Field***

With reference to this thesis is the importance of the family as a social field and the actors within it as the primary socialising agents responsible for creating a structure which might mediate young people’s physical activity choices. Bourdieu’s (1996) article ‘*On the Family as a Realized Category*’ for the first time really, drew attention to this social entity and the representations that people form when they refer to the family. Bourdieu (1996, 1998) argues that the dominant definition of family is based on a collection of words (home, house, household). On this definition, the family can be considered “a set of related individuals linked either by alliance (marriage) or affiliation or less commonly by adoption (legal relationship) and living under the same roof (cohabitation)” (Bourdieu 1996, p.19). However, he also acknowledged that there are a growing number of groups called ‘families’ that have no resemblance to this dominant definition and that in modern society, as explained earlier, the tradition ‘nuclear family’ is fast becoming a minority existence in comparison to the number of unmarried couples living together, lone parent families or married couples living apart.

The common definitions of family are therefore “seen as having in common the assumption that the family exists as a separate social universe” (Bourdieu, 1996, p.20). Given

that, Bourdieu (1996) suggested that the family functions as a field. It maintains “physical, economic and, above all, symbolic power relations (linked for example, to the volume and structure of the capital possessed by each member) [and] its struggles for conservation and transformation of these power relations” (Bourdieu, 1996, p.22), which only exist within that site. Within the structure of any field there are essentially two direct systems of hierarchy. The first is economic, whereby position and power are determined by money and property and within the family field this usually lies with the parent(s). The second is determined by how much cultural or symbolic capital one possesses and its particular value within that field. Similarly, in relation to physical activity and the family field, “there is no absolutely fixed correspondence between a specific activity and habitus... it is the position of an activity within the field in question that determines its value and participants” (Shilling, 2004, p.476).

Importantly, Bourdieu (1996) contends that the family (as a particular social field) remains the key site of social reproduction, playing a vital role in maintaining social order by reproducing the structure of social space and social relations. It is also one of the key sites for the accrual and transmission of various forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1996, 1998) with one of the clearest and simplest examples being the transmission of the family name; a basic element of symbolic capital. The family thus plays a pivotal role in the reproduction of social order across generations. Moreover, Bourdieu (1998) regards the family as a key field in which dispositions of habitus, associated with taste, interests, behaviours and attitudes are embedded in young people. In so doing, early family experiences “produce the structures of the habitus which become in turn the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience” (Bourdieu, 1977a, p.78). There is therefore a need to carefully consider the concept of family in its entirety and its perspective from those involved, especially concerning how they view physical activity as a form of capital within the family field.

### 3.4 Capital

Completing Bourdieu's (1984) conceptual trilogy and closely associated with both field and habitus is the notion of *capital*. Capital offers a perspective on the ways in which a person's resources are privileged, marginalised, traded or acquired within a given field (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu conceptualised capital in three fundamental types: social, cultural and economic. Economic capital is fairly straightforward in that it refers to one's financial position and is certainly more tangible than other types of capital. With regard to physical activity, economic capital may be directly related to the amount of opportunities young people have. That said, social and cultural capital are no less important in trying to explain the possibilities for people in different social fields. Social capital for instance refers to an individual's stock of "social connections" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.47), that is, the relational networks that allow individuals to maximise their ability to convert capital into different forms. Cultural capital on the other hand relates to all symbolic and material goods that might give an individual a higher status in society. Bourdieu (1986) also explained that cultural capital exists in three forms. Firstly, in the *embodied state*, as in how one acts; secondly, in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods that one possesses (i.e. books); and finally, in the *institutionalised state*, in the form of educational qualifications that one has acquired. In addition, Bourdieu advocated a notion of symbolic capital in the form of prestige or reputation, which is often the form that other types of capital are recognised (Bourdieu, 1985). Hence, Light (2001) broadly defines capital as something that is owned, but also something that is embodied. As such, the amount of capital accumulated by an individual will make a significant contribution to the range of available choices within a specific field. The accumulation of capital therefore

determines an individual's "distance from necessity" (Bourdieu, 1984, p.177) that is, his or her distance from material want.

In continuing with Bourdieu's view of embodiment, Shilling also explored the notion of physical capital. While Bourdieu maintained that embodied capital was a sub division of cultural capital as in "cultural resources invested in the body" (Shilling, 1991, p.654), Shilling suggested that it failed to account for the physical aspect of embodiment. Instead, Shilling (1991, 1993) argued that the management and development of the body was central to human agency and the maintenance of their status within given fields. Physical capital is therefore used to refer to cultural capital that is embodied through social practice and any form of physical attribute as well as their physical condition and health. Physical strength or skills, the size and shape of the body all represent physical capital and carry particular meanings, just as the way we carry our bodies by walking in terms of posture and deportment or how we present our bodies in terms of clothing all carry particular social or cultural meanings (Light, 2001; McDonald, 2003). For Bourdieu (1984), physical capital was not only an embodied capacity to use the body but the appearance of the body and in particular, as evidence of work on the body. Bourdieu's own interpretation of physical capital gave specific attention to the way different social classes used their bodies as an expression of class tastes. Bourdieu (1984) empirically mapped out the distinct body habitus developed by the main classes. The upper classes tend to treat their bodies as a project, akin to a form of investment (McDonald, 2003) whilst the middle classes, also treat the body as a project but less for intrinsic benefits and more for extrinsic display. In contrast, Bourdieu argued that members of the working class, as befitting their stereotypical position as labourers, develop an instrumental orientation to their bodies, based on the metaphor of the body as a machine, whereby the body is valued for its functional utility and is expressed in a preference for sporting activities that require stamina,

power and strength (McDonald, 2003). However, Shilling (1991) suggested a broader concept of physical capital than Bourdieu, referring to the importance of the body as a form of capital in its own right.

Conceptualised by Bourdieu in these forms, capital can be accumulated within specific fields but importantly, it can also be converted. Cultural capital contained in a university degree can be converted into economic capital through the particular type of work to which it provides access (Light, 2001). Similarly, social capital accumulated through the building of social networks can also be converted into economic capital through the access that it provides to business exchanges and the possibility of more rewarding employment (Light, 2001). Physical capital, as outlined by Shilling (1991, 1993, 2004) refers to the conversion of bodily participation in sport and leisure activities into other forms of capital, most notably, how elite sports men and women convert physical ability into economic reward. However, young people also look to convert physical capital into social capital by building physical activity and sporting relationships with others (Gorely et al., 2003). Fields can therefore be understood as a means of production of different types of capital and as regulators of the distribution of that capital. The possession of capital within a particular field such as physical activity therefore has the potential to mediate an individual's participation. If however, an individual's stock of capital (in any form) declines within a field, the possibility of continuing to engage in certain activities is reduced and a taste for other activities may eventually develop (Shilling, 1991). Consequently, in unpacking Bourdieu's equation it is evident that habitus interacts with the amount of capital in a given field to regulate available choices and thus practice.

### **3.5 Practice**

Agency and hence practice, is not simply the result of one's habitus but rather the interaction between habitus and an individual's current circumstance; the field they occupy and the current stock of capital they possess. According to Bourdieu, the dispositions that constitute habitus are acquired through social practice and while practice mediates between habitus and field, it is through practice that social structures are embedded in the habitus (Light, 2001). Field and habitus therefore "constitute a dialectic through which specific practices produce and reproduce the social world that at the same time is making them" (Thomson, 2008, p.75). As with the concept of agency, actions that constitute practice occur through processes that may be beyond conscious control or awareness of the individual (Hunter, 2004). Richard Light (2001) argues that in sport, advanced players develop a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu 1988b, p.782) that enables their practice to respond unconsciously, without thinking. While movements and actions within physical activity are initially conscious, they become more natural through practice and almost second nature, embedded in the body. However, Hunter (2004) argues that those who develop a feel for the game become complicit in reproducing *doxa*, the taken for granted assumptions and beliefs, which "refers to the natural beliefs or opinions that are intimately linked to field and habitus" (Deer, 2008, p.120). For Bourdieu, doxa determines natural practice within a specific field; practice that those accustomed to the field will ultimately take for granted. Hence practice is seen to be the product of habitus (Hunter, 2004). As such, to analyse practice and in this case individual agency (choices to engage in particular forms of physical activity), it must be considered in relation to a specific field (the family) and its mediating effects on habitus and capital.

### **3.6 Concerns with Bourdieu's Work**

Perhaps one of the most persistent critiques of Bourdieu's work is that it is deterministic, dwelling too much on reproductive aspects and focusing on continuity rather than change (Shilling, 2004; Tomlinson, 2004). Indeed, Shilling (2004) points out that Bourdieu viewed social life as patterned, regular and stable and while emphasising the importance of agency, habitus rarely accounts for change. Bourdieu (1992, p.133) himself stated that new experiences are "perceived through categories already constructed by prior experiences" and Wacquant (1992) suggests that here the issues lie. For instance, Morrison (2005) argues that the main problem centres on the notion that habitus encapsulates structured structures and structuring structures. He suggests that the habitus is "both a result of social structures and yet also structures; that is, changes and influences, behaviour, life-styles and social systems" (2005, p.313). As Bourdieu outlined in two of his seminal works (*Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977a, p.79) and *The Logic of Practice* (1990, p.52)), the habitus is both "opus operatum" (result of practices) and "modus operandi" (mode of practices) and therefore, agents tend to act in ways that reinforce and reproduce structure. In fact, Bourdieu suggests that habitus "tends to generate all the reasonable, common sense behaviours (and only those) which are possible with limits of regularities" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.55) of a particular field. However, while there are limits to habitus operations (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1990), there is still potential for change as effected through the exercise of agency and the interaction of habitus and field. Reay (2004) suggests that an individual's habitus is malleable and responsive to its current circumstances and therefore continuously restructured by its encounters with the outside world. Like habitus, a social field is not fixed and it is possible to trace the history and shape of a field in support of understanding how change happens (Thomson, 2008). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.133) explain:

“Habitus is not the fate that some people read into it. Being the product of history, it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures. It’s durable but not eternal”.

Drawing on the earlier analogy, unlike a football field, fields are not governed by permanent rules allowing for agency and change. Thus, it is when habitus encounters a new and unfamiliar field, or when the structure and power relations within an existing field are altered that disjunctions occur and social agents can experience change. Hence, as the social environment changes around the actors, dispositions making up the habitus are also open to change. At such a point, the taken for granted assumptions (*doxa*) are interrupted allowing agents to experience *heterodoxy* which “implies an awareness and recognition of the possibility of different or antagonistic beliefs” (Bourdieu, 1977a, p.164). These beliefs essentially disagree with previous assumptions within that field and result in change.

Another problem with adopting Bourdieu’s key thinking tools is that the boundaries of a field are hard to define and thus it is difficult to determine where the field effects stop. When using ‘fields’ within research, Thomson (2008) argues that it is perhaps best to do what Bourdieu himself did and reduced the number of fields in play at any one time and with specific reference to this thesis, focus solely on the family field and its effects on young people’s physical activity practice.

### **3.7 Families, Physical Activity and Habitus Research**

Bourdieu’s work can be used to explore, not just the lived experiences of individuals, but also the social conditions that shape and limit that experience (Bourdieu, 2003). As such, there has been a recent explosion of qualitative studies that explore the family influence on young



people's agency and choices with regard to physical activity. With particular relevance to this thesis, the majority of these (Coakley, 2006; Fitzgerald and Kirk, 2009; Lee and Macdonald, 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Macdonald et al., 2004; Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010) have tended to draw on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. In youth sport (a form of structured physical activity) for example, Coakley (2006) identified the family as vital in providing opportunities and in helping to generate children's sporting preferences. In doing so, he coined the term "family habitus" (Coakley, 2006, p.160). As an extension of Bourdieu's (1978, 1984) concept of habitus, family habitus refers to "a historically and socially situated system of dispositions and the family activities associated with them" (Coakley, 2006, p.160). Families in his study demonstrated a family habitus that involved a belief system and particular lifestyles that represented specific dispositions and practices of all aspects of family life. Essentially, family habitus contained activities that parents believed would best serve the moral and physical development of their children (Coakley, 2006) and so worked to generate children's interests in such activities.

Also drawing on Bourdieu's key concepts, a recent qualitative study in the U.K. focused on the role of family for young disabled people's sport and physical activity. In this study, Fitzgerald and Kirk (2009) argued that the family was an important arena for the development of sporting tastes and that the family introduced and encouraged disabled young people to engage in sport. Moreover, the family was identified by the participants as influential in constructing young disabled people's emerging habitus and provided a key site in which various forms of capital could be accumulated and converted (Fitzgerald and Kirk, 2009).

This tracks with findings regarding young able-bodied people too. Exploring physical activity participation in young people aged 11 – 15 from rural Australia, Lee and Macdonald

(2009) found family to be important in providing encouragement, support and social interaction. Their data demonstrated that young people relied heavily on family support in maintaining their habitus. Parents were found to make financial and time sacrifices in order to support their children's involvement in structured physical activity settings (Lee and Macdonald, 2009). The authors argued that "the importance of the family in physical activity participation can be seen as a form of social capital where parents consider organised activities as valuable for their children's social development" (Lee and Macdonald, 2009, p.371). However, Lee and Macdonald (2009) suggested that for some of the participants, their choice not to engage in physical activities was a reflection of a particular taste developed within the family. When physical activity was not valued or regarded as important within certain families, the participants' taste mirrored their family's dislike for activity which the authors argued was a result of what Bourdieu (1984, p.372) termed a "taste for necessity".

Furthermore, their study suggested that young people tended to choose sports that their parents had participated in or had encouraged them to do (Lee and Macdonald, 2009). Like previous studies (Macdonald et al., 2004; Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010) this mirrors Bourdieu's notion of intergenerational habitus, whereby parents own biographies and interests are transmitted to their children. This notion of intergenerational habitus, whilst not explicitly stated, is also evident in Maureen Harrington's earlier study on sport and leisure. She argued that parents deliberately introduced their children to leisure activities that they valued and hoped they would be remembered and repeated in later life (Harrington, 2006). In that sense, parents were seen to be complicit in the transmission of physical activity related cultural capital in an effort to instil specific values and beliefs in their offspring and to orient them towards particular activities.

All of these studies that draw on Bourdieu's concept of habitus and capital provide further insights into the role that the family plays in shaping young people's (both able-bodied and disabled) physical activity choices. They are particularly useful as they allow for an acknowledgement of individual agency within larger social settings. Qualitative research in this domain allows for understandings of the particularities in such groups to come to the fore, whereas statistical data does not. Indeed, Lee et al., (2009, p.74) argue that future research must continue to adopt a qualitative perspective, to "add to the somewhat hollow stories of participation statistics and to contribute to a greater understanding of inequalities and differences in participation in physical activities".

Used by Bourdieu (1984), the habitus is therefore a means to understand how various mechanisms lead to the reproduction or transformation of certain behaviours. In broad terms, physical activity participation is seen to be shaped by social structures and essentially, how young people's habitus is shaped may influence their initial and ongoing involvement in physical activity and even the nature and reasons behind engaging in activities in general. Given that the family is an important arena in nurturing physical activity tastes, preferences and interests (Fitzgerald and Kirk, 2009), it is crucial to explore how family structure in particular shapes young people's habitus and tastes for physical activities. It may be that an individual's habitus, as bearing experiences of their family upbringing, may provide them with certain desires to engage in physical activity. That said, adopting Bourdieu's methodological principles includes accepting that such activities and preferences are understandable only in terms of their social spaces, positions and relationships that pertain to a particular time and place (Grenfell, 2008). Therefore, in keeping with Bourdieu's tradition of working with dualisms, this research attempts to work with habitus' duality as both

collective and individualised, attending to biography and social structure. Importantly, the use of his framework adds “meaning to the literature on participation patterns and statistics” (Lee and Macdonald, 2009, p.362) and helps understand how wider structural forces converge to orient young people’s activity choices. Drawing on Bourdieu’s key concepts to guide the research, and in attempting to work between binaries as Bourdieu himself did, this thesis worked within a specific methodological framework which is carefully explored within the following methodology chapter (see section 4.2).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Chapter Two provided a succinct overview of the current national and international literature relating to this research and the need to explore the family from a different viewpoint while Chapter Three outlined the specific sociological constructs, in the form of Bourdieu's conceptual tools, which helped guide the research. As such, this chapter begins with an introduction and discussion of the major methodological traditions in educational research and the social sciences. This explores the quantitative and qualitative approach and their underlying paradigmatic assumptions coupled with a discussion of the third research tradition, mixed methods. Thereafter, a justification of the particular methodological framework adopted for this study is provided. This links the main research question with a socio-cultural perspective, Bourdieu's sociological tools and the use of a mixed methods design. A careful consideration of the research focus and specific research sub-questions is then provided. Following this, the chapter details the participants invited to take part in the study and how they were selected. Since this study employed a sequential mixed methods approach, the instruments for each stage are addressed independently, closely followed by the piloted aspects from each measure. Next, a detailed description of data analysis is provided for each of the quantitative and qualitative components, with explanations of the procedures that were followed to generate the subsequent results and findings. An account of the study's validity and reliability, with regard to legitimation (a mixed methods term for addressing these aspects of research) follows. Finally, the chapter concludes with a reflective account of the research process.

## **4.1 Introduction**

For as long as can be remembered people have sought to understand their environment and the phenomena it presents (Cohen et al., 2007). One of the primary means of achieving such understanding is through research, a process described as the search for knowledge. More precisely it has been defined as the “systematic process of discovery and advancement of human knowledge” (Gratton and Jones, 2004, p.4). Macdonald et al. (2002) contend that individual researchers act within a community of scholars who share similar conceptions of questions, methods and techniques. As such, they argue that shared research affiliations are referred to as frameworks or paradigms that function as guidelines for designing and conducting inquiry.

### ***4.1.1 Philosophical Assumptions***

There are currently various paradigms that inform social science research. Prior to the 1970's, social research mainly adopted the positivist, quantitative approach of the natural sciences (Bryman, 2001). However, the 1970's saw a growing backlash against the natural science approach by individuals from multiple epistemological, methodological, political and ethical disciplines, who believed it was inappropriate to treat people in the same way; as objects fixed within the natural world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The resulting reaction was the emergence of the interpretive paradigm within qualitative research. In the present research environment, both forms of inquiry are widely used, although both of these terms (quantitative and qualitative) have come to denote contrasting positions in relation to a number of dimensions of social research. Each term subsequently implies a commitment to a particular set of ontological and epistemological assumptions about how the social world is viewed and subsequently how the research process is informed (Denscombe 1998, 2007;

Macdonald et al., 2002). The distinctions within each paradigm in turn relate to differences at various levels including the concern over the production of knowledge and the research process, as well as the use of data collection and analysis. However, there has been a recent emergence of a third research tradition (Denscombe, 2007, 2008); an approach governed by an alternative paradigm, *pragmatism* (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2007; Morgan, 2007). This paradigm advocates that research should be conducted within a mixed methods design so as to best answer the research question. It is therefore important to distinguish between the major methodological traditions within social science research and explore the comparative merits of their modes of inquiry, outlining the implications of adopting a mixed method approach for this emerging research focus. Hence, the underlying philosophical assumptions of each approach are explored in detail below and later discussed in relation to their use within the current study.

#### **4.1.2 Quantitative Research (Scientific Paradigm)**

The quantitative, *scientific paradigm* is based on the principles of the natural sciences and incorporates the ontological assumptions that reality is external to the individual and objective in nature. Associated with this is the epistemological notion of *positivism*; a belief that explanations must be empirically verifiable, and that there are universal laws in the structure and transformation of human institutions (Bryman, 2001). Positivism is therefore based in the natural science and is more closely aligned with the scientific traditions of biology, for example, than those of sociology. It also acknowledges that knowledge of the world is obtained through applying the scientific method to experiences perceived through the natural senses, believing that human behaviour can be broken down, categorised and measured (Curtner-Smith, 2002). The use of this type of methodology in social research has its

attractions as it portrays an aura of “scientific respectability” (Denscombe, 1998, p.176) and allows for results to be generalisable across time and space. Its purpose is therefore to use objective measures to establish predictable relationships between two or more variables. As such it portrays data as numbers and presents findings in the form of graphs and tables, conveying a sense of solid, objective research that helps organise knowledge, providing general relationships between events (Denscombe 2002, 2007; Robson, 2002).

The scientific paradigm also lends itself to a number of different data collection processes that are associated primarily with strategies such as surveys and experiments and with methods like questionnaires and observation. Such strategies allow researchers to be as objective as possible, attempting to eradicate human bias both during data collection and analysis (Curtner-Smith, 2002). However, in adopting this paradigm, the nature of data collection requires the researcher to “focus on specific factors and to study them in relation to specific other factors... it is therefore necessary to isolate variables; to separate them from their natural location, in order to study their working and their effect” (Denscombe, 1998, p.176). This subsequently places the researcher ‘outside’ of the researched, and creates a very objective method of investigation. Many natural science studies have therefore been criticised for alienating the context in relation to the subjects who are being investigated. They take very little account of the social world preferring to generate universal truths from experiments that can be replicated across time and space. Furthermore, given the rigid, planned structure of such an approach, there is rarely any chance to change direction once the investigation has started.

Within the field of sport and physical activity, many will advocate that positivism has steered thought and conduct in areas with particular relevance to human behaviour (Macdonald et al.,



2002), with its eventual goal being the prediction and control of human behaviour in various environments. In physical activity for example, many if not all of the empirical studies that focus on adult participation in physical activity are based within a positivist paradigm, using objective measures to quantify levels of engagement and links to other variables. Indeed, experimental studies using systematic observations of behaviour, followed by planned interventions, have long been part of the positivist tradition in this field (e.g. Cale and Harris, 2006; Macdonald et al., 2002; Sallis et al., 2003).

While this line of research has its benefits, in encouraging more people to be active, it does not address some of the questions that can be posed and answered under other, currently more prominent perspectives. This is not to say that positivistic thought is on the decline because it has been shown to be flawed in any way (Macdonald et al., 2002), but rather that it is being constantly challenged by newly ascending perspectives in social science that cause a shift from one to the next, in what could be termed the paradigm wars. The dominant discourse of positivism used in journals, conferences and education has been replaced, resulting in an unmistakable shift from research rooted in the traditions of the natural sciences to those based in the social sciences (Macdonald et al., 2002).

#### ***4.1.3 Qualitative Research (Interpretive Paradigm)***

On the opposite side of the coin so to speak are those who reject the ideal of a detached, objective observer and instead argue that behaviour can only be understood by “sharing their frame of reference” (Cohen et al., 2003, p.19): that is, by being on the *inside* rather than the *outside*. Qualitative research is therefore often depicted as the antithesis of the more traditional quantitative approach (Thomas et al., 2005). It is a process designed to obtain an in-depth understanding of social action, experience and meaning presented by different people

(Pope, 2006). The qualitative research approach draws on the *interpretive paradigm*, which deals much more with understanding the fundamental nature of the social world and positions the observer within it (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Pope, 2006). Associated with this paradigm is the epistemological assumption of *interpretivism*; a term taken to denote an alternative way to the positivist orthodoxy. Bryman (2001) argues that it is predicated upon the view that social scientists must grasp the subjective meaning of social action. Essentially, interpretivism is a view whereby all knowledge is a matter of interpretation by the researcher.

The interpretive paradigm therefore places an emphasis and value on the human, interpretative aspects of knowing about the social world and within that, the significance of the investigator's own interpretations and understandings of the phenomenon being studied (Snape and Spencer, 2003, Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Among these common characteristics is the premise that "social organisations are constructed based on the purposeful actions of individuals as they negotiate their social roles and define status within the collective social group" (Macdonald et al., 2002, p.138). Another premise of the interpretive perspective is that a person is viewed as both an individual and as part of a larger social organisation (Macdonald et al., 2002), with regard to this research, the family. The interpretive paradigm is useful when attempting to identify the specific sequence and significance of a particular social phenomenon, and when linking the participants' meanings and actions to a particular time and place (Macdonald et al., 2002). In contrast to the positivistic desire of the scientific paradigm that seeks to establish norms and expectations of social, behavioural and physical phenomenon, the interpretive paradigm is concerned with the viewpoints of the individual or social group in helping to understand human action (Schwandt, 2000).

From an interpretivist point of view, human action is distinguished from the movement of physical objects because it is thought to be inherently meaningful and, "to

understand a particular social action (e.g. friendship, voting, marrying, teaching), the inquirer must grasp the meanings that constitute that action” (Schwandt, 2000, p.189). In contrast to the positivist perspective, the data collection methods and analytic techniques of the interpretive paradigm are rooted in anthropological and selected sociological research traditions, which value the participant telling their story. This lends itself to the adoption of qualitative research methods such as interviews, journals and observations, which allow the researcher to gain descriptive understanding of values, meanings and actions (Macdonald et al., 2002; Pope, 2006). Additionally, an interpretive paradigm allows for the effect of relationships in research and understands that the researcher and the social world impact upon each other. To understand what a particular action means, the researcher must interpret in a particular way, what the actors are doing. Facts and values are therefore not distinct, with the findings inevitably influenced by researchers’ own perspectives and beliefs (Snape and Spencer, 2003). For that reason, it is almost impossible to conduct objective, unbiased and value free research, as each interpretation of the participants’ views are laden with researchers’ own beliefs. As such, interpretivists often declare their own position and background early in the research process so that they maintain transparency about their assumptions throughout the investigation (Curtner-Smith, 2002).

Like the scientific paradigm, the interpretive paradigm is also open to criticism. For instance, since every researcher carries their own subjective views about the topic they are to investigate, the selection of data may inadvertently be biased. Moreover, many argue that it is more difficult to generalise the results from this particular standpoint (Bryman, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2006). Hence, an important difference between the positivist and interpretive perspectives lies in the fact that the latter neither predicts nor generalises

behaviour, events or actions (Macdonald et al., 2002). Traditional positivist researchers are frequently working to capture a single truth, whereas interpretive researchers support the notion of multiple interpretations of reality and thus multiple truths. Macdonald et al. (2002) argue that truth is therefore seen as a social construction and inextricably linked to the meanings of the study's participants. If the participants, time, and/or location are changed, the truth is likely to change as well, meaning that findings from one interpretive study are very difficult to compare with findings from another.

#### ***4.1.4 Mixed Methods Research (Pragmatist Paradigm)***

Some regard mixed methods as the third research tradition (Denscombe, 2007, 2008): a different approach and outcome from that which just qualitative or just quantitative will provide. Mixed methods research has been defined as:

“research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry” (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007b, p.4).

While this is only one of several similar definitions of mixed methods research (see Johnson et al., 2007 for further definitions) there remain numerous defining characteristics that constitute this type of approach. Primarily, mixed methods research involves the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches within a single research project. More importantly, there is an explicit focus on the link between the two approaches and how they are integrated within the study (Denscombe, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007). Perhaps the defining characteristic of this type of approach is that it emphasises a practical approach to generating a clearer understanding and thus solving research problems (Johnson et al., 2007).

Since mixed methods involve the inclusion of qualitative and quantitative research it crosses boundaries of traditional studies by drawing on approaches with different underlying assumptions (Denscombe, 2007). This has ultimately led to a long standing debate about the use of combining different methods with certain assumptions indicating that quantitative and qualitative paradigms and methodologies must not be mixed since there is a belief that epistemology and method are synonymous (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005). Furthermore, Snape and Spencer (2003) argue that the data generated by the methods of the natural sciences will have little impact in the social world, given that the social world is not governed by the same law-like regularities but is mediated through meaning and human agency. Some even argue that the epistemological positions in which quantitative and qualitative methods are grounded constitute irreconcilable differences about how social reality should be studied (Bryman, 2001). However, Morgan (1998) contends that such debates about using either qualitative or quantitative methods in isolation can easily lead to mistaken conclusions about how to use them in combination and, that any outspoken advocacy for using qualitative or quantitative as the true method may lead to the rejection of any attempt to combine the two.

Given that mixed methods deals with the practical approach to solving research problems, the philosophical partner or paradigm for this type of research, at least as advocated in America, (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2007) is *pragmatism*. This constitutes that research approaches should be mixed so that they offer the best opportunities for addressing and answering research questions (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and therefore looks to challenge unproductive dualisms and seek a common ground (Denscombe, 2008). Pragmatism, as well as contending that there is no single method that can lead to indisputable knowledge, also recognises that knowledge is provisional (Denscombe, 2007) in that what is understood to be truth today may not be seen as truth tomorrow. Fundamentally, the

pragmatic approach differs from both qualitative and quantitative approaches in three main areas. First, whilst induction and deduction are used in qualitative and quantitative approaches respectively, the pragmatic approach draws on *abduction* whereby reasoning moves back and forth between induction and deduction (Morgan, 2007). Second, though subjectivity and objectivity lie at the heart of the qualitative and quantitative approaches, neither can be truly subjective or objective. Instead, the pragmatic approach advocates *intersubjectivity*, which places an emphasis on the “process of communication and shared meaning that are central to any pragmatic approach” (Morgan, 2007, p.72). Finally, unlike the dualism that resides in context specific knowledge generated by qualitative approaches and universal, generalisable knowledge from quantitative approaches, the pragmatic approach suggests *transferability*. Morgan (2007) argues that an important question underlying transferability is the extent to which knowledge generated by one method in a specific context can be used in different circumstances and conditions. While pragmatism does not end the debate about epistemological, ontological and axiological positions and whether different approaches can or should be combined, it is a reasonable approach concerned with finding the most appropriate means of answers and addressing certain research questions.

There is now a growing preparedness to think of mixed methods as just that, as methods, whereby researchers are not restricted by epistemological constraints (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2007). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) argue that epistemology does not and hence, should not dictate the specific data collection and analysis methods used. In addition, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggest that any differences in epistemological beliefs must not prevent researchers drawing on different methods since the use of mixed methods is not to limit or constrain researcher’s choices but to enable the researcher to think eclectically about the best approach for addressing the research questions. It goes without saying that the design

for collecting data and the tools used should be selected in light of a specific research question. Obviously some methods are better suited to address some questions than others. This is what O'Sullivan (2007, p.250) calls the "*party line*"; that the method and type of data collection tool used to conduct the research, fit with the question posed. In order to conduct quality research in the social sciences, O'Sullivan (2007) maintains that we must not become too bogged down with specific epistemological positions and their associated tools, but rather be flexible in our thinking and adopt those that best suit our purpose. Hence, traditional mixed methods researchers "seem not to dwell on epistemological and ontological debates and exhibit a clear pragmatism in their work" (Bryman, 2007, p.17). Epistemological debates aside, mixed methods can be an invaluable approach for deepening understanding of phenomenon.

There are though numerous different directions in which a mixed methods study can unfold. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggest that a *mixed-model* approach involves mixing qualitative and quantitative (or vice versa) within or across the stages of research, whereas a *mixed method* approach involves the inclusion of a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase (or vice versa) in an overall study. This is also known as a sequential design whereby qualitative research, for instance, precedes statistical enquiry or is used in some form of follow up study (Ritchie, 2003). There are several ways in which qualitative research can facilitate quantitative research. Bryman (2001) maintains that it can provide hypotheses, which can be subsequently tested using statistical enquiry. Similarly, it can provide in-depth knowledge of social contexts that can be used to inform the designs of survey questions for structured interviews and self completion questionnaires (Bryman, 2001). Conversely, when quantitative research facilitates qualitative research, one may begin with a quantitative study that seeks to establish a sample of respondents and determine the broad contours of the field

before employing qualitative tools that look in depth at key issues using some of the earlier sample (Bryman, 2001; Silverman, 2006). Moreover, research designs that incorporate a mixed methods approach will not necessarily attach equal weight to both parts, but may regard one method as subsidiary to the other (Denscombe, 2007). However, to ensure that the approach taken truly constitutes mixed methods research (as well as establishing a link between the two approaches, with an emphasis placed on the practical approach to unearthing research problems) the findings *must* be integrated at some point, or involve one phase sequentially informing another (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Whilst neither tradition can encompass the whole, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods will provide a more complete, in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Denscombe, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005). By facilitating a blend of quantitative (exploratory) and qualitative (explanatory) research, the findings are more likely to provide a more encompassing vision of the phenomenon and be able to address a wide range of questions relating to ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘where’, ‘when’ and ‘how’ (Denscombe, 2007).

## **4.2 Justification and Selection of Study Methods**

To give full consideration to all of the aspects of the family environment in which individuals act, this study draws from a socio-cultural perspective to explore young people’s physical activity engagement. A socio-cultural perspective involved the consideration of

“...physical activity issues that highlights social (power relations, political and economic factors, dominant and subordinate groups) and cultural (shared ways of thinking and acting such as ideas, beliefs, values and behaviours) aspects and influences” (Cliff et al., 2009, p.179).



Moreover, in attempting to study a relatively unexplored area of research, the methodological framework was influenced by the social theory of Bourdieu. The main research question outlined in the following section (4.2.1) focused on **how family structure affects young people's dispositions and engagement in physical activity**. The study investigated the interplay of structural factors and personal agency in the lives of young people. The structural factors considered are those of family and in particular, different family structures. Agency on the other hand, refers to “the scope that people feel they have to shape their own lives, or in other words one’s sense of control” and importantly, “**is manifest in behaviour as well as in dispositions to act**” (Woolley, 2009, p.10). For Bourdieu, social behaviour is both complex and relational “involving the dialogical interplay of objective social structural forces with subjective intentionality on the part of social agents” (Fries, 2009, p.344). Bourdieu considered the task of social science as one that sought to understand how objective structures of society shape subjective behaviour (practice) and, given their relational nature, how social behaviour then serves to reproduce society (Fries, 2009). In essence, social structures are thought to provide access to different conditions (forms of capital), in different contexts and as a result of constant exposure to these conditions, habitus is shaped accordingly (Bourdieu, 1990, 2003; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Habitus then reproduces fields and shapes social practice in accordance with the conditions of existence that initially shaped it. The pursuit within most sociological study is therefore how best to understand how objective social forces (e.g. family, class, gender, ethnicity etc.) constrain behaviour and individual agency. Bourdieu (1984, 1990) argued that such objective structural factors that pattern behaviour are only visible through quantitative examination. However, he also acknowledged that there is also an important subjective dimension to behaviour (Fries, 2009) that can only be understood through qualitative inquiry. Then, according to Bourdieu, to understand young people’s

diverse physical activity practices, only methodologies that consider how both structure and agency combine to influence this complex behaviour will suffice. Hence, Fries (2009, p.336) argues that “the interplay of structure and agency are best revealed through a reflexive combination of research methods”.

Importantly, Fries (2009, p.331) posits that habitus is the “epistemological unification of social structure, culture, and the body”. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) the habitus is Bourdieu’s conceptual device designed to dissolve such distinction’s and overcome “oppositions that artificially divide social science” through linking the macro and the micro (Bourdieu, 1990, p.25). Indeed, understanding the relationship of structure and agency lies at the heart of Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology which is inherently orientated towards a mixed methods approach (Fries, 2009). The use of mixed methods is not uncommon for Bourdieu since much of his early work combined statistical investigations with direct observations and the study of interaction through discourse and document (Wacquant, 1998). Nevertheless, much of the work now drawing on Bourdieu’s conceptual thinking tools in the sociology of sport tends to neglect quantitative elements in favour of his qualitative theoretical efforts. However, Bourdieu (1985, p.725) made it clear that “statistical analysis... is the only means of manifesting the structure of the social space”, mapping social fields. He also argued that an objective approach using quantitative research allows the researcher to understand social phenomena objectively, from the outside. This objective view from the outside must though be succeeded with qualitative research in which social phenomena are subjectively understood from the inside (Bourdieu, 1977a). In other words, Bourdieu’s own work is oriented to one that adopts a mixed methodology in that it first makes use of quantitative methods to understand the objective social structural factors that contextualise behaviour followed by

qualitative methods to investigate the subjective nuances whereby those structural factors shape the habitus through social interaction (Fries, 2009).

Hence, because this research was mainly concerned with conceptualising the relationship between structure and agency (which are vital in researching social behaviour), to help understand how individual's dispositions and choices pertaining to physical activity are facilitated or constrained by wider structural forces of family, a sequential mixed methods approach (Quarmby et al., 2011) was seen to be most appropriate for this study. Bourdieu himself even stated that "we must try, in every case, to mobilise all the techniques that are relevant and practically usable, given the definition of the object and the practical conditions of data collection" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.226). In this case, a mixed methods approach sequenced into two phases was employed. The initial phase sought to produce a quantitative description of young people's activity patterns by family structure, helping to contextualise behaviour and the objective structural forces. This phase helped to identify the different family fields and provided a macro level overview of practice for actors (young people) sharing similar social space and living conditions. The following phase looked to draw on qualitative research with a purposefully selected sample (see section 4.5.2) of young people and allowed for the subjective dispositions that configure habitus and structure individual agency to be explored in greater detail. It should be noted however that adopting a mixed methodology framework alongside Bourdieu's conceptual tools meant that the activities and preferences of the participants could only be truly understood in relation to their position within social space at that particular time (Grenfell, 2008).

For this study, ethical approval was obtained from the institution of the author prior to data collection with additional permission to conduct the study obtained from the Principal and

Head of Physical Education for each school. Parents were sent an information sheet detailing the nature of the research and the methods along with what would be required of their child if they chose to take part. Consent to work with the students was obtained via in loco parentis. The value of adopting such an approach was to provide a more complete picture of young people's physical activity and family structure, specifically the relationship between structure and agency. It was thought that the fusion of quantitative and qualitative components would better represent the complexity of reality for these participants at a macro and micro level as well as strengthening the credibility of the study through the triangulation of methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

#### **4.2.1 Focus of the Study**

Informed by the relevant literature, the focus of this study was driven by an overarching research question: *How does family structure affect young people's dispositions towards and engagement in, particular forms of physical activity?* Adopting Bourdieu's conceptual tools, this question gave rise to subsequent qualitative and quantitative types of sub-questions to capture the relationship between the micro and macro, structure and agency, the individual and collective. As such, a mixed methods design was seen to be most appropriate. Each component of the study is driven by different sub-questions that are subsequently outlined below. Initially, since the research was sequential, the following quantitative questions were employed to observe on a broader scale, whether practice was similar for individuals in similar fields:

- Does family structure mediate the amount of time young people spend engaged in specific types of activities?

- Are young people in certain family structures exposed to more joint activities with immediate family members?
- Does family structure affect the amount of time parents are able to spend with their offspring?

The second phase of the mixed methods research included a qualitative component that was driven by a desire to explore individual agency and the wider structural forces that impact on engagement, subsequently shaping dispositions and thus practice. This included the following questions:

- What types of support are provided by families for young people with regard to physical activity?
- What barriers to physical activity do young people from different family structures experience and how do they impact on physical activity choices?
- To what extent is physical activity valued within families and how are those physical activity beliefs and values transmitted to children and adolescents?

In accordance with a view put forward by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007a), a strong mixed method study must also include a specific question that explicitly states the connection between the two different approaches used in the research. As such, the discussion and conclusion of this thesis seeks to explore how the follow up qualitative findings helped to explain the initial quantitative results and answer the overarching research question in its entirety. Given the aforementioned research questions, careful consideration was required to identify first, suitable participants and second, appropriate methods that would ultimately answer such questions.

#### **4.2.2 Participants**

Informed by the relevant literature and research focus, the sample consisted of low income children and adolescents aged 11 – 14 years, of both male and female gender drawn from a variety of different family structures including; intact couple, lone parent and stepfamilies (see chapter two for definitions). It should be noted that from this point forward, the generic term of ‘young people’ employed throughout this thesis will relate specifically to children (aged 11 – 12) **and** adolescents (aged 13 – 14) who participated in the research. As mentioned earlier, this age range (11 – 14 years) is considered to be a period whereby young people spend a substantial part of their leisure time with parents and siblings and, although they age and begin to individuate from them, they still rely heavily on parents and other family members (Zeijl et al., 2000). This age range also coincides with a decline in physical activity and sport participation for both boys and girls (Fox, 1994; Fox et al., 2004; Yang et al., 1996). As such, it is seen as the optimal age for young people’s physical activity participation and family interaction combined (Zeijl et al., 2000), and was therefore an ideal age range for the sample throughout this study. Furthermore, young people aged 11 – 14 are thought to have reached the cognitive levels required to successfully complete objective research methods such as questionnaires (Zabriskie and McCormick, 2003).

It was determined that access through inner city comprehensive schools (secondary state schools whose students included those aged 11 – 14) would provide the most likely avenue of engaging with young people from a broad range of family structures. As such, schools were selected from close geographic wards with low socioeconomic status as these areas included a greater diversity of family structures (since there is a relationship between low income and lone parent and stepfamilies). Socioeconomic status of the schools was therefore based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score - a UK Government-produced measure of area deprivation that includes assessments of income, employment,

health, education, crime, housing and living environment (Noble et al., 2007). The IMD for the postcode of each school was obtained from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Neighbourhood Statistics website (<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>) and calculated at the 'Super Output Area' level and using the 'Neighbourhood Summary'; providing an overall IMD rank as well as individual ranks for each domain. As a result, schools were drawn from deprived areas that scored highest (higher scores indicate greater deprivation, i.e. low socioeconomic status) on all individual ranks and the overall IMD rating. However, the IMD represented a measure of deprivation for the school area and not the individual participant though still allowed for the gathering of data from young people who attended schools located in those neighbourhoods. That said, a benefit of using the IMD was that it preserved participant privacy as home addresses were not required (Thompson et al., 2010).

Further contextual information is provided below that draws on data from the IMD, the ONS and each schools most recent Ofsted inspection reports. It is hoped that this information will provide a clearer picture of the school contexts from which the participants were drawn (in terms of socioeconomic indicators, geography, social and ethnic make-up), allowing for a more nuanced understanding of their potential backgrounds and social circumstances.

#### **4.2.3 The Schools**

The first school, *Hanmoore High* (a pseudonym) was a large mixed gender comprehensive, secondary school boasting a school roll of 1305 pupils, ranging in age from 11 – 18 years (Ofsted, 2009). According to the schools latest inspection report, the number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds was below average with the majority of the students being white

British. However, the percentage of students with learning difficulties/disabilities was considered to be above the national average (Ofsted, 2009). The school was classed as operating at a ‘satisfactory’ level by Ofsted, though significant improvements were made since its last inspection (Ofsted, 2009). Drawing on data from the IMD, the school was situated within a low income area in the West Midlands, ranked overall among the most deprived areas in England. Using the school postcode, the IMD suggested pupils attending the school were likely to come from families that endured economic hardship since the area surrounding the school included a significantly high proportion of individuals claiming benefits, more than double the regional and national average of the time (ONS, 2010a). In addition, pupils from the surrounding area were considered to be entering the school with below average attainment levels (Ofsted, 2010a). Importantly, data from the 2001 census suggest there were a large proportion of lone parent households with dependent children within the school postcode area (ONS, 2007a).

The second school, *Drayton-South High* (a pseudonym) was located in the same area, approximately 3 miles from Hanmoore High. It was a much smaller, mixed comprehensive secondary school with around 423 pupils ranging in age from 11 – 16 years. Like the first school, less than a quarter of students were from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties/disabilities was considered to be above the national average (Ofsted, 2008). Importantly, the school was again located within a low socioeconomic status area with the latest school inspection report indicating that there were an above average proportion of students eligible for free school meals (Ofsted, 2008). The report also concluded that measures of socioeconomic disadvantage for the school locality were much higher than the national average. Like Hanmoore, Drayton-South was also operating at a ‘satisfactory’ level and seen to be improving in a number of curriculum areas (Ofsted,



2008). Similar to the area around Hanmoore School, the area surrounding this school was equally deprived, again identified among the most deprived areas in England according to its overall IMD rating. Additional IMD data once again indicated that there were a large number of individuals claiming incapacity and jobseekers benefits (ONS, 2010b) while census data indicated a large proportion of ‘non traditional’ family formations (ONS, 2007b) within the school locality.

The final school, *Kings High* (a pseudonym), was also a mixed gender comprehensive secondary school with 634 pupils on the school roll. Like Drayton-South, the age range included pupils aged 11 – 16 and at the last inspection, boys were thought to significantly outnumber girls. Unlike the previous two schools though, Ofsted classed Kings High as ‘good’ overall (Ofsted, 2007). Of particular importance once again though was the high proportion of pupil’s eligible for free school meals, which was considered to be well above average (Ofsted, 2007). According to the report, despite lying on the fringe of a more affluent suburb, the school drew the majority of its students from inner city primary schools, many of whom demonstrated a range of features of significant disadvantage (reflected in the high proportion of students eligible for free school meals) (Ofsted, 2007). As such, the majority of students attending the school were considered to be disadvantaged with regard to their socioeconomic circumstances (Ofsted, 2007) while the ethnic make-up of students was broadly similar to that of Drayton-South. Interestingly, whilst the school postcode was ranked among the most deprived on 6 of the 7 IMD indicators (income, employment, health, crime, housing and living environment), it was among the least deprived with regard to its education rating. Overall though, the surrounding area was recognised as a low socioeconomic status area and according to 2001 census data, the surrounding area also contained a high proportion of lone parent families with dependent children (ONS, 2007c).

In an attempt to provide more detail about the areas from where the participants might reside, the area of each school was also closely assessed by comparing the diversity of family structures within the catchment area of the schools to that of the region overall. Importantly, each area contained great diversity in family structure ensuring a suitable range of participants could be drawn from within the schools. This information was also obtained from the National Statistics website which provided a breakdown of family configuration by ward. As mentioned earlier, all three schools were selected from close geographic wards, each school located within a five mile radius of the other. In addition, the supplementary Ofsted data regarding all three schools indicated that a large proportion of students were eligible for free school meals and, coupled with high levels of unemployment and other indicators from the IMD regarding the surrounding area, suggested that the catchment areas for each school were equally similar with regard their deprivation and low socio-economic status.

#### ***4.2.4 Sample Summary***

Selecting the sample from within a low income area ensured maximum comparability in terms of geographic location and socioeconomic status. The focus on young people from lower income areas also allowed for the inclusion of a wider range of family structures since there is a consistent link between lower socioeconomic status and many lone parent families and recently formed stepfamilies (Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). In addition, drawing on families from socially deprived areas provided a means of contrasting young people's social situations while their economic situation was kept fairly similar since all families were drawn from the same low socioeconomic status bracket. Although not a primary focus of the study, selection through these schools also ensured a reasonable mix with regard to gender (actual statistics

with regard to the gender balance of the final samples are included in the results section, 5.1). Due to the low number of minority students and subsequently high proportion of white British students identified by school reports, ethnicity was not considered as an additional factor and thus the study participants were all Caucasian. Given the location and geographic make up of each school and its surrounding area, the resulting population for the study included low income students from three inner city comprehensive schools in the Midlands region of England, UK, who were sought to represent three prominent family structures: intact couple, lone parent and stepfamilies. Further details of the sample characteristics can be found in the results section (5.1).

Importantly, individuals from within a low income area are more likely to experience financial, transport and access related barriers that may not be as prevalent in higher income groups (Thompson et al., 2010). They may also experience fewer facilities (of less quality) and, as a result, may also engage in more low cost activities (Kay, 2004; Thompson et al., 2004). Thus, individuals from low income areas may have different interests to other social groups due to differences in their material circumstances, all of which means that this sample are not comparable to other socioeconomic groups. Importantly, the findings in Chapter Five and following discussion in Chapter Six should therefore be seen as relating to this income group only.

## **4.3 Instruments**

### ***4.3.1 Instrument 1: Self Report Questionnaire***

The quantitative instrument was designed to reflect an overview of agency at a macro level for those who share similar social conditions allowing comparisons to be made between family structures. Drawing from the relevant literature, time and specifically how family

structure mediates time for parent/child interaction is one element that would be best captured using a quantitative measure. This approach also ensured that the types of activity young people engaged in (and how often they did so) could be explored using the same apparatus. The method chosen to report such data was a questionnaire given that they provide a means of collecting large amounts of data in the most economical form; they are convenient to administer, cost effective, unobtrusive and non reactive when compared to other measures (Cale, 1994; Thomas et al., 2005; Treuth et al., 2005). In addition, they provide a suitable means of data collection when the initial sample is too large for face to face interviews (Gratton and Jones, 2004).

There are though, other methods of capturing the kind of relationship that the quantitative phase of this study sought to explore. Like the subjective measure of behaviour gained from a self report questionnaire, a subjective, physical activity diary could have been employed. However, Armstrong and Welsman (2006) argue that some studies have found that the quality of completed diaries is inconsistent as they place a heavy burden on young participants and keeping a diary may, in itself, influence physical activity habits. Sallis and Owen (1998) also contend that they are limited to use by children with good reading and writing skills, which may alienate some individuals. On the other hand, an objective measure of behaviour could have been the use of direct observation. While direct observation can quantify the type of activity, the environmental setting and the related social interactions, it is often labour-intensive, time consuming and therefore costly (Armstrong and Welsman, 2006; Silverman, 2006). The extent to which even well trained observers affect subject behaviour (subject reactivity) is also extremely problematic (Robson, 2002). Direct observation can capture valuable short term patterns and sudden changes in young people's physical activity, but it is normally impossible to follow a child for a full day (Sallis and Owen, 1998) and

importantly, it would be even more problematic to try and observe children outside of school, with their family.

Given the specific aims and research questions of this study, a self report questionnaire was employed for this aspect of the investigation. More specifically, the instrument was a self report questionnaire based on Cale's (1993) *Four by One Day Physical Activity Recall*. Originally, this measure was designed for children to provide activity information for the previous day only, in an effort to measure their activity levels. Moreover, it was designed specifically for British children aged 11 years old and upwards in order to counteract the limitations of child memory and the considerable demands that self report measures place on the cognitive abilities of children to recall events from the past (Cale 1994). Cale (1994) noted how daily self monitoring data are more accurate since they overcome many of the problems encountered with child memory and recall. Cale's (1993) questionnaire was also interviewer administered, in that the researcher read out the questions with the children in an effort to help them recall activities and to overcome any potential issues with understanding. A reliability of  $r = 0.62$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) was obtained for the original questionnaire and was deemed a reliable measure of physical activity (Cale, 1994). In addition, concurrent validity was assessed using heart rate monitoring and an observational method. The resulting relationship for heart rate monitoring was  $r = 0.61$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), while no significant difference was recorded between the recall and observational values ( $t = 0.72$ ). As a result, young people aged 11 – 14 were thought to be capable of accurately recalling time in activity for one previous day only (Cale, 1993, 1994).

Adapted from this original item, *The Family Physical Activity Questionnaire* was geared towards capturing activity related information for two previous days – one weekday

and one weekend day (see Appendix I). Initially, respondents were asked to include demographic and family structure information. After this, the most prominent feature of the questionnaire was that it was designed to capture the amount of time spent in certain activities through the use of previous day recall since this was considered more accurate and countered many of the problems with child memory (Armstrong and Welsman, 2006; Cale, 1994; Treuth et al., 2005). Subsequently, the questionnaire contained a list of 26 activities from which participants could identify. Based on previous work (Fairclough et al., 2002; Green, 2004; Green et al., 2005), all 26 activities could be catalogued to fit into categories for ease of analysis later (see table I).

**Table I – Questionnaire Activity Categories**

<b>Sedentary Activities</b>	<b>Domestic Activities</b>	<b>Lifetime Activities</b>	<b>Games Activities</b>	<b>Partner Activities</b>	<b>Other Activities</b>
TV	Paper round	Walk	Hockey	Golf	Athletics
Music	Walked dog	Swim	Football	Badminton	Gymnastics
Computer	Chores	Cycle	Basketball	Tennis	Play
	Gardening	Run	Rugby	Tag	Skateboarding
		Dancing	Netball		
		Martial Arts			

*Sedentary Activities* included those activities that may be considered inactive (Marshall and Welk, 2008), while *Domestic Activities* were comprised of household duties or domestic chores and responsibilities. In contrast, *Lifetime Activities* included activities that could be freely undertaken when and how individuals chose, with whom and wherever they wanted and were often recreational with a health and fitness orientation (Green, 2004; Green et al., 2005). Unlike lifetime activities, *Game Activities* were competitive in nature and often comprised of numerous players, restricted to particular contexts (Green et al., 2005). *Partner Activities*, while similar to lifetime activities (they could be recreational in nature yet also competitive), ultimately required a partner. The final category of *Other Activities*, though also

recreational in nature and similar to lifetime activities, were rarely carried over into adulthood (Fairclough et al., 2002) and hence to did not fall under any of the previous categories.

In addition, the questionnaire asked children, on both the weekday and weekend recall, to report how many activities they usually engage in with a member of their family. This provided an additional overview of joint activity patterns by family structure. Finally, the questionnaire asked how often they eat their main evening meal with their whole family. This last question is important as meals have been found to be a useful predictor of family time together (Yeung et al., 2001). Meals and television watching have been reported to be the most common family activities, with meals specifically found to be the most common shared activity for Finnish adolescents (Turtiainen et al., 2007). They are a particularly important activity as they facilitate conversations and enable views to be shared (Turtiainen et al., 2007) and can help in the promotion of healthy eating and general health behaviours (Pearson, Biddle et al., 2009; Pearson, MacFarlane et al., 2009). However, in the UK less than 70 per cent of adolescents reported eating meals with their parents several times per week (UNICEF, 2007). As such, this appeared an important context in which the transmission of behaviours may take place and as such, the inclusion of this question helped to identify differences in time spent together with regard to family structure.

#### ***4.3.2 Instrument 2: Semi Structured Interviews***

The second phase of the research process involved conducting interviews with a purposefully selected sub sample in order to explore individual agency. This was investigated by exploring and comparing how young people reported on their present lives, past experiences, and future possibilities. Qualitative interviewing was therefore employed to provide an insight into the way the participants viewed, thought and felt about their worlds (Powney and Watts, 1987). It

allowed the researcher to share the world of the researched, to find out what was going on and why people acted in the manner that they did. Interviews also ensured the researcher could gather an understanding of the participant's experiences and generate pictures by reconstructing events about a specific topic (Powney and Watts, 1987; Silverman, 2006). Marshall and Rossman (1999) argue that interviews, specifically unstructured and open interviews, are much more like conversations than formal events, which may allow the interviewee to feel more comfortable and respond more freely. There are essentially three main types of qualitative interviewing techniques. These include:

- **Structured interviews:** These types of interview include a predetermined list of questions and answers that usually fall under a restricted number of categories. Given the tight control over the order and wording of questions, a structured interview is essentially a questionnaire that is read out by the researcher (Denscombe, 2007). The rigid nature of these types of interview ensure that each question is the same for all participants, which ensures answers are fairly similar, allowing for ease of coding and analysis (Denscombe, 2007; Silverman, 2006).
- **Semi-structured interviews:** Like the structured interview, a semi structured interview schedule still has a listed of questions that need to be addressed. However, unlike a structured interview the interviewer can be flexible with the order and importantly, allow the participants to digress and develop congruent ideas and themes (Denscombe, 2007). There is also more emphasis on the interviewer probing and the participant elaborating on relevant points of interest.
- **Unstructured interviews:** Unlike the previous two interview techniques that more than likely begin with the interviewer asking a question, unstructured interviews begin with a topic or theme from which the participants take their own course (Denscombe,



2007). The direction of the interview is very much led by the respondent with the interviewer developing questions during the interview.

There are however, implications to using any type of interview as a methodological tool for research. The most prevalent being the notion of value free research. As a fundamental assumption of this particular research path, Marshall and Rossman (1999) argue that a participant's perspective on the phenomenon must unfold as they view it, not by being gently pushed or guided in a particular direction by the researcher. This implication derives from qualitative research being so involving. Most interviews for example, involve personal interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer making cooperation an essential skill (Powney and Watts, 1987; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Within this process is a balance of power between each participant and the researcher that may impact on the objective nature of the results, particularly when working with younger children who tend to see adults as authority figures (Jeanes, 2006; Mason, 2002; Mauthner, 1997). In the same sense, there is an issue in the quality of the data gathered and reported. As Fontana and Frey (2005) reason, many studies using unstructured interviews are not reflexive enough about the interpreting process as the researcher will undoubtedly become buried in field notes, transcripts and audio tapes. Fontana and Frey (2005) argue on behalf of many sociologists, who believe the researcher becomes an author when transcribing and selecting which data to use, imparting a degree of subjectivity, as a direct result of their own, often unconscious perspectives.

The second phase of the research process broadly focused on young people's views and experiences of physical activity, how parents transmit values of physical activity and their joint family activities. For such an investigation, interviews provided a particularly suitable

means in gaining perspectives from the ‘inside’; accounts given in young people’s own words. Moreover, they proved a very useful means of exploring the relationships between young people’s past and present, that is to say, exploring the experience of physical activity for those who have moved from one family structure to another. In particular, such an approach facilitated the exploration of young people’s perspectives along with allowing for another key aspect of their behaviour to emerge, namely their habitus. Subsequently, the type of interview employed in this phase of the study was a semi structured interview schedule that could account for the sporadic nature of young people’s conversations. Paired interviews with a friend were chosen where possible as it is thought they generate more in-depth data (Highet, 2003). Moreover, interviews with two individuals facilitated more natural conversation and allowed for greater insights into aspects of young people’s family and social lives (Highet, 2003). The interview protocol was therefore designed so that all questions were of an open-ended nature to encourage participants to speak freely and discuss any ideas they had with the other person. For any given question, the interviewer used clarification and probes as necessary to gain the required depth of information. The results of the pilot study and its effect on the final interview protocol will be discussed later in this chapter.

The design of the interview protocol was divided into six sections, each covering a specific topic under investigation. However, an underlying theme that ran throughout each section was that of the ‘family’ since this was the area in context in which the research questions were based. Grouping questions in sections within the interview schedule helped the later stage of data analysis as the initial categories were predefined. The first section and subsequent questions dealt with young people’s perceptions and understanding of their family and how often and when they spent time together. The second set of questions were concerned with exploring the students’ views of physical activity, as well as more general

themes about the body, health and active lifestyles (including where appropriate, the lifestyles and activity of other household members). Following this, the third section focused on exploring the activities of their parent(s) and any joint family activities that they might engage in on a regular basis. The fourth section looked to explore how parents support young people's physical activity and overall health. It was concerned with uncovering the different types of support that the family exerts. Section five included questions that were designed to specifically detail the types of unstructured activity children and adolescents do and importantly, any barriers as a result of their family structure that has prevented or is currently preventing them engaging in activities. The final section also looked to explore barriers to physical activity but this time in a more structured environment in extra curricular activities and clubs (see Appendix II)

#### **4.4 Pilot Study**

##### ***4.4.1 Pilot Study – Instrument 1***

The purpose of the pilot study was two fold: first, to test the self report questionnaire and interview protocol, and second to gain experience as a researcher in interviewing young people. As such, students ( $n = 79$ ) from a case study school in the East Midlands participated in the pilot project. Children were aged between 11 – 12 years ( $M = 11.81$ ) and consisted of both genders (33 male and 46 female). Originally, children were grouped into five categories according to family structure, though on reflection afterwards, this was reduced to three with male and female lone and stepparent families included in a broader category of lone parent and stepfamilies, respectively. Each participant completed the pilot self report questionnaire four times, recalling their activity for the previous day only. Moreover, the initial questionnaire was subdivided into various sections of the day and was interviewer

administered in an effort to help them recall activities and to overcome any potential issues with comprehension and understanding.

Piloting the questionnaire allowed the researcher to reflect on its use and appropriateness for the study with all those involved. At the end of the pilot study, the children were gathered in the school hall, thanked for their participation and asked for relevant feedback on the questionnaire. Indeed, both the PE teacher and participants agreed that the breakdown of each day into specific sections (*Before School*, *At Lunch*, and *In the Evening*) worked well in focusing their memory for those parts of the previous day. However, it was noted that the questionnaire was too long and failed to capture their full attention which led to revisions in the length and formatting of the questionnaire. Furthermore, respondents commented on the list of physical and sedentary activities included in the original questionnaire and identified additional activities that they thought would be more appropriate, thus resulting in the final list of 26 activities.

#### **4.4.2 Pilot Study – Instrument 2**

Like the main study, children ( $n = 12$ ) were also selected for interviews based on purposive sampling. Two children from the same family structure, one male and one female, were selected for an interview at any one time with six semi-structured interviews conducted during the pilot study. The pilot interview protocol was designed so that all questions were of an open-ended nature to encourage participants to speak freely and discuss any ideas they had with the other person in the group.

As with the questionnaire, so too the interview protocol was adapted with one of the original seven topics being cut and the remaining six restructured accordingly. Piloting the interview protocol also highlighted several issues that needed to be carefully considered in the

full phase of data collection. Initially, there were differences in age between the interviewer and interviewees. At the time, the interviewer was 23 years old while the ages of the participants ranged from 11–12 years. This highlighted the various power and status differentials between children and adults. While there may be no way to completely eliminate how socio-demographic differences can shape the data, conducting prior fieldwork may work to reduce the degree of social distance between the interviewer and participants (Arksey and Knight, 1999). For the pilot study, the interviewer met with the children on four previous occasions to administer the self report questionnaires, answer general questions and begin interacting with participants in their own environment. Subsequently, the increased interactions enhanced the participants' understandings of the researcher, breaking down any stereotypes the participants had and narrowing the status differences between adult and child, researcher and participant. Another main issue that arose from the pilot study was the amount of time that was allocated to each interview. In some cases, the interviews were rushed as the time schedules didn't allow for the full exploration of the children's responses. As such, the full project made sure that more detailed and precise times for interviews were arranged with gatekeepers and those involved directly with the students.

## **4.5 Procedures and Sampling**

### ***4.5.1 Phase 1: Self Report Questionnaire***

For the distribution of the quantitative instrument, classes within the schools were randomly selected and the associated students ( $n = 381$ ) were then engaged in the first phase. This ensured a higher response rate as the participants were in a mandatory, structured environment (school lessons). The questionnaire was administered before Physical Education lessons on two separate days with the researcher and teacher present at all times, to distribute,

deliver, collect and assist with any difficulties the students may have with comprehension. The researchers read out the questions to all students and asked participants to first indicate their age and gender (by circling the appropriate response options) before writing down who they normally lived with at home and their relationship to them. This was completed on the first page of the questionnaire by the students themselves, which allowed for the responses to be categorised by family structure. The researcher then asked whether they had engaged in any of the 26 activities on the previous day (outside of school) and if so, to report their time in that activity to the nearest 15 minutes and who they did that activity with. Each individual activity was read out by the investigator before participants responded. The students were then asked to tick the appropriate boxes that indicated how many activities during a week they usually engaged in with their family and how often they usually ate their main meal with everyone they lived with. The questionnaire was delivered once on a Monday recalling activity from one day at the weekend and once on another weekday capturing participants' previous day activity (excluding school time) that could then be compared across family structures.

#### ***4.5.2 Phase 2: Semi Structured Interviews***

All students who participated in the initial phase were invited to participate in the second phase during a school assembly, when an information session was held. It was also reiterated (so that everyone understood) that they could decline to participate or withdraw from the research at any point without any negative consequences. For this phase, purposive sampling was employed which allowed the researcher to satisfy their specific needs in the research by choosing a sample that illustrated some features in which they were interested (Robson, 2002; Silverman, 2006). Based on family demographic data from the initial phase, participants for

the interviews were purposely selected from the same school year, gender and importantly, family structure. Importantly, given the small proportion of ethnic minority students within the schools, all participants invited for the second phase were Caucasian. This sampling process is in line with a mixed methods design whereby the sample of one phase was “nested within that of the other” (Yin, 2006, p.44). Thirty small group interviewers with two and in some cases three children ( $n = 62$ ) were then interviewed in an open Physical Education staff room, which lasted between 20 – 45 minutes. Familiar settings allow for flexible adaptation to suit the cognitive and linguistic competences of young children and can be valuable in reducing anxiety (Greig and Taylor, 1999). Moreover, by interviewing young people in small groups, the interviewer can adopt a different role in facilitating the discussion between all parties (Greig and Taylor, 1999). The use of a smaller sample here reflects Kay’s (2004) argument put forward in chapter two, whereby she argued that qualitative research exploring the role of the family should draw on sub samples of approximately 20 – 30, which would allow for greater depth and detail to emerge. With permission, interviews were recorded and immediately transcribed verbatim so as to ensure a complete and accurate record of the data was obtained.

## **4.6 Data Analysis**

### ***4.6.1 Analysis of the Questionnaire Data***

Data analysis was carried out on PASW Statistics 18.0, with weekend and weekday data analysed separately since there is greater discretionary time available at weekends, which may influence behaviour (Jago et al., 2005). For question one, all data were tested for approximation to the normal distribution by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Continuous minutes in each activity variables were found to be non-normally distributed, with significant skew

and kurtosis evident in many variables. Attempts were made to correct the large positive skew of these variables using logarithmic transformations but the data remained non-normally distributed. Activity minute data were therefore analysed using non-parametric statistics. Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to identify any effect of family structure on the time spent carrying out different activities during the week and at weekends. Where differences were found, Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests were performed to determine the location of any differences between family structures. Gender comparisons within week day and weekend activities were also carried out by Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests. Exact  $p$  values were calculated where possible but in the event of computational problems a Monte Carlo approximation based upon 200,000 samples was used to determine the  $p$  value. A Bonferroni correction was applied to the probability of a Type I error ( $\alpha$ ) when multiple comparisons were carried out (Field, 2009). In order to more easily present the non normal distributions of activity minute data, durations spent in each type of activity were grouped in 30 minute intervals from 0 minutes.

To analyse how many physical activities during the week and at the weekend young people engaged in with a member of their family, similar procedures were followed. Given the large spread, data were collapsed into more manageable categories and the categorical data were reassigned a score as follows (No activities = 1, 1 activity = 2, 2 or more activities = 3). To provide a total score across a whole week and not just individual days, the frequency of counts were computed for each individual into new variables. These new variables, using the categories above, indicated the total number of days during the week that individuals did activity with family members, i.e. no activities done with family members on 3 days of the week, 1 activity done with family members on 2 days of the week and, 2 or more activities done with a family member on one day of the week. For the weekend, data were also reassigned accordingly (No activities = 1, 1 – 2 activities = 2, 3 or more activities = 3) and



frequency counts computed into new variables for a total weekend score. Data were then tested for approximation to the normal distribution by Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. Results during the week were significantly non normal across all three categories. For the purpose of this study though, the focus will be on only one category during a week and at the weekend. These are the frequency in which young people engaged in 2 or more activities with a family member during the week and, the frequency in which young people engaged in 3 or more activities with a family member at the weekend. This was subsequently found to be non normal during the week  $D(381) = .26, p < .05$  and at the weekend  $D(381) = .37, p < .05$ . As with the previous question, Kruskal-Wallis tests were initially performed before post hoc Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests were conducted. As well as carrying out comparisons for gender, sibling comparisons (no siblings, 1 sibling, 2 or more siblings) were also carried out in the same fashion.

Finally, for the questions relating to the frequency of meals eaten together as a family during the week, the categorical data were reassigned a score as follows (never = 1, once a week = 2, twice a week = 3, three times a week = 4, four times a week = 5 and five times a week = 6). For the weekend, data were also reassigned accordingly (never = 1, once = 2 and twice = 3). As with the analysis of the previous questions, data were tested for approximation to the normal distribution by Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. During the week, the 'Frequency of Main Meals with Family',  $D(381) = .24, p < .05$  was significantly non normal. This was also evident for the 'Frequency of Main Meals with Family at the Weekend',  $D(381) = .39, p < .05$  with significant skew and kurtosis evident. This question, both during the week and at the weekend, was therefore analysed using non-parametric tests (Kruskal-Wallis with post hoc Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests) as before. The data was also split by gender so additional

comparisons could be carried out. Since multiple comparisons were carried out, a Bonferroni correction was again applied to control the probability of a Type I error ( $\alpha$ ) (Field, 2009).

#### ***4.6.2 Analysis of the Interview Data***

For the interviews, the same methods were used to analyse data for both the pilot and the main study. Interviews were transcribed verbatim with all the transcripts including information on the school, gender of students, age, family structure and the code names given to the interviewees (respecting anonymity). With regard to analytical methods, both analytic deduction and induction were followed. The former allows for the elimination of existing categories while the latter is especially useful in generative research as it allows for generating new categories based on emergent patterns (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). Having read and re-read the texts to become thoroughly familiar with the responses, Denscombe (2007) suggests that one of the primary steps in data analysis is to begin coding the transcribed, raw material. Given that the questions asked within the semi structured interview schedule gave rise to appropriate initial categories, the interview transcripts were coded based on the following seven pre-defined categories:

- Category A: Understanding of Family (UFA)
- Category B: Understanding of Key Concepts (UKC)
- Category C: Perceptions of Health and Fitness (PHF)
- Category D: Parent and Family Activities (PFA)
- Category E: Parental Support for Activity and Health (PSA)
- Category F: Children's Evening and Weekend Physical Activities (CPA)
- Category G: Children's School Based and Extra Curricular Activities (SBA)

Depending on the responses given, subsequent sentences or paragraphs were coded. Each coded response included the code of the category, the code of the subcategory, the serial number of the interview transcript, the family structure of the respondent and the line number of the quotation that was taken from the transcript. For example the coded response for “Well it’s like when you’re moving about and stuff” was (UKC/UPA/A3/STF1/60). UKC is the code for the initial category and the letters UPA correspond to the code of the subcategory, which in this instance was their “Understanding of Physical Activity”. The code A3 relates to the serial number for the transcribed interview. Importantly, STF1 refers to two things: the first being the family structure the respondent was from (STF = Stepfamily) and the following number (1) relates to whether that response was from the first or second respondent within that interview. If an asterisk (\*) follows this number then the interviewee was female. The subsequent number (60) refers to the line number within the interview from where the quotation can be found.

After coding each transcript the process of grouping each pattern under common themes began. This analysis was based on deductive and inductive procedures (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993), which involved scanning the data for categories and relationships among the initial categories (semi-structured interview protocol), developing working typologies on an examination of initial cases and then modifying and refining them on the basis of subsequent cases (Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010; Quarmby et al., 2011). Negative cases or phenomenon that contradict emergent patterns were actively sought to help “expand, adapt or restrict the original construct” (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p.254). As a result, the grouping of emergent themes under larger categories resulted in the formation of several new subcategories (see Appendix III). Once the categories and subcategories were coded, each was read through independently and notes were recorded at the beginning of each category.

Having allocated all of the interview data to the aforementioned categories and subcategories, the final task involved analysing them for comparative purposes to find key concepts that would help set the foundations for any generalised conclusions (Denscombe, 2007). Each category was subsequently compared with the focus of sourcing differences or similarities between responses from individuals within each of the three distinct family structures before identifying and describing other issues that the research dealt with. The underlying analysis of the text involved sourcing how individuals understood physical activity and their beliefs (shaping habitus), and how wider structural forces, social circumstances and particularly their family structure constrained or facilitated their subsequent actions. Within the text, interview data is presented with the pseudonym of the participant followed by their family structure (e.g. John, Stepfamily) in brackets after their quotation.

#### **4.7 Legitimation (Issues of Validity and Reliability)**

Since mixed methods research is still very much in its infancy, so too are the processes (and even terms used) for evaluating and describing research validity (i.e. quality). Stemming from both the quantitative and qualitative traditions are numerous terms used to describe whether the research design and findings are valid and reliable. According to Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) ‘validity’ refers to whether the conclusions drawn from a study are of a high or low quality. In quantitative research, discussions concerning validity and its various components (internal and external validity) are commonplace. However, because of its association with the quantitative paradigm, the term validity has been replaced in qualitative research by terms such as credibility or trustworthiness (Dellinger and Leech, 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003).

In mixed methods research however, Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) offered the term *legitimation* as, opposed to validity, it has neutrality and was neither predominantly associated with qualitative or quantitative research. They outlined a typology of legitimation issues in mixed methods research based on nine types of legitimation including: *sample integration*; *inside-outside legitimation*; *weakness minimisation*; *sequential legitimation*; *conversion legitimation*; *paradigmatic mixing*; *commensurability legitimation*; *political legitimation* and; *multiple validities legitimation* (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). While not a definitive set of criteria for evaluation legitimation (as new frameworks are continually emerging, e.g. see Dellinger and Leech (2007) for further examples) and, though it is perhaps not feasible to meet all legitimation criteria, attempting to adhere to as many elements as possible would no doubt enhance the study overall. In keeping with the mixed methods tradition that guided this study, issues of validity are discussed below in relation to, what mixed methods advocates have termed, ‘legitimation’.

The first component of legitimation posited by Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) is *sample integration*. This refers to the ability to make generalisations to the wider population. However, unless exactly the same individuals are involved in both components of the study (i.e. the quantitative and qualitative aspects), drawing “meta-inferences by pulling together the inferences from the qualitative and quantitative phases can be problematic” (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006, p.56). In this study, as explained in the methodology chapter (section 4.5.2), a nested sampling technique was employed that included a specific selection of participants for the second phase who represented certain characteristics identified in the first phase. Here, because both phases of this study did not employ random sampling, the effect of statistical generalisability was low (Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) argue that this is often

the case with most mixed methods studies). Nonetheless, it was never an intention of this study to generalise results to the wider population since the findings are specific to these low income individuals only. Instead, an attempt was made to make the research process and sample as transparent as possible so that any findings may be of benefit in alternative contexts. However, issues of legitimisation are linked to issues of integration (the extent to which the study integrates methods and findings) and thus, adopting a nested sample allowed for the sample to represent a feature of Yin's (2006) notion of integrated sampling which he argued adds to overall legitimisation.

Another type of legitimisation, *inside-outside* legitimisation, refers to the "degree to which the researcher accurately presents and utilises the insider's view and the observer's view" (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006, p.58). A strategy employed in this study to ensure this criterion was met was the use of member checking. Member checking (also known as member validation (Denscombe, 2007) or respondent validation (Silverman, 2006)) is a technique whereby the data, analytical categories and interpretations are checked by the initial informants (Denscombe, 2007). In this case, member check methods were used to enhance the trustworthiness of the study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Miles and Huberman, 1994): once the transcription process was completed the researcher revisited the schools, the transcripts were returned to the participants and asked to comment on the material thus providing an opportunity to modify existing information. However, extensive checking at the interpretation stage was not possible due to lengthy summer holidays.

*Weakness minimisation* is another criterion of legitimisation and refers to the extent that one method compensates for the weaknesses of the other (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). Here the careful design of the study allowed each phase to add something to that which came before or after, minimising the weaknesses of the other instrument. For example, the

quantitative method in phase one provided numerical data of a large random sample that generated an overview of behaviour. However, it produced a rather abstract knowledge that lacked more local perspectives and understanding. As such, the qualitative method was able to compensate by capturing participants understanding and personal experience.

One of the limitations to this study with regard to overall legitimization was that it could not fully align with the notion of *sequential* legitimization. This relates to the degree to which results obtained are an effect of the sequencing itself. Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) argue that to counter this, researchers should look to change the sequential design to a multiple wave design. However, given the discrete timeframe available within each school, the approaching school holidays and limited time within which to collect data, altering the sequencing was not possible.

As with the sequential legitimization mentioned above, achieving *conversion* legitimization was also problematic. Conversion legitimization relates to the inferences drawn from data analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data and the extent to which they lead to interpretable data (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). It is achieved through applying quantitative techniques to qualitative data (e.g. obtaining counts of themes in qualitative data in addition to narrative descriptions) and vice versa (e.g. obtaining narrative profiles of quantitative data). However, Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) contend that this technique is not always possible given the context and nature of data analysis and may lead to over generalisations and a representation of participants that is unrealistic. This was the case here since Bourdieu's theoretical framework, underpinning the analysis, sought to explore nuanced perspectives of each individual, rather than attempting to generalise findings.

*Paradigmatic mixing* refers to extent that the researchers underlying epistemological and ontological beliefs concerning the qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined

or blended within the research (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). One solution employed here was the use of both view points in the study (e.g. by having a pure quantitative phase and a pure qualitative phase) before drawing meaning from both components in the findings. To ensure legitimisation on this level was achieved, the sequential nature of the study meant that data collection, analysis and representation were kept separate in the methodology and results until they were drawn together in the conclusion.

Another aspect of legitimisation, *commensurability*, involves the extent to which the researcher is able to switch between a qualitative and quantitative lens. However, Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) argue that depending on the researchers' viewpoint, this may not be possible and so, as a measure of legitimisation, may be ignored. In contrast, *political* legitimisation involves the extent to which consumers of the research value the inferences drawn from both components of the study. On one hand, because this study was conducted by a single, self funded researcher, there was little external pressure or difficulty in dealing with competing perspectives of researchers. However, this thesis was ultimately to be assessed by examiners and so, in line with Onwuegbuzie and Johnson's argument, it has attempted to generate results, which address novel research questions that consumers will value and find of use, as evidenced through the publication of some aspects of this work (see for example, Quarmby et al., 2011).

Arguably, the most important form of legitimisation is that of *multiple validities* legitimisation which involves the extent to which "all relevant research strategies are utilised and the research can be considered high on the multiple relevant 'validities'" (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006, p.59). Thus, with regard to the quantitative instrument for the first phase, issues of reliability and validity could be seen to be fairly straightforward since an objective referent point against which to compare results could be identified. However, psychometric



testing of the measure was not performed as the questionnaire was not structured to allow this within a discrete collection time point. In order to fully explore validity and reliability between the time points it would have necessitated data collection on the same days in different weeks. It was therefore considered that a strength of the study would be to collect data on differing week days in the same week and for both weekend days. However, the original questionnaire from which this measure was developed was found to be reliable as highlighted earlier (section 4.3.1). With regard to the qualitative phase, several practical checks were conducted to help ensure credibility for the qualitative component of the study. Here, two prominent techniques were used: members' checks (as discussed earlier) and triangulation. A key strength of this study was the use of a mixed methodology to triangulate results, providing richer information than would be available through the use of a single method. "Triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.5), by checking propositions with other methodological tools.

In adhering to multiple validities legitimization, Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) also ask to what extent the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Here the whole was deemed to be greater than its parts because these quantitative and qualitative components were linked throughout the project; there was integration at the sampling stage, of findings at the interpretive stage and in the presentation of results in the reporting stage. By doing so, it was possible to deepen understanding and to elaborate on findings emerging from other parts of the data set. An example of this is where the quantitative and qualitative data converge to help explain family meal patterns and their position within families as a unique pedagogical context (see section 6.3).

All in all, several attempts were made to ensure the study adhered, where possible, to issues of legitimisation as outlined by Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006). However, the value of adopting a mixed methods perspective was that the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods provided a clearer picture of young people's perspectives, allowing for a more nuanced account and explanation of personal agency.

#### **4.8 Reflective Account of the Research Process**

As well as advocating a mixed methods approach to research, Bourdieu (1977a) also acknowledged a particular epistemological and ontological position that required an aspect of reflexivity with regard to how the research was conducted, the methods chosen and processes undertaken. Greenbank (2003, p.798) argued that it is important that researchers adopt "a reflexive approach that is clearly articulated in their writing". Importantly, he suggested transparency in the research with any drawbacks highlighted. He posits that such an approach does not need to be confined to purely qualitative research and that those using quantitative methods would also benefit from recognising and highlighting the difficulties and implications of the research process (Greenbank, 2003). Such issues should therefore also be discussed within mixed methods research to ensure a transparent approach is maintained. As such, this reflexive account attempts to provide a critical perspective, highlighting issues and implications that arose during the research process.

Perhaps a limitation of this thesis was that, even though the impartiality of the researcher underpinned the study, there were several differences between the researcher and participants. According to Bourdieu (1977a) the researcher is continually part of the social world and must adopt a reflective attitude to their own practice. Hence, it is important to note that the

researcher, while Caucasian, was from a middle class, relatively stable intact couple family background. It is argued that these factors could influence the findings and be a potential source of bias (Denscombe, 2007; Greenbank, 2003). However, a counter argument is that if researchers are aware of, and overtly state their position, then they will be more upfront about subjective elements. In addition, those from an alternative social background to the participants are likely to be more objective (Usher, 1996).

With regard to the overall research process, initially, the aims included gauging the opinion of parents to supplement that of their child, thus providing a more holistic picture of the family influence. However, because the focus was on low income families (to ensure a greater diversity of family structures) it quickly became apparent that engaging with low income parents, whose time may be precious, would be problematic. During the pilot and main study, approximately 80 information sheets and consent forms were sent out with students from the participating schools. Despite information also being contained in the school bulletin, no consent forms were returned, perhaps due to recipients' heavy schedules, coupled with prior work and family commitments. As a result of the poor response rate, it was decided to only focus on the voices of young people. If parents had been included then ideally, written consent would have been obtained with additional verbal assent from young people to participate in the study. Parents would have been contacted by phone to arrange a mutually convenient time and venue for the interview and would have been sent a list of interview questions prior to the interview to allow them time to consider their responses. Like the student interviews, interviews with parents would have been conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule that would have enabled further probing of responses and a flexible flow as appropriate. An initial interview schedule was trialled with one eleven-year-old child and his parents, both of whom were known to the interviewer prior to commencing

the study. However, the final (parent) interview protocol was not trialled on a larger basis due to lack of responses.

The removal of parents from the study had several implications for the research questions and design. Instead of looking at case study families after the initial phase, the focus was placed solely on young people, meaning the number of students for the second phase had to be increased. In addition, several of the research questions pertaining to parents had to be removed from the study. Examples of the research questions removed from the study included: “What are parents’ perceptions of barriers to supporting young people’s physical activity” and; “What resources do parents draw on in constructing their own and their family’s beliefs and values about physical activity and health?”. Had parents been able to voice their opinions the research might have uncovered even more interesting findings with regard to the how parents view physical activity and their ability to influence the activity of their child. It may have also shed more light on the place of physical activity within particular family fields. In addition, because parents could not be reached for an interview, consent from young people to participate was instead provided via in loco parentis from the head of the school. Moreover, the collection of additional socio-demographic data and family information from parents themselves was not possible. It was also deemed to be too sensitive and therefore inappropriate by the gatekeepers who vetted the questionnaires to ask probing questions about their family. This meant that the only means of categorising the participants as low income was down to the IMD postcode of the school attended, alongside supplementary data from Ofsted reports and census data regarding the surrounding catchment areas. It is therefore recognised that this may be a limitation of the study since some of the participants may not actually fall into the low income category. In some instances young

people did discuss their parents' employment status, which did allow for further probing, though this was not always the case for all participants.

Though the lack of input from parents didn't greatly alter the mixed method design of the study as far as young people were concerned (this remained relatively similar with the exception of increased numbers), further questions were included after the pilot stage designed to elicit parental activity habits which could not be obtained from their parents directly. As a result, further questions were added to the student's interview protocol to compensate for the lack of a parental voice. Some of these questions included: "In the past, have your parents been involved in any physical activities/structured sports?"; "Are they still involved in any activities now" and; "Do your parents talk much about physical activity and health?". However, while it was important to listen to the voices of young people and provide them with equal status to that of adults, without achieving a whole family perspective, Jeanes (2010) argues that we can only grasp a partial understanding of the family influence. Removing parents from the study, while allowing for a greater focus on young people's voices, did ultimately impact on the amount of information available and prevent further triangulation of perspectives between parent and child.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESULTS**

The following chapter details the results of the main study. Findings from both the quantitative and qualitative components are presented independently according to the sequential nature of the data collection and analysis process. Both sets of data are then integrated in the preceding discussion and conclusion chapters in an effort to allow the qualitative data to explicate the quantitative data in response to the research questions. Here, quantitative results are presented that address the amount of time spent in a range of activities, the number of joint activities engaged in by family structure and the number of meals regularly eaten together as a whole family. Thereafter, the qualitative results are presented that initially provide an overview of the types of support and barriers experienced by these young people. Following this, data which supports the quantitative element is presented with regard the different types of activities and meal time patterns. Finally, results are presented that demonstrate how young people's physical activity habitus is constructed, shaped and disrupted in various family formations.

## 5.1 Introduction

Data reported in this results section will be addressed in the same order that data were analysed before being interpreted together in the following discussion and conclusion. Descriptive statistics (frequency, means and standard deviations) were computed for both elements (quantitative and qualitative) across the whole sample. The participants' characteristics for both phases are reported together in Table II below.

**Table II – Participants' Demographic Characteristics**

		<b>Quantitative Phase 1</b>	<b>Qualitative Phase 2</b>
Gender	Male	218	34
	Female	163	28
	Total	381	62
Age	Range	11 – 14	11 – 14
	Mean	12.54	12.26
	SD	0.91	0.85
Family Structure	Intact Couple Family	201	19
	Lone Parent Family	120	24
	Step Family	60	19
	Total	381	62

The proportion of different family structures in phase one was broadly similar to that of the West Midlands overall (Smallwood and Wilson, 2007). Taken alone, this is important since Denscombe (2007) suggests that having a similar balance in the proportions within the sample and those that occur in the overall population works to enhance the representativeness. However, these individuals are drawn from a range of family structures in low income areas and therefore the following results are specific to this population of young people only.

## 5.2 Quantitative Results

Given that the quantitative data was non parametric, most of the data obtained from the self report questionnaire were presented in tabular format with frequency counts, supported by

additional information to help explain what they represent. The results here begin to answer, in order, three prominent research questions discussed in the previous chapter. The first of these looks at whether family structure mediated the amount of time young people spent in different types of activities, these being the six categories of activities described in the methodology chapter and in Table I (section 4.3.1). Following this, quantitative results explore whether young people in certain family structures were exposed to more joint activities with immediate family members. The final quantitative data presented here addressed whether family structure made a difference to the amount of evening meals eaten together as a family and thus was symbolic of the amount of time families spend together (Yeung et al., 2001).

### **5.2.1 *Types of Activities***

The following findings outline differences from the self reported data in the amount of time young people spent in a variety of different categories of activities (sedentary, domestic, games, partner, other, lifetime). Later, the qualitative data is explored to further enhance the quantitative findings as they relate to the different types of activities (section 5.3.3).

#### **5.2.1.1 Sedentary Activities**

There was a significant effect of family structure on the time spent carrying out sedentary activities for young people during the week ( $H(2)=9.17$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and at the weekend ( $H(2)=7.55$ ,  $p=0.02$ ) (Table III). Further analyses ( $\alpha=.0167$ ) showed that there were no significant differences between intact couple families and stepfamilies during the week ( $U=5871$ ,  $z=-.31$ ,  $p=.76$ ,  $r=-.02$ ) or weekend ( $U=6023$ ,  $z=-.01$ ,  $p=.99$ ,  $r=-.00$ ), or between lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=2895$ ,  $z=-2.14$ ,  $p=.03$ ,  $r=-.16$ , week;  $U=3048$ ,  $z=-1.68$ ,



$p=.09$ ,  $r=-.13$  weekend). A significant difference was found between intact couple families and lone parent families during both the week ( $U=9757$ ,  $z=-2.87$ ,  $p=.004$ ) and weekend ( $U=9875$ ,  $z=-2.72$ ,  $p=.006$ ). However, the effect sizes of both week ( $r=-.16$ ) and weekend ( $r=-.15$ ) were small. Mean ranks suggested that young people from lone parent families spent more time engaged in sedentary activities during both the week (150 *c.f.* 180; intact, lone) and weekend (150 *c.f.* 179; intact, lone).

When the data were split by gender the effects of family structure were present for boys' week day activities ( $H(2)=7.63$ ,  $p=.02$ ) but not girls' ( $H(2)=4.19$ ,  $p=.13$ ) (Table III). In addition, there were no effects reported for weekend sedentary activities between genders ( $H(2)=5.72$ ,  $p=0.06$ , boys;  $H(2)=3.09$ ,  $p=0.21$ , girls). Further analyses of the boys' data for sedentary activities during the week failed to highlight significant differences even after correction to account for multiple comparisons ( $\alpha=.0167$ ). No differences were shown between intact couple and lone parent families ( $U=3254$ ,  $z=-2.32$ ,  $p=.02$ ,  $r=-.17$ ), intact couple and stepfamilies ( $U=1554$ ,  $z=-1.02$ ,  $p=.31$ ,  $r=-.08$ ) or stepfamilies and lone parent families ( $U=690$ ,  $z=-2.26$ ,  $p=.02$ ,  $r=-.23$ ).

#### **5.2.1.2 Domestic Activities**

There was no effect of family structure on the distribution of time spent in domestic activities during the week ( $H(2)=3.86$ ,  $p=.15$ ) or at the weekend ( $H(2)=4.63$ ,  $p=.10$ ). In addition, there were no effects for week activities ( $H(2)=1.10$ ,  $p=.58$ , boys;  $H(2)=4.19$ ,  $p=.13$ , girls) or weekend activities ( $H(2) = 1.53$ ,  $p = .47$ , boys;  $H(2) = 5.67$ ,  $p = .06$ , girls) when the data were split by gender.

**Table III – Cumulative Sedentary Activity Minutes split by Family Structure and Gender**

Cumulative sedentary activity time (mins)		Weekend				Weekday											
						All				Boys				Girls			
		Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total	Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total	Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total	Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total
< 30	No. of children	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	3	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	1
	% within family structure	1	0	0	0.5	1	0.8	0	0.8	0.8	1.5	0.0	0.9	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.6
30 – 59	No. of children	9	6	2	17	20	8	7	35	16	6	6	28	4	2	1	7
	% within family structure	4.5	5	3.3	4.5	10	6.7	11.7	9.2	13.1	9.0	20.7	12.8	5.1	3.8	3.2	4.3
60 – 89	No. of children	13	7	4	24	23	10	12	45	16	5	6	27	7	5	6	18
	% within family structure	6.5	5.8	6.7	6.3	11.4	8.3	20	11.8	13.1	7.5	20.7	12.4	8.9	9.4	19.4	11.0
90 – 119	No. of children	18	8	8	34	38	16	6	60	17	8	2	27	21	8	4	33
	% within family structure	9	6.7	13.3	8.9	18.9	13.3	10	15.7	13.9	11.9	6.9	12.4	26.6	15.1	12.9	20.2
120 – 149	No. of children	22	13	11	46	29	15	10	54	15	6	4	25	14	9	6	29
	% within family structure	10.9	10.8	18.3	12.1	14.4	12.5	16.7	14.2	12.3	9.0	13.8	11.5	17.7	17.0	19.4	17.8
150 – 179	No. of children	17	2	3	22	25	5	5	35	17	2	3	22	8	3	2	13
	% within family structure	8.5	1.7	5	5.8	12.4	4.2	8.3	9.2	13.9	3.0	10.3	10.1	10.1	5.7	6.5	8.0
180 – 209	No. of children	23	6	6	35	13	20	3	36	6	11	1	18	7	9	2	18
	% within family structure	11.4	5	10	9.2	6.5	16.7	5	9.4	4.9	16.4	3.4	8.3	8.9	17.0	6.5	11.0
210 – 239	No. of children	25	15	1	41	11	8	5	24	6	2	2	10	5	6	3	14
	% within family structure	12.4	12.5	1.7	10.8	5.5	6.7	8.3	6.3	4.9	3.0	6.9	4.6	6.3	11.3	9.7	8.6
240 – 269	No. of children	19	11	4	34	17	17	3	37	14	13	1	28	3	4	2	9
	% within family structure	9.5	9.2	6.7	8.9	8.5	14.2	5	9.7	11.5	19.4	3.4	12.8	3.8	7.5	6.5	5.5
270 – 299 <sup>1</sup>	No. of children	12	10	3	25	10	7	5	22	14	13	4	31	9	7	5	21
	% within family structure	6	8.3	5	6.6	5	5.8	8.3	5.8	11.4	19.4	13.7	14.2	11.4	13.2	16.2	12.9
300+	No. of children	41	42	18	101	13	13	4	30								
	% within family structure	20.4	35	30	26.5	6.5	10.8	6.7	7.9								

<sup>1</sup> 270+ for Weekday split by gender

### 5.2.1.3 Games Activities

There was no effect of family structure on the distribution of time spent in games activities in the week ( $H(2)=5.91, p=0.05$ ). In addition, no effect on the weekend activity was found ( $H(2)=3.04, p=0.22$ ). There was, however, an effect of family structure on boys' week day games activities ( $H(2)=7.12, p=0.03$ ) but not girls' ( $H(2)=1.06, p=0.59$ ). However, this pattern was not present in weekend games activities ( $H(2)=5.86, p=0.05$ , boys;  $H(2)=2.60, p=0.27$ , girls). Further analyses of the boys' data ( $\alpha=0.0167$ ) for games activities during the week showed a significant difference between stepfamilies and lone parent families ( $U=683, p=0.01, z=-2.45, r=-0.25$ ). Mean rank data suggested that boys in lone parent families spent less time in games activities than those in a stepfamily (44 *c.f.* 58; lone, step). In fact, only 3 per cent of boys from lone parent families spent more than 90 minutes in games activities compared to 28 per cent of boys from stepfamilies. There were no differences between intact couple and lone parent families ( $U=3376, p=0.04, z=-2.09, r=-0.15$ ) or intact couple and stepfamilies ( $U=1554, p=0.30, z=-1.05, r=-0.09$ ).

### 5.2.1.4 Partner Activities

There was no effect of family structure on the time spent in partner activities during the week ( $H(2) = .25, p = .89$ ) or at the weekend ( $H(2) = 5.41, p = .07$ ). When the data were split by gender there were no effects of family structure for weekend activities ( $H(2) = .69, p = .72$ , boys;  $H(2) = 5.57, p = .06$ , girls) or week activities ( $H(2) = 1.88, p = .40$ , boys;  $H(2) = .55, p = .74$ , girls).

### 5.2.1.5 Other Activities

There was no effect of family structure on the time spent in other activities at the weekend ( $H(2)=2.16, p=0.34$ ) or during the week ( $H(2)=1.74, p=0.42$ ). When the sample was split by

gender there was no effect for week other activities ( $H(2)=1.23$ ,  $p=0.55$ , boys;  $H(2)=3.16$ ,  $p=0.21$ , girls). However, for weekend other activities there was a significant effect for females and family structure ( $H(2)=7.64$ ,  $p=0.02$ ) but not for boys ( $H(2)=0.18$ ,  $p=0.91$ ). Further analyses of the girls' weekend data ( $\alpha=0.0167$ ) showed a significant difference between intact couple and lone parent families ( $U=1506$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $z=-2.81$ ,  $r=-0.24$ ). Mean rank data suggested that girls in intact couple families spent more time in other activities than those in a lone parent family (55 *c.f.* 74; lone, intact). Actually, 23 per cent of female participants from intact couple families spent more than 90 minutes in these activities compared to just 11 per cent of girls from lone parent families. There were no differences between step and lone parent families ( $U=731$ ,  $p=0.37$ ,  $z=-0.91$ ,  $r=-0.01$ ) or intact couple and stepfamilies ( $U=1066$ ,  $p=0.28$ ,  $z=-1.08$ ,  $r=-0.10$ ).

#### **5.2.1.6 Lifetime Activities**

There was an effect of family structure on the time spent on lifetime activities in the week ( $H(2)=9.70$ ,  $p<0.01$ , Table IV) but not at the weekend ( $H(2)=1.70$ ,  $p=0.43$ , Table IV). Further analyses ( $\alpha=0.0167$ ) of the lifetime activities data during the week showed significant differences between intact couple families and lone parent families ( $U=9620$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $z=-3.09$ ). Although this effect was weak ( $r=-0.17$ ), the mean ranks suggested that young people from lone parent families spent less time in lifetime activities during the week (173 *c.f.* 141; intact, lone). There were no differences between intact couple families and stepfamilies during the week ( $U=5981$ ,  $p=0.92$ ,  $z=-0.01$ ,  $r=-0.00$ ) or lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=2989$ ,  $p=0.06$ ,  $z=-1.90$ ,  $r=-0.14$ ).

**Table IV – Cumulative Lifetime Activity Minutes split by Family Structure and Gender**

Cumulative lifetime activity time (mins)		Weekend					Weekday											
							All				Boys				Girls			
		Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total		Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total	Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total	Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total
< 30	No. of children	36	34	17	87		63	58	23	144	42	39	13	94	21	19	10	50
	% within family structure	17.9	28.3	28.3	22.8		31.3	48.3	38.3	37.8	34.4	58.2	44.8	43.1	26.6	35.8	32.3	30.7
30 – 59	No. of children	35	17	8	60		55	28	13	96	35	14	10	59	20	14	3	37
	% within family structure	17.4	14.2	13.3	15.7		27.4	23.3	21.7	25.2	28.7	20.9	34.5	27.1	25.3	26.4	9.7	22.7
60 – 89	No. of children	34	18	7	59		33	17	7	57	14	8	1	23	19	9	6	34
	% within family structure	16.9	15.0	11.7	15.5		16.4	14.2	11.7	15.0	11.5	11.9	3.4	10.6	24.1	17.0	19.4	20.9
90 – 119	No. of children	26	10	5	41		21	8	4	33	13	2	1	16	8	6	3	17
	% within family structure	12.9	8.3	8.3	10.8		10.4	6.7	6.7	8.7	10.7	3.0	3.4	7.3	10.1	11.3	9.7	10.4
120 – 149 <sup>1</sup>	No. of children	23	13	8	44		29	9	13	51	18	4	4	26	11	5	9	25
	% within family structure	11.4	10.8	13.3	11.5		14.4	7.5	21.7	13.4	14.8	6.0	13.8	11.9	13.9	9.4	29.0	15.3
150 – 179	No. of children	9	11	3	23													
	% within family structure	4.5	9.2	5.0	6.0													
180 – 209	No. of children	38	17	12	67													
	% within family structure	18.9	14.2	20.0	17.6													

<sup>1</sup> 120+ for Weekday

When the data were split by gender an effect of family structure on boys' week day lifetime activity time was found ( $H(2)=9.72$ ,  $p<0.01$ , Table IV) but not for the girls' sample ( $H(2)=2.63$ ,  $p=0.27$ , Table IV). This effect was not seen in weekend lifetime activities for males ( $H(2)=2.27$ ,  $p=0.32$ ) or females ( $H(2)=1.33$ ,  $p=0.52$ ).

Further analyses ( $\alpha=0.0167$ ) of the boys' data for lifetime activities during the week showed no significant differences between intact couple and stepfamilies ( $U=1544$ ,  $p=0.28$ ,  $z=-1.08$ ,  $r=-0.09$ ) or stepfamilies and lone parent families ( $U=846$ ,  $p=0.30$ ,  $z=-1.04$ ,  $r=-0.11$ ). An effect of family structure between intact couple and lone parent families was seen for boys' weekday lifetime activities ( $U=2992$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $z=-3.11$ ,  $r=-0.23$ ). Mean rank data suggested that boys in intact couple families spent more time in lifetime activities than those in a lone parent family (104 *c.f.* 79; intact, lone).

### **5.2.2 Joint Activities with Family Members**

Another research sub-question that the quantitative data sought to address related to the number of joint activities young people from different family structures engaged in. In fact, activities carried out with family members, particularly parents, can be seen as a form of social support for physical activity. Since all data regarding joint family activities for the week and weekend were analysed separately, so too are they presented separately below.

#### **5.2.2.1 Joint Family Activities during the Week**

Results indicated that there was a significant effect of family structure on the number of days during a week that young people engaged in two or more activities with a member of their family ( $H(2)=86.92$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Further analyses ( $\alpha=.0167$ ) showed that there was no significant difference between lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=3433$ ,  $z=-.60$ ,  $p=.55$ ,

$r=-.04$ ). However significant differences were found between intact couple families and lone parent families ( $U=5475$ ,  $z=-8.51$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.48$ ) and between intact couple families and stepfamilies ( $U=3115$ ,  $z=-5.83$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.36$ ) with both demonstrating medium to large effect sizes. Mean ranks point toward those in intact couple families engaging in two or more activities with a family member on more occasions during the week than their lone parent (194 *c.f.* 106) and stepfamily counterparts (146 *c.f.* 82).

**Table V - Frequency of Engaging in 2+ Activities with a Family Member during the Week**

		Family Structure							
		Boys				Girls			
		Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total	Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total
No days in the week	No. of children	24	47	16	87	26	33	23	82
	% within family structure	19.7	70.1	55.2	39.9	32.9	62.3	74.2	50.3
One day in the week	No. of children	14	10	5	29	9	12	0	21
	% within family structure	11.5	14.9	17.2	13.3	11.4	22.6	0.0	12.9
Two days in the week	No. of children	22	3	5	30	6	1	4	11
	% within family structure	18.0	4.5	17.2	13.8	7.6	1.9	12.9	6.7
Three days in the week	No. of children	20	6	0	26	13	5	2	20
	% within family structure	16.4	9.0	0.0	11.9	16.5	9.4	6.5	12.3
Four days in the week	No. of children	20	1	1	22	11	1	2	14
	% within family structure	16.4	1.5	3.4	10.1	13.9	1.9	6.5	8.6
Five days in the week	No. of children	22	0	2	24	14	1	0	15
	% within family structure	18.0	0.0	6.9	11.0	17.7	1.9	0.0	9.2

When the data were split by gender the effects of family structure were still present for both boys ( $H(2)=60.46$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and girls ( $H(2)=29.96$ ,  $p<.001$ ) (Table V). In addition, further analyses of both the boys' and girls' data revealed similar patterns after correction for multiple comparisons ( $\alpha=.0167$ ). Differences were reported for both genders between intact couple families and lone parent families ( $U=1531$ ,  $z=-7.34$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.53$ , boys;  $U=1202$ ,  $z=-4.36$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.38$ , girls), with higher mean ranks suggesting those in intact couple families

more frequently engaged in 2 or more activities with a family member (116 *c.f.* 57, boys; 78 *c.f.* 50, girls). This was similar when intact couple families and stepfamilies were compared ( $U=904$ ,  $z=-4.16$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.34$ , boys;  $U=665$ ,  $z=-3.91$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.37$ , girls). No differences were reported between lone parent and stepfamilies for either gender ( $U=814$ ,  $z=-1.49$ , *ns*,  $r=-.15$ , boys;  $U=761$ ,  $z=-.67$ , *ns*,  $r=-.07$ , girls).

When siblings were considered alongside gender there were still effects of family structure present for boys **without any siblings** ( $H(2)=11.86$ ,  $p=.002$ ) but not girls ( $H(2)=2.74$ ,  $p=.25$ ). However, for young people with **one sibling** significant effects of family structure were recorded for boys ( $H(2)=20.34$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and girls ( $H(2)=11.11$ ,  $p=.003$ ). This was similar for young people of both genders with **two or more siblings** whereby a significant effect of family structure was evident ( $H(2)=21.41$ ,  $p<.001$ , boys;  $H(2)=9.97$ ,  $p=.006$ , girls).

When further analyses were conducted to see where the effect of family structure lie with regard to boys without any siblings, after adjusting for multiple comparisons ( $\alpha=.0167$ ), significant differences were identified between boys in intact couple families and lone parent families only ( $U=30$ ,  $z=-3.41$ ,  $p=.001$ ). Higher mean ranks for boys in intact couple families (20 *c.f.* 11) suggest they engaged in two or more activities with a family member more frequently than those in lone parent families, with a large effect size signifying the strength of this relationship ( $r=-.60$ ). No differences were reported between those boys in intact couple families and stepfamilies ( $U=14.5$ ,  $z=-.57$ , *ns*) or between lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=19.5$ ,  $z=-.236$ , *ns*).

For both boys and girls with one sibling, significant differences were reported between those in intact couple families and lone parent families ( $U=192$ ,  $z=-4.18$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.52$ , boys;  $U=115$ ,  $z=-2.83$ ,  $p=.005$ ,  $r=-.44$ , girls) and between intact couple families and



stepfamilies ( $U=186$ ,  $z=-2.70$ ,  $p=.007$ ,  $r=-.35$ , boys;  $U=65$ ,  $z=-2.59$ ,  $p=.010$ ,  $r=-.44$ , girls). Mean ranks showed that those in intact couple families engage in two or more activities with a family member significantly more than those in lone parent families (40 *c.f.* 20: intact, lone, boys; 26 *c.f.* 16: intact, lone, girls) and stepfamilies (33 *c.f.* 20: intact, step, boys; 21 *c.f.* 12: intact, step, girls) during the week. Again, no significant differences were reported for either gender between young people in lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=155$ ,  $z=-1.02$ , *ns*, boys;  $U=113$ ,  $z=-.36$ , *ns*, girls).

Finally, the frequency of engaging in two or more activities with a family member during the week was significantly greater for both boys (56 *c.f.* 29: intact, lone) and girls (42 *c.f.* 28: intact, lone) with two or more siblings in intact couple families compared with those in lone parent families ( $U=393$ ,  $z=-4.40$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.45$ , boys;  $U=361$ ,  $z=-2.77$ ,  $p=.006$ ,  $r=-.32$ , girls). No other significant differences were reported for boys and girls between intact couple families and stepfamilies ( $U=177$ ,  $z=-2.20$ , *ns*, boys;  $U=165$ ,  $z=-2.07$ , *ns*, girls) or lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=108$ ,  $z=-.36$ , *ns*, boys;  $U=131$ ,  $z=-.04$ , *ns*, girls).

#### **5.2.2.2 Joint Family Activities at the Weekend**

These patterns during the week were largely consistent with patterns at the weekend. Results here demonstrated a significant effect of family structure on the number of times at the weekend that young people reported engaging in three or more activities with a member of their family ( $H(2)=106.2$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Further analyses ( $\alpha=.0167$ ) showed that unlike during the week, significant differences were reported between all three family types with varying effect sizes. The largest effect size ( $r=-.53$ ) was reported when comparing intact couple families and lone parent families ( $U=5293$ ,  $z=-9.43$ ,  $p<.001$ ) with mean ranks suggesting those in intact couple families more frequently engaged in three or more activities during a weekend with a

family member (195 *c.f.* 105, intact couple, lone parent). This was also true when intact couple families and stepfamilies were compared ( $U=3142$ ,  $z=-6.07$ ,  $p<.001$ ), though the effect size was slightly smaller ( $r=-.38$ ). Finally, there was a small effect ( $r=-.20$ ) evident between lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=3047$ ,  $z=-2.63$ ,  $p=.01$ ) with mean ranks also suggesting more frequent family engagement in activities in stepfamilies (99 *c.f.* 85, stepfamily, lone parent).

**Table VI - Frequency of Engaging in 3+ Activities with a Family Member at the Weekend**

		Family Structure							
		Boys				Girls			
		Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total	Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total
No days at the weekend	No. of children	41	63	18	122	34	44	26	102
	% within family structure	33.6	94.0	62.1	56.0	40.5	83.0	83.9	62.6
One day at the weekend	No. of children	21	1	10	32	17	9	5	31
	% within family structure	17.2	1.5	34.5	14.7	21.5	17.0	16.1	19.0
Both days of the weekend	No. of children	60	3	1	64	30	0	0	30
	% within family structure	49.2	4.5	3.4	29.4	38.0	0.0	0.0	18.4

When the data were split by gender the effects of family structure were still present for boys ( $H(2)=66.20$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and girls ( $H(2)=39.54$ ,  $p<.001$ ) (Table VI). Additional analyses of the data revealed similar patterns after correction for multiple comparisons ( $\alpha=.0167$ ) for both genders. Differences were reported for boys and girls between intact couple families and lone parent families ( $U=1619$ ,  $z=-7.70$ ,  $p<.001$ , boys;  $U=1068$ ,  $z=-5.35$ ,  $p<.001$ , girls) with large and medium effects sizes respectively ( $r=-.56$ , boys;  $r=-.38$ , girls). Higher mean ranks for boys (115 *c.f.* 58) and girls (79 *c.f.* 48) in intact couple families suggested they more frequently engaged in three or more activities with a family member than those in lone parent families. Similarly, significant differences with medium effect sizes were identified between intact couple families and stepfamilies for both genders ( $U=976$ ,  $z=-4.03$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.33$ ,

boys;  $U=619$ ,  $z=-4.43$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.42$ , girls) with mean ranks (83 *c.f.* 49, boys; 63 *c.f.* 36, girls) indicating the same as above. Interestingly, whilst there was no significant difference between girls in lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=815$ ,  $z=-.10$ , *ns*), there was for boys ( $U=676$ ,  $z=-3.75$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.38$ ), with mean ranks indicating that boys in stepfamilies engaged in three or more activities with a family member more often than boys in lone parent families (59 *c.f.* 44).

Like the weekday data, the number of siblings was also considered alongside gender. Similarly, the effects of family structure at the weekend were present for boys **without any siblings** ( $H(2)=11.82$ ,  $p=.002$ ) but not girls ( $H(2)=4.54$ ,  $p=.10$ ). Moreover, these significant effects of family structure were consistent with the weekday data for boys ( $H(2)=16.57$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and girls ( $H(2)=11.00$ ,  $p=.002$ ) with **one sibling** only, as well as for boys and girls with **two or more siblings** ( $H(2)=31.77$ ,  $p<.001$ , boys;  $H(2)=20.75$ ,  $p<.001$ , girls).

Additional analyses were conducted to see where the effects of family structure lie with regard to boys without any siblings. After adjusting for multiple comparisons ( $\alpha=.0167$ ), significant differences were identified between those in intact couple families and lone parent families only ( $U=36$ ,  $z=-3.42$ ,  $p=.002$ ,  $r=-.66$ ), mirroring results from the week. Higher mean ranks for boys in intact couple families indicated that they more frequently engaged in three or more activities with a family member at the weekend (19 *c.f.* 12). No differences were reported between boys in intact couple families and stepfamilies ( $U=11$ ,  $z=-1.19$ , *ns*) or between lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=27$ ,  $z=-.212$ , *ns*).

For both boys and girls with one sibling, significant differences were reported between those in intact couple families and lone parent families only ( $U=245$ ,  $z=-3.81$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.47$ , boys;  $U=117$ ,  $z=-3.12$ ,  $p=.002$ ,  $r=-.48$ , girls). Once again mean ranks suggested boys (39 *c.f.*

23) and girls (26 *c.f.* 16) from intact couple families more frequently engaged in three or more activities with a family member at weekends. No significant differences were reported for either gender between intact couple families and stepfamilies ( $U=227$ ,  $z=-2.08$ , *ns*, boys;  $U=85$ ,  $z=-1.88$ , *ns*, girls) nor lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=137$ ,  $z=-2.14$ , *ns*, boys;  $U=102$ ,  $z=-1.11$ , *ns*, girls).

Finally, there were significant differences for boys and girls with two or more siblings between intact couple families and lone parent families ( $U=326$ ,  $z=-5.40$ ,  $p<.001$ , boys;  $U=282$ ,  $z=-3.90$ ,  $p<.001$ , girls) with large ( $r=-.55$ , boys) and medium ( $r=-.46$ , girls) effect sizes. This pattern was similar for boys and girls when intact couple and stepfamilies were compared ( $U=173$ ,  $z=-2.53$ ,  $p=.013$ ,  $r=-.28$ , boys;  $U=120$ ,  $z=-3.10$ ,  $p=.002$ ,  $r=-.40$ , girls). For both of these comparisons, mean ranks indicated that boys and girls in intact couple families were more likely to engage in three or more activities at the weekend with a family member than those in lone parent (57 *c.f.* 26: intact, lone, boys; 43 *c.f.* 24: intact, lone, girls) and stepfamilies (43 *c.f.* 24: intact, step, boys; 34 *c.f.* 17: intact, step, girls). Interestingly, boys in stepfamilies reported more frequently engaging in three or more activities with a family member than boys in lone parent families (23 *c.f.* 16) ( $U=69$ ,  $z=-2.47$ ,  $p=.013$ ,  $r=-.42$ ) while there was no significant difference reported for girls ( $U=123$ ,  $z=-.44$ , *ns*).

### **5.2.3 Meals Eaten Together**

The final data presented here, again split by week and weekend, relates to the frequency that young people ate their main meal with their whole family. This data is used to represent how different family structures spent time together and is further explored by additional qualitative data later (section 5.3.4).

### 5.2.3.1 Frequency of Main Meals with Family during the Week

It was apparent that there was a significant effect of family structure on the amount of main meals young people ate with their whole family; that is, the people they reported living with ( $H(2)=16.31, p<.001$ ). Post hoc tests ( $\alpha=0.0167$ ) reported no significant difference between lone parent and stepfamilies ( $U=3396, z=-.63, p=.53, r=-.05$ ). However, significant differences were identified between intact couple and lone parent families ( $U=9584, z=-3.22, p<.001$ ) and between intact couple and stepfamilies ( $U=4399, z=-3.33, p<.001$ ) albeit with a relatively small effect size: ( $r=-.18$ ) and ( $r=-.21$ ) respectively (Table VII). Median scores for each condition suggested that young people from intact couple families more frequently eat their main evening meal with parents and other family members ( $Mdn = 4$  times a week) than their counterparts in lone parent ( $Mdn = 3$  times a week) and stepfamilies ( $Mdn = 2$  times a week).

**Table VII – Frequency of Meals Eaten Together during the Week**

		Family Structure			
		Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total
Never	No. of children	14	20	11	45
	% within family structure	7.0	16.7	18.3	11.8
Once a week	No. of children	19	16	6	41
	% within family structure	9.5	13.3	10.0	10.8
Twice a week	No. of children	19	17	14	50
	% within family structure	9.5	14.2	23.3	13.1
Three times a week	No. of children	31	15	8	54
	% within family structure	15.4	12.5	13.3	14.2
Four times a week	No. of children	23	11	3	37
	% within family structure	11.4	9.2	5.0	9.7
Five times a week	No. of children	95	41	18	154
	% within family structure	47.3	34.2	30.0	40.4

When the data were split by gender the effects of family structure were present for boys ( $H(2)=11.50, p=.003$ ) but not girls ( $H(2)=4.90, p=.088$ ) (Table VIII). Further analysis of the

boys' data highlighted significant differences after correction to account for multiple comparisons ( $\alpha=.0167$ ) between those boys in intact couple families and those in lone parent families ( $U=2963$ ,  $z=-3.28$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.24$ ). No differences were shown between boys in intact couple and stepfamilies ( $U=1421$ ,  $z=-1.75$ ,  $p=.08$ ,  $r=-.14$ ) or lone parent and stepfamilies ( $U=905$ ,  $z=-.55$ ,  $p=.59$ ,  $r=-.06$ ).

**Table VIII: Frequency of Meals Eaten Together during the Week split by Gender and Family Structure**

		Family Structure							
		Boys				Girls			
		Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total	Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total
Never	No. of children	2	11	3	16	12	9	8	21
	% within family structure	1.6	16.4	10.3	7.3	15.2	17.0	25.8	12.9
Once a week	No. of children	10	6	4	20	9	10	2	21
	% within family structure	8.2	9.0	13.8	9.2	11.4	18.9	6.5	12.9
Twice a week	No. of children	9	9	5	23	10	8	9	27
	% within family structure	7.4	13.4	17.2	10.6	12.7	15.1	29.0	16.6
Three times a week	No. of children	26	12	3	41	5	3	5	13
	% within family structure	21.3	17.9	10.3	18.8	6.3	5.7	16.1	8.0
Four times a week	No. of children	14	8	2	24	9	3	1	13
	% within family structure	11.5	11.9	6.9	11.0	11.4	5.7	3.2	8.0
Five times a week	No. of children	61	21	12	94	34	20	6	60
	% within family structure	50.0	31.3	41.4	43.1	43.0	37.7	19.4	36.8

### 5.2.3.2 Frequency of Main Meals with Family at the Weekend

A significant effect of family structure on the amount of main meals young people ate with their whole family was reported at the weekend too ( $H(2)=40.19$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Additional analysis ( $\alpha=0.0167$ ) reported no significant difference between lone parent and stepfamilies ( $U=3540$ ,  $z=-.20$ ,  $p=.85$ ,  $r=-.01$ ). Similar to findings during the week, significant differences were identified between intact couple and lone parent families ( $U=8248$ ,  $z=-5.68$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and

between intact couple and stepfamilies ( $U=4018$ ,  $z=-4.87$ ,  $p<.001$ ) with medium sized effects: ( $r=-.32$ ) and ( $r=-.30$ ) respectively (see table IX). Median scores for each condition suggested young people from intact couple families more frequently ate their main evening meal with parents and other family members ( $Mdn = 3$  [on both weekend evening]) than their counterparts in lone parent and stepfamilies ( $Mdn = 2$  [on one night at the weekend]).

**Table IX: Frequency of Meals Eaten Together at the Weekend**

		Family Structure			
		Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total
Never	No. of children	12	31	16	59
	% within family structure	6.0	25.8	26.7	15.5
Once	No. of children	34	31	16	81
	% within family structure	16.9	25.8	26.7	21.3
Twice	No. of children	155	58	28	241
	% within family structure	77.1	48.3	46.7	63.3

Unlike during the week, when data were split by gender the effect of family structure was present for boys ( $H(2)=22.70$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and girls ( $H(2)=16.48$ ,  $p=.001$ ). After applying the Bonferroni correction ( $\alpha=.0167$ ) additional analysis of the boys' data highlighted significant differences between intact couple and lone parent families ( $U=2907$ ,  $z=-4.20$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.31$ ) and intact couple and stepfamilies ( $U=1200$ ,  $z=-3.62$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.29$ ) with regard to the frequency of joint family meals at the weekend. No differences were shown between boys in lone parent and stepfamilies ( $U=947$ ,  $z=-.22$ ,  $p=.85$ ,  $r=-.02$ ) (Table X). Similar findings were reported for the girls' data whereby significant differences were identified between girls in intact couple families and lone parent families ( $U=1381$ ,  $z=-3.72$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $r=-.32$ ) and between intact couple families and stepfamilies ( $U=835$ ,  $z=-2.99$ ,  $p<.005$ ,  $r=-.29$ ). Again, no difference was reported between girls in lone parent families and stepfamilies ( $U=808$ ,  $z=-.14$ ,  $p=.88$ ,  $r=-.02$ ).

**Table X: Frequency of Meals Together at the Weekend split by Gender and Family Structure**

		Family Structure							
		Boys				Girls			
		Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total	Intact Couple	Lone Parent	Step Family	Total
Never	No. of children	3	12	5	20	9	19	11	39
	% within family structure	2.5	17.9	17.2	9.2	11.4	35.8	35.5	23.9
Once	No. of children	19	18	9	46	15	13	7	35
	% within family structure	15.6	26.9	31.0	21.1	19.0	24.5	22.6	21.5
Twice	No. of children	100	37	15	152	55	21	13	89
	% within family structure	82.0	55.2	51.7	69.7	69.6	39.6	41.9	54.6

#### **5.2.4 Summary of Quantitative Results**

These quantitative results address three specific research questions. On a macro level it was clear that family structure impacted on the type of activities young people engaged in, with those from lone parent families engaging in more sedentary pursuits and less lifetime activities than their counterparts in intact couple and stepfamilies. In relation to joint activities, it would appear that those in intact couple families engage in more joint family physical activities than those in lone parent and stepfamilies. Finally, from a macro perspective, family structure was seen to affect the amount of time different family structures spent together since those in lone parent and stepfamilies ate fewer main meals together. These quantitative results are subsequently further explored by the following qualitative data.

### **5.3 Qualitative Results**

Numerous themes emerged from the qualitative data that supported the initial findings from the quantitative data. However, a complete integration of the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative components is not presented until the following discussion chapter. Here, the qualitative findings are expressed in a sequential nature whereby initial



findings on a macro level lead on to inform findings on a micro level. For instance, before detailing how young people's physical activity habitus is shaped by family structure, it is initially important to briefly outline the types of support evident across all family structures, coupled with the barriers expressed by these young people. This is important since some of those barriers are provided as reasons behind engagement in specific types of activities and as reasons for a lack of family meals and thus time together. It was therefore decided to present these first so that the reader is aware of the constraining factors before discussing the qualitative data that pertains to the quantitative results. Following this is an exploration of the different types of activities that young people engage in and an overview of family meals eaten together, which both draw on issues raised in the previous results relating to the types of support and barriers. Thereafter, the results again draw together the different types of support and barriers to activity to demonstrate how young people's physical activity and health related habitus and tastes are constructed. To do this, several cases from the interviews are explored in depth to highlight how family works to influence health and physical activity related dispositions and subsequently how these are affected by family structure.

### ***5.3.1 Parental Support for Activity***

Almost all of the respondents, regardless of family structure, could identify and clearly appreciated the influence of various types of parental support on their continued engagement in physical activity. While not determining the quantity of support or whether it differed across family structure, they did identify the different ways in which their parents sought to facilitate their physical activity. Like the literature suggests, family support was predominantly focused around three main types: (1) Facilitation, (2) Investment and (3)

Encouragement. The extracts provided here are largely symptomatic of all of the responses given across the interviews.

#### **5.3.1.1 Facilitation of Activity**

For many young people, facilitation included the provision of equipment, opportunities to be active and importantly, transportation to or from structured physical activity venues. The majority of young people for instance considered family facilitation as an integral part of their engagement in physical activity. Claire for example highlighted that her mother transports, stays with her and helps organise elements of her dance activities:

*I do dancing but my mum comes with me and sorts everything out for me like costumes and things like that... She's always with me helping whatever I do. (Claire, Lone Parent Family)*

Not surprisingly, parents were deemed to be a major influence on young people's physical activity. Importantly, most participants of all ages (11 – 14) reported that their parents provided transport and logistical support to and from physical activity settings. For example:

*Usually my mum and she's the one that drives me there and picks me up too every week. (Tom, Stepfamily)*

*Yeah, cos I've got football matches. Well, I've training on Tuesday, and a match every Saturday... It depends if we're playing home or away but normally... My dad takes me in his car (Lindsey, Lone Parent Family)*

*I'm looking forward if we get to do cheerleading in school, and out of school I'm looking forward to going swimming on Saturday mornings before I do my horses. My*

*dad's going to start taking me and my cousin swimming (Kayleigh, Lone Parent Family)*

As such, facilitation in the form of transportation and general management of activities was identified as a crucial form of support for all young people with regard to their continued participation in certain activities. However, facilitation was not the sole form of support expressed by these interviewees.

#### **5.3.1.2 Investment in Activity**

Very much linked with facilitation and perhaps one of the most important influences on activity was support in the form of parental investment. This was again expressed by young people across all family structures as a significant factor for their involvement. The example below from John indicated how his father, despite not living with him, continually provided money to engage in structured activity.

*Yeah on a Sunday you have to pay £5 a week and my dad pays that but on my Saturday football it's free. (John, Stepfamily)*

Similarly, in listing a host of activities physical and otherwise, that Sam is involved with, he also demonstrated the importance of parental investment in the form of economic capital. Money from his parents ensured he was able to get the bus to and from activities throughout the week and at the weekend.

*Yeah, err, on the, well Monday I've got football and that's here. Then Tuesday, we have that period 6, you know period 6... We have that... they give me bus fare for that because I go to College... You know the new one? I go there Wednesday I have jazz band after school and I'm the drummer for that and then I have drumming you know African jam base, I have that and I have drumsticks on Monday. Thursday I have*

*Glenstock band, which is like a rock band at Glenstock school and I have to leave 10 minutes before school finishes because I have to catch the bus, because it starts at like half 3. Erm, then on Friday I have this survival place, then on Saturday I have football, Sunday....* (Sam, Intact Couple Family)

Parental investment however was not just in the form of paying for structured activities but also evident in the purchase of apparatus that young people required to improve in certain activities. For example, investment for Michelle came in the form of her mother and stepfather buying equipment to help her improve in an activity in which she was already heavily involved.

*I just like tell them what I get when I do weightlifting how I can improve... They just say well then I'll get you a bar and you can practice at home* (Michelle, Stepfamily)

Interestingly, for some participants interviewed here, investment in equipment allowed parents to direct their offspring towards certain physical activities. Unlike Michelle above, the extracts below demonstrate how Jack, Sharon and Garry were all persuaded to engage in their respective activities after their parents purchased the relevant equipment. For Jack in particular, this represented an activity in which his dad was already involved with.

*He just bought, for my birthday he bought me some [golf] clubs* (Jack, Lone Parent Family)

*And, erm... kind of cos he bought us the bikes and stuff and it was his idea for us to go bike riding but anything other than that, no.* (Sharon, Lone Parent Family)

*Well, I started trampoline cos my dad bought me like a trampoline and erm I did rugby, cos we did it at school once and I thought it was fun so I joined a team and then my dad kept on pushing me with that* (Garry, Intact Couple Family)

### **5.3.1.3 Encouragement for activity**

The final, and arguably most prominent, form of support these young people mentioned was encouragement from parents for them to engage in physical activity. For the majority of interviewees this encouragement related to after school activities but for some, this also related to activities within school:

*Well, my mums always like saying, run through my dances and things like that so just to... and yeah she's always encouraging me to go out and do things like that.* (Claire, Lone Parent Family)

*Erm, my mum doesn't really like to watch me do sports cos on the trampoline I do flips and stuff and she thinks I'll get hurt, so she doesn't go to watch, but when I come back in she says you should join a group and stuff.* (Garry, Intact Couple Family)

The form of encouragement provided by parents was for some born out of an inherent desire to promote physical activity for its health and fitness benefits. In doing so, it allowed parents to transmit values related to physical activity regarding its potential benefits to health as outlined in popular culture. For example:

*Yeah, they're encouraging me, well they're encouraging me not to give up the things that I'm doing, so they're trying to keep me fit and healthy by doing that. Erm, yeah and trying to make me stay interested in school PE as well, which is not my favourite lesson* (Harriet, Intact Couple Family)

*She, she pretty, sometimes, most of the times she does like want us to just like keep fit and healthy, because she can't really do anything now, she has to, cos she has to watch her blood pressure, so she just wants me and my younger brother to actually be able to do things like we want to do when we're older (Mark, Lone Parent Family)*

*I can't think... Like running, and football and that, cos she wants me to get a job like as a team worker, like and, why she, like thinks like, I kind of say I wanna be a footballer, but she says you have to do these things to be that... like train well and eat healthily (Jordan, Lone Parent Family)*

For Jordan, in promoting the benefits of physical activity, his mother drew on various social benefits like team work as well as the health related aspects that could be developed whilst engaged in certain activities. It was therefore apparent that most parents were aware of the benefits of physical activity and tried to convey these to their offspring in the form of verbal encouragement which for many, was supported by parental facilitation and investment in activity, regardless of family structure. It is however, difficult to distinguish from the qualitative data whether or not levels of support (in various forms) differed by family structure. What is clear though is that despite the amount of support, young people from certain backgrounds did experience more barriers to activity.

### **5.3.2 Barriers to Physical Activity**

It was evident from the qualitative data that various barriers to physical activity were more apparent in 'alternative' family structures; lone parent and stepfamilies than for those who live in intact couple families. Although children from all family types felt that their parents

provided some support to be physically active, young people in lone parent and stepfamilies reported common barriers that included: (1) The busy lifestyles of parents and the resulting lack of time, (2) The locality in which they reside and (3) Lack of finance to support new activities.

#### **5.3.2.1 Parents' busy lifestyles**

For those in alternative families, the most common barrier to engaging in physical activity (during the week and at the weekend) were the challenges inherent in their parents living busy lives, which young people felt contributed to an overall lack of time to be able to provide support for their activity. Given that the sample here were from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, many lone parents were left to work long hours to try to support their offspring. In turn, parents' work commitments were seen to be a barrier to activity for these young people.

*Erm, weekends my mum's always out, while I'm up at me Nan or dads and the week like Monday to Friday she's at work... Erm, one week I go to my Nan and then the other week I go to my dad (Lauren, Lone Parent Family)*

*Most of the time I'm like on my X Box but sometimes I do like to go round to my friends and we like play some football or something but normally just play X box... there's not much else to do like really cos mum's always busy... (Jerome, Lone Parent Family)*

For Jerome above, his joint family-based physical activity was limited by his mother's lack of free time. The busy lifestyle of parents was also reflected in some stepfamilies whereby young people felt their biological parents were too busy spending time with their new partner. This

was a particularly prominent theme in many stepfamilies and may as a result, impact on the quality of relationships between those involved.

*Cos they're always at work or busy doing stuff together* (Tom, Stepfamily)

*Yeah, I used to go swimming every weekend... with my mum, I was like 6 or something, I was really young [but] I don't know, mum spends a lot of time with my step dad now but I wouldn't want to go anyway* (Laura, Stepfamily)

Moreover, some of the young people interviewed here had additional after school time demands that acted as a barrier to physical activity. However, these were often self imposed in an effort to reduce the load on lone parents who were seen to be under constant pressure to manage their busy lifestyles, including work hours and home responsibilities. For example:

*I don't get the that much time, now like, people don't wanna go, they do wanna go but like I'd be to busy and that, I have to do jobs for my mum... I don't have to do it for my mum, but like, she's just like, I don't want her to do, she's tired and that and I don't want her to get more tired, so I just like chip in and like clean my room and that... I sometimes help get all the food together and clean the room* (Jordan, Lone Parent Family)

*She doesn't, she never asks me to, she never does really ask me to do any chores, cos she sees it as her responsibility, cos she's not like, she's our mother so... she just does it herself... but sometimes I do help out* (Mark, Lone Parent Family)

*She does encourage me to do erm but I just don't, I don't go the practices or try and get in to them because I have, I have too much like homework or responsibilities to do*



*at home... Like cleaning my room and stuff like sometimes parts of the house (Mark, Lone Parent Family)*

*I spend quite a bit cos I've got a great Nan and we [he and his mother] help her with the house and stuff, and we stop at my Nan's like every week (Jonathon, Lone Parent Family)*

It was clear that young people recognised that the busy lifestyle of lone parents was in part due to a need to work long shifts to support their family and simultaneously manage the family home. In some stepfamilies, the busy lifestyle of parents was due to the parent and new partner spending increasing amounts of time together (and will be further explored later) which also acted as a barrier to some structured activities.

#### **5.3.2.2 Locality**

Young people's environment was also reported to be an influential barrier to unstructured physical activity, often determining where and when they played. This is not surprising given the low socioeconomic status areas from which the participants were drawn. Low-income neighbourhoods are typically less likely to have available locations that facilitate physical activity such as parks or fields. This also applied to the availability of safe places and spaces to play informally with friends. Several respondents voiced their concerns about playing out in certain areas where crime and gang culture were prominent.

*Yeah, I used to do a football club in the park but then I stopped cos of the rain and it started getting dark so, and everything bad things happen in the park like fights and stabbing in my park as well so... (Courtney, Lone Parent Family)*

Unlike the presentation of previous quotations, the following quote from an interview with friends Ash and Courtney is presented as the discussion evolved at that time, since this better highlighted the nuanced perspectives of these individuals. When asked why Ash and Courtney weren't involved in any after school or out of school clubs at the moment, both raised issues of locality and safety:

Courtney: *You ain't gonna do it now with the nights are coming... it's like five o'clock*

Ash: *It's like five o'clock it'll be pitch black and you won't when you're coming back someone could stab you*

Interviewer: So is it dangerous then?

Courtney: *Yeah around my area it's proper dangerous*

Ash: *I come through your area*

Courtney: *I know, but everybody knows in the area, like the bad guys, cos like my sister's husband, but they won't do nothing to him so, like if I need help they will help me with anything I need*

Interviewer: So is it not a very nice area or?

Courtney: *There are like gangs in my area*

Interviewer: Does that mean you can't go out?

Courtney: *I can go out cos they mostly all know me, but the [name of a gang] are mostly round my area*

Interviewer: Right, what about when you are bike riding and stuff like that?

Ash: *You see quite a lot of groups watching your bike... Looking at your bike when you're riding about*

Interviewer: Does it put you off bike riding and things like that?

Ash:                *Yeah... but like it's because if they look at my bike I just look back at them*

Issues such as these seemed to impact on parents' perception of safety and accounted for their restriction on the time young people's activities could take place. For instance, when asked if he was encouraged to become involved in structured activity after school, Jordan indicated that his mother continually worried about him getting home because she couldn't collect him due to her busy schedule and as a result, tried to ensure he was home early.

*Not encourage you to take part in school clubs, but like say you get home early, they getting worried, like if I come late, like she gets worried and she rings all her mates and that to see how their kids are*

So you walk home?

*No bus it. Mum works so can't pick me up* (Jordan, Lone Parent Family)

As mentioned earlier, low income areas in which many alternative families reside may be prone to more neighbourhood problems of crime and safety that ultimately affect young people's ability to engage in unstructured, play activities. In line with locality, poorer areas are also likely to have limited facilities. Danny, for instance (who is from an intact couple family) reported a lack of facilities within his neighbourhood as a barrier to structured physical activity.

*They're trying to but I wont do a lot of it cos not all of it I enjoy, because there's only certain things I can enjoy but the things that I enjoy like badminton, its like hard trying to find badminton classes, its really hard to get into one* (Danny, Intact Couple Family)

Here, the intersection of social class (the locality) and family structure (parent's busy lifestyle and an inability to pick their offspring up from activities) combine to restrict engagement in structured and unstructured physical activity.

### **5.3.2.3 Lack of capital**

Living in a lone parent family is also related to lower household income and though not as prominent as the previous two categories, for some young people here, this was recognised as another barrier to activity. Citing the cost of equipment and access, Jerome highlighted how his mother's lack of capital meant he couldn't afford to purchase the equipment to engage in certain activities:

*Badminton... But I am good at it but I just don't have the erm, facilities of it, cos it's not exactly cheap for new rackets and stuff or to play* (Jerome, Lone Parent Family)

In some families, children were encouraged to help out in an effort to earn money so that they themselves could pay for structured activities. When asked if they would like to do any additional activities in future both Ryan and Ian replied:

*Yeah [but] I'd probably have to put money towards it* (Ryan, Lone Parent Family)

*Yeah I'd probably have to work for it too... Do like jobs at home to earn money to pay for it* (Ian, Lone Parent Family)

This is in contrast to many young people from intact couple families who reported a range of activities that they engaged in with their parents, who incidentally also paid for it.

*Erm, with my dad, we tend to go like, so twice week, kayaking, canoeing or something [and] when we have the money we go sailing* (Danny, Intact Couple Family)

Overall, the most prominent barriers to physical activity for young people in lone parent families and stepfamilies were the busy lifestyles of parents and the resulting lack of time which meant they couldn't take them to, or pick them up from, structured activities after school or at the weekend. For some, this also restricted family based activities done together. In addition, the locality of low socioeconomic families, particularly families who have experienced a transition from an intact couple family to a lone parent family, combined with parents' busy schedules was seen to impact on young people's ability to engage in safe, unstructured activity. The result of such barriers on the type of activities individuals and families engaged is explored next, while the effect of such barriers on young people's activity dispositions is addressed later (sections 5.3.5 and 5.3.6).

### ***5.3.3 Types of Activities***

Building on the different types of support and barriers to activity previously presented, the qualitative data here helps to explain the quantitative data with regard to the amount of self reported time spent in different types of activities and the amount of activities done with family members. These findings tended to be grouped around two prominent categories of activities that were carried out individually and importantly as part of routine whole family activities: (1) Sedentary activities and (2) Lifetime activities. Moreover, sedentary activities were predominantly reported more in lone parent families while lifetime activities were more readily carried out in two parent (intact and step) families. As such, these types of activities are presented below, along with the reasons behind such engagement with regard to the barriers mentioned previously.

#### **5.3.3.1 Sedentary Activities**

Consistent with findings from the questionnaire data were the numerous reports from young people in lone parent families who highlighted their engagement in after school sedentary pursuits. Jack for example, who lived at home with his mother, described how a lack of parental support in the form of transportation prevented him from engaging in physical activities. Instead, he was left to engage in sedentary activities, such as video games until such time when his mother returned from work.

*She encourages me to get out cos it's hot out there... cos I've got a new X box and I'm always playing on it...*

Is there anything that's stopping you doing any other activities?

*My mum's job, she gets back at like half five so if I want to go anywhere to do anything it's normally too late so instead like I just play X box and stay in when she's not back. (Jack, Lone Parent Family)*

Despite his desire to engage in activity and his mother's encouragement to avoid sedentary pursuits, because his mother returned home from work late and there not being another adult present prevented him from being able access physical activity.

The fact that young people from lone parent families reported spending more time in sedentary activities may be due to a lack of availability of joint family activities. Essential to young people's development is socialisation with significant influences such as parents. However, both Adam and Naomi (from lone parent families) argued that the only time they had to engage with their parent's was while watching television together.

Are there any activities that you do with your mum?

*Yeah we watch TV, and have dinner and everything. Well not everything, cos she wants her own space and like wants to do everything that she wants to do rather than me going with her all the time but we normally watch TV together.*

Are they the only activities you do with your mum?

*Yeah... err she's normally really busy with like housework or other work so yeah... it's quite hard like she just don't have time I guess and she just wants some time to herself but sometimes we like... well yeah just TV really.* (Adam, Lone Parent Family)

Are there any other activities you do together?

*Apart from watching like TV... no not really... maybe used to do little things when they [parents] were together ages ago but she's not got the time now so yeah just TV.* (Naomi, Lone Parent Family)

*Don't know... cos there's nothing to do like with just me and my mum, we just sort of sit at home and watch the tele. Don't really speak or anything.* (Naomi, Lone Parent Family)

In the previous examples, Adam suggested that his mother's desire to use her free time, outside of her domestic chores, for herself, restricted their ability to interact and engage in anything other than low intensity sedentary pursuits. Similarly, Naomi pointed toward time as a barrier to engaging in anything other than sedentary pursuits with her mother. Interestingly though, she indicated that this wasn't always the case when both her parents were together.

Despite encouragement to engage in activity, both Jonathon and Ben also indicated that sedentary activities were the only joint activity that they engaged in with their mothers. For Jonathon, this was despite his mother continually going to watch his involvement in other physical activities:

*Sometimes we watch Eastenders and stuff together but like she comes to my football matches and stuff, or if I go for sports she'll come and watch if she can...* (Jonathon, Lone Parent Family)

*Yeah, I like to watch television with my mum that's what we do most...* (Ben, Lone Parent Family)

Similar findings were reported for weekend sedentary activities. In most cases reported here, children from lone parent families spent the weekend visiting their absent biological parent. James lived with his mother during the week and spent the weekends with his dad but again cites the only family activity as television viewing with various household duties and a lack of time the reason his father didn't engage in activities with him.

*We watch some TV together at my dad's but my sister like wants me to take her out in the garden and we play a bit of football or something just the two of us*

Ok. Does your dad come and do that as well?

*Sometimes but he's been busy painting the fence or doing stuff around the house but we normally just watch some TV together when he's finished, my sister as well sometimes, but like... he's really busy with like you know D.I.Y which isn't good.*

(James, Lone Parent Family)

Certainly, the reduction of time available for lone parents to spend with their children creates a climate that supports sedentary pursuits and inhibits engagement in physical activities, particularly after school when parent's return home from work late and have additional household duties to perform.



### 5.3.3.2 Lifetime Activities

Unlike in lone parent families, the availability of more family members during the week seems to encourage engagement in lifetime activities. Young people from intact couple families and stepfamilies readily reported participating in certain lifetime activities after school and in the evenings. For Sam, a greater availability of parental time meant that lifetime activities were not the only joint family activity they all engaged in:

*Yeah, bike rides, parks, picnics, erm cinema, town, things like that, shopping... yeah, like I said earlier I go riding with my dad and do other stuff with mum. I sometimes go for a run with her and like sometimes she comes cycling too. (Sam, Intact Couple Family)*

Elizabeth was similarly able to identify lifetime activities as a joint family activity that she used to do. Despite injuries to both of her parents, they still provided support in the form of transportation to ensure they all went together even if her parents couldn't physically be involved.

*Well, like with swimming, my mum don't do it now... Cos my dad, like my dad's like got something wrong with his foot and my mum's got something wrong with her hand... And she fell over, her hand went round, so they don't do it with us like they used to do but they do like come with us every time. (Elizabeth, Intact Couple Family)*

In some cases, it was clear that having two parents present (whether biological or not) meant that household responsibilities could be shared to ensure family activities were met. John, for example, highlighted that while his mother cooked, he was able to engage in physical activities with his stepdad.

So, what do you normally do after school then when you get home?

*Well I play outside most of the times, you know, go for a bike ride and it's only like when I have to come in that I watch a bit of T.V... or I watch a bit of T.V. before I go out and play... sometimes I'll do some like running and biking with my stepdad after school, you know, while mum cooks dinner like. (John, Stepfamily)*

Similarly, Hannah recalled how her family environment (of two biological parents) acted in a way that allowed for one parent to compensate for the other to ensure that her and her sister's regular joint family lifetime activity during the week wasn't compromised.

*Erm...we go swimming on Fridays and then... Me and my mum and dad, and my two sisters we go swimming on Fridays, straight when mum and dad are back from work. Its something we've always done for ages.*

Do you always go with both of your parents and sisters?

*Well yeah mostly... like sometimes if dad, cos he works late, just mum comes with us but we've always done it. (Hannah, Intact Couple Family)*

There is a clear contrast between children from two parent families and those from lone parent families whose parents faced barriers that prevented them from supporting their child's engagement in certain physical activities during the week. The extract below demonstrates the difficulties young people in lone parent families may face in trying to engage in lifetime activities, when their lone parent returned home from work and then had to contend with domestic chores. This was representative of all lone parent children involved in the study.

*Yeah, like sometimes we go on a bike ride and I play erm... football with me brother. We used to play in the garden quite a lot.*

Do you still play it in the garden quite a lot or...?

*Not as much... Cos he's not really, he's never in any more so now I just stay in a bit more and you know watch a bit of TV with mum when she's back from work and after she's finished doing the house stuff....* (Sarah, Lone Parent Family)

A lack of lifetime activities in young people from lone parent families may be due to recent changes in family structure that resulted in the departure of a parent who previously supported such engagement. For example, Jerome indicated that he used to engage in family activities with his parents until they separated and as a result, any similar activities have since ceased.

*In the park it was like fun and like you got to spend like time with your family you know... I don't really go to the park any more and plus don't live with my dad now either so... guess we just stopped it.* (Jerome, Lone Parent Family)

The home, social environment in two parent (intact couple and step) families appear more conducive to physical activity during the week as two parents are able to manage daily domestic duties better. This ultimately enables more free time to engage in easily accessible lifetime activities (such as running or cycling) with their children. With a lack of opportunities to engage in lifetime activities or for that matter any other physical activities with family members, sedentary activities become more appealing since they are reflective of the practices carried out by parents with their offspring. This in turn is reflected in individuals' own choices to engage in similar activities. Hence, the activity of individuals tends to mirror the activities that are commonplace within their family environment.

#### **5.3.4 Meals Eaten Together**

Earlier findings from the quantitative component that explored the frequency of meals eaten together as a family are explored here in relation to the qualitative data, which saw family

meals as a particularly prominent discussion topic within the paired interviews. For many of the young people interviewed here family meals were part of their daily routine whereas for others, family meals were not the norm. There was also a disparity with regard to the context of family meals, such as the settings and what was discussed. As such, there were several dominant themes that emerged from the discussions about family meal patterns. These included: (1) The importance of meals as a pedagogic context whereby parents could teach and transmit beliefs and values about health; (2) The influence of family meals on young people's own health dispositions; and (3) The effect of family structure on the amount of meals eaten together. Each of these key themes is presented below.

#### **5.3.4.1 Meal Times as Informal Pedagogic Contexts**

For many young people, mothers were most frequently mentioned as the one who prepared evening meals in their homes. Regardless of family structure, meal times were seen to be an important, informal pedagogic context or pedagogic moment (Burrows, In Press), in which parents passed on information, beliefs and values about health and in particular, healthy eating. In most cases, this was again the preserve of the mother. For example Sean, who lived at home with both of his biological parents, noted how his mother while shopping and cooking dinner also continually checked the calorific value of the food she was preparing:

*My mum does, cos when we go shopping or she cooks dinner, cos my dad likes to always check on his weight to see if he's putting on too much pounds or if he's losing, my mum most of the time she like checks like, reads the back of the box or the packet to see how many err calories or what ever it has (Sean, Intact Couple Family)*

Possibly without intention, his mother's repeated habit of counting the calories of the food she prepared, her routine pedagogic practice, may have worked to impart similar dispositions onto

Sean. On a similar note when eating dinner, Adam's parents both mentioned how eating healthily could help maintain one's weight. Again, this demonstrates the unique nature of family meals as a time when the values of eating right can be transferred:

*They always talk about fit and healthy well like when they're eating food she'd say like if you eat this you lose this much pounds and everything* (Adam, Intact Couple Family)

Several young people also reported how their parents helped to identify which foods conform to the standards of healthy eating and those that don't. They reported how their parents helped identify appropriate healthy foods and those which they should try to avoid. This was usually their mother who was seen as a source of knowledge and influence about food.

*Yeah, she like tells me like which ones are better and healthy ones, and not like to have fast foods. You can have them sometimes, just not all the time* (Jerome, Lone Parent Family)

*Well, they tell us to eat, or they tell us to do, how to stay healthy so you don't eat and stuff like that* (Sean, Intact Couple Family)

*Sometimes or she'll just say I'll cook you something else, or sometimes she'll say like, no reason, that isn't good for you, have something better like, healthy like a baked potato or something.* (Jonathon, Lone Parent Family)

*Like, when I ask for chips or something, she's like that ain't healthy, you should be having like carrots or something, and like if I ask for like something that isn't healthy, she's like, that ain't healthy blah, blah* (Kat, Lone Parent Family)

To help convey the importance of eating right Joe's mum drew on biopedagogical techniques that are often deployed in an effort to get health messages across to young people. Here, Joe highlighted how his mother drew attention to the biological benefits of healthy eating despite the somewhat contested nature of these statements.

*Probably when we're like at the table having dinner or something... She says they'll put hairs on your chest and that encourages me. Like greens and stuff and carrots will make you see in the dark (Joe, Lone Parent Family)*

Utilising the statements that certain food could help him see in the dark and put hairs on his chest, Joe's mum passed on knowledge of healthy eating and its benefits in an attempt to encourage him to adopt similar behaviours and thus, shape his habitus and tastes accordingly. In the same interview, Garry noted how his mum drew on notions of ill health to promote the benefits of healthy eating and as a result, he was able to identify fruit and vegetables as a method to avoiding illness.

*Well when we're eating together, like erm usually my mum, because when I'm ill I'll usually just vomit loads, so my mum says you don't want that to happen so you should eat all your fruit and veg. and stuff (Garry, Intact Couple Family)*

Importantly, as well as transferring knowledge about health dispositions and eating the right foods, meal times were also an opportunity to reinforce those behaviours through parental modelling. Some respondents also discussed health-related attitudes of their parents and how they influenced the type of food served to everyone during meals time at home. By modelling

appropriate health behaviours, these young people were easily able to identify what their parents ate, thus providing an insight into their parent's own health dispositions:

*They tell you to be healthy like and erm... they like put your vegetables on your plate when they have veg... Like, cos when they try to be healthy like, and like, they have food with vegetables and that, they put them on your plate as well (Jake, Stepfamily)*

*My mum eats like a balanced diet and stuff, but she don't really exercise, she takes the dog out for a walk near enough every day but she's a bit chubby [laughs] (Jonathon, Lone Parent Family)*

It is therefore evident that eating meals together as a family offered an important opportunity for parents to monitor what their children ate, as well as it providing an important context to promote healthy eating, facilitate family conversations and enable views to be shared (Turtiainen et al., 2007). It is also apparent here that predominantly the mother (in all family types) assumed the role of 'expert'. They became the 'teacher' that was responsible for social reproduction, passing on knowledge of health and in particular healthy eating to the next generation.

However, meal times also provided a unique opportunity to transfer additional health related dispositions as they relate to physical activity. Jenny, Pete and Emma all offer insights into how this time was used by parents to talk about physical activity.

*Not really, I just found photographs and my Dad's told me occasionally, but like at dinner the other day, my Mum went on about when she was in school, she was never really good at PE. She got banned from hockey for nearly killing someone, cross country she was down at the bridge smoking, and then when they were sent down to*

*the park to do tennis they would just lie there sunbathing, until the teacher got there, and they would pretend to be in the middle of play (Jenny, Intact Couple Family)*

*Not really. Like sometimes at dinner we just talk about what's gone on at school and stuff like that (Pete, Lone Parent Family)*

*Yeah when we're eating sometimes cos I do like one sport every day and it's like, its like how did you do and stuff like this and then she'll say what she used to do and stuff. (Emma, Stepfamily)*

The extracts from young people in all three family structures above indicate how parents often use meal times to discuss their son/daughter's physical activity and pass on information about their own activity or what they used to do. Hence, the value of meal times as a unique context in which dominant beliefs are transmitted to young people can not be underestimated.

#### **5.3.4.2 Impact on Young People's Health Dispositions**

While it is difficult to know the full effects that these kind of interactions and pedagogic moments between family members have on young people, some of their narratives taken from the interviews do provide a glimpse of how they shape young people's own dispositions and habitus. In some cases, the impact of these pedagogic moments seemed to impart similar beliefs and values in the young people interviewed here, as they expressed in their own views of health. For many of the young people here, it was clear that certain foods (fruit and vegetables) could be categorised as 'healthy', while other foods would be 'unhealthy'. For Elizabeth, her parent's views about health, transferred through similar pedagogic moments, were reflected in her own beliefs and values:



*Like, when you eat food like vegetables, and she says like, “vegetables are the most healthy things, you should eat them to stay healthy” and I have to have milk cos that’s good for you too* (Elizabeth, Intact Couple Family)

Elizabeth then went on to describe health in a manner that mirrored this pedagogic encounter:

*Like, when you eat and drink, like loads of like milk and water and erm... eat loads of fruit and veg.* (Elizabeth, Intact Couple Family)

Similarly, Jake in an extract above identified how his mum and stepdad reinforced healthy eating by modelling such behaviours and used meal times to reiterate why he should eat healthily. As a result, his health dispositions reflected this practice.

*Yeah, cos I sometimes eat my five a day and drink loads of water* (Jake, Stepfamily)

In outlining why it was important to remain active, Jake also fell back onto the messages of healthy eating that were continually embedded in him whilst at home. He was also able to identify the mix of foods required to maintain the right balance, rather than simply eradicating fatty foods altogether.

*Yeah, cos if you just sit down and eat junk you’re gonna be like a little big fatty just sitting on the couch watching a DVD all day... But active people, they like eat different, diet, they eat fruit, five fruit a day and vegetables... Yeah, some like fatty food cos people in the world do need fatty food* (Jake, Stepfamily)

Jonathon also considered himself to be healthy because of what he ate. In the earlier extract, he highlighted the eating practice of his mother and as such, he mirrored this when discussing his own health:

*Mine's fairly balanced. I have like cooked meals and that at my mums. Like Sunday dinner with boiled potatoes and stuff, and then like spaghetti Bolognese, proper like food... (Jonathon, Lone Parent Family)*

In addition, the influence from such pedagogic moments at dinner was evident in Garry's later comments. As explained earlier, Garry's mother drew on notions of ill health and the consumption of fruit and vegetables as a means to counter it. As a result, reflections of his own health mirrored his mothers' comments and pointed toward a realisation that if he adhered to this advice, his health might improve.

*I wouldn't say I was amazingly healthy because I do eat quite a lot of sweets and erm, I don't really eat that much fruit and vegetables, although, my mum and dad makes me, but yeah...*

*When I eat loads of sweets and just stay on my computer or my drums or sometimes I don't really do much exercise and stuff, and my mum tells me to eat more fruit and veg. and go out more so I think I'll try (Garry, Intact Couple Family)*

A final example of how these interactions at meal times can help shape young people's dispositions was evident in an interview with Adam. In the previous examples, Adam stated that his parents used encounters during meal times to talk about the benefits of eating healthy with regard to weight management and losing pounds. When asked how Adam viewed his own health, he drew on the ability to eat healthily but also the ability to burn off excess junk food and maintain his weight.

*... but I can eat healthy when I need to but I'm not really that fat, but my mum, well my family say that, when you age of 30 you start building up and she says you need to*

*stop like eating junk, but I don't eat junk. Sometimes you eat junk but I just burn it off in football* (Adam, Intact Couple Family)

There is a hint here that Adam believes being healthy can be turned on and off, like a switch, and that when he 'needs' to eat healthily, he can. This view of health may have resulted from competing discourses used to transfer knowledge from a range of different sites, of which the family is just one. It does however highlight the importance of recognising how young people come to learn about health and related dispositions and how this then shapes their own habitus.

#### **5.3.4.3 Effect of Family Structure on Meals Eaten together**

The previous two categories highlight the important influence that such interactions between parent and child can have on young people's health related dispositions. Although regular family meals may form part of family routine for many families, for others this simply wasn't the case. As a result, certain pedagogic moments were missed and parents could not engage in social reproduction by attempting to impart the same knowledge, beliefs and values onto their offspring. Some of the key reasons for not participating in family meals included a recent change in family structure and, often as a consequence, the busy schedules of parents. The quotations below from Taylor, who at the time of the interview lived with her mum and step father, act as a prime example of how a change in family structure impacted on pedagogical practices and the amount of time the family spent together. For Taylor, a change in family structure resulted in the loss of a unique encounter between her and her biological father whereby knowledge of health was initially transferred:

*Yeah, I remember being a little bit younger, and erm, erm, we had this like, my dad sat down with me and he drew our table, and he asked me what I'd had on Monday, and*

*Tuesday, and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday Saturday and Sunday and then he'd show me like all the erm, meats I'd eaten and all the diary products I'd had and stuff, and like it just opened my mind a bit more to see what like I used to eat*

That's interesting does that happen still now?

*No, not really cos I don't see my dad that often and I never really eat with my mum and erm my step dad.* (Taylor, Stepfamily)

When Taylor lived with her dad, he used a food chart to help inform and guide her eating practices. This acted as a tool for her father to assess the degree to which she was abiding by the recommended daily intake of specific food groups. Since then however, a change in family structure has meant that her father can no longer so readily monitor and enforce such behaviours. The resulting change in family structure meant that Taylor spent less time with her mum and step dad who were commencing a new relationship.

*I don't spend a lot of time with my family... I'm either in my room doing homework, or I'm just out... Cos like we're all close, but we don't really like talk and stuff, and then when we're like at dinner table and stuff, it's usually only me and my brother, like my mum and my step dad will go into another room and stuff and have some privacy*  
(Taylor, Stepfamily)

As a consequence, her family rarely ate together, there were fewer, if any, pedagogic moments at meal times whereby parents transferred any health related values and there appeared to be less importance attached to what they ate.

*Yeah, well we've just had like our front room decorated so we're not allowed to eat in there any more cos my little brother, he's five, he'll just totally wreck it, so we have to sit at the dining table and my mum and step dad sit in the front room. But, erm, like my mum always gives me and my brother whatever we want to eat, cos he usually only*

*has like about this much a day, he doesn't have a lot of food and he's really skinny*  
(Taylor, Stepfamily)

Like Taylor, the ability of parents to monitor their child's food at meal times appeared to be reduced in some family structures. Laura for instance suggested that despite buying healthy foods her mother and step father went out a lot and therefore couldn't monitor what she was eating.

*Well they buy and eat healthy food but I just eat between food... And then they go out a lot... they can't really watch what I eat cos they are out.* (Laura, Stepfamily)

Like Taylor and Laura, Kat also expressed concerns that her mother couldn't constantly monitor what she ate. Living in a lone parent family, Kat's mother worked long hours as a hotel housekeeper and, as a result, Kat stated that "*on the weekends I never see her really because she is working*" while after school contact between her and her mum is also minimal:

*My mum... When like, err like, so if I get in from school, like, every day, like quite late, and then I'm tired so I just sit and watch the telly and go to bed really* (Kat, Lone Parent Family)

Despite her mother's repeated encouragement to eat healthy, the reduced contact and supervision over what she eats meant that Kat frequently consumed unhealthy foods at various other times:

*Cos mostly erm, I have healthy food but sometimes when I want some chips she'll like say that isn't healthy, blah, blah, like if the times I went after school to go and get some chips, she like that isn't healthy you should have got like something else* (Kat, Lone Parent Family)

These examples are symptomatic of several issues raised by young people in lone parent and stepfamilies whereby the indication was that they spent less time with their family and more time in isolation, particularly when it came to eating meals. Moreover, in some lone parent families, the busy work schedules of parents also restricted the amount of meals they ate together. For Lindsey and Jack, their mothers' busy work patterns means they rarely ate together and for Jack, this impacted on the type of food he was given. Jack reported that his mum often coped by using quick and easy (and often cheaper) convenience foods that meant she didn't have to take extra time out of her busy schedule to prepare.

*Just sometimes, cos we don't always like eat together cos she's busy working*  
(Lindsey, Lone Parent Family)

*Well, if she is in a rush it isn't like healthy food, it's just like pizza or something sticks it in the microwave...*

Is she normally in a rush?

*Yeah, well she has to rush back from work to take my sister to work so we never really eat together anymore* (Jack, Lone Parent Family)

Finally, there is an inherent danger in the modelling of eating behaviours if parents' own consumption does not conform to the 'appropriate' standards of healthy eating. Lauren, who lived with her lone parent mother, sisters and brothers, identify that she normally eats the same food as her mother:

*I think it's important for your parents to be healthy, cos it shows you to be like healthy and that, like at dinner time you eat the same stuff as your mum usually* (Lauren, Lone Parent Family)

Despite the fact that her mother frequently told her “*not to eat a lot of sweets because of your health*”, Lauren later expressed that the type of food both her and her mother enjoy was, like Jack, largely fast food. Interestingly, when asked if she thought she was healthy Lauren replied:

*No... Cos I eat a lot of junk food and I'm not really energetic... Cos we [her family] just go to MacDonald's and eat something... Because I don't really have a balanced diet, and I don't really do that much sport, only at school* (Lauren, Lone Parent Family)

While the modelling of eating behaviours can work to reinforce positive health messages, it must equally be supported by similar healthy eating practices of parents. It was clear that Lauren's mum tried to engender the right messages (not eating a lot of sweets), but perhaps the nature of her lone parent family environment meant quick, convenient food was all she could manage for her and her daughter.

These comments are in stark contrast to the majority of comments from young people in intact couple families who readily reported eating together as a family. For some, this time included set routines and family discussions, as explained by Harriet:

*Yeah, we tend to do a lot of stuff together, cos erm, we always eat our meals together, always. And when we're watching TV, when I'm watching TV on my own, every one tramps in and usually sits there. And I help my mum with her work preparation and everything, so we do a lot of stuff together* (Harriet, Intact Couple Family)

For Harriet however, the notion of eating healthily was given even greater priority than that of physical activity, perhaps given the added benefit of cost and how it might help those on lower incomes. She described how they stopped playing badminton in the garden to

concentrate on growing their own healthy produce; an activity in which the whole family was part of.

*Well she used to do it when we had our badminton net up in our garden a lot, but since we had to get rid of the net we haven't done much of it*

Ok. Why did you have to get rid of the net?

*Cos we had to grow our own vegetables for our dad... Like, we used to play while he grew veg and stuff but like we kinda all do it now.*

Why do you grow your own veg?

*Cos it's healthier... well that's what dad says and oh yeah cos it's cheaper.* (Harriet, Intact Couple Family)

Danny also reported regularly eating together as a family despite the busy work schedule of his mother and her desire to spend time on her own relaxing.

*Whenever she decides that we are going to have dinner she talks about health and stuff, cos my dad really cooks... Cos me and my dad have this thing against the American way of life, so we like sitting down and like sitting down together at the table, instead of sitting in front of the TV and watching it... Cos when my mum gets home and we have dinner, so all she wants to do is sit down and watch TV and relax and we want to just have a conversation*

Right, so you like to sit and eat around the dinner table?

*Yeah and she sometimes mentions like health when we're eating but, not like work and being a nurse health, but just like 'you should eat properly' blah blah* (Danny, Intact Couple Family)



The above two examples from Danny and Harriet indicate that meal times are an important context in which the transmission of health related habits are conveyed. They also move to demonstrate the importance that some families attach to eating meals together as it works to build bonds and interaction. For Danny, the impact of eating meals with his mother (who drills in notions of healthy eating) and his father (who advocates an ideological way of living) was evident in his desire to continue with such values:

*I'm, I, I, I, I eat everything healthy... And I really despise erm, hate like going to like MacDonald's, cos I just don't really like the food there, don't mind going out to restaurants and everything cos its not take away, but just don't like fast food places like MacDonald's... It's just fat and the way it's all cooked it's so disgusting, and watching the way they prepare their animals, kept in such conditions like their all battery farmed. At least it should have a healthy life before its slaughtered and sometimes it tastes sort of like the stuff that's gone in to it and it's not very nice*  
(Danny, Intact Couple Family)

It is clear that Danny was encouraged at meal times to adopt healthy eating dispositions. Moreover, the nature of his family meals and the interaction with his father who disliked the “American way of life” was also seen in his reluctance to eat MacDonald’s, a stereotypical American fast food outlet. The result of such interactions for Danny and similar young people from intact couple families, who share evening meals with their family, was the adoption of certain health orientated dispositions. For those in ‘alternative’ family formations however, maintaining such interactions and transferring beliefs and values appeared very problematic.

### **5.3.5 The Construction of Habitus – Intact Couple Families**

Unlike the previous results that relate specifically to the construction of health related dispositions in the form of the appropriate intake of food, three themes emerged from the interview data that related to the construction of young people's *physical activity* habitus, tastes and their family structure. While there remains some cross over in that issues of health were raised again here, the primary focus instead is on activity. Specifically these themes include: (1) The transmission of physical activity values and tastes, (2) Joint family activities, and (3) The effect of family structure. In the following accounts, extracts from five individuals in intact couple families are used to illustrate the points made. Thereafter, five individuals from alternative family structures are also presented (two from lone parent families and three from stepfamilies) under the same three themes before being drawn together in the subsequent discussion. However, it is worth remembering that because of the sample characteristics, these findings should relate to these low income individuals only and should not be read as generalisable to wider populations.

#### **5.3.5.1 Transmission of Physical Activity Values and Tastes**

Interview data revealed that despite their family structure, all young people expressed similar values towards physical activity; that it was beneficial for health and social development. More importantly and in order to explore how their physical activity habitus are constructed, all referred to their family and, in particular, their parents as providing initial support (in the forms discussed earlier) to engage in activities. Sam (who was 12 years old and lived with both of his biological parents, brother and sister) for instance, reported that both of his parents were active and as a result continually encouraged activity at home. While his father regularly cycles, his mother runs and repeatedly advocates running as a method of improving health:

*My mum does that when she's running... she goes we did 5 k and stuff like that in 26 minutes or however long it took them and she's always banging on about how its good for life... like health and that (Sam, Intact Couple Family)*

Continually discussing and encouraging activity ensured that the transmission of physical activity values and beliefs was echoed in Sam's own dispositions toward activity. Moreover, he readily recognised the importance of such activities as a means of maintaining health and fitness:

*Err, I just, I like, I really like sports. Erm, I do quite a lot of sports and I just think that is probably my favourite hobby, that's what I like doing the most... Erm, I think its, I'm not sure, I think its like the different types of sports, like when you're running I think you're just sort of in the fresh air, and obviously getting fit, and football it's playing opposition, tackling and scoring goals with the feeling when you score goals and things like that... (Sam, Intact Couple Family)*

Like Sam, Oliver (12 years old and living with both his biological parents and one sister at the time) reported both of his parents to be physically active, engaged in power walking, running and cycling on a regular basis. As a result, his parents were continually involved in imposing their own physical activity tastes onto him through their enthusiasm for their respective activities and the “gadgets” that accompanied cycling and power walking. In addition, they highlighted the health benefits of such activities and in the example below, his mother in particular demonstrated an awareness of the amount of activity that should be done by continually counting her steps on a pedometer.

*Right it's just usually, they're not talking about the activities, more about, cos my parents love getting all the gadgets, so my dad will get like speedometers and monitors or whatever and my mum will get the latest trainers with built in, you know*

*MBTs [Masai Barefoot Technology] that help your back, she'll get all those with built in pedometers and all that. So they'll always talk about the crummy steps they did and showing off their skills (Oliver, Intact Couple Family)*

As well as transmitting values of physical activity and specific tastes, Oliver's parents also encouraged activities that represented an opportunity to network and enhance their stock of social capital.

*If, if, cos I don't enjoy cricket much cos like I'm too good at it, but my parents like really like me doing it, partly because the local cricket club, erm, on Friday nights its two and half hour practice, and all the parents go along, go in the club house... So that's more social for my mum, that's why I think she wants me to cricket, which I don't like really enjoy but so I think she makes me do cricket (Oliver, Intact Couple Family)*

These dispositions and tastes were subsequently reflected in Oliver's own understanding and beliefs of physical activity whereby he recognised both the physiological and social benefits:

*Err, work your muscles, I think it does a lot, its social a lot of the time cos you have to organise things and be out with friends and family, so I don't think it's purely the exercise that counts, I think it's the social aspect of it as well (Oliver, Intact Couple Family)*

Evident here is Bourdieu's notion of field. It was clear that despite having preferences for other activities, Oliver was actively supported and encouraged by his parents to continue with cricket. It is the position of an activity within a given field that determines its value to participants and for his family, cricket maintained a position of power given its ability to allow for the accumulation of social capital.

Danny (a 13-year-old pupil from an intact couple family who lived at home with both his biological parents and one brother and sister) also expressed values towards physical activity. Despite not being, as he described it, 'sporty' and having an allergy to chlorine which prevented him doing his favourite activity (swimming), he still understood the importance of physical activity as encouraged by his parents:

*They [his parents] can't find anything for me to do erm, sport wise, so I'm encouraged to walk the dog a lot more. Instead of a ten minute walk, I have to give it a half hour walk ... to exercise me and the dog and I know I should really do it so I'm trying to do it more now cos it keeps you healthy.*

During the weekends do you try and stay active?

*I do now, because I can't go swimming and not doing sports, I might go for a run around for five or ten minutes. (Danny, Intact Couple Family)*

Finally, Lucas (12 years old who lived with both his biological parents and one older brother) also demonstrated how his parents have transmitted physical activity values to him. Lucas reported that he enjoyed physical activity and identified it with fun and health benefits and stated his belief that he has inherited this from both his parents:

*Well, like when I was really young my dad was always getting me to play football and that and he's always liked sports, so I kind of inherited that. My mum, she's got nothing against sport but she's not really a person who would like play it but she encourages me to do it for like health and fitness I guess .... When I used to play football they were always trying to get me to go and play like in a team. (Lucas, Intact Couple Family)*

It appeared that young people from intact couple families identified their family and in particular their parents as important in helping to shape their physical activity dispositions.

#### **5.3.5.2 Joint Family Activities and Intergenerational Habitus**

Macdonald et al. (2004) argue that the transmission of parent's own biographies, values and interests mirrors Bourdieu's notion of an intergenerational habitus which may be further reinforced through joint activities. The interview data supported this while also highlighting the degree to which this differed between the family structures. As discussed previously, reinforcing the intergenerational habitus through joint activities may be more prominent in intact couple families as the following examples demonstrate. For Sam, as well as going on regular bike rides as a family the transmission of beliefs and values was supported by joint ventures to watch special events. In the example below, Sam demonstrated how going to watch the Tour de France and visiting the National Cycling Centre at Manchester Velodrome allowed his father to transfer his own activity tastes and preferences onto him.

*Yeah, like I've been to the Tour de France with my dad and I've been to track cycling at the Velodrome, Manchester quite a lot of times... We went to erm, we went to the Tour de France opening in London and we got the VIP sort of box area where they come past right underneath you. That was really, really good cos my dad just loved that (Sam, Intact Couple Family)*

The transfer of knowledge and taste for activities through joint engagement within the same family was clearly more apparent in intact couple families. In addition, for Sam, such activities done together worked to build relationships between family members and offered an opportunity to reflect on past experiences.

*Yeah, well it depends. I think that's another thing about fam... if you do family activities, it's sort of the memories from it, like you can say ah, do you remember last week when we went to the cinema together? Ah excellent, and then when remember when dad was chasing people, chasing us around town. Its just little memories like that that you remember quite strongly, like I said just a family movie, watching the movie and things like that. Like we were watching Nemo the other day, crisps and that, lovely (Sam, Intact Couple Family)*

The notion of an intergenerational habitus, whereby parents impose and transfer their own tastes to their offspring and act to further embed those tastes through joint participation was further evident in extracts from Oliver's interview. As well as providing support to engage in cricket and by going with him to the practices, Oliver and both his parents regularly engaged in joint family physical activities that worked to reinforce certain dispositions and activity tastes. For him, certain lifetime activities (cycling, swimming) were a regular part of his family routine with cycling in particular heavily promoted by his father.

*Erm, with my parents we usually, sort of on weekends go rollerblading, well I roller blade and my parents usually cycle with me, and my sister, or a big bike ride, and my sister does swimming as well, so we go there every lone night (Oliver, Intact Couple Family)*

Indeed, his own activities reflected his joint family activities, even playing tennis regularly with his mother:

*Sometimes I go swimming on Saturday mornings. I used to do football. I usually go to the park and play basketball or I'll go rollerblading. Err, sometimes, well we have done a few times in the summer, not so much in the winter, we'll go to the tennis club,*

*because my mum loves tennis and we used to play a lot of tennis, so we'll do tennis.*

(Oliver, Intact Couple Family)

Like many of the young people interviewed from all family backgrounds, Oliver highlighted that joint activity was an important opportunity to spend quality time with his parents, which could facilitate conversation and interaction. It was therefore was an ideal opportunity for the transfer of values to occur:

*It's good to spend quality time, cos your parents can talk about work and you can talk about school, and then, but often, yeah, you get good lunch* (Oliver, Intact Couple Family)

Further examples from Lucas and Danny enhanced the notion of an intergenerational habitus within intact couple families. When asked about the activities his parents did and that they did together as a family Lucas replied:

*Oh, erm, although he doesn't eat great things, my dad goes cycling all the time when he cycles to work, so I think that probably means that although he does eat a lot of food, but its all right cos he cycles everywhere and does a lot of exercise. He like cycles like hundreds of miles sometimes, with other people who like cycling as well ... and erm, my dad makes me go cycling with him sometimes too.*

Ok, do you enjoy that?

*Erm, yeah it's alright, you know its exercise and my brother does come usually, so it's good fun, even mum sometimes too.* (Lucas, Intact Couple Family)

However when other actors enter a field, their influence may sway the type of practice undertaken. For instance, Lucas indicated that his brother was influenced by his friends which sometimes impacted on the amount of joint activities he engaged in:



*Err, I think my dad would like my brother to cycle to places more and he did for a bit and then he kind of stopped cos his friends always kind of get him to come out from my house so he doesn't really need his bike (Lucas, Intact Couple Family)*

As his older brother aged, the influence of the family and parents in particular was seen to decline, with the influence of peers becoming more prominent. Although his brother still engaged in some family bike rides, the frequency gradually reduced and the influence of the intergenerational habitus lessened.

The joint activities Danny engaged in with his parents worked to reinforce his values toward physical activity. While he was aware he should be doing more activity for health benefits, his mother both passively and actively encouraged him to continue, embedding in him certain desires to participate in some form of physical activity.

Danny, are there any activities you do with your parents?

*Erm, with my dad, we tend to go like, so twice week, kayaking, canoeing or something. When we have the money we go sailing.*

Any activities you do with your mum?

*Walk the dog... Erm, well she (mother) usually makes me come along, I don't really enjoy it cos all she talks about is gibberish .... I enjoy walking the dog by myself more which is what I've started doing, but I don't mind doing it with mum and dad cos we kind of get the chance to talk and catch up and stuff. (Danny, Intact Couple Family)*

However, the notion of an intergenerational habitus and joint participation was not just limited to physical activity pursuits. At a later stage of the interview Danny mentioned engaging in other forms of leisure activity with family members that were reflective of his parents own tastes.

*Cos like on computers and stuff, cos I can do like photography, art, still art, stuff I enjoy and my dad's into like, well, he used to like drawing, and kind of, he's teaching me some stuff. He used to like get a picture of a plane, and then get these kind of curves, shapes, so different curves and everything, and put different curves on it and then he'd draw the plane, close up, and then copy the plane, different scales and everything.*

So he talks a lot about what he used to do with you?

*Yeah and when I do it he's really interested and comes to see if he can help out or like.*

(Danny, Intact Couple Family)

Danny also indicated that the effect of habitus and specific tastes were common within his family field. As Bourdieu himself suggested, those actors occupying the same field are likely to exhibit similar tastes and dispositions. This was also evident when Danny earlier identified who he constituted as his family and why:

*Me and my dad, and my mum but not a lot of time with my sister... With my dog, and my dad, we've got a lot more in common and kind of... Yeah, we like the same music and stuff like that* (Danny, Intact Couple Family)

In the same interview with Danny, Mick (who was also 13 and from an intact couple family with two brothers and one sister) also drew attention to the possibility of an intergenerational habitus and joint participation that was not just limited to physical activity pursuits.

*Yeah erm, I talk to mum about, cos I did drums, saxophone, swimming, used to do karate, and I like doing basketball and you know stuff like that, erm, that I talk to, like mum and dad, get me there, get me back, pay for it, stuff like that. So I have to sort of talk to them, but also with like music and saxophone, my family are quite musical,*

*right, so mum and dad know how to play different things you know. (Mick, Intact Couple Family)*

In particular, Mick's engagement in music was further supported by his parents' passion for musical instruments, which further supported the workings of an intergenerational habitus.

#### **5.3.5.3 Effect of Family Structure on Activity Tastes and Dispositions**

A key component to emerge from the interview data was the effect of family structure on young people's opportunities to engage in activity and subsequently how this then affected their physical activity dispositions and choices. All participants interviewed from an intact couple family however clearly identified their parents as influential in their activity involvement, while few identified barriers to activity that would affect their habitus. In contrast to many lone parent or stepfamilies, the effect of family structure tended to be more positive. They were less constrained by barriers and instead highlighted how their parents helped to manage the activity of their offspring. In the example presented from Sam, his parents demonstrated support by investing time and money into his activities, arranged a timetable at home that portrayed each family member's activity (including Sam's) and continually made contact with him to ensure everything was ok.

*Err, I think they encourage me a bit more because I do a lot more things. Like we've got this timetable on the wall like that shows all these things and I've got a list of things going on every day whereas my brother's got one thing, the same as my sister, so yeah, they definitely encourage me a lot more and they'll like help me like deal with it, cos I need bus money for quite a few of them so they'll always give me that and they'll like text me to ask me where I am and how everything's going and things like that (Sam, Intact Couple Family)*

Like Sam before him, Oliver also highlighted the positive aspect of his family structure. His parents and in particular his mother, was responsible for planning all aspects of family life, including managing the competing demands of other family members and organising Oliver's own activity.

*But I don't, my mum's like obsessed with planning things... It must just be something to do with mums; they always have like a routine... Café Rouge at two, then we go shopping for half an hour, then we go for a walk at the canal, then we go see the lights and... It's usually, well, if she goes power walking she'll say "right, we'll put the lamb in at this time and then it will cook for 5 hours and then when we get back it will be just the right time". She'll plan it, everything around each other even what stuff I want to do (Oliver, Intact Couple Family)*

It was therefore evident in intact couple families that parents were able to transmit values and tastes for specific physical activities. In so doing, they were complicit in developing an intergenerational habitus and worked to further embed such dispositions in their offspring through joint activities. Moreover, the nature of their stable family structure also enabled parents to manage the activity of their offspring in relation to competing demands of other family members and their own busy lifestyles, subsequently providing the necessary support to ensure young people could enact their physical activity dispositions.

### **5.3.6 Construction of Habitus – Lone Parent and Stepfamilies**

#### **5.3.6.1 Transmission of Physical Activity Values and Tastes**

Like those in intact couple families, young people in alternative family formations also expressed positive attitudes towards physical activity and demonstrated an understanding of its importance in relation to the same psycho-socio benefits. For friends Ellen (a 13-year-old

girl who lived at home with her lone parent mother, two brothers and her sister) and Sharon (a 12-year-old girl who lived with her mother, two brothers and two sisters), who have both lived in the same family structure since they were young, their mothers were reported to have encouraged them by passing on their own early life interests in activities. For Sharron in particular, her mother was seen to invest in equipment for activities that reflected her mother's own interests:

*Cos she [mother] buys us like badminton racquets and I say why did you buy us this for and she says, she used to love it when she was younger and that we should play it cos it's good for us ... like good for our health and stuff. (Sharon, Lone Parent Family)*

*Yeah, cos I used to do netball in year seven, my mum said she used to play it when she was at school so I should do it too to keep me fit and stuff. (Ellen, Lone Parent Family)*

As a result, both Ellen and Sharon also expressed specific values towards physical activities (them being beneficial for health) that reflected the views of their parents as these children saw them:

*When you're working out its good for you and that ... like if you don't do anything [physical activity] you don't do anything to work off what you eat. (Ellen, Lone Parent Family)*

*You'd just be fat .... Yeah, like if you're lazy you won't do anything will you .... Cos you just sit down and do nothing. (Sharon, Lone Parent Family)*

However, for those living in stepfamilies and indeed some lone parent families, the transmission of physical activity values and tastes may occur across several different sites.

Johnny (a 13 year old boy who lived with his biological mother and step dad) experienced the transmission of physical activity values differently when at home, compared to when he went to see his dad. When asked if his mother discussed physical activity or related issues with him, Johnny drew attention to the different values that were placed on activities by both his biological parents:

*Well, erm, I don't really get it from my mum, but when I go and see my dad, like he always tells us that he like thrashed his mate at a game of tennis or squash or whatever he does and yeah that's kind of it. (Johnny, Stepfamily)*

Similarly, these different values for activity were expressed in the influence his parents exerted on his own physical activity dispositions:

*Well, definitely football with my dad, cos I like enjoy it and he like used to do it and yeah, and erm, yeah, I played the position he played, I don't know what that's about but yeah like, just one of, I don't know really. Like my mum doesn't really like encourage me to play sports, she just says why don't you go and have a game of tennis or whatever and like if I'm bored or whatever, so I'm like less bothered when at mums but kind of more into like different activities when at dads... (Johnny, Stepfamily)*

By indicating that he was more engaged in activities whilst at his fathers, Johnny highlighted the different experiences that he was prone to across two different fields and in turn, how they affected the transfer of physical activity beliefs and values.

Earlier extracts from the interview with Taylor were used to explore how meal times impacted on the transfer of health related dispositions. Those examples indicated how, before her parents separated, her father primarily acted in a way that transferred these beliefs and values.

Coincidentally, her father was also responsible for passing on physical activity tastes and preferences.

*Err, when I was about 7 I couldn't swim, so my Dad cos he's like a teacher, he taught me how to swim and erm we used to go swimming every, like twice a week, every week until I was about 11 and then I started to go with my friend, so erm (Taylor, Stepfamily)*

### **5.3.6.2 Joint Family Activities and Intergenerational Habitus**

In contrast to those in intact couple families, these young people in lone parent families highlighted that the transmitted values towards physical activity were not reinforced through joint family activities. Whereas Sharon had earlier mentioned that her mother had bought her badminton rackets and encouraged her to take it up, her only joint family activities were much more sedentary in nature.

*We watch telly but that's not really an activity .... Well, I watch X Factor on Saturdays with all my family ... well, the people what like live in my house, my two brothers, my sister and my mum.*

So do you do any physical activity with your mum for example?

*Not really, well, only if its, stuff like, if its summer we go out and have a little play and chase my brothers and stuff like that but not often. (Sharron, Lone Parent Family)*

Sharon's absent father was an engineer, while her mother worked in an unnamed manual job on a shift basis, meaning that occasionally, she would go to work at half past six in the morning and often return late in the evening. So, not surprisingly, when asked why her only joint activity was sedentary, Sharon suggested that it was because of the nature of her family

structure, her mother's lack of free time to engage with her and her propensity to carry out household responsibilities:

*No, she doesn't really have time and she's busy round the house ... clearing up.*

Clearing up after you?

*Kind of ... well and my brother, and she just does basic things like mothers should do, like cook and she cleans the kitchen and then she just tells us to do the rest. (Sharron, Lone Parent Family)*

As well as Ellen echoing similar thoughts in the same interview, Johnny also mirrored Sharron's comments. Like many of the young people interviewed here, a common activity in lone parent and stepfamilies was based around the television. The account below from Johnny mirrored his mother's dispositions to activity and the environment in which she operated.

Are there any other activities that you do with your mum?

*Yeah, erm, well, I don't really do anything with my mum to be honest just like watch a bit of TV with her, only like, if I have a game on a Sunday, my dad comes and watches but like I don't really do anything.*

Despite this, his mother has encouraged him to play tennis with his stepdad. However, earlier in his interview, Johnny clearly stated that he didn't count his stepdad as part of his family. Though his mother has been married since 2003, his reluctance to accept him as part of the family may have impacted on their ability to interact together in any activities:

*Well I used to play tennis with him [stepdad] but then after I didn't enjoy it, I didn't like playing with him so I stopped and now I don't really play tennis much anymore...*

*Yeah [long pause] don't know why I stopped I just didn't get on with him (Johnny, Stepfamily)*



Though not unique, the resistance Johnny expressed to a new family member acted as a barrier to any joint family activities. The new activity within the field clashed with Johnny's previous tastes and as a result, this prevented the transmission of tastes for activities and thus the generation of an intergenerational habitus.

For Taylor, the transmission of physical activity tastes worked to initially develop a habitus that was similar to that of her fathers. Indeed, Taylor recognised the influence he had on developing her passion for sports and physical activities:

*Well, erm I do a lot with my mates now but I think if my dad didn't get me into sports then I probably wouldn't do it at all so I think it's good that I spent at least like 6 or 7 years just doing sports with him... Otherwise I wouldn't be doing it today (Taylor, Stepfamily)*

However, Taylor spent little time with her mother and stepfather and because she was only able to see her father on a Wednesday and every other weekend, her engagement in joint physical activities with him was restricted. That said, when she did manage to see him, he regularly took her to a gym that accommodated both adults and children.

*Um, well, I go about [to the ice gym] three times every week, on Wednesday, and Saturday, and Sunday. Erm, but it's really cool cos it's not like just like a normal gym. There's like 2 flat screens in there and stuff, and they play loud music and stuff, so it's not just like where you just have to train... Yeah but, my dad, it's only for 8 to 16 year olds so I go with my mates while he goes to the gym next door which is the adults (Taylor, Stepfamily)*

Thus, her father tried to reinforce physical activity dispositions in his daughter but was restricted due to the nature of the family environment and the limited contact he had with her.

### ***5.3.6.3 Effect of Family Structure on Activity Tastes and Dispositions***

In contrast to those young people in intact couple families, those in ‘alternative’ family structures faced greater barriers (such as those mentioned previously in section 5.3.2), which ultimately shaped their habitus and impacted on their desire to engage in physical activity. Sharon for example indicated how a change in her family structure had impacted upon her ability to continue to participate in after school activities. She highlighted how the change in family structure meant that she could not continue in the same activities that she previously did due to competing family demands placed on the lone parent.

Do they [parents] encourage you to take part in any physical activities?

*Yeah ... my mum tells me, like do things inside of school because she keeps coming to pick us up and I have as sister as well, and I've got a little brother at school and she's got a baby as well so she can't pick me up later.*

Is it difficult for you to stay late at school because of your mum's responsibilities?

*Yeah ... and I've got too far to walk. (Sharron, Lone Parent Family)*

Ellen echoed this, stating on several occasions that she was restricted from continuing to participate in after school activities.

*My mum doesn't really allow me to stay after school unless we absolutely have to ... it's a lot of like hassle to get back. (Ellen, Lone Parent Family)*

*My mum doesn't really allow me to stay after school unless we absolutely have to. Cos I was like in like, when I was in year 7, I was in a thinking group and then when it came to winter I didn't really bother cos it got dark earlier*

Right and how would you get to and from school?

*I walk a little bit to the bus stop and then I get the bus*

Do you think that's why your mum doesn't want you to keep doing it?

*Well, maybe, I don't know, it's like anything can happen like someone could just come and take you* (Ellen, Lone Parent Family)

The above extract also demonstrated how locality and safety also impacted on her ability to engage in activities. As well as being unable to collect her from her activities, Ellen's mother was also worried about her daughter walking home alone. As a result she restricted her after school activity altogether. This was again reflected in another account from Ellen whereby she indicated that despite encouragement from her mother to engage in netball outside of school (an activity in which her mother's own activity preferences were rooted), the family structure in which she lived impacted on her ability to get to and from the netball club.

*Yeah [was engaged in netball club in the past] but not anymore cos I'm not allowed to do it anymore, to go clubs. I just stopped going.*

Why?

*I'm not sure... like, Cos my mum can't like pick me up cos she's well busy and she doesn't want me getting the bus all the time so I can't go.* (Ellen, Lone Parent Family)

As is often the case when experiencing a transition from one family structure to the next, some lone parent families may experience a loss of economic capital. Though economic capital may be a barrier for all low income families, it may be exacerbated in many lone parent families, which are more prone to poverty. Recognising this, Sharon cited a lack of finance as another barrier to her involvement in an activity that she had earlier described as one she would most like to be involved in.

Is there anything that's stopping you join that gymnastics club now or?

*My mum ... it costs a lot of money [to join the club] and something like that, plus the fact that she doesn't really let us out much. (Sharron, Lone Parent Family)*

As a result of the transition from one family structure to another both girls' dispositions have been adversely affected in that they now demonstrated little desire to engage in physical activity in their free time. For Sharron, watching television was "*like the only time we're all together*" and hence her preferences began to reflect the activity most frequently carried out together in her family and as such revealed a "taste for necessity" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.372).

So at the weekends do you try and stay active?

*No, stay on the computer all day .... And watch X Factor.*

So you don't go out and do any activities, any sports or anything like that?

*No not really ... my mum's normally busy so I can just do what I want really.*

(Sharron, Lone Parent Family)

This was equally true for Ellen:

*Sometimes go out with my friend but yeah that's about it .... I just watch TV cos I don't do much netball anymore or stuff like that.*

*I just sometimes sit and watch TV, but my brother usually does that on his own and my other brother, and I do, I just sit on the laptop (Ellen, Lone Parent Family)*

Studying their 'habitus' highlighted the workings of structure and agency. Here both girls' agency (practice) began to reflect the structure (field) in which they reside. Their normal family activity was to watch TV together, neglecting physical activity due to their family circumstances limiting their opportunities and choices for physical activity and thus, practice

started to reflect the structures that limited them, despite having more free time and less supervision.

In a similar account, Johnny argued that his parents' views towards physical activity differed. As highlighted earlier, despite living with his mother, Johnny still displayed physical activity tendencies though acknowledges these were more evident when he went to visit his father. One activity that Johnny did engage in was football, an interest he admitted inheriting from his father. It was also his father that went to support him as a result of his mother and stepfather spending increasing amounts of time together. In turn, this meant Johnny had to find his own way to and from football, which he acknowledged was quite stressful.

*Yeah, I enjoy riding my bike sometimes but a lot of the times it gets really stressful at the end... On the way there [to play football] its not that bad cos I don't really get out of breath, like on my bike but erm, I have to play football for an hour and a half, its usually like the last third of coming home, cos its kind of uphill as well*

Do you have to ride your bike there?

*Yeah dad comes to watch but he's not always there at the start and mum don't take me cos she's out with my stepdad. (Johnny, Stepfamily)*

Although he was more open to physical activity when at his father's, and with his father transmitting his interests for activities, the strain of travelling to this location on the opposite side of the city every weekend meant he lacked the energy and indeed desire to actually engage with his father. When asked if they engaged in any joint activities, Johnny answered:

*Erm, not really, well sort of, he says like do you fancy a game of squash or whatever and I usually say no... Well he like, to be honest we don't really like cos I go there and*

*I stay the night on a Saturday and he lives in W [area of residence] and its kind of far away and I just like really, like to chill (Johnny, Stepfamily)*

As a result, this structure impacted on Johnny's engagement in activity and his subsequent activity actions. He displayed limited desires to engage in physical activities due to his family circumstances and the distance he had to travel between his parents' houses.

As a result of her change in family structure and limited contact with her father (who appeared to hold the most influence with regard to physical activity), Taylor's desire to engage in activity when with her mother and stepfather was reduced, especially since her stepfather seemed more interested in engaging in activities with her brothers.

*No, but my brothers do some stuff with him [stepdad] ... They erm, he goes with them when he trains them to do football cos I think its boys only (Taylor, Stepfamily)*

*Well, some weekends I'll be like I just can't be bothered to do anything, I just do my work on Friday and then the rest is just to relax but erm, like if my grandma and granddad come up, my granddads got like something in his legs which means... I think arthritis... So he can't walk very far but he can cycle, but my grandma likes to be really active, even though she's, I think she's 79 now, but she walks 3 miles every day, and erm, she does lots of different sports, so like sometimes she'll come down for the weekend, or we'll go up hers for the weekend and we'll just like, we'll take a picnic and we'll just walk all day. And like she lives by C [area of residence] so we go to the [outdoor centre], which is an outside swimming pool which I love and we spend all day there in the summer (Taylor, Stepfamily)*

What is evident from the final extract here though, was how Taylor's tastes and physical activity dispositions were truly embedded. For example, when Taylor encountered an environment that was conducive to her habitus, her passion for swimming reignited. When she entered a field that was favourable to her habitus, her taste for swimming (that was instilled in her by her father) re-emerged resulting in practice. This worked to demonstrate how her habitus was embedded and whilst open to change, initial dispositions were difficult to completely remove.

However, the effect of family structure for those in lone parent or stepfamilies wasn't always detrimental to young people's physical activity. It is not uncommon for young people to experience multiple transitions in family formation and Rob (12 years old) for instance, (at the time of the interview) recently moved from a lone parent family (living with just his mother) to a stepfamily (living with his father and his father's longtime girlfriend). Like Johnny above, Rob cited a lack of physical activities when he lived with his mother and instead more joint sedentary activities.

*No I didn't do anything with my mum I just like I said, kind of led my own life... Sometimes I go to my aunties on occasions like my birthday and I go on the Nintendo Wii or something like that... Yeah that's all I do on the Wii with my mum. (Rob, Stepfamily)*

However, having moved to live with his father in a new family formation, Rob was able to identify a shift in parenting practices. Whereas before his mother left him largely unsupervised, his father and his father's girlfriend monitored his activity much more. Physical activity for Rob was valued much more within the new family field and as such, was given greater priority and importance.

*Because, like I lived with me mum for a couple of years, and really I led my own life...*

What when you were living with your mum?

*Yeah, I could just do what I wanted nobody really said anything to me so I just used to go out and play all the time or just watched T.V whenever I wanted... but since I've lived with dad and his err... his girlfriend like I can't really do that anymore... I can't just do what I want or go out and play I have to tell them what I want to do and they make sure I'm doing stuff... (Rob, Stepfamily)*

There was subsequently more structure and greater encouragement to engage in activity rather than engage in sedentary pursuits which Rob clearly appreciated.

*Now I'm living with my dad it's a lot better... Erm.... I get to see him more and I do more things now (Rob, Stepfamily)*

The previous examples begin to highlight the differences between young people in intact couple families and those in lone parent and stepfamilies. Indeed, those participants in alternative family structures were prone to experience more transitions from one family structure to another than those in intact couple families and, despite initially exhibiting embodied dispositions towards physical activity, the economic and social resources converged to restrict the possibilities for those young people to enact such practices. Such changes ultimately impacted on the habitus of young people and though such dispositions and tastes which make up habitus were embedded and difficult to change, given time and changes in field, such change was not inevitable or impossible.

### **5.3.7 Summary of Qualitative Results**



Like the quantitative results before, these qualitative results addressed three research sub-questions. On a micro level it was clear that initially, regardless of family structure, support was provided by parents to their offspring in the form of facilitation, investment and encouragement. However, various barriers experienced by these participants did impact on the amount of support parents were able to provide. Importantly, while all were prone to issues of locality and capital, young people from lone parent and stepfamilies were also subject to their parents' busy schedules which affected engagement. These barriers were then seen to be a cause of young people in lone parent families engaging in more sedentary activities and those from alternative families (lone and stepfamilies) eating fewer meals together and thus, spending less time together as a family. It was also apparent that in alternative families, those that have undergone transitions, physical activity was often not regarded as a significant form of symbolic capital in comparison to other more pressing concerns. This was subsequently reflected in the transmission of beliefs and values to young people and ultimately shaped their tastes, dispositions and habitus accordingly. The following discussion aims to bridge the gap between the micro and macro to explain how individual agency was shaped and reproduced on a wider level.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **DISCUSSION**

The following chapter draws together the quantitative and qualitative findings presented previously and addresses the initial research questions that drove the study. It first provides an overview of the types of support and barriers that were experienced by these participants with regard to their family structure. Then with consideration of those barriers, an exploration of joint family activities and the specific types of activities (physical and sedentary) that young people engaged in are discussed. Following this, Bourdieu's key thinking tools are integrated into the discussion to show how family meal times act as a unique period that shape young people's health dispositions. This is important since health related notions and practices are used in society as key drivers behind engagement in physical activity, while also demonstrating how different family structures spend time together. Finally, the discussion chapter focuses on how young people's physical activity habitus is constructed within families. Here consideration is given to the effect of the field (family structure), intergenerational habitus, the development of taste and essentially, young people's agency. It is hoped that the quantitative and qualitative data add to each other to explain how individual practice, though unique, is shaped by wider structural forces and that those in similar fields who are constrained by such forces also express similar tastes, dispositions and ultimately, action.

## **6.1 Introduction**

Employing a sequential mixed methods approach to explore the influence of family structure on young people's physical activity engagement, the discussion of findings presented here draw together both the quantitative and qualitative elements, along with relevant literature from chapter two and three to help explain how family structure mediates young people's engagement in physical activity. By presenting the discussion in a developmental manner in which the following element adds to the one before, it provides a clearer picture of where these structural forces lie and how they interact to constrain agency. Initially, the types of support and barriers to activity are discussed before these are integrated alongside Bourdieu's key concepts to help demonstrate how family structure shapes young people's habitus and taste for various activities. In so doing the discussion aims to address the research sub-questions that drove the study and then answer the overarching question regarding the influence of family structure on young people's physical activity dispositions and engagement.

## **6.2 The Influence of the Family on Young People's Physical Activity**

The different types of support and barriers to activity experienced by these young people are presented first before the quantitative and qualitative results are discussed to identify and explain (drawing on the types of support and barriers) reasons behind differences in joint family activities and subsequently, the different types of activities that young people reported engaging in.

### ***6.2.1 Types of Support and Barriers to Activity***

One of the driving research sub-questions for this study was to try and identify the types of support that young people received within their families. As such, several types of support for physical activity were reported by young people across all types of family structure. For the majority of participants these included facilitation, investment and encouragement whilst for others, involvement in activity was also highlighted. These findings support recent evidence that suggests social support from parents is essential in facilitating young people's activity (Davison, 2004; Springer et al., 2006; Trost et al., 2003). Qualitative findings here indicated that facilitation, investment and encouragement were particularly prominent for these participants. Facilitation was reported by young people in the form of transport and logistical support, coupled with the general organisation and management of their activities, while investment by parents occurred in the purchase of equipment and provision of fees or expenses to travel to and from activity venues. Previous research suggests this type of support is essential since young children in particular rely heavily on their parents and their parents' social networks for transport (Gosling et al., 2008). However, the most prominent type of support was reported to be parental encouragement both in the form of verbal support and in the form of parents watching their child participate in an activity. This was evident for the majority of young people regardless of family structure and appeared to commonly stem from their mothers; consistent with research implying that mothers typically provide more social and emotional support in the form of encouragement (Beets et al., 2007). All of these types of support have been found to be vital to young people's continued engagement in activity (Duncan et al., 2005; Sallis et al., 2000; Springer et al., 2006) and were equally important here in helping to sustain activity participation.

Parental support was central to young people's physical activity, though Trost et al. (2003) argue that relatively little is known about the factors that affect the provision of such support. As a primary tool through which parents are seen to influence activity, social support in its various components may vary according to when parents have the opportunity to engage and interact with their children (Yeung et al., 2001). As discussed in chapter two, different family structures, at a meso level, give rise to different conditions and structural social influences. Indeed, it would appear that some family structures (lone parent and stepfamilies) act as a barrier and mediating factor to these social influences and importantly, the amount of support parents are able to provide and when they are able to provide it.

Similar to a recent study by Thompson et al. (2010), the most common barrier to activity and regulator of the amount of support young people could receive was the busy lifestyles of their parents. Interestingly, this barrier was much more apparent for young people in lone parent and stepfamilies than those in conventional intact couple families. For young people in lone parent families, they frequently reported the busy lifestyle of their parent, often their lone mother and a subsequent lack of time due to work commitments and other household duties. This lack of time ultimately restricted the amount of support they could provide to their offspring which in turn hindered participation in activity. Similar findings were reported by Dwyer et al. (2008) whereby lone parents of younger children identified a lack of assistance which made it difficult to continually engage with and provide support to maintain their child's activity. Jenkins (2009) and Jenkins and Lyons (2006) have also suggested that non resident lone fathers, in the face of limited contact, endure time pressures that restrict their ability to spend time with and provide additional support to their child. It should also be noted that the busy lifestyles of lone parents was recognised by some of the

participants here who then took it upon themselves to help out with household chores and other duties wherever possible, often to the detriment of their own activity involvement.

For those in stepfamilies, their parents' busy lifestyles and lack of time were also cited as barriers to activity though for entirely different reasons. Like previous reports (Allan and Crow, 2001; Pryor and Rodgers, 2001), young people in stepfamilies reported spending less family time together as their biological parent and their partner began their new relationship. In newly formed stepfamilies, young people drew attention to the amount of time their parent and stepparent spent together in isolation from their offspring, thus reducing the availability of social support for activities. These findings are unique since few, if any studies have specifically explored the effect of stepfamilies on young people's physical activity. Instead, previous studies have explored two parent families, as an inclusive term, and lone parent families only.

Further barriers to activity that young people reported stemmed from the intersection of family structure and socioeconomic circumstance. Despite all participants being drawn from low income areas, stocks of economic capital may still differ between family structures. In fact, most prominent amongst young people here was a reported lack of capital to help support structured activity involvement and purchase recreational equipment. This was particularly noticeable among respondents from lone parent families. Since divorce often directly affects the amount of economic capital per family, there is notable consistency with regard to the socioeconomic circumstances of lone parent families (Allan and Crow, 2001; Coltrane and Collins, 2001). In comparison to intact couple and in some cases stepfamilies, lone parent families tend to be severely disadvantaged with weekly household wages

substantially lower (ONS, 2004; Save the Children, 2011) and this was regularly reported by the participants of this study as a barrier to engagement in some forms of structured activity.

As well as being disadvantaged financially, lone parent families tend to reside in more deprived areas and live in smaller houses (Allan and Crow, 2001; Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). As such, locality was also reported to be a barrier to activity. However, given that the sample was selected by use of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, those involved were likely to reside in the same or near, low income neighbourhoods. As such, locality was reported to be a barrier for young people in lone parent, stepfamilies and some intact couple families. Romero (2005) has previously argued that lower income neighbourhoods are likely to have less available facilities and those that do, are often of less quality. In addition, she suggested that low income areas are often more prone to issues of safety which ultimately impacts on participation in a variety of physical activities (Romero, 2005). Issues of crime and safety were particularly prominent here with young people indicating that the environment in which they live was not conducive to safe play. Concerns about the local area also meant some young people were restricted from engaging in activities because their parents feared for their safety. It was therefore evident that first and foremost, family structure acted as a barrier to engagement in individual and family activities because of the wider social circumstances that some family structures are associated with.

### ***6.2.2 Involvement and Joint Family Activities***

For lower socioeconomic status families (like the participants of this study), joint family activities and involvement in activities with young people is considered to be an area in which parents are seen to heavily invest (Lee et al., 2009). However, accounting for the effect of socioeconomic status, both the qualitative and quantitative findings converge here to

demonstrate how biological family structure mediates the amount of time parents have available to engage in joint activities. As previously mentioned, parents' joint participation and involvement in activity with their children has demonstrated positive effects on young people's activity (Sallis et al., 2000; Springer et al., 2006). Here, the quantitative findings indicated that the number of days in the week and at the weekend that young people engaged in several activities with a family member was significantly influenced by family structure.

During the week, those in intact couple families engaged in two or more different physical activities with family members more often than those in both lone parent and stepfamilies. This effect was present for boys and girls. At the weekend too, similar responses indicated that boys and girls in intact couple families engaged in three or more activities significantly more often than their counterparts in lone parent and stepfamilies. However, it was also evident that at the weekend, boys in stepfamilies engaged in several activities more readily than boys in lone parent families.

When siblings were considered alongside gender the results remained fairly consistent with significant effects of family structure evident in many cases. While there was no difference for girls without siblings, boys without siblings in intact couple families still engaged in several activities with family members more frequently than boys in lone parent families, both during the week and at the weekend. It would therefore appear that for boys without any siblings, having two biological parents at home was more conducive to joint activities than just having one parent at home.

Young people (boys and girls) with any number of siblings in intact couple families were also seen to engage in several activities with a family member more often than those with any number of siblings in lone parent families, both during the week and at the weekend. Moreover, boys and girls in intact couple families with one sibling (during the week) and two



or more siblings (at the weekend) were seen to engage more frequently in a higher number of joint activities with a family member than their counterparts in stepfamilies. Overall, there was little variation between those in lone parent families and stepfamilies regardless of gender or siblings. These findings would suggest that boys and girls follow similar patterns and that living in an intact couple family was the strongest predictor of joint family activities regardless of the child's gender or number of siblings.

To date, few studies have explored joint family activities especially with regard to the effect of family structure. Those that have (Shaw and Dawson, 2001; Thompson et al., 2010), have suggested that parents considered joint activities as vital for overall family life, in sustaining family communication and the physical and social benefits that accompany it. Like the qualitative data indicates here, Thompson et al. (2010) highlighted the most common barriers to joint family physical activity both at the weekend and during the week as being the busy lifestyles and inherent work commitments of parents that contributed to a lack of free time. Since these barriers were more prominent here in lone parent and some stepfamilies, they resulted in less joint activities for those in 'alternative' family structures. Wagner and Kirch (2006) have suggested that it is vital that parents promote activities that can be done as a family. For many young people here, two parent households allowed parents to pair off with their offspring so that while one engaged in household or other related responsibilities, the other was able to participate in activity with their child(ren). Given that the effect of siblings was consistent across family structure and gender, it would be reasonable to assume that it is the number of parents and the relationship of these parents (biological or non-biological) in the home that was seen to mediate the amount of joint family activities. Hence, living in an intact couple family with both biological parents was more likely to result in more joint activities, more often, during the week and at the weekend.

### **6.2.3 *Types of Activities***

With regard to the type of activities, the data indicated that living in a lone parent family gave rise to various barriers during the week and at the weekend that influenced the amount of time young people could spend with their parents; ultimately affecting their availability to engage in joint activities other than those that were most accessible. Similar to previous reports (Saelens and Kerr, 2008; Macdonald et al., 2004), these young people had parents with numerous additional responsibilities such as work commitments, caring for other children and household duties, which made managing their child's physical activity difficult due to logistical constraints such as transport and a lack of time. This subsequently worked to create a home environment that promoted sedentary behaviours as the only joint family activity. Consistent with previous studies (Bagley et al., 2006; Gorely et al., 2004; Gorely et al., 2009; Hesketh et al., 2006; Lindquist et al., 1999), young people from lone parent families reported spending more time engaged in sedentary activities than those from intact couple families. Findings here support the notion that the relationship between family structure and young people's activities appears stronger for overall sedentary activities than for physical activities (Saelens and Kerr, 2008). A common leisure time sedentary activity is TV usage and several authors contend that TV viewing in young people is positively associated with parental viewing habits (Barradas et al., 2007; Gorely et al., 2004; Granich et al., 2010; Salmon et al., 2006). In fact, Jago et al. (2008) have suggested that in families where the TV plays an important role, young people are more likely to engage in higher levels of sedentary behaviour. Similarly, Hardy et al. (2006) argue that the odds of young people spending two or more hours a day in front of the television doubles when they co-view with parents. If, as these young people suggest, TV viewing is a more collaborative activity in lone parent

families, then the modelling of such behaviours may ultimately influence their leisure choices and sway them towards common sedentary pursuits (Granich et al., 2010).

Unlike previous studies that produced conflicting results for the relationship between family structure and physical activity, total physical activity was not assessed here. However, types of physical activity were considered, with the quantitative results indicating differences for 'games' and 'other' activities. Though no overall association was reported for family structure and these groups, further analysis suggested that boys in step families spent more time in game activities during the week, while girls in intact couple families spent more time in other activities at the weekend than their counterparts in lone parent families.

Similar gender effects were found for lifetime activities, though in this case, a significant difference was reported between those (boys and girls) in intact couple families and those in lone parent families. Young people from intact couple families were seen to spend more time in lifetime activities; an effect largely from the boys' data. Lifetime activities tend to be health and fitness orientated (Fairclough et al., 2002; Green et al., 2005) and possess a greater carry-over value than team or game activities as they are often more readily available. Consequently, if young people engage in lifetime activities then there is a greater possibility that they will follow a physically active lifestyle during adulthood (Fairclough et al., 2002). This mirrors findings from Thompson et al. (2010) who reported some of the most common physical activities done together as a family to include walking, cycling and swimming. Qualitative data here suggested that during the week these activities were more readily engaged in by those in intact couple families, who were likely to participate with one or both of their parents. In their reports, whilst one parent took care of household duties, the other was able to engage in easily accessible lifetime activities with them. Like a previous report (Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010) young people from two parent families experienced less

restrictions on the family environment which meant they received more physical and social support to engage in activities after school. According to Baranowski (1997, p.183) the “family is something more than the sum of its parts”, which suggests that two parents are better suited to manage the family environment more easily than lone parent families. If young people from both types of two parent family are exposed to and spend more time in lifetime activities in youth, then there exists the possibility that they will continue to engage in similar activities in adulthood, as opposed to young people from lone parent families.

### **6.3 The Importance of Family Meals in Shaping Health Related Dispositions**

While the previous discussion sections explore the types of support, barriers and different activities that these young people experienced, the following begins to integrate Bourdieu’s key concepts in order to explain how certain dispositions are developed and shaped within families. In order to fully understand how young people’s physical activity habitus is constructed, everyday family routines needed to be explored from their own perspectives. One particular element to arise from the qualitative discussions was the importance of family meals in helping to shape health orientated beliefs and values. This is of great importance since overall physical activity dispositions are loaded with underlying assumptions and beliefs about health; a driving force behind widespread popular culture justifications for participation in physical activity. Thus, to understand the make up of young people’s physical activity habitus it is necessary to explore how additional dispositions towards health (as a component of health related physical activity) are produced within a given social space, the family. In so doing, it was again evident how the emergent barriers discussed earlier (section 6.2.1) impact on the transmission of such values from parent to child. The following discussion therefore

draws on both qualitative and quantitative elements to understand the impact of family structure on the construction of young people's health related beliefs and values.

The influence that family structure and parents in particular, have on constructing children's health related dispositions and tastes was evident here. It was apparent that initially, regardless of family structure, families, parents and mothers in particular were clearly implicated in the transmission of health related beliefs and values during family meals, findings that are consistent with previous research (Gosling et al., 2008). Meals have subsequently been found to be a useful predictor of family time together (Yeung et al., 2001) and Hofferth and Sandberg (2001) suggest that more time spent eating meals together at home is likely to be associated with a more stable, organised family life. However, the amount of meals eaten together and the transmission of such values at meal times did vary greatly across family structures.

Eating meals together has been used in a UNICEF (2007) report on child wellbeing as an indicator of family relationships, in which the UK scored poorly in comparison to 24 other developed nations. The qualitative data supports the notion that family meals offer a unique opportunity to facilitate conversation and share views and beliefs (Turtiainen et al., 2007) and remains an important context for family interactions and influencing young people's health and wellbeing (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2000). Not surprisingly, parents were deemed to be a major influence on healthy eating. It was clear that meal times offered a unique pedagogic moment (Burrows and McCormack, In Press) when parents and particularly mothers, could pass on knowledge and beliefs about health to their offspring in an effort to shape young people's dispositions accordingly. Many young people indicated that their mothers made decisions about what and where they ate and were responsible for managing their

consumption of healthy and unhealthy food. Indeed, their practice and choice of food at meal times was often seen to reflect their own health related dispositions.

As a particular social field (Bourdieu, 1996), the family and its particular micro practices can act as a site of informal pedagogy (Tinning, 2008) helping to shape dispositions and behaviours in certain ways. This is of particular importance given that the family is fast becoming a site increasingly responsible for the health of “the youthful self” (Kelly, 2000, p.468). Kelly (2000) and Burrows and Wright (2004) refer to the pedagogic family, whereby parents in particular are seen to be responsible for making the right choices for the sake of their children regarding physical activity and health. Vincent and Ball (2007) in turn argue that in many cases, young people are seen as soft and malleable, and that ‘good parenting’ can provide learning experiences that develop and improve them in certain ways. While it has long been embedded in various developmental discourses that ‘good parenting’ will produce ‘good children’ (Burrows and Wright, 2004), what is new, is “the expansion of the boundaries and responsibilities of the family so that almost every disposition and behaviour of children is potentially amenable to family regulation” (Burrows and Wright, 2004, p.90). Perhaps as a consequence of the increasing responsibility on families to ensure the appropriate knowledge and behaviours are instilled in their children, parents are increasingly required to reinvent themselves as ‘experts’. Experts who, without much help, are involved in the surveillance, judgement, correction and regulation of children together with the production and maintenance of their child’s health (Burrows and Wright, 2004). This was particularly the case here whereby parents acted as facilitators at meal times, responsible for social reproduction and the transmission of knowledge, values and beliefs of appropriate health actions and choices.

Furthermore, it would not be unusual to assume that the rhetoric employed by many parents reflected their own views and dispositions towards health since, Fernandez-Balboa and Muros (2006, p.203) argue that “discourses shape and are shaped by... habitus”. Bourdieu (1977b) argues that it is through discourses that we learn to behave, relate and obey and because of the power relations inherent within families, such pedagogic moments carry ‘pedagogic authority’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p.22) reinforcing the legitimacy of the discourse. Fernandez-Balboa and Muros (2006) argue that “through their regular use, these discourses [of healthy eating] have a way of penetrating people’s minds” (ibid: p.203) and thus become engrained in the individuals who experience them. The result of these pedagogic moments was that many young people here expressed similar dispositions to those preached and practiced by their parents. Like previous studies (Burrows et al., 2009), there was overwhelming evidence that eating right, coupled with regular activity was seen by these young people to be beneficial for health. To further embed those dispositions, some of the interviewees even reported how their parents modelled similar behaviours which subsequently worked to reinforce their health orientated habitus. These findings mirror results from Pearson, Timperio et al. (2009) which suggested that parental modelling of healthy eating was associated with higher vegetable consumption among boys and girls. Taken together, it would appear that positive modelling of health behaviours during meal times act as an important opportunity to impart healthy dispositions in their offspring.

Meals eaten together are in fact one of the most common shared family activities (Thompson et al., 2010) and act as an indicator of family time together. However, the quantitative data here (section 5.2.3) indicated that during the week and at the weekend, young people in intact couple families more frequently ate their main meal together with their whole family (the

people they lived with), than those in lone parent and stepfamilies. This effect was largely present for both boys and girls in these family structures. In their Finnish study, Turtiainen et al. (2007) also found that family structure was related to the amount of time young people in lone parent and step families spent together though it should be acknowledged that this may be due to these families being separated, with young people spending time with both parents at different points of the week. Furthermore, in a recent qualitative study, Dwyer et al. (2008) indicated that parents themselves felt, given the busy nature of their lives, they didn't have enough time to sit down and eat together as a whole family. This corresponds with responses from the qualitative data (section 5.3.4) and is of particular concern given the unique nature of family meals. Here, young people faced barriers unique to their family structure, to the amount of meals they could eat with their whole family and the amount of time they spent together. Several respondents indicated that young people in stepfamilies tended to be isolated from their biological parent and their new partner/spouse who wanted time to themselves to build their new relationship. In turn, this sometimes had a dramatic effect on the previous pedagogical practices and transfer of values that had occurred, as was the case here for Taylor. In lone parent families, young people were restricted due to the nature of the family environment and the fact that their mothers had to work late or had to manage numerous other tasks which meant they struggled to find time to eat together. It appeared such factors constrained parents' decision making and as a consequence, food provided at meal times was often quick, convenient packet meals or take away food. Given that the family acts as a social field (Bourdieu, 1996, 1998) and that practice is reducible to the social conditions that shape the field, it is not surprising that this was then mirrored in young people's agency and taste for fast food, which was symptomatic of the type of food enjoyed within their family.



Burrows and Wright (2004, p.90) perhaps summed it up best by stating that “it is often those parents who are already ‘othered’ in the normalising discourses of parenting (i.e. lone parents, parents on low incomes) who are further marginalised by these moral imperatives to regulate children”. Vincent and Ball (2007, p.1074) suggest that it is important to remember that creating an environment conducive to “conditions of acquiring” is available only to those whose parents who can afford them in terms of time and effort. Here, parents’ own ability to transfer appropriate values and act in a surveillance and correctional capacity, monitoring what and when their sons/daughters ate was restricted in some low income lone parent and stepfamilies. It was clear for these particular low income individuals that different family structures, and especially a change in social field from one family structure to another, certainly impacted on young people’s learning of appropriate health behaviours, dispositions and subsequent practices.

#### **6.4 The Influence of Family Structure on Young People’s Habitus**

The previous section outlines how young people’s health related dispositions are constructed within families at particularly important times (meal times) and how they are affected by changing family structures. Health related dispositions are an important element that makes up young people’s habitus with decisions to engage in physical activity rooted in beliefs about the link between physical activity and health. The following discussion therefore moves one step further and explores how young people’s physical activity tastes, dispositions and overall habitus are constructed within given fields, how parents in particular are involved in the (re)production of such dispositions and in turn, what effect family structure has on young people’s agency; their choices to enact such dispositions. To do this, the barriers expressed by young people earlier were again explored in the results section, this time in greater detail and

in relation to extracts from ten case study participants that demonstrate how habitus is constructed and affected within different family structures.

The influence that family structure (and parents in particular) has on constructing young people's habitus and taste for physical activities was evident in this study. It was apparent here that initially, regardless of family structure, families are clearly implicated in the transmission of beliefs and values, helping to construct individual histories which are vital to understanding the concept of habitus (Reay, 2004). Much like previous research (Coakley, 2006), young people from all family types highlighted the importance of their family in helping to shape their physical activity dispositions, continually referring to the perceived benefits of regular participation as outlined in popular culture. Indeed, the notion of physical activity for health is a popular and significant resource by which parents were seen to draw from in order to instil similar beliefs in youth. Physical activity was viewed as important by all young people and according to the students, initially encouraged by all parents. This also tracks with previous research whereby families were considered to play a vital role in encouraging and providing support for physical activity (Fitzgerald and Kirk, 2009; Lee and Macdonald, 2009; Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010). However, family structure clearly mediated the amount and type of encouragement available, with those from intact couple families receiving greater support to engage in activities, mainly because they were prone to fewer barriers than those in lone parent and stepfamilies.

In the context of young people's activities, parents are considered to be the gatekeepers, in that their own beliefs could inhibit or promote their child's activity (Beets et al., 2007). Accordingly, family structure was a factor in the extent to which parents' own biographies and interests were transmitted to their children in helping to shape their physical

activity preferences. Macdonald et al. (2004) argue that this mirrors Bourdieu's concept of intergenerational habitus, which Dagkas and Stathi (2007, p.372) describe as the "intergenerational transmission of physical capital (habitus and taste for specific forms of physical activities)" whereby parents in particular attempt to implant their own embodied habits into their offspring. As such, for young people in intact couple families who experienced greater family interaction with regard to physical activity, this notion of intergenerational habitus becomes even more evident. If, as Bourdieu (1984) suggests, tastes (as manifested preferences of habitus) are acquired through the process of socialisation and become more sedimented over time, then the more interaction young people have with their parents the more likely these tastes are to become "rooted in material constraints" (Shilling, 1993, p.129). Drawing on the earlier discussion regarding joint family activities (section 6.2.2), it is clear that young people from intact couple families engaged in more joint activities with parents and, like related studies have reported (Lee and Macdonald, 2009), since these activities may be based on their parents own tastes, then such participation in joint activity works to reinforce an intergenerational habitus. All five of the cases from intact couple families (Sam, Oliver, Lucas, Danny and Mick) presented in the results section (5.3.5) demonstrated this in relation to physical activities, whilst Mick and Danny also expressed this with regard to other leisure pursuits that their parents encouraged and reinforced through joint participation. Often, joint engagement in these leisure based physical activities stemmed from their parents' own preferences and desires and tended to be recreational with a lifetime orientation. In fact, joint engagement in family activities has been found to be a key arena for the transmission of beliefs and values (Shaw and Dawson, 2001). In contrast, the quantitative data and additional reports from young people in lone parent and stepfamilies suggested that they engaged in fewer activities with their parents, but were subsequently awarded with more

free time due to commitments of the lone parent and because some parents in stepfamilies spent more time with new partners.

For those young people who were subject to the transmission of an intergenerational habitus and who did engage in joint activities with family members and particularly parents, their position within their family was seen to increase. As explained previously, the structure of the family field is essentially determined by two hierarchical systems: the possession of economic capital, which for young people will tend to lie with the parent(s) and the possession of symbolic capital and its value within that family. Just as the family name functions as a form of symbolic capital transmitted from their parents (Bourdieu, 1996, 1998), so too does the knowledge and taste for specific activities. The leisure based activities of photography and music for example are heavily valued within the families of Danny and Mick respectively. Moreover, cycling for Sam and his family (father in particular) is given a special place and afforded significant value; they both continually take part in and go to watch major sporting events (Tour de France) and frequently purchase and discuss cycling accessories. As such, these young people were actively engaged in the accumulation of knowledge and tastes for these activities, and were subsequently engaged in the transfer of cultural capital. Since symbolic capital is the form in which other types of capital are recognised (Bourdieu, 1985, 1986), passion, taste and knowledge of these activities act as a form of symbolic capital within their family, working to increase the individuals' standing within that field.

Bourdieu's notions of *individual* habitus suggest that individual personal history and current social circumstance crucially influence their engagement in physical activity, particularly when considering the effect of family structure. This is no more evident than when the

concept of field is incorporated, where the difference between those in alternative family structures (lone parent and stepfamilies) and intact couple families is at its greatest. In essence Bourdieu's concept of field can be defined as a social arena, within which struggle and contestation over resources takes place (Light, 2001). A field "is simultaneously a space of conflict and competition" (Wacquant, 1992, p.18), structured internally in terms of power relations. Each field operates in relative autonomy from other fields and is comprised of "a set of objective power relations that impose themselves on all who enter the field" (Bourdieu, 1985, p.724). As such, those who occupy the same field, or in this case the same family structure with similar objective living environments, may share similar habitus and reproduce the culture of their shared fields through practice. Bourdieu (1989, p.17) contends that:

"...social space is so constructed that agents who occupy similar or neighbouring positions are placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditionings, and therefore have every chance of having similar dispositions and interests, and thus of producing practices that are themselves similar".

According to Bourdieu (1996) the family, given its hierarchical nature, can constitute a particular field and thus those within that field will tend to exhibit similar dispositions, such as siblings exhibiting similar activity preferences. Characteristics of a family field may include family rules and routines while less overt features include parental expectations, values and beliefs and, it is these structuring elements of a field that give meaning to the embodied dispositions (Evans, 2004).

Habitus can therefore be replicated through encountering a field that reproduces its dispositions (Reay, 2004). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.127) explain that "when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted". This implies a sense of

doxa, which refers to shared, unquestioned opinions that determine the ‘natural’ practice and attitudes of social agents within that field (Deer, 2008). It is the natural orthodoxies within a field that ultimately guides the appropriate feel for the game and is similarly assumed by all those within that field who share a similar habitus. However, when habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar, the resulting disjunctures can generate change and transformation. Such disjunctures between habitus and field occur for Bourdieu when individuals with a well-developed habitus find themselves in different fields or different parts of the same social field (Reay, 2004) just as, for example, when young people experience a transition from one family structure to another.

In order to truly study change in habitus it is therefore necessary to explore individuals’ embodied dispositions. Bourdieu points out that habitus is “durable but not eternal” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.133), given that such dispositions are open to a variety of experiences that continually shape its structures. If prolonged dissonance exists between habitus and the social environment (field) then an individuals’ habitus will eventually change (Bourdieu, 1990). In short, any change in field from one family structure to another will ultimately impact on a young person’s habitus since habitus can only really be explored in relation to field and capital; both of which are subject to change when families undergo transitions. It is important to note that generally, families headed by a lone parent are more vulnerable to low income, poor housing and in some cases poverty (Kay, 2004; Save the Children, 2011). According to Kay (2004) the broad pattern of household income involves married couples with children having the highest incomes and lone parents with the lowest. It is such that “low incomes are particularly most common in one-parent families headed by a woman” (Kay, 2004, p.50) as was the case here. Thus, despite these participants being drawn from low income areas, it would appear that family structure may still mediate differences in

stocks of economic capital. As such, family structure may give rise to other structural influences that may be responsible for shaping dispositions and restricting individual agency. It may be the combination of family structure and the resulting class location that ultimately affect young people's dispositions toward physical activity. In this study, more young people from lone parent families expressed financial concerns that restricted their engagement in activity. They also commented on how difficult it was to find time for their parents to engage in activity with them or even provide the necessary support to maintain their activity engagement for example, in the form of transport. These comments reflect the findings of Wright et al. (2003) and Macdonald et al. (2004) who argue that young people's physical activity is frequently a task to be managed in relation to the competing demands of other members within that particular field. However, access to those things that are required to manage activity and provide the necessary support may simply depend on the amount of economic or social capital (relational networks) available to lone parents to be able to allow their child to engage in activity. It was evident here that the amount of capital available to lone parents was not sufficient to be able to continually do this.

Moreover, changes in family structure also impacted on young people from stepfamilies who, though not necessarily subject to lower income and economic capital to the same degree, still faced barriers to activity that ultimately impacted on their habitus. This was particularly evident for Johnny whose reluctance to accept his stepfather as a new family member acted as a barrier to joint activities, which further prevented the transmission of alternative values and beliefs. Moreover, Johnny's tastes for activity differed from those activity preferences of his new stepfather causing disjunctures between the dispositions experienced in his old family structure and those expressed in his new family field (stepfamily). Changes in family structure such as this are also prone to what Bourdieu (1977a)

terms *heterodoxy*. Transformations in Johnny's social environment meant the dispositions making up his habitus were also open to change. The normal practices and orthodoxies, the taken for granted assumptions (*doxa*) were interrupted allowing him to experience heterodoxy. Heterodoxy depends on the recognition of alternative or competing beliefs and when these beliefs essentially disagree with previous assumptions held within that field, they can result in change.

However, the disruption of doxa due to changes in family structure is not always inherently bad. It was clear that for Rob, new dispositions toward activity and a change in habitus emerged as a result of moving to live with his father and his father's girlfriend. In his new field (stepfamily), physical activity was valued more so than in his previous field (lone parent family) when he lived with his mother. As stated earlier in this thesis, "it is the position of an activity within the field in question that determines its value" (Shilling 2004, p.476) and since physical activity was valued more within his new family structure, Rob experienced heterodoxy and became aware of the alternative possibilities available to enact his physical activity dispositions that living in a stepfamily could provide. This illustrates again that practice, as a result of embodied dispositions, is not fixed or predetermined but may be subject to change. Though change is possible, the initial dispositions of habitus are embedded and can remain long after the initial structures that shaped it have gone. The extracts from Taylor demonstrate this whereby even though her initial physical activity dispositions are buried, they re-emerge when her grandparents provide opportunities to engage in activities that align with her original tastes developed with her father.

However, the overall effect of family structure on young people's **agency** can be seen when the results from lone parent families specifically are considered. As discussed earlier (section



6.2.3), it was certainly evident from the quantitative data that young people from lone parent families engaged in higher amounts of sedentary activities while this was corroborated by data from the qualitative element. For Bourdieu the day-to-day activities that people take part in are produced by an interaction of agency and social structure (Light, 2001). Bourdieu places an emphasis on social structures which he balances with the notion of agency; an individual's capacity to act and make free choices. Indeed, agency and thus practice is a direct result of one's habitus and current social circumstance. "However, acting as an agent may be mediated by influences that are beyond their conscious realisation" (Hunter, 2004, p.176), leading agents, and in this case these young people, to reproduce the structures that limit them. This was evidenced by the case participants from lone parent families (Sharon and Ellen), who began to exhibit diminished desires to engage in physical activity and made unconscious choices that reflected the behaviour of their family structures. They reproduced the behaviours most common in that environment (field) which in this case, given parents busy lifestyles, the limited opportunities and numerous barriers to activity discussed earlier, were sedentary in nature. It is through practice that "social structures become embedded in the habitus" and, "as with the concept of agency, actions occur through processes that may be beyond conscious control or awareness of the individual" (Hunter, 2004, p.177). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.135) then argue that "habitus reveals itself ... only in reference to a definite situation. It is only in the relation to certain structures that habitus produces given discourses or practices".

Ultimately then, decisions not to exercise their physical activity dispositions were down to the wider structural forces deriving from their family structure, with many from lone parent families reporting more class related barriers to activity. Resulting sociodemographic factors such as locality and a lack of facilities were thought to impede accessibility to activity opportunities. As a direct result of these wider structural forces, some young people from lone

parent families chose to adopt sedentary behaviours and rationalised their actions by drawing on the practice of significant family members (parents) who also chose to engage in sedentary activities. Here, their agency became predisposed towards certain ways of behaving due to the structure (field) in which they operate, which placed less emphasis on physical activity and instead afforded opportunities for television viewing and computer use. Their choice not to seek out physical activity alternatives when at home was reflective of the particular tastes developed within their families. This is not surprising since Bourdieu (1989, p.19) suggests that for habitus, its “operation expresses the social position in which it was elaborated”. Thus, young people’s own engagement in sedentary pursuits (and Sharon and Ellen in particular) was no doubt a result of a “taste for necessity... an acceptance of the necessary, a resignation of the inevitable” (Bourdieu 1984, p.372) that arose from their particular family structure and a combination of their resulting social circumstance: increased barriers to activity and a lack of time with parents which led to reduced support, along with low income and limited opportunities within their neighbourhood. Living in a lone parent family subsequently resulted in a lack of social and economic capital which placed restrictions on their physical activity opportunities. Importantly, as the dispositions which make up habitus are socially constructed, acquired through previous interactions and experiences, they are thus reflective of the social histories and importantly, the conditions in which they were acquired. Over time, the continued practice of engaging in sedentary pursuits within these fields means there is a chance that these young people may become complicit in reproducing doxa, which in turn will define and characterise that field (Deer, 2008).

In contrast, while the practice of young people in lone parent families was shaped by the conditions in which they lived, to a lesser degree, so too were young people in intact couple and stepfamilies since all participants were drawn from low income areas. For those in

intact couple families in particular, despite showing more dispositions towards physical activity and experiencing the influence of the intergenerational habitus, their agency and eventual practice was still restricted by locality and socioeconomic status; with many reporting restrictions on activity as a direct result of parental safety concerns with regard to the neighbourhood in which they live. Thus, it is clear that family structure (at a meso level) appears to be highly influential in shaping habitus and mediating agency and practice, since the type of family structure in which young people live mediates other structural forces such as social class. In fact, Bourdieu (1978, 1984) argues that class is central, as a structural category, to understanding how social conditions inform habitus and shape life chances.

The family, as a particular social field and site of social reproduction that struggles with physical, economic and symbolic power relations (Bourdieu, 1996) clearly allows for the development of physical activity tastes and preferences. However, these are highly influenced by the biological make up of the family and the resulting amount of resources that they have available. Indeed, some families are more privileged than others since they do not have to contend with various conditions that shape their existence (i.e. lack of income, restricted space and opportunities) and are thus more able to provide a stable environment in which young people's physical activity habitus can be constructed and, importantly, enacted.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CONCLUSION**

This final concluding chapter returns to the original aim of the study and the subsequent research questions. Initially, it provides a review of the main research question and sub-questions before detailing an overview of the findings. Here, this section will show how each research sub-question was addressed and answered, before drawing all of the sub-questions together to draw conclusions regarding the main research question. In so doing, the types of support, barriers to activity, the amount of joint activities and the types of activities all converge to explain how family structure shapes young people's emerging habitus and the influential role that key social agents play in this. Thereafter, conclusions are drawn from the discussion about each family structure in an attempt to demonstrate the place of physical activity in their daily lives. Following this, the key strengths and weaknesses of the study are presented before indications of future research questions and ideas are expressed that could build on the foundations of this thesis.

## 7.1 Overview of the Study Aims and Research Questions

Kay (2006) previously suggested that family structure was an under researched area, particularly as it pertains to young people's physical activity. The purpose and overall aim of this study was therefore to develop an understanding of the influence of family structure on young people's engagement in physical activity. In so doing, it aimed to provide further insight into the concept of 'family' as a pivotal space within the lives of young people from different social upbringings. It should be noted again that these participants were drawn from low income areas only so as to enhance the breadth of family structures, since there is a very real link between some family structures and lower income (Allan and Crow, 2001; Coltrane and Collins, 2001; Pryor and Rodgers, 2001; ONS, 2004; Save the Children, 2011). As such, these findings may only be applicable to these individuals. Essentially, the study was driven by the main research question: *How does family structure affect young people's dispositions towards and engagement in, particular forms of physical activity?* To best answer this overarching question, the research adopted a mixed method approach, sequenced into two phases that ultimately sought to address additional research sub-questions. The first phase of the research focused on addressing the following research questions:

- Does family structure mediate the amount of time young people spend engaged in specific types of activities?
- Are young people in certain family structures exposed to more joint activities with immediate family members?
- Does family structure affect the amount of time parents are able to spend with their offspring?

These questions were predominantly explored by way of a self report measure and 'checked' by triangulation with the qualitative component which counted toward ensuring the second

phase built on and helped to inform findings from the first phase. The second phase and qualitative component was therefore driven by research sub-questions that sought to explore:

- What types of support are provided by families for young people with regards to physical activity?
- What barriers to physical activity do young people from different family structures experience and how do they impact on physical activity choices?
- To what extent is physical activity valued within families and how are those physical activity beliefs and values transmitted to children and adolescents?

In addressing these questions, the thesis placed young people's everyday lives at the centre of the study, suggesting that family structure was key to shaping the engagement of young people in physical activity. Moreover, it sought to address a gap in the literature and helped explain how young people's physical activity engagement was affected by family structure. The findings reported here add significantly to the current literature as there is little published information pertaining to the influence of family structure from the perspectives of young people.

## **7.2 Overview of the Findings**

In providing an overview of the main research findings and conclusions, the following section documents exactly how each research question was addressed. Initially, the research sub-questions are independently explored before these findings are drawn together to provide final conclusions in response to the main research question. How the research questions were addressed and the corresponding answers are thus outlined below.

### ***7.2.1 Research Sub-Question 1***

***Does family structure mediate the amount of time young people spend engaged in specific types of activities?***

Predominantly this question was answered by the self report questionnaire that asked participants to indicate if they had engaged in an activity on the previous day and, to the nearest 15 minutes, how long they had engaged in that activity for (see section 5.2.1). This provided a collective, macro level view of engagement patterns by family structure, suggesting that boys and girls from lone parent families engaged in more sedentary activities than their counterparts during the week and at the weekend, while those from intact couple families engaged in more lifetime activities. On an individual level, semi structured paired interviews helped to corroborate these quantitative findings and explicate reasons behind such engagement (section 5.3.3). Bridging the micro and macro as Bourdieu so often did, these findings moved to demonstrate that on an individual level, those sharing similar living conditions and thus field (lone parent families), tend to exhibit similar habituses and dispositions toward similar activities which is common at a collective, macro level.

**7.2.2 Research Sub-Question 2**

***Are young people in certain family structures exposed to more joint activities with immediate family members?***

Like the previous research sub-question, this question was addressed mainly through use of the self report measure. During the week and at the weekend, young people were asked to indicate how often they engaged in activity with members of their family – the people they reported living with (see section 5.2.2). This data was enhanced by additional qualitative data (section 5.3.2 and 5.3.3) that provided explanations behind such events and was important because joint activities are seen as a form of social support provided within families. It was

apparent that during the week and at the weekend, boys and girls in intact couple families more frequently engaged in activities with a member of their family than those in both lone parent and stepfamilies. This effect was largely similar for boys and girls with or without siblings indicating that having two biological parents at home was more conducive to joint activities than just having one parent at home. These findings would suggest that on a macro level, boys and girls follow similar patterns and that living in an intact couple family was the strongest predictor of joint family activities regardless of the child's gender or number of siblings.

### **7.2.3 Research Sub-Question 3**

***Does family structure affect the amount of time parents are able to spend with their offspring?***

Building on the previous question that explored joint family physical activities, this sub-question was addressed by the final element of the questionnaire which asked participants to indicate how often they ate their main evening meal with all members of their family (see 5.2.3). Albeit a rather crude assessment, the number of meals eaten together as a whole family has been used previously as a predictor of time spent together (Yeung et al., 2001). On a broader level at least, lone parents and parents in stepfamilies spent less time with their children than those in intact couple families. Taken with the qualitative data (5.3.2), it was clear from some of the students' responses that this was due to additional barriers more evident in these 'alternative families'.

### **7.2.4 Research Sub-Question 4**



***What types of support are provided by families for young people with regards to physical activity?***

This research sub-question was addressed by interview data only and helped to identify possible reasons behind patterns of engagement expressed at a macro level in the earlier sub-questions (see section 5.3.1). Within the semi structured interviews, questions included: “Do you think your parent(s) are helping you stay fit and health?” and “Do they encourage you to take part in physical activities?”. Regardless of family structure, these findings suggest that various types of support were identified by these individuals. These predominantly centred on facilitation, investment and encouragement. It was clear here that initially, physical activity was supported and encouraged by key actors (parents) in all family structures.

***7.2.5 Research Sub-Question 5***

***What barriers to physical activity do young people from different family structures experience and how do they impact on physical activity choices?***

Similar to the above question, this was also addressed by way of interview data (section 5.3.2) and the findings had important implications in helping to understand the quantitative research sub-questions (sub-questions 1, 2 and 3). It was certainly evident that parents’ busy lifestyles, their locality (including their social environment) and a lack of capital often impinged on the availability of different types of support expressed above. Importantly, the influence of parents’ busy lifestyles as the most predominant barrier was much more prominent in lone parent and stepfamilies than for those young people from intact couple families.

***7.2.6 Research Sub-Question 6***

***To what extent is physical activity valued within families and how are those physical activity beliefs and values transmitted to children and adolescents?***

The final sub-question was answered by qualitative interview data. Initially, as a driving force behind physical activity beliefs and values, it was apparent that meal times were an important context for the production and transmission of general health related knowledge and dispositions (section 5.3.4). However, it should be noted that while the family is not the only social space in which health messages are conveyed, for young people in this study, it was perhaps the most immediate and important. The role of parents and mothers especially was influential not just in the type of food they ate, but in how they influenced young people's views about food and health. At meal times, parents were seen to be complicit in providing pedagogic moments, creating a climate for acquiring knowledge, beliefs and values about healthy eating and health in general that ensured their offspring developed the appropriate dispositions. However, changes in family structure disrupted the field and prevented usual practices from occurring. Since, lone parent and stepfamilies were identified as eating fewer main meals together, due to a lack of time and because parents in new stepfamilies spent more time together in isolation, the transmission and reinforcement of such values was restricted. In short, the family environment was identified as a critical context for the development for healthy eating and other health related dispositions in youth, though this was certainly mediated by family structure.

Meal times were also used to transmit values about specific health practices such as physical activity. For many families, physical activity was highly valued and encouraged as a means of improving health. However, interview data also revealed that the place of physical activity within families and the values attributed to it, varied according to the nature of the family structure in which young people reside (section 5.3.5 and 5.3.6). This was

predominantly because, in some ‘alternative’ families, physical activity had to compete with other important daily activities and household responsibilities. However, when physical activity did occupy a position of value within families, related beliefs and values were transmitted through informal pedagogic encounters during meal times and via joint participation in activities with significant family members, which allowed for the transmission of physical activity cultural capital and worked to reinforce an intergenerational habitus.

#### **7.2.7 Main Research Question**

***How does family structure affect young people’s dispositions towards and engagement in, particular forms of physical activity?***

All of the above research sub-questions come together to provide a more complete picture in response to the main research question. In essence, understanding practice at an individual, micro level, ultimately led to greater explanations of collective, macro level practices. Drawing on the conceptual lens of Bourdieu, the presentation of findings here suggest that the family is vital in helping to shape young people’s health related dispositions, physical activity tastes and, is extremely influential in constructing their emerging habitus. Along with health related dispositions, Bourdieu’s theory of habitus was useful in deconstructing structural categories and allowing for acknowledgement of individual agency. In this sense, family structure was analysed to explore issues of difference with regard to young people’s physical activity choices. This study, therefore, suggests that young people’s individual habitus, bearing the experiences of their familial backgrounds, provided them with certain desires to participate in physical activity which were mediated by their family circumstance. As such, in response to the main research question above, final conclusions for each family structure are discussed in turn below.

#### ***7.2.7.1 Intact Couple Families***

Clearly, those in low income, intact couple families were more prone to the influence of an intergenerational habitus in helping to shape their physical activity tastes and preferences and received more frequent support to engage in activity. While the nature of their family structure for some restricted the availability of joint family activities and impacted on the amount of time they could spend in certain physical activities, this was not necessarily the case for those in intact couple families. Young people from intact couple families, along with young people from stepfamilies, spent more time during the week engaged in accessible lifetime activities, as a joint or whole family activity, thanks to a greater ability by both parents to manage the family workload and overcome potential barriers. This is particularly important since lifetime activities possess a greater carry over value into adulthood suggesting that young people from two parent families who engage in more of these types of activities may be more active in adulthood. Only one previous study has documented barriers to joint activities (Thompson et al., 2010) and thus, these findings extend the literature to suggest that everyday barriers equally impact on the type of family activities undertaken by different family structures.

#### ***7.2.7.2 Lone Parent Families***

In contrast, for some young people in lone parent families, their opportunity for joint activity was limited to sedentary pursuits with their parent as this was the most accessible joint activity, once parents had finished their additional duties. Young people in these low income lone parent families, because of their social circumstances and limiting factors, were seen to reproduce behaviours most common to that field. It was evident here that young people from

lone parent families faced more barriers to activity and led more sedentary lifestyles than their intact couple and stepfamily counterparts. Furthermore, many young people reported that at weekends they had to travel to see their other biological parent (often father) who in some cases did not live nearby, restricting time to engage in anything other than sedentary activities. These low income, lone parent families may still be financially worse off than their counterparts in two-parent families and, because their mothers had little free time due to competing demands of other family members and increased working hours, their physical activity engagement within the family was reduced. In some lone parent families, physical activity simply did not occupy a position of any great stature, reducing its currency within that field. As a result, parents were less likely to invest the necessary resources (in terms of time and effort) to support activity, leaving young people with different dispositions to engage in more sedentary activities when at home. Bourdieu (1984) argued that in order to understand interactions between people or to explain an event or social phenomenon, it was insufficient to look at what was said or what happened. Instead, it was necessary to examine the social space in which interactions, transactions and events occurred. Thus the notion of habitus, in exploring the dualism of structure and agency, may mean that their physical activity behaviour, reproduced within the family, is only applicable when acting within that particular social field. Nevertheless, Bourdieu argues that the boundaries of social fields are hard to define and therefore delineating where its influence ends, is difficult to comprehend (Wacquant, 1989). However, given that on a macro level young people from lone parent families engaged in more sedentary activities, it was evident that those occupying similar social conditions (low income, lone parent families) did tend to express similar habitus and taste.

### ***7.2.7.3 Stepfamilies***

In contrast, those in stepfamilies occupied a unique position with regard to their physical activity experiences that oscillated between those in lone parent families and those in intact couple families. Despite exhibiting more barriers to activity than those in traditional intact couple families and engaging in fewer joint family activities, they engaged in roughly the same amount of lifetime activities and, unlike those in lone parent families, they spent less time in sedentary activities. It would appear that a transition to a stepfamily can have both positive and negative effects. Initially, young people may experience reduced contact with their biological parent and stepparent since they spend more time together at the start of their relationship. This may lead to unfavourable feelings towards the new family member which may result in a reluctance to engage in joint family activities, reducing their contact and thus the transmission of physical activity tastes and dispositions. However, since stepfamilies are usually formed from lone parent families (Allan and Crow, 2001), young people can also experienced heterodoxy and became aware of new possibilities and opportunities to engage in activities. That said, the effects of such a transition are likely to unfold over time and thus, like the family structure itself, young people's physical activity experiences in stepfamilies may be fluid, constantly evolving and themselves open to change.

In keeping with the mixed method approach a combination of these quantitative and qualitative questions helped to explicate a deeper understanding of the issue and provided a more complete picture in response to the original research question. Overall, despite all young people exhibiting embodied dispositions towards physical activity, their family structure shaped differences in relation to their stock of economic and social resources, which overlapped to contour the possibilities for young people to enact such dispositions. Thus, it

was evident that young people's lives were constrained by different family structures and the very real material limits associated with them.

### **7.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

A key strength of this study was the use of a mixed method approach to triangulate results and provide richer information than would be available through the use of a single method. Used in conjunction with Bourdieu's key thinking tools which allowed for a focus on individual agency and wider structural forces, this approach highlighted the potential barriers and reasons behind behaviours to be illuminated, whereas otherwise they may have remained hidden. While the quantitative results provided important insights and a collective perspective of action, they had little power to explain them and thus, the use of in-depth, paired qualitative interviews provided a richer account of family life for those participating young people. Ultimately, by integrating both the quantitative and qualitative elements in the reporting stages, it was possible to deepen understanding and elaborate on findings emerging from other parts of the data set. In line with Kay's (2004) argument, these qualitative interviews were conducted with smaller sub-samples that brought to light a diverse range of issues. More importantly, this study looked at family, not through a single lens that assembled all groups together under the same heading of 'family', but through multiple lenses that recognised difference in families and family life based on the very different and constantly evolving family structures that are evident in society today. In so doing, it highlighted the numerous barriers to activities that are experienced within different family structures and how they impacted on engagement. Though Jensen and McKee (2003) and Macdonald et al. (2005) have previously argued that the majority of research in physical activity has been undertaken on young people, this research was specifically conducted *with* children and therefore gained

their own, first hand experience of their daily lives and did not need to rely on parental assumptions of behaviour. By allowing the voices of young people to be heard, readers are able to make sense of how young people see physical activity in their daily lives and the obstacles they often face. Finally, the focus on young people from lower income backgrounds allowed for greater diversity and comparability between family structures and although the findings are specific only to these individuals, the study still allowed for facets of low income groups to come to the fore where they were particularly influential. However, perceptions of lower class families as a homogeneous group are not helpful in understanding existing inequalities in physical activity engagement. It is therefore important to acknowledge that different pedagogical practices permeate different families within similar class configurations and in this sense social class should be examined in conjunction with other cultural categories such as family structure, ethnicity, and gender.

It could be argued that a limitation to the study was that using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) might not have accurately reflected the actual level of deprivation of the families from which the participants were drawn, since those young people might not have lived in the same geographical ward to that of their school. However, since all three schools were in close proximity, the IMD alongside Ofsted school reports and additional census data did provide reasonable indication of the deprivation of families living in the area and pointed toward the sample of this study representing an area level approximation of low socioeconomic status. Importantly, the nature of the study and the qualitative component are indicative of the specific population and therefore may not apply to young people from other socioeconomic strata (middle or high class families). Furthermore, given that the majority of pupils within the schools were white British, the study participants were predominantly



Caucasian and so other ethnic views were not represented here. For Bourdieu (1987, p.18) points of view from within a given field are just that, “views taken from a certain point, that is, from a determined position within social space”. As such, different agents may have different view points which make these findings specific to these individuals alone. However, mixed methods advocates suggest that the value of these findings will lie, not in their ability to be generalised to wider populations, but to be used to inform different situations and contexts (Morgan, 2007). Another methodological limitation of the study was that the adapted questionnaire was not previously validated. Despite being interviewer administered, the questionnaire remains a self report approach with the potential for socially desirable responses and since young people are also less time conscious than adults tending to engage in activity at sporadic times (Armstrong and Welsman, 2006), accurately recalling activity is difficult. Perhaps though, the main limitation of this study (as discussed in section 4.8) was the inability to recruit low income parents into the research and provide additional family information (i.e. income) and history. While additional data from parents would have provided greater context and a further dimension, these results are instead based on the voices of young people whose explanatory power may be limited.

#### **7.4 Future Research Directions**

In a climate of economic uncertainty and pressure on public funding, identifying the social and personal factors influencing participation in physical activity by marginalised groups (such as low income families) is of paramount importance, especially if we are to target effective and economically viable public policies designed to promote healthy lifestyles. This research has demonstrated that, in the West Midlands of England at least, families play a central role in developing young people’s physical activity tastes by providing support and

nurturing their interests. However, it has also demonstrated that many low income families, especially lone parent families, face difficulties in supporting their offspring, ultimately disadvantaging their potential choices. The absence of a critical reflection on families (low income, lone parent, stepfamilies) within physical activity and health related policies coupled with an absence of mechanisms to help young people whose families cannot provide support may continue to contribute to issues of social exclusion. For instance, the Government driven *Change4Life* campaign targets families, but in no way does it define or differentiate between different types of family or families that may find it extremely difficult to provide continuous support with regard to young people's active and healthy lifestyles.

With regard to more direct measures, given the increasing diversity in social life, future designs of family based interventions must look to address influences of physical activity and sedentary behaviour for young people, particularly in socially deprived areas. It may be that activities performed together have a more lasting effect and, as lone parent families and indeed some stepfamilies struggle to find time to do this, future interventions could try to accommodate the competing demands that parents face. Since dispositions and ultimately behaviours tend to be reflective of common practices within the family, any efforts to reduce sedentary behaviours will therefore most likely need to have a family focus that targets reduced sedentary behaviour of all family members.

While policy makers and practitioners are becoming more aware of the influence of family with regard to sport, physical activity and health, the results of this research should also be considered with regard to other areas of social policy whereby family is a primary focus (such as education or family policies). Vincent and colleagues (2010) have argued that many family policies actively promote the moral possibilities of middle class families while tending to over exaggerate the possibilities of working class families. In reality, the ability of

working class families, and indeed different family structures within the working classes, are constrained by existing social inequalities such as income, parental working hours, parenting arrangements and caring responsibilities (especially when this has to be negotiated between households). Existing policies further marginalise many families depicting parents in particular as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ depending on whether they adhere to societal norms of moral responsibility and provide adequate care and interaction with their children (Vincent et al., 2010). However, it may be that lone parent families and some newly formed stepfamilies manifest social and economic inequalities more so than intact couple families and thus new kinds of consideration, provision and support for these families must be sought.

Even though this specific research managed to provide insights into the issue of family structure and young people’s physicalities, by no means does it provide a complete understanding how family structure (as a mediating factor) impacts on young people’s engagement in physical activity. It is therefore crucial that any future research in this area maintains a critical treatment of the concept of ‘family’ (Kay, 2004) and observes the many ways in which families are constructed and enacted. Of course, there are distinctions which could be made between lone parent families with those never married parents, those divorced and those who are widowed, all potentially bearing different issues that orient young people’s agency in even more diverse ways. However, while different and changing family structures do have the potential to influence young people’s dispositions towards physical activity, more research is certainly needed that explores parents’ perceptions of their roles as physical activity agents within different family structures. Without adopting this whole family approach, Jeanes (2010) argues that we can only hope to hold a partial understanding of the real influence of family.

Attracting low income parents (alongside young people) through schools proved to be problematic here and perhaps, future research should begin to explore more suitable ways of engaging with those 'hard to reach' groups in society. Without doubt, some individuals or groups may be harder to find and thus it may be more appropriate to engage with low income parents by drawing on social networks such as voluntary or community groups or through structured sports settings in which their offspring attend. Alternatively, funded research may look to offer some form of incentive to participants in an effort to compensate for the time they devote to the research. One thing for sure, is that researchers must find a way to engage with these individuals since without their participation alongside that of their children, we can only partially understand the influence of the family (Jeanes, 2010). While capturing young people's voices should be encouraged, this should ideally be accompanied by adult voices of equal status.

Importantly, there is also a need to continue to focus on how young people learn and acquire physical activity and health related dispositions within and across different social fields (family structures). With the exception of this thesis and previous work (Quarmby and Dagkas, 2010), this remains a relatively unexplored area. The "processes of knowledge (re)production" is concerned with the transmission of physical activity and thus health related beliefs, values, dispositions and identities produced through different pedagogical encounters (Tinning, 2008, p.416). With specific regard to sport pedagogy, teachers and coaches, to be effective, must recognise the individuals' needs and interests, so that suitable pedagogical encounters can be created and achieved. However, to be successful in this endeavour, teachers and coaches must be fully informed about the different pedagogic environments in which young people come to learn about and experience physical activity and health. It is therefore

important to not only be aware of the ‘formal’ pedagogic encounters that take place in institutional sites such as schools, but also ‘informal’ encounters that occur in different fields, such as the family (Tinning, 2008). In fact, Tinning (2008) posits that all pedagogical encounters concerned with developing an understanding of the body, physical activity and health, wherever they take place, must be taken into account. Informal pedagogic encounters within the family may also differ and clash with formal pedagogical encounters in different institutions and as such he argues that:

“If we are to gain a better understanding of the actual impact of our institutional pedagogical work, we also need to understand the pedagogical work done by other cultural players that often undermines the intentional pedagogical work done by kinesiology specialists” (Tinning, 2008, p.419).

Future research must therefore continue to explore the influence of the family and indeed how different family structures, some of whom are often disadvantaged in supporting young people, work to transmit physical activity and health related values that lead to engagement and lifelong participation in physical activity. Such findings can then be used by teachers and coaches to inform their own pedagogic practices to help create suitable programmes that work in conjunction with informal pedagogic encounters rather than in competition; ensuring that pedagogies can meet the complex, individual needs of those young people from different social and cultural backgrounds.

Finally, Benn et al., (2011) argue that there is an increased importance attached to issues of intersectionality in research, though it is far less prominent within the sport, physical activity and physical education field. According to Phoenix (2006) cited in Flintoff et al., (2008, p.74) intersectionality is concerned with “the complex political struggles and arguments that seek to

make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the powerful relations that are central to it". Engaging with intersectionality only enhances understanding of multiple issues along with dynamic and ever changing individual agency. Benn et al., (2011) argue that embracing intersectionality requires future research to broaden its frame of reference within which the world is perceived. Any future research on families should certainly not treat them as homogenous groups, but as unique social fields that are structured according to multiple socio-cultural influences including ethnicity, religion, culture and class that ultimately help to shape individual practice. Research must also explore family related issues for other marginalised groups, such as black and minority ethnic families (where for some, lone parenthood is the norm), and take into account religious and cultural differences that impact on agency. By doing so, we may be more able to effectively correspond to an ever changing society and tackle issues of disengagement and health.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I**

#### **The Family Physical Activity Questionnaire**

## **FAMILY INFORMATION**

Student I.D.:

School I.D.:

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As part of my research, I am interested in finding out a little bit about you and your family. As such, I would like you to answer the following simple questions.

**Remember:**

- i. There are no right or wrong answers – this is not a test**
  - ii. Please try and answer all the questions as honestly and accurately as you can – this is very important.**
- 

Please tick the corresponding circle:

**1. Age:**      11      ☐      12      ☐      13      ☐      14      ☐

**2. Gender:**    Male      ☐                      Female      ☐

**3. Please indicate who else normally *lives at home* with you:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WEEKDAY**

Student I.D.:

School I.D.:

I am trying to find out about your usual physical activity patterns from the previous day. This includes sport or dance that makes you sweat or makes you feel tired, or games that make you breathe hard such as tag, running or just general play outdoors.

### **Remember:**

- iii. **There are no right or wrong answers – this is not a test**
- iv. **Please try and answer all the questions as honestly and accurately as you can – this is very important.**

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**1. Physical Activity before and after school – did you do any of the following activities YESTERDAY? If yes, please indicate for how long you did it and who you did it with – this could be a family member – mum, dad, brother, sisters, step parent or, a friend. If it was with a team or a club please write “Club”.**

<b>Example:</b>	<b>How Long?</b>	<b>Who with?</b>
<b>Bicycling</b>	<b><u>45 mins</u></b>	<b><u>Dad and Brother</u></b>
	How long?	Who with?
Watched television	_____	_____
Listened to music	_____	_____
Played computer games	_____	_____
Did a paper round	_____	_____
Walked a dog	_____	_____
Light household chores	_____	_____
Gardening	_____	_____
Brisk walk	_____	_____
Bicycling	_____	_____
Swimming	_____	_____
Golf	_____	_____
Badminton	_____	_____
Tennis	_____	_____
Hockey	_____	_____
Gymnastics	_____	_____
Netball	_____	_____
Basketball	_____	_____

Athletics	_____	_____
Running	_____	_____
Football	_____	_____
Rugby	_____	_____
Dancing	_____	_____
Tag	_____	_____
Skateboarding	_____	_____
Martial Arts	_____	_____
General play	_____	_____

**2. Was this a normal weekday for you? Please mark.**

Yes            ( )            No            ( )

**3. Please mark how often during a *usual* school week you do some form of physical activity (like those physical activities listed above) WITH A MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY/STEP FAMILY (these should only be the people you indicated living with).**

	<i>No Activities</i>	<i>1 activity</i>	<i>2 activities</i>	<i>3 activities</i>	<i>More than 3</i>
Monday	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Tuesday	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Wednesday	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Thursday	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Friday	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

**4. Please mark how often, during a *normal* school week (Monday – Friday), you sit down and eat your evening meal with your WHOLE FAMILY (this should only relate to people you live with)?**

Never            ( )  
Once a week    ( )  
Twice a week    ( )  
Three times a week ( )  
Four times a week ( )  
Five times a week ( )

## **WEEKEND**

Student I.D.:

School I.D.:

I am trying to find out about your usual physical activity patterns from one day at the weekend. This includes sport or dance that makes you sweat or makes you feel tired, or games that make you breathe hard such as tag, running or just general play outdoors.

### **Remember:**

- v. **There are no right or wrong answers – this is not a test**
- vi. **Please try and answer all the questions as honestly and accurately as you can – this is very important.**

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**1. Physical Activity at the weekend – did you do any of the following activities at the WEEKEND? If yes, please indicate for how long you did it and who you did it with - this could be a family member – mum, dad, brother, sisters, step parent or, a friend. If it was with a team or a club please write “Club”.**

<b><i>Example:</i></b>	<b>How Long?</b>	<b>Who with?</b>
<b>Swimming</b>	<b><u>60 mins</u></b>	<b><u>Mum, Sister and Brother</u></b>
	How long?	Who with?
Watched television	_____	_____
Listened to music	_____	_____
Played computer games	_____	_____
Did a paper round	_____	_____
Walked a dog	_____	_____
Light household chores	_____	_____
Gardening	_____	_____
Brisk walk	_____	_____
Bicycling	_____	_____
Swimming	_____	_____
Golf	_____	_____
Badminton	_____	_____
Tennis	_____	_____
Hockey	_____	_____
Gymnastics	_____	_____
Netball	_____	_____
Basketball	_____	_____

Athletics	_____	_____
Running	_____	_____
Football	_____	_____
Rugby	_____	_____
Dancing	_____	_____
Tag	_____	_____
Skateboarding	_____	_____
Martial Arts	_____	_____
General play	_____	_____

**2. Was this a normal weekend for you? Please mark.**

Yes                      ( )                      No                      ( )

**3. Please mark how often during a *weekend*, you do some form of physical activity (like those physical activities listed above) WITH A MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY/STEP FAMILY (these should only be the people you indicated living with).**

	<i>None</i>	<i>1 – 2 activities</i>	<i>3 – 4 activities</i>	<i>5 – 6 activities</i>	<i>More than 6 activities</i>
Saturday	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Sunday	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

**4. Please mark how often, during a usual *weekend* (Saturday and Sunday only), you sit down and eat your evening meal with your WHOLE FAMILY (this should only relate to people you live with)?**

Never                      ( )  
Once                      ( )  
Twice                      ( )

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Interview Protocol**

### Introductory Comments

Thank you for taking the time to complete the initial questionnaire and agreeing to take part in this follow up research. As already discussed this interview will remain anonymous, meaning I will give you a different name throughout. Also with your permission this discussion will be recorded so I have a record of what ideas you have come up with, except for any time when you wish for the interview to be stopped.

### Explanation of Interview Purpose

The purpose of this interview is to explore yours and your family's choices in physical activity. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions; I am simply interested in your thoughts and opinions. Take your time before answering and if you want to you can discuss the question with the other students in the group.

<b>Questions:</b>	<b>Procedures/Prompts:</b>
	<b>Equipment Needs: Interview protocol, Digital voice recorder</b>
Interviewer states: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Tape recording –</li><li>- Today's date and time</li><li>- Venue of interview (insert pseudonyms)</li><li>- Name of participants involved (insert pseudonyms)</li><li>- No right or wrong answers – all children we interview may give us different answers and that is what we want.</li></ul>	<b>Guidelines for questioning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Simplify your language when child does not respond</li><li>- Clarify child's response by repeating child's words/using synonyms</li><li>- Do not ask leading questions</li><li>- Summarise child's response at end of question</li><li>- Maintain a neutral stance – no acknowledgement of answers</li><li>- Look for themes emerging in various questions and take the opportunity to verify the themes.</li></ul>
	<b>Guidelines for prompting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Do not ask guiding questions</li><li>- Use the child's own language to clarify or expand</li></ul>
<b>Topic 1 – Understanding of Family</b> The questionnaire you completed made reference to the kind of activities you engage in with your family. I would now like to explore what you come to understand of the concept of 'family'; what does family mean to you.	<i>Prompts as above:</i>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take a minute and have a little chat amongst yourselves and try and decide what you understand about family? Can you give me some examples?</li> <li>2. Who would you include in your family?</li> <li>3. Do you spend a lot of time with your family, or more time with friends? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When do you spend most time with your family – evenings/weekends?</li> <li>- Within your family who do you think you spend most time with?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><i>2. Probe for inclusion/exclusion of step-parents or parents not living with the child? Why?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>How would you describe your family structure?</i></li> <li>- <i>How long have you lived in this family structure? Has it always been this family type?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Topic 2 – Understanding of Key Concepts: Body and Self</b></p> <p>This next section is now going to focus on you and whether you think it is important to be active and, what you understand about physical activity, health and being fit.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does physical activity mean to you?</li> <li>2. Do you enjoy being physically active and playing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do/don't you enjoy about it then?</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Do you think it is important to stay active? Why?</li> <li>4. What do you think the words "healthy" and "fit" mean?</li> <li>5. Would you say you are pretty healthy?</li> <li>6. Would you consider yourself fit?</li> <li>7. Do you think your parent(s)/guardian(s) are healthy and fit?</li> <li>8. Do you think it is important they stay fit and healthy? Why?</li> <li>9. How often do you hear these words and where/from whom?</li> </ol>	<p><i>Prompts as above:</i></p> <p><b>1. Probe for understanding of physical activity/exercise/sport</b></p> <p><b>4. Explain why/how they know?</b></p> <p><b>5. Explain why/how they know?</b></p> <p><b>6. Explain why/why not and how they know?</b></p> <p><b>9. Who in the family talks about it most?</b></p>
<p><b>Topic 3 – Family/Parent Activities</b></p> <p>This group of questions will explore how much and in what kind of activities you normally engage in with your family, i.e., your parents/guardians, brothers or sisters.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have your parents/guardians ever been involved in physical activities/structured sports? Why? Why not?</li> </ol>	<p><i>Prompts as above:</i></p> <p><i>Probe for their views of physical activity</i></p>

<p>2. Are they still involved in physical activity/sports now – are they the same as before?</p> <p>3. What activities do you normally do with your family? Where? When? How often?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What sort of activities do you do with your <i>dad / step dad /</i> guardian? Have you always done that</li> <li>- What sort of activities do you do with your <i>mum / step mum /</i> guardian? Have you always done that?</li> </ul> <p>4. Do you enjoy doing physical activities with members of your family? Why?</p> <p>5. Do you think your parents/guardians are the reasons you take part in physical activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do they encourage/motivate you to be active?</li> <li>- Do you think it is the same for your brothers or sisters?</li> </ul>	<p>2. <i>Why do you think they are involved in these?</i></p> <p>3. <i>Explore why they might not – would they like to?</i> - <i>Is there anything that stops you going out to play with family?</i></p> <p>4. <i>Probe for which family member most / <b>siblings</b>?</i></p> <p>5. <i>Why? Why not?</i> - <i>Why? Why not?</i></p>
<p><b>Topic 4 – Parental Support for Activities/Health</b> I would now like you to think about how your parents/guardians help support your participation in physical activities as well as how they might support/maintain your health.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do your parents/guardians talk much about being fit and healthy? Where? When? Who talks most?</li> <li>2. Do your parents/guardians talk much about their activities with you?</li> <li>3. Do you talk much about what activities you do, or are going to do, with your parents?</li> <li>4. Do you think your parents/guardians are helping you stay fit and healthy?</li> <li>5. Do they encourage you/help you to take part in activities?</li> </ol>	<p>Prompts as above:</p> <p>1. <i>Probe for further explanations / <b>siblings</b> involvement</i></p> <p>4. <i>How – what types of support are they providing?</i></p> <p>5. <i>How? Ask for examples?</i></p>
<p><b>Topic 5 – Children’s Evening and Weekend Activities</b> This next subject will look to explore the types of activities you do, who you do them with, where you do them and why you chose to do them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. During the weekends, do you try and stay active? How?</li> </ol>	<p>Prompts as above:</p>



<p>Where?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Do you think it is important you try and stay active on weekends? Why?</li> <li>3. Are there any activities you really look forward to doing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who do you do these with?</li> <li>- Why do you do these?</li> <li>- Where do you do these?</li> <li>- How do you get there?</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. How often do you do these activities – every weekend?</li> <li>5. Apart from any ECA at school, are there any activities you do after school in the evening?</li> <li>6. Is there anything that prevents you taking part in physical activities more often?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Probe for further explanations</li> <li>3. Ask children to name their favourite three.  <i>Are there any activities you might like to do/used to do? Why don't you do these now?</i> - Probe for what is stopping them doing activities?</li> <li>6. Probe for family structure factors?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Topic 6 – Children's School and Extra Curricular Activities</b> I would now like you to think about what activities you do at school and any extra curricular activities you do after school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What sort of physical activities/sports do you do at school?</li> <li>2. Do you take part in any after school clubs? What types? Who with? Why do you do them?</li> <li>3. Do your parents encourage you to take part in school activities?</li> <li>4. Out of everyone and everything we have talked about today, in your opinion, whose job is it to try and make sure you stay fit and healthy – who is responsible?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do they play for a team? What made them decide to join?</li> <li>2. Probe for parental support / involvement / encouragement / motivation</li> </ol>
<p><b>STOP RECORDING</b></p>	

Thank participants.

Interviewer's field notes of any observations/impressions during interview.

## **APPENDIX III**

### **Interview Analysis - Coding Sub-categories**

## **INTERVIEW ANALYSIS – CODED SUB-CATEGORIES**

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- **Category A: Understanding of Family (UFA)**
  - Definitions of family (DEF)
  - Inclusion/exclusion of family members and reasons (INC)
  - Free time with family members and reasons (FMR)
  - Free time with friends and reasons (FRR)
- **Category B: Understanding of Key Concepts (UKC)**
  - Understanding of physical activity (UPA)
  - Reasons for enjoying physical activity (ENJ)
  - Importance of physical activity (IPA)
  - Understanding of health (UHE)
  - Understanding of fit (UFT)
- **Category C: Perceptions of Health and Fitness (PHF)**
  - Self perceptions of health (SPH)
  - Self perceptions of fitness (SFT)
  - Parents' health and fitness (PHF)
  - Reasons why parents should try to stay fit and health (RPH)
  - Health and fitness messages (HFM)
- **Category D: Parent and Family Activities (PFA)**
  - Parent activities (PAC)
  - Reasons parents have stopped activities (RPS)
  - Joint family physical activities (JFP)
  - Joint family sedentary activities (JFS)
  - Other joint family activities (OJA)

- Reasons for joint family activities (RJF)
- Reasons for lack of family activities (RLF)
- **Category E: Parent Support for Activity (PSA)**
  - Parents' influence on siblings (PIS)
  - Transfer of physical activity values (TPV)
  - Parents' facilitation of physical activity (FPA)
  - Parents' investment in activity (INV)
  - Encouragement for physical activity (EPA)
  - General support for activity (GSA)
  - Parents' support for health (PSH)
- **Category F: Children's Evening and Weekend Physical Activities (CPA)**
  - Evening and weekend activities (WA)
  - Importance of activity at weekend (IAW)
  - Other activities (OA)
  - Activities affected by change in family structure (CFS)
  - Barriers to activity (BPA)
- **Category G: Children's School Based and Extra Curricular Activities (SBA)**
  - Extra curricular activities during and after school and why (ECA)
  - Parental encouragement for school based activities (PES)
  - Responsibility for health (ROH)

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **Gatekeeper Information Sheet and Consent Form**

**PhD RESEARCH STUDY – UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM**

**THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY STRUCTURE IN SHAPING YOUNG PEOPLE’S  
ENGAGEMENT IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR GATEKEEPERS**

To whom it may concern:

My name is Tom Quarmby, a PhD student from the University of Birmingham and I am writing to invite you and your school to take part in a research study carried as part of my doctoral thesis. Below is a brief outline of the nature of my research and what it entails. If there is anything you do not understand, would like further clarification on or whether you simply have any queries, please don’t hesitate to contact me at the correspondence below and I will be more than happy to explain it further.

**What is the purpose of the research?**

The purpose of this study is to explore how family structure plays a part in shaping young people’s choices for, and engagement in, physical activities together with exploring how they understanding physical activity, health and fitness.

Recent professional and academic literature has highlighted alarming changes to the structure of families that young people are brought up in. A recent report by UNICEF (2007) on “*Child Wellbeing*” made use of family structure as a dimension of the overall rating for family relationships and indicated that less than 70 per cent of young people live with both biological parents. Furthermore, with the family being one of the most significant social influences on health behaviour for young people, it makes sense to observe how different and changing family structures impact on their engagement in activity.

In essence, this study will seek to explore the relationship between young people’s activity and their family structure using a self report questionnaire and through interviews, explore what family related determinants they face to physical activity.

**What is my involvement as the School Head Teacher/Head of Department?**

All I ask of you and the school management team is to facilitate the conduct of my research. This will primarily involve two areas:

1. Aid in the dissemination of questionnaires to students in years 7, 8 and 9 ideally, before or after a PE lesson.
2. If selected for further study, to facilitate the conduct of small group/paired interviews, involving students, to be conducted during school time.

**How will this impact on the daily running of the school?**

It is my intention to minimise any disruption to the daily life of the school, the students and their teachers. I have no reason to believe that the research will place any additional strain on your resources and in most cases, will simply involve the handout of questionnaires to those taking part, together with the use of a small room to conduct interviews.

**Will the school name be made public?**

No. The school and all information obtained during the research will be, and will remain, strictly anonymous and therefore non-attributable to anyone talking part.

**Who has reviewed this study?**

This study has been reviewed by the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Contact Information**

Thomas Quarmby

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Research Student, School of Education

The University of Birmingham

Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 5TT

Thank you for your time and I will try to call you in the near future to discuss, in person, the possibility of conducting this research within your institution.

Best wishes,

Thomas Quarmby

**PhD RESEARCH STUDY – UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM**

**THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY STRUCTURE IN SHAPING YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
ENGAGEMENT IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

**CONSENT FORM FOR GATEKEEPERS  
(HEADTEACHERS/HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)**

**School ID:**

		Please Initial Box
1	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I have spoken with relevant staff and hereby give my full consent to allow this research to go ahead within this school.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I agree to help with the dissemination of information to young people and their parents and to help facilitate this research within the school where appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Gatekeeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

*Please keep a copy of this form for your own personal records*



## **APPENDIX V**

### **Example of Coded Interview Transcript**

Location: **School S1**

Participants: Pete (12 years) (SP Mother) & James (12 years) (SP Mother)

Date & Time: 08/05/2008 – 9.55

Interviewer: *Thank you both for coming Right... erm, today is the 8<sup>th</sup> of...*

James: May

Interviewer: *Thank you... May! Err it is almost five to ten... and I'm in the meeting room with Pete and James. So, first question. I want you to take a little minute, chat amongst yourselves if you want, and try to decide what you understand about the word family, and can you give me some examples of what family means to you.*

James: **People that you can trust (UFA/DEF/A5/SPF2/12)**

Pete: **And care about and stuff and people that look after you (UFA/DEF/A5/SPF1/13)**

Interviewer: *OK. Anything else? Who would you include in family then?*

Pete: My sister and my mum

Interviewer: *So Pete, you'd include your sister and your mum*

James: My mum and my brother

Interviewer: *Your mum and your brother, you wouldn't include anybody else in that?*

James: **I might include my dad but I only see him on the weekends (UFA/INC/A5/SPF2/20)**

Interviewer: *Ok and Pete?*

Pete: Just them

Interviewer: *Just them. Ok. Thank you for that. Erm...so would you say you spend a lot of time with your family or more time with your friends?*

Pete: **More time with my family... I guess (UFA/FMR/A5/SPF1/26)**

Interviewer: *More time with your family, who in particular within your family?*

Pete: My mum

Interviewer: *Your mum? And James?*

James: Same with me

Interviewer: *Yeah. So you'd spend more time with your family?*

James: Yeah

33 Interviewer: *And who in particular in your family?*

34 James: My Mum

35 Interviewer: *Your mum again. OK. Hold onto that thought 'cos we'll come back to that then.*

36 *Erm...when would you say you spend most time with your family, when would you say you*

37 *spend most time with your mum?*

38 James: In the evenings when we are having our dinner

39 Interviewer: *James. Good. Pete?*

40 Pete: Evenings, and mornings and some weekends

41 Interviewer: *Some weekends. OK. That's the first section over and done with... Erm... so*

42 *this next set of questions is just gonna ask about physical activity and health and stuff like*

43 *that. So do you enjoy being physically active and playing?*

44 James: Yeah

45 Pete: Yeah

46 Interviewer: *Yeah. What do you enjoy about it?*

47 James: **Keeping us fit and like when you do with your mates you can have a laugh as**

48 **well (UKC/ENJ/A5/SPF2/47)**

49 Interviewer: *Good. Yeah*

50 Pete: The same

51 Interviewer: *The same, yeah, so what do you understand about physical activity, what does*

52 *physical activity mean to you?*

53 James: **Enjoying yourself (UKC/UPA/A5/SPF2/53)**

54 Interviewer: Sorry?

55 James: Enjoying yourself

56 Pete: **Enjoying yourself and keeping fit (UKC/UPA/A5/SPF1/56)**

57 Interviewer: *And you're keeping fit. So you, what if you are physically active....*

58 Pete: Healthy

59 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm...Do you think it's important to stay active?*

60 Pete: Yeah

61 Interviewer: *Why?*

62 Pete: **So when you're older you got like less chance of getting heart rate or stuff like**

63 **that (UKC/IPA/A5/SPF1/62)**

64 Interviewer: *Ok. James?*

65 James: Less chance of you like getting diseases if you stay active when you're young  
66 (UKC/IPA/A5/SPF2/65)

67 Interviewer: *What kind of diseases?*

68 James: Like a heart attack, diabetes, anything (UKC/IPA/A5/SPF2/68)

69 Interviewer: *How do you know that?*

70 James: I watched a program on it

71 Interviewer: *Alright erm... you mentioned a minute ago the words fit and healthy, all right,*  
72 *so I just want you to think now what you think the word healthy actually means. Any ideas?*  
73 [Long pause] *Pete?*

74 Pete: Eating like fruit, veg and stuff and running about (UKC/UHE/A5/SPF1/74)

75 Interviewer: *Ok. And James?*

76 James: You keeping your heart like a steady pace and sometimes when it goes too fast  
77 it means you're increasing your stamina (UKC/UHE/A5/SPF2/76)

78 Interviewer: *And where did you learn that?*

79 James: I just know it

80 Interviewer: *You just know it. And how do you know it? Is it from a TV program you've*  
81 *watched, is it from...*

82 James: School

83 Interviewer: *School. What about the word fit?*

84 Pete: Well it makes you feel skinny and everything and if you're like fat and  
85 everything people take the mick out of you. (UKC/UFT/A5/SPF1/84)

86 Interviewer: *OK*

87 James: Just keeping active (UKC/UFTA5/SPF2/87)

88 Interviewer: *So, you think, James, you think fit is keeping active, and Pete, you think fit is*  
89 *more to do with erm being skinny and not being fat so people don't pick on you, yeah? Any*  
90 *other ideas? No? OK erm... would you say you were both pretty healthy?*

91 James: I'd say I was healthy but sometimes I'd have a day that I'll sit in and do  
92 nothing (PHF/SPH/A5/SPF2/91)

93 Pete: Same

94 Interviewer: *Right, so some days are you saying, some days you are healthy and some*  
95 *days...*

96 Pete: Lazy

97 Interviewer: *And some days you're lazy? And on those days when you're lazy does that*  
98 *mean you're not healthy?*

99 Pete: Well it still means that we're healthy but we just wanna have a day off and  
100 stuff (PHF/SPH/A5/SPF1/99)

101 Interviewer: *Ok. What about being fit, would you consider yourselves being pretty fit?*

102 Pete: I'd be in between (PHF/SPH/A5/SPF1/102)

103 Interviewer: *Pete, you'd be in between, in between what, being fit and not being fit? Why do*  
104 *you think that?*

105 Pete: Cos some days I have days off and everything (PHF/SFT/A5/SPF1/105)

106 Interviewer: *Ok*

107 James: I'd have to say I'd be in between as well 'cos I'm not out every day running  
108 around (PHF/SFT/A5/SPF2/107)

109 Interviewer: *'Cos you're not out every day? Ok. Good. Erm.....here's a question for you*  
110 *then, Do you think your parents, do you think your mums are fit and healthy?*

111 James: Yeah

112 Pete: Yeah

113 Interviewer: *Yeah? Do you think it's important that they stay fit and healthy?*

114 James: They're like the inspiration for the kids to stay fit and healthy, 'cos if your  
115 mum and dad aren't doing anything, then you're gonna think you don't have to do anything  
116 (PHF/RPH/A5/SPF2/114)

117 Pete: And when you're older then, do you want to have kids, do you want them to be  
118 fit and healthy, so take it from them (PHF/RPH/A5/SPF1/117)

119 Interviewer: *Erm... so how do you know your mums and dads are fit and healthy?*

120 James: Well my mum has been trying to eat 5 fruit and veg for the past 2 years  
121 (PHF/PHF/A5/SPF2/120)

122 Pete: My mums stopped smoking and everything.... (PHF/PHF/A5/SPF1/122)

123 [INTERUPTION – DOOR OPENS]

124 Interviewer: *Could you just wait outside for 5 minutes? Thank you*

125 Pete: She's always like trying to get me fit and healthy and making me run around  
126 the field and stuff (PSA/GSA/A5/SPF1/125)

127 Interviewer: *OK. Erm...how often do you hear the words fit and healthy?*

128 Pete: Loads in PE

129 Interviewer: *Loads in PE?*

130 James: We have PE 2 times a week, Wednesday and Thursday, so it's like in the mid  
131 part of the week so it stays in your mind

132 Interviewer: *Do you hear the words fit and healthy much at home?*

133 Pete: Pretty much

134 Interviewer: *Who from?*

135 Pete: My Mum

136 James: My Mum and my brother

137 Interviewer: *When do they, when does your mum tend to talk about being fit and healthy?*

138 James: When my brother goes to the gym, she like, when you're older you can go to  
139 the gym and be fit and healthy. (PSA/TVP/A5/SPF2/138)

140 Interviewer: *Good*

141 Pete: My mum just says it anyway so she knows I'm gonna be all right when I'm  
142 older and stuff (PSA/TVP/A5/SPF1/141)

143 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm.... next couple of questions then, Have your parents ever been*  
144 *involved in any physical activities or any structured sports that you know of?*

145 Pete: Yeah

146 Interviewer: *What like Pete?*

147 Pete: She did play like Basketball and netball and everything  
148 (PFA/PAC/A5/SPF1/147)

149 Interviewer: *How long ago was that?*

150 Pete: About when she was 18 – she still tries to get to 'cos she's got work and  
151 everything, she tries once a week (PFA/RPS/A5/SPF1/150)

152 Interviewer: *Good. And James?*

153 James: When I was at primary school my mum used to come to my sports day and run  
154 the adults race for me and my brother (PFA/PAC/A5/SPF2/153)

155 Interviewer: *Really. And does she do anything else now that you know of?*

156 James: No, not that I know of

157 Interviewer: *So, erm... both of you, are they still involved in anything now? I mean you said*  
158 *you're mum tries to fit in, what does she try to fit in?*

159 Pete: Like after work, she plays basketball for an hour or netball for an hour  
160 (PFA/PAC/A5/SPF1/159)

161 Interviewer: *Whereabouts does she do that...at a club or...*

162 Pete: *She plays it with my sister 'cos we got a like a basketball hoop*  
 163 **(PFA/PAC/A5/SPF1/162)**

164 Interviewer: *OK. Well that brings me on to my next question, you said there that your mum*  
 165 *plays with your sister, basketball sometimes, Are there any activities that you do together, do*  
 166 *you play together with your mums or....*

167 Pete: *Yeah*

168 Interviewer: *Pete? What kind?*

169 Pete: *Play wrestling with her... Yeah, we have the mattresses out and everything and*  
 170 *we flip each other about* **(PFA/JFP/A5/SPF1/169)**

171 Interviewer: *And how often do you do that?*

172 Pete: *About every like, every two weeks at weekends*

173 Interviewer: *Ah Good. What makes you do that then, what makes you do wrestling?*

174 Pete: *Cos I watch it and everything and my mum just like, she likes to me, one day*  
 175 *we could get the mattress out and everything and play and going "yeah, yeah", and it started*  
 176 *to be mean exciting thing* **(PFA/RJF/A5/SPF1/174)**

177 Interviewer: *And James?*

178 James: *I play cricket with my brother and his mates outside the front*  
 179 **(PFA/JFP/A5/SPF2/178)**

180 Interviewer: *Ok and what about with your Mum?*

181 James: *I do a bit of gardening with her* **(PFA/JFP/A5/SPF2/181)**

182 Interviewer: *Bit of gardening.... do you do that often?*

183 James: *Yeah*

184 Interviewer: *Ok. Good. Erm... What about with your Dad, do you do any activities with your*  
 185 *Dad when you see him?*

186 James: *When I go to my dads, me and my dad and my sister go swimming*  
 187 **(PFA/JFP/A5/SPF2/186)**

188 Interviewer: *And...*

189 Pete: *I ain't got a Dad* **(PFA/RLF/A5/SPF1/189)**

190 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... do you enjoy doing these physical activities with members of your*  
 191 *family, do you enjoy wrestling with your mum?*

192 Pete: *Yeah*

193 Interviewer: *Yeah... What do you enjoy about it?*

194 James: **I enjoy helping my sister learn how to swim (PFA/RJF/A5/SPF2/194)**

195 Interviewer: *OK.*

196 Pete: **I just like to the fun that we're flipping each other around and we are having**

197 **fun (PFA/RJF/A5/SPF1/196)**

198 [DOOR OPENS]

199 Interviewer: *Is it ok for these two to sit down just for a minute 'cos they're on next and*

200 *they're not allowed to stand in the corridor?*

201 Pete: *Yeah*

202 James: *Yeah*

203 Interviewer: *Yeah, come in and sit down for a minute, we're just finishing this one and then*

204 *you two can do yours... erm... right, do you think your mums are the reason why you take*

205 *part in sort of physical activities and sport?*

206 Pete: *Yeah*

207 Interviewer: *Yeah. Why?*

208 Pete: **She always like tries and gets me into them and stuff**

209 **(PSA/EPA/A5/SPF1/208)**

210 Interviewer: *What sort of things does she try and get you to do?*

211 Pete: *Basketball, football and stuff like that*

212 Interviewer: *Good*

213 James: **When I get into something my mum like encourages me and buys me things to**

214 **do with the sports so I keep at it (PSA/EPA/A5/SPF2/213)**

215 Interviewer: *Ok... erm... do you think they do the same for your brothers and sisters?*

216 James: **Yeah, she's done the same for my brother (PSA/PIS/A5/SPF2/216)**

217 Interviewer: *Yeah?*

218 Pete: *Yeah*

219 Interviewer: *Yeah? Definitely? Ok. Erm... so we mentioned earlier that you hear the words*

220 *fit and healthy a lot at school, erm, at home, apart from when you, or when your brothers or*

221 *sisters go to do activities, when does your mum talk about it then at all or...*

222 Pete: *No. We just talk about what's gone on at school and stuff like that*

223 James: **Sometimes we talk about, like I say if me and my brother have like loads of**

224 **vegetables and she says you will staying healthy (PFA/HFM/A5/SPF2/223)**



225 Interviewer: *OK. When you are sat at the table as well then do you talk about, as well as*  
 226 *what you've done at school, what sort of activities you might do, what activities you might like*  
 227 *to do?*

228 Pete: Yeah

229 James: Yeah

230 Interviewer: *Yeah, who starts that conversation off, is it you or is it your mum or...*

231 James: Me and my brother

232 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm...do you think your parents are helping you to stay fit and healthy?*

233 Pete: Yeah

234 Interviewer: *How, how are they doing that?*

235 Pete: 'Cos they encourage me and everything (PSA/EPA/A5/SPF1/235)

236 Interviewer: *In what way do they encourage you?*

237 Pete: Like they keep on saying why don't you do that sport and everything?  
 238 (PSA/EPA/A5/SPF1/237)

239 James: My Mum encourages me by buying me things and then like when she comes  
 240 and watches me but I know that she's there, but she doesn't know that I know that she's there  
 241 (PSA/EPA/A5/SPF2/239)

242 Interviewer: *Ok. And what erm...if you are watching TV, does anyone come up to you and*  
 243 *say you should be outside*

244 James: My mum does sometimes

245 Interviewer: *Yeah*

246 Pete: My mum just taps me on the shoulder and points out the window

247 Interviewer: *What about if you are at your dads James? Do you watch a lot of TV there*  
 248 *or...*

249 James: We watch some TV at my dads but my sister like wants me to take her out in  
 250 the garden and we play a bit of football or something just the two of us  
 251 (PFA/JFS/A5/SPF2/249)

252 Interviewer: *Ok. Does your dad come and do that as well?*

253 James: Sometimes but he's been busy painting the fence or doing us stuff around the  
 254 house but we normally just watch some TV together when he's finished, my sister as well  
 255 sometimes, but like... he's really busy with like you know D.I.Y which isn't good  
 256 (PFA/JFS/A5/SPF2/253) & (PFA/RLF/A5/SPF2/253)

257 Interviewer: *Gotcha. No problem. Alright...erm...we're nearly finished then. So... at the*  
 258 *weekends, what sort of things do you do to try and stay active?*

259 James: *Go swimming and play football with my little sister (CPA/WA/A5/SPF2/259)*

260 Interviewer: *Ok*

261 Pete: *Play footie with my mates and basketball and wrestling with my mum.*  
 262 *(CPA/WA/A5/SPF1/261)*

263 Interviewer: *And is that a regular thing, do you always do that?*

264 Pete: *Yeah*

265 Interviewer: *Yeah, definitely football and basketball each weekend?*

266 Pete: *Yeah*

267 Interviewer: *Ok. Do you think it's important you try and stay active at weekends?*

268 James: *Yeah, because like people say that the weekends are like their days off, but if*  
 269 *you're not getting in the mood of staying off, then you won't want to do something when it*  
 270 *comes back to weekdays (CPA/IWA/A5/SPF2/268)*

271 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm...are there any activities that you really, really look forward to*  
 272 *doing?*

273 Pete: *Definitely wrestling*

274 Interviewer: *Definitely wrestling with your mum... what again, explain to me again what it*  
 275 *is about that, that you really, really enjoy then?*

276 Pete: *Cos my mum just flips me over and stuff and I just love it... 'cos when I land*  
 277 *I'm just bouncing on the mattress (PFA/RJF/A5/SPF1/276)*

278 Interviewer: *And James, any activities you really, really enjoy?*

279 James: *When I take my little sister swimming 'cos she, I like going into the deeper*  
 280 *end and she'll like try and come and get me (PFA/RJF/A5/SPF2/279)*

281 Interviewer: *OK erm....How do you get to swimming just out of interest?*

282 James: *Oh we drive*

283 Interviewer: *You drive?*

284 [Laughs]

285 James: *No, my dad drives*

286 Interviewer: *Ok erm... are there any extra curriculum activities you do at school, sorry, any*  
 287 *school based activities?*

288 Pete: *Golf*

289 Interviewer: *You do golf at school?*

290 Pete: Yeah

291 Interviewer: *And how often do you do that?*

292 Pete: It's every... Wednesday

293 James: I do cricket three times a week

294 Interviewer: *Anything else, any other sport you do at school?*

295 James: No

296 Interviewer: *And again do your parents encourage you to take part in that?*

297 James: Yeah

298 Pete: Yeah

299 Interviewer: *Yeah?*

300 James: My mum helps me get up for morning practice cricket

301 **(PSA/GSA/A5/SPF2/300)**

302 Interviewer: *Good. Alright. Last set of questions then... erm...do you think your school is*

303 *helping you to stay fit and healthy?*

304 James: Yeah cos like in PE they're always encouraging us to do more extra curriculum

305 clubs

306 Pete: And when they like when they're telling us to do things they ain't soft with us,

307 they're trying to make us go straight for it and everything

308 Interviewer: *Ok. And do they talk to you much about being fit and healthy again your PE*

309 *teachers?*

310 Pete: Yeah

311 James: Yeah

312 Interviewer: *And when do they usually talk about that? Is it at the beginning of the lesson,*

313 *is it before the lesson?*

314 Pete: Before

315 Interviewer: *At the beginning of the lesson. Is there anything else you wanna add... No? Ok.*

316 *I'll stop this now.*

## **APPENDIX VI**

### **Example Interview Transcripts**

Please note that the full appendix is not included here, in the printed version of the thesis, due to the large volume of pages.

Location: **School S2**

Participants: Ellen (13 yrs) (SP Mother) & Sharon (12 yrs) (SP Mother)

Date & Time: 03/11/2008 – 11.03

Interviewer: *Right, erm, tape is recording; today's date is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November err... we're in I presume the PE staff room, is it? Yeah, the PE staff room and who have I got with me?*

Sharon: Sharon

Interviewer: *Sharon and*

Ellen: Ellen

Interviewer: *Ellen, Brilliant. As I said before there is no right or wrong answer, so I'm just interested in you own thoughts and opinions. So just be as honest as you can. Err... what I'd like you to do first is, the questionnaire that you did, talked about the activities you did and perhaps what member of your family you did it with...*

Ellen: Oh yeah, I did that one

Interviewer: *There you go so to start with erm... if you can just like have a little think and decide what you think the word family means. Any ideas?*

Sharon: Brothers and sisters and parents

Interviewer: *Ok, Ellen?*

Ellen: People you are related to

Interviewer: *People you are related to yeah, so who would you include in your family?*

Sharon: My two brothers, my two sisters, my mum

Ellen: The people that I'm closest to, well like I'm related to, yeah. Like my Nan and granddad, my mum, my brother

Interviewer: *Right, hang on, slow that down, I got your Nan and your granddad and then was lost*

Ellen: [Laughing] My mum, my brothers my sister and my aunts and uncles

Interviewer: *Ok. Erm...what about anyone else, what about erm...dads or anything like that? No?*

Sharon: No... I wouldn't include my dad. Only because, like I haven't seen him since I was 2... I didn't actually know about him being my real Dad until last year or some thing

32 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... do you spend a lot of time with your family or more time with your*  
33 *friends?*

34 Sharon: More time with my family

35 Interviewer: *More time with your family, Ellen?*

36 Ellen: I would say both really

37 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... when you do spend most time with your family, would you say that*  
38 *is during the week or on the weekends?*

39 Sharon: Every day

40 Interviewer: *Every day?*

41 Sharon: Yeah, like after school and then at the weekend

42 Ellen: Yeah

43 Interviewer: *Ok and within your family, who do you spend the most time with do you think?*

44 Sharon: My Mum

45 Interviewer: *Sharon, your mum*

46 Ellen: Yeah, mum and sister

47 Interviewer: *Right, moving on, that was the first set of questions done, right, really easy. So*  
48 *the next set of questions just gonna talk about PE, sports, physical activity, health and things*  
49 *like that. So the first question is, what do you think physical activity means, what does it mean*  
50 *to you? Have you got any ideas?*

51 Sharon: Sports

52 Ellen: Yeah, sports

53 Interviewer: *Anything else?*

54 Sharon: No

55 Interviewer: *What kind of sports?*

56 Sharon: Football, badminton

57 Ellen: Basket ball

58 Sharon: Badminton and that

59 Interviewer: *What about sports like snooker, would you say that's physical activity?*

60 Sharon: Yeah, because you're using you upper arms

61 Interviewer: *Yeah, so, ok, you have to be moving, is that what you're trying to say?*

62 Sharon: Yeah

63 Ellen: Yeah

64 Interviewer: *Ok. Do you enjoy being physically active*

65 Sharon: Yeah

66 Ellen: Depends

67 Interviewer: *Depends on what?*

68 Ellen: What I'm doing

69 Interviewer: *How do you mean?*

70 Ellen: Like, I don't like certain things, I don't like football but I like hockey

71 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... what do you enjoy about it then, what do you enjoy about being*

72 *active and doing those sports you just mentioned?*

73 Ellen: I like, like a lot of practical stuff

74 Sharon: Like getting involved physically and stuff

75 Ellen: And when you're working out it's good for you and that

76 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... do you think it's important that you try and stay active?*

77 Ellen: Yeah

78 Sharon: Yeah

79 Interviewer: *Why?*

80 Sharon: You'd just be fat

81 Interviewer: *You'd just be fat? Can you explain that a bit more?*

82 Sharon: Like if you're lazy you won't so anything will you?

83 Interviewer: *So, if your lazy you won't do anything, so how does that relate to being fat?*

84 Sharon: Cos you just sit down and you do nothing

85 Ellen: Like you don't do anything to work of what you eat

86 Interviewer: *Ok, so are fat and lazy the same thing?*

87 Ellen: Well, no

88 Sharon: Could be

89 Interviewer: *Could be?*

90 Sharon: Yeah, because you could be fat and lazy

91 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... alright what about the word healthy, do you think the word healthy*

92 *is important?*

93 Ellen: Yeah

94 Sharon: Yeah

95 Interviewer: *What do you think the word healthy means?*

96 Ellen: That you're not too skinny and you're not too fat, and you eat a balanced diet  
 97 and that

98 Sharon: Erm...

99 Interviewer: *So what do you think the word healthy means?*

100 Sharon: It means like just to eat stuff and do physical stuff like every day

101 Interviewer: *Ok. What about the word fit, what do you think the word fit means?*

102 Sharon: Well to me like, it means like you can run a long distance without getting tired  
 103 that much

104 Interviewer: *Ok, Ellen?*

105 Ellen: Yeah, like keep active and doing stuff

106 Interviewer: *So, let's recap there, healthy is, what did you say, is sort of not being...*

107 Ellen: Not being too skinny and not too fat and having a balanced diet

108 Interviewer: *And not having a balanced diet?*

109 Ellen: No. Having a balanced diet

110 Interviewer: *Ok, and fit means, what was your example?*

111 Sharon: Erm... just be able to do exercise for a long time without getting tired

112 Interviewer: *Ok, would you say you were pretty healthy?*

113 Sharon: I would say that

114 Interviewer: *You would say that, why?*

115 Sharon: Cos I can run for a long distance and I do get slightly tired, but and I do eat a  
 116 balanced diet

117 Interviewer: *Ok. Ellen?*

118 Ellen: Kind off, cos I'm sort of lazy sometimes like, I don't do much when I'm at  
 119 home unless I'm on my trampoline, so yes sort of

120 Interviewer: *Ok, what about fit, would you say you were both pretty fit? You think you're*  
 121 *healthy, do you think you're fit?*

122 Sharon: I think I'm fit

123 Ellen: Maybe

124 Interviewer: *Maybe, why only maybe?*

125 Ellen: Cos I can't run a distance but that's because of my asthma

126 Interviewer: *Ok and you think asthma stops you being fit?*

127 Ellen: Yeah



128 Interviewer: *Do you think your parents are fit and healthy?*

129 Sharon: My mum does a lot of walking...

130 Interviewer: *Your mum doesn't like?*

131 Sharon: My mum does a lot of walking

132 Interviewer: *She does a lot of walking, sorry*

133 Sharon: Yeah, and she eats healthier food than me and she's losing a lot of weight, and

134 my dad, he does a lot of work in his car cos he's an engineer and I would say they're quite

135 healthy

136 Interviewer: *Ok, yeah, Ellen?*

137 Ellen: My mum is healthy cos she does everything around the house and everything,

138 and she's always up and never sits down, she's always real busy

139 Interviewer: *Ok. So you would you say they're both, would you say they are all fairly fit*

140 *then as well?*

141 Sharon: Kind of... Well she gets tired easily, but like now, she gets tired, she doesn't

142 get tired walking, but if you tell her to run, she does

143 Interviewer: *Ok, Ellen?*

144 Ellen: I've never seen my mum run

145 Interviewer: *Never seen your mum run?*

146 Ellen: No

147 Sharon: Only time I see my mum running is when she is like playing football outside,

148 or running for the bus

149 Interviewer: *Ok, who does she, who does she play football outside with?*

150 Sharon: Oh, sometimes when my sister comes round with her fiancé, we all play

151 football out in the garden if it's sunny

152 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... do you think it's important that your parents try and stay fit and*

153 *healthy?*

154 Ellen: Yeah

155 Interviewer: *Why*

156 Ellen: Because then it's a good influence on you

157 Interviewer: *It's a good influence on you, ok. Any other reasons?*

158 Sharon: And plus, cos you know like, kids and that, they might tease you and say your  
 159 mums fat and stuff... And it helps with her appearance, how it makes her feel, cos it makes  
 160 her feel good when she's slim

161 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... how often do you hear those words, fit and healthy then? Do you*  
 162 *hear them a lot or?*

163 Ellen: Yeah, hear it on the telly a lot

164 Interviewer: *You hear it in the telly a lot? Anywhere else?*

165 Sharon: I don't really talk about it in a normal conversation

166 Interviewer: *You don't?*

167 Sharon: No, it's not one of them things that you sit down and talk about

168 Interviewer: *So, you don't, do you hear it a lot at home or?*

169 Sharon: Not really

170 Ellen: No

171 Sharon: No, just on TV

172 Ellen: Yeah

173 Interviewer: *Ok, moving on. Have your or do know whether your parents have ever been*  
 174 *involved in any sort of regular physical activities or actual structured sports?*

175 Sharon: No

176 Ellen: No

177 Interviewer: *You don't know, or you know they've not ever?*

178 Sharon: Erm I don't know

179 Interviewer: *You don't know, ok, Ellen?*

180 Ellen: No, erm she might have done netball when she was like, a teenager or  
 181 something like that

182 Sharon: My mum enjoyed badminton

183 Ellen: Yeah, my mum liked badminton

184 Sharon: She used to play, that's one of the things that she used to love playing  
 185 badminton like when she was in Secondary School

186 Interviewer: *Ok, she doesn't play it now though*

187 Sharon: No, she doesn't really have time

188 Interviewer: *No time to do it now, any other reason why she's stopped playing do you know*  
 189 *of, or you can think of?*

190 Sharon: Erm... she's got arthritis and she's busy round the house

191 Interviewer: *Busy round the house, what sort of stuff is she doing round the house then?*

192 Sharon: Clearing up

193 Interviewer: *Clearing up*

194 Sharon: Yeah

195 Interviewer: *Who is she clearing up after, you?*

196 Sharon: Kind of

197 Interviewer: *Kind of, any one else?*

198 Sharon: My brother and she just does basic things like mothers should do, like cook

199 and she cleans the kitchen and then she just tells us to do the rest

200 Interviewer: *Ok, right, erm... Are there any activities that you normally do with your*

201 *family? Any one in your family that you mentioned lives with you earlier*

202 Sharon: We watch telly but that's not really an activity

203 Interviewer: *Who do you watch telly with?*

204 Sharon: Well, I watch X Factor on Saturdays with all my family

205 Interviewer: *All your family? Who's that?*

206 Sharon: Well, the people what like live in my house

207 Interviewer: *All right, recap those for me again*

208 Sharon: My two brothers, my sister and my mum

209 Interviewer: *Why do you do that?*

210 Sharon: Err... I guess it's like the only time we're all together

211 Interviewer: *Ok, so you all sit down and watch the X Factor. Are there any other activities*

212 *that you do?*

213 Ellen: I just sometimes sit and watch TV, but my brother usually does that on his own

214 and my other brother, and I do, I just sit on the laptop

215 Interviewer: *What about any physical activities?*

216 Ellen: I play a lot in the garden on the trampoline with my brother and sisters

217 Sharon: We usually go in the garden and play and stuff like that

218 Interviewer: *So you don't do any activities like physical activity with your mum for*

219 *example?*

220 Sharon: Only if its, stuff like that, if its summer we go out and have a little play and

221 chase my brothers and stuff like that

222 Interviewer: *Ok, so that's about it? Erm... you mentioned your step dad earlier, do you do*  
 223 *any activities with him?*

224 Sharon: No

225 Interviewer: *No?*

226 Sharon: Cos he doesn't live with us

227 Interviewer: *Ok.*

228 Sharon: Err... we used to go, we used to do bike riding. With my brother and step dad

229 Interviewer: *Whereabouts?*

230 Sharon: Just round the block usually, or we'd ride to Cannon Hill Park from my house  
 231 and come back

232 Interviewer: *Did you enjoy that?*

233 Sharon: Yeah even though it was a bit tiring cos it was steep

234 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... do you enjoy doing those activities with your member of your family*  
 235 *then, do you enjoy sitting down watching TV? Do you enjoy running around with them*  
 236 *occasionally, going for bike rides and things like that?*

237 Ellen: Yeah

238 Sharon: Yeah

239 Interviewer: *What is it about those sort of things that you do that you enjoy most?*

240 Sharon: When you're having fun and not sitting down being bored all the time

241 Ellen: Yeah, it's a change just to like get out of the house and do stuff

242 Sharon: Better than being at school and doing work

243 Interviewer: *When you said err... it's a change and not sitting down...*

244 Sharon: Not sitting but like, doing stuff, like cleaning up, cos I have to clean up the  
 245 house every Saturday so when we go out and do activities and stuff it's a nice like fun change  
 246 really.

247 Interviewer: *What about when you're watching TV though? What do you enjoy about that*  
 248 *when you're watching TV with everyone in your family?*

249 Sharon: I just like the program

250 Interviewer: *Yeah, you just like the program*

251 Sharon: Yeah

252 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... do you think your parents are the reasons you take part in sort of*  
 253 *physical activities?*

254 Ellen: No

255 Interviewer: *No?*

256 Ellen: Well, yeah cos if I didn't have the trampoline we'd have, they had to buy the

257 trampoline for us to do

258 Interviewer: *So, Ellen, you think yes because they provide the trampoline for you, and*

259 *Sharon?*

260 Sharon: And, erm... kind of cos he bought us the bikes and stuff and it was his idea for

261 us to go bike riding but anything other than that, no.

262 Interviewer: *Ok, do you still go for bike rides now?*

263 Sharon: Err not really.

264 Interviewer: *Do they encourage you to take part in activities like in school or out of school*

265 *or anything like that?*

266 Sharon: Yeah

267 Ellen: No, cos I do ask

268 Sharon: My mum tells me like do things inside of school because she keeps coming to

269 pick us up and I have as sister as well, and I've got a little brother at school and she's got a

270 baby as well so she can't pick me up later.

271 Interviewer: *Right, so it's difficult for you to stay late at school cos your mum's got*

272 *responsibilities?*

273 Sharon: And I've got far to walk

274 Ellen: My mum doesn't really allow me to stay after school unless we absolutely

275 have to. Cos I was like in like, when I was in year 7, I was in a thinking group and then when

276 it came to winter I didn't really bother cos it got dark earlier

277 Interviewer: *Right and how would you get to and from school?*

278 Ellen: I walk a little bit to the bus stop and then I get the bus

279 Interviewer: *Do you think that's why your mum doesn't want you to keep doing it?*

280 Ellen: Well, I dunno, it's like anything can happen like someone could just come and

281 take you

282 Interviewer: *Ok, you mentioned there that they kind of do encourage you a little bit; do you*

283 *think it's the same for your brothers and sisters? Are they the same towards them as they are*

284 *towards you?*

285 Ellen: No, cos my brothers and sisters don't really need encouraging, cos they just do  
 286 it on their own, and their littler and they enjoy playing on the trampoline

287 Interviewer: *Ok*

288 Sharon: My mum tells my little brother to do more stuff cos he likes to sit down and eat  
 289 things like, eat junk food while my mum's not there, and he's putting on weight and he needs  
 290 to do more stuff

291 Interviewer: *You say he eats junk food when your mums not there?*

292 Sharon: Yeah, like me and my mum go to work like at half past six, round them times,  
 293 and then cos my older brother goes out partying and stuff, cos he's 18, and like, he's like in  
 294 the house by himself, and when he does that he goes in the kitchen and starts eats junk food

295 Interviewer: *Would your mum not normally allow him to eat junk food?*

296 Sharon: No, cos we've already had dinner and stuff and he just likes to eat more and  
 297 more

298 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm... moving on again then, you mentioned earlier about fit and healthy,*  
 299 *do your parents talk a lot about that at anytime?*

300 Ellen: No

301 Interviewer: *No?*

302 Sharon: Only to my brother

303 Interviewer: *Only to your brother? Why to your brother?*

304 Sharon: When she finds out that he's been eating like a whole packet of biscuits

305 Interviewer: *Right, so, she doesn't talk to you about eating the right food?*

306 Sharon: No, because I don't, yeah. I am a bit on the sugary side, but other than that you  
 307 can see that I'm like...

308 Ellen: But you run all the time don't you so you work it off

309 Sharon: Yeah, she knows that I'm healthy

310 Interviewer: *Ok erm... Have they ever talked about what activities they used to do with you,*  
 311 *cos you know you mentioned badminton, that your mum used to play badminton, your mum*  
 312 *might've used to have done netball, how did you know about that? Have they talked about it*  
 313 *with you in the past?*

314 Sharon: Only when I've asked really... cos she buys us like badminton racquets and I  
 315 say why did you buy us this for and she says, she used to love it when she was younger but

316 she don't have time to play it now and we should play cos its good for us... like good for our  
 317 health and stuff

318 Interviewer: *Ok. Ellen?*

319 Ellen: Cos I used to do netball in year seven, my mum said she used to play it when  
 320 she was at school and she likes used to talk to me about how good it was... so I should do it  
 321 too, to keep me fit and stuff

322 Interviewer: *Ok, erm...moving on, next question if I can find where I was a minute ago, do*  
 323 *you talk much about the activities you do with your mums, with your brothers and sisters?*

324 Sharon: She doesn't really care

325 Ellen: I tell her what I do in PE and that's about it

326 Interviewer: *She doesn't really care*

327 Sharon: No

328 Interviewer: *Why do you think that is?*

329 Sharon: I don't know, I guess she's not really bothered with me. She just pretends and  
 330 then when I ask her about it she goes 'what'

331 Ellen: No

332 Interviewer: *Ok erm... do you think your mums are helping you stay fit and healthy?*

333 Sharon: My dad kind of is cos he takes us out but he doesn't really take us out that  
 334 often

335 Interviewer: *On the bikes?*

336 Sharon: No, yeah, yeah

337 Interviewer: *Ok, Ellen, do you think your mum is helping you to stay fit and healthy?*

338 Ellen: No, not really

339 Interviewer: *What about the food that you eat?*

340 Sharon: Yeah, every Friday we have like a little pizza or something. She doesn't really  
 341 cook on Fridays. Apart from that we always have like fibre and stuff, and healthy stuff and  
 342 that

343 Ellen: I kind of have a mix, cos sometimes we have like a takeaway and stuff but we  
 344 don't usually have a MacDonald's cos don't like that and then like we eat something like  
 345 pasta or fish and that

346 Interviewer: *Would you say that was healthy food?*

347 Ellen: Kind of, sometimes

348 Interviewer: *Kind of, sometimes?*

349 Ellen: Yeah

350 Interviewer: *And who buys that?*

351 Ellen: My mum, goes shopping every Friday

352 Interviewer: *Does she normally by like a lot of healthy food?*

353 Ellen: No, she just buys really what we usually have, sometimes we have pasta, and

354 sometimes pasta and tuna

355 Interviewer: *Do they, so you mentioned earlier that your mum makes sure your brothers*

356 *eating the right food, do they make sure you're eating the right food or do they leave you to*

357 *decide/*

358 Sharon: They leave us to decide

359 Interviewer: *Ellen, is that the same for you?*

360 Ellen: Yeah, she asks us what we want in the week, and like we don't usually have

361 chips, cos mum don't like fish and chips

362 Interviewer: *Ok*

363 Ellen: If we have chips she buys it from the chip shop and cooks something healthy

364 with it at home

365 Interviewer: *Ok, we're flying through this, so at the weekends do you try and stay active, or*

366 *do you just chill out and watch TV, watch the X Factor?*

367 Sharon: No, stay on the computer all day and watch X Factor

368 Interviewer: *Both of you play on the computer quite a lot?*

369 Sharon: Yeah, talk to each other on MSN all day

370 Interviewer: *So you don't go out and do any activities, any sports or anything like that?*

371 Sharon: No not really

372 Ellen: Sometimes go out with my friend but yeah that's about it mum never really has

373 time to play. I just watch TV cos don't do much netball or stuff anymore.

374 Interviewer: *Sometimes, Ellen, you might go out with your friends, what do you do?*

375 Ellen: Shopping... Or go to the cinema or something like that

376 Interviewer: *Right, Sharon?*

377 Sharon: No not really, sorry

378 Interviewer: *Do you know why that is?*

379 Sharon: No



380 Interviewer: *Ok, do you think it is important that you might try and stay active on the*  
381 *weekend?*

382 Sharon: Yeah, cos you can get more time to do it rather than in the week day, cos you  
383 got school, but if you do it like on the weekend you got more time to do it

384 Interviewer: *Ok*

385 Sharon: And you can do more stuff

386 Ellen: And usually you're bored so you ain't got no excuse not to do it

387 Sharon: Yeah

388 Interviewer: *Erm...are there any activities that you really look forward to doing?*

389 Ellen: Hockey

390 Sharon: Cheerleading

391 Ellen: Gymnastics

392 Sharon: Running

393 Interviewer: *Right, one at a time, so hockey, where do you do hockey?*

394 Ellen: School

395 Interviewer: *School, ok, any other activities you really look forward to doing?*

396 Ellen: I like basketball

397 Interviewer: *You said a minute ago you used to do netball in year seven*

398 Ellen: Yeah

399 Interviewer: *Why, why don't you do that any more?*

400 Ellen: Cos I'm not allowed to do it anymore, to go clubs. I just stopped going. I don't  
401 think they have netball club anymore

402 Interviewer: *Right*

403 Ellen: I'm not sure

404 Interviewer: *Why were you not allowed to do any more clubs?*

405 Ellen: Cos my mum can't like pick me up cos she's well busy and she doesn't want  
406 me getting the bus all the time so I can't go.

407 Interviewer: *Yeah, and what activities was it that you say you really*

408 Sharon: Erm...just running, gymnastics, and what was that other one?

409 Interviewer: *Cheerleading?*

410 Sharon: Yeah, cheerleading

411 Interviewer: *And do you do all those in school?*

412 Sharon: Yeah, we said we're gonna like do a petition, cos we wanna bring cheerleading  
 413 back, looking forward to it

414 Interviewer: *Any others, or is that it, No? Apart from those activities that you just*  
 415 *mentioned in school, are there any activities that you do out of school, or at the weekends or*  
 416 *ones that you might like to do in the future?*

417 Ellen: Erm...

418 Interviewer: *You mentioned hockey, would you like to do that outside of school or are you*  
 419 *just happy doing it in school?*

420 Ellen: I'd like to do it outside of school, yeah, but I can't... Yeah, I used to do like  
 421 basketball in year eight and I used to trampoline in year seven but then I stopped

422 Interviewer: *But you've got a trampoline at home*

423 Ellen: Yeah, so I do trampoline there

424 Interviewer: *Sharon, any activities that you'd like to do outside of school that you do in*  
 425 *school or...*

426 Sharon: I'd like to join a gymnastics club that's it

427 Ellen: And I quite like judo

428 Interviewer: *You'd like to join a gymnastics club. Is there one nearby?*

429 Sharon: I don't know

430 Ellen: There's one on Daisy Farm road

431 Interviewer: *So what, is there anything that's stopping you join that gymnastics club now*  
 432 *or?*

433 Sharon: My mum... She would let me, but it costs a lot of money and something like  
 434 that, plus the fact that she doesn't really let us out

435 Interviewer: *Ok, Could you see yourself doing it in the future when you're a bit older?*

436 Sharon: Yeah

437 Interviewer: *Yeah, something that you'd definitely like to do?*

438 Sharon: Yeah

439 Interviewer: *Ok, final set of questions err... are there any school clubs that you take part in*  
 440 *now?*

441 Ellen: In sixth period we do like performing arts and loads of stuff like that, it's  
 442 different but we have to do it

443 Interviewer: All right, what about sports clubs, any sports club you take part in?

444 Sharon: Is trampolining still on?

445 Ellen: Yeah it's still on but no not really

446 Interviewer: *Ok. Erm...do your parents encourage you to take part in school activities?*

447 Sharon: Not any more

448 Interviewer: *Not any more*

449 Ellen: No

450 Interviewer: *All right, last two questions then; these are fairly easy questions do you think*

451 *your school is helping you to stay fit and healthy?*

452 Ellen: Yeah

453 Sharon: Yeah

454 Interviewer: *How?*

455 Sharon: They keep changing what we're doing to make, to make it more fun, I don't

456 know, having PE lessons basically

457 Ellen: And plus we used to have loads of sweet vending machines and now we have

458 stuff like, like healthy stuff, we have like pizza and stuff, but we still have healthy stuff

459 Sharon: Yeah

460 Interviewer: *And do you eat that healthy stuff?*

461 Ellen: I have baguettes every day

462 Interviewer: *Yeah, any other ways the school is helping you to stay fit and healthy?*

463 Sharon: In cooking lesson, she, Miss Bray, like this was how we could cook healthier

464 Ellen: And how to eat healthier

465 Sharon: Yeah, and how to eat healthier and what stuff is actually healthy

466 Interviewer: *Ok*

467 Ellen: And I think that's one of the reasons why they did sixth period to help us get

468 better because not enough people were going to after school clubs, that's why they made us

469 Interviewer: *And what is this sixth period?*

470 Ellen: Its every Tuesday, we have an extra hour after school, and everyone has to go,

471 we do stuff like sailing, performing arts and running, and it changes every nine weeks

472 Interviewer: *So that's an extra hour after school, so is it like three till four o'clock or two*

473 *till three o'clock or...*

474 Sharon: Three till four

475 Interviewer: *Three till four o'clock?*

476 Ellen: Well, sometimes it's about five past till and...

477 Sharon: It varies, which I don't really like.

478 Interviewer: *All right, the final question, out of everyone and everything that we've talked*  
 479 *about, whose job is it that you try and stay fit and healthy, in your opinion who's responsible*  
 480 *for you to stay fit and healthy?*

481 Sharon: Ours

482 Ellen: Yourself and your represe, representatives.

483 Sharon: Mums and like your parents, they can encourage you but you should also like  
 484 listen to what they say instead of like sitting on the computer all day, like I do

485 Interviewer: *Like you do, so do you think you could do more to help yourself to get fit and*  
 486 *healthy?*

487 Sharon: Yeah, probably, but I'm not actually that fat so

488 Ellen: Like, the teachers as well

489 Interviewer: *The teachers, so if you had to rank it in order right, 1 2 and 3, right cos you*  
 490 *mentioned there yourselves, your parents, the teachers*

491 Sharon: In that order

492 Interviewer: *That order*

493 Sharon: Yeah

494 Interviewer: *So you're the most responsible*

495 Sharon: Then your parents, then the teachers

496 Interviewer: *Ok. Have you got anything else you'd like to add about anything that we've*  
 497 *spoke about*

498 Sharon: No

499 Ellen: No

500 Interviewer: *No? Ok, thank you very much.*

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