My Research

PhD study
Life histories approach to physical activity and well-being within family contexts

- Heuristic well-being (Riordan, 2011)
- Family life as an interdependent, intimate and unpredictable lived process (Chambers, 2012; Cheal, 2002)

Today
Issues with existing family-based physical activity research and intimate connections between physical activity and well-being in the lived experience of being a brother
Intimacies and Family Relationships (Chambers, 2012)

Majority of family and long-term friendships characterised by various types and degrees of intimacy

- Intimacy a fundamental social aspect of many obligatory biological relationships

- Intimacies central to the social construction and maintenance of our relationships of choice

- The shared and democratic closeness of human relationships
Well-being, Active Children and Family

Predominant Research Philosophy

Rationale that children should be ‘regularly’ active and responsible parents should provide their children with ‘sufficient’ opportunities to be active (e.g. Boufous et al., 2004; Hamilton & White, 2010; Hart et al., 2003; Schinke et al., 2010)

Issues

- ‘Increasingly, people feel that in adult relationships the state has little role – except when there are children’ (Layard, 2011; 176)
- PA an incidental family practice (Thompson et al., 2009)
- Quality and stability of family relationships more important for happiness than health (Layard, 2011)
Big 7 Factors Affecting Happiness
Layard (2011; 63)

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<thead>
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<th>The Big Seven factors affecting happiness</th>
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<td>(The first five are given in order of “importance”)</td>
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<td>Family relationships</td>
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<td>Financial situation</td>
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<td>Work</td>
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<td>Community and friends</td>
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Family Sociology & Power Relations of Families

Democratic intimacies (Giddens, 1992) and increased agency for children (Chambers, 2012)

Anticipatory socialisation of adolescence (Cheal, 2002)

Absence of sisters and sistering in family sociology (Mauthner, 2005)

More interest in vertical parent-child ties than lateral sibship (Mauthner, 2005)

Studying young people as passive vessels has left a gap in understanding our socialisation into the gendered identities of men and women (Edwards & Weller, 2014)
Sibling Intimacies in Physical Activity

“my big brother played soccer and he thought it was good and so I thought I might have a try at it”

‘Carly and Liam seemed to decide what they wanted to do, but then to check that it was okay with their parents’ (p. 183)

Maintained motivation to be active through the approval of parents and older siblings of the same sex

‘Although the 4 Fijian-Indian girls felt that their parents had an influence on their physical activities, they felt that their siblings were even more influential on their activity patterns’ (p. 497)

“We used to just shoot hoops. We have a school in front of our house, and so, we’d go to the back, to the basketball court, and just play with each other. We’d [also] take the dog for a walk together”

Mark, 26

Currently lives with his girlfriend

Previously lived with both biological parents and older brother

Involved in various physical activities during childhood and school, currently considers himself relatively inactive

- Established territorial hoodlums of ‘the close’
- “Then it started”...
- Drifting apart and fading non-optional household intimacies
- Constructing biological intimacies of choice
Implications of Mark’s Story

Insecurities about the closeness and distance of non-optional biologically-based sibling relationships across a physical activity life history

Becoming biological friends of choice following transitions into separate households as a more meaningful source of well-being than physical activity

Shared childhood experiences of sport and play, but intimacies developed and maintained as adult siblings through active and inactive leisure

Sport as a childhood practice but a lifelong theme of intimate closeness and tension between brothers
References


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