

# Young People's Embodiment of Physical Activity: The Role of the 'Pedagogized' Family

**Symeon Dagkas**

University of Birmingham

**Thomas Quarmby**

University of Birmingham

Drawing from Bourdieu, this study investigated the multifaceted influences that operate in and through combinations of family and social class with regard to the embodiment of physical activity in young adolescents in the UK. The findings suggest that pedagogical practices within the family environment are crucial to the development of embodied dispositions toward physical activity and health. The results illustrate that the family operates as a "pedagogical" field where personal histories and prevailing social circumstances exert a strong influence on children's embodied physicalities.

Empruntant aux théories de Bourdieu, cette étude a examiné les influences multiples associées à la famille et à la classe sociale qui jouent sur l'incorporation de l'activité physique chez des adolescents du Royaume-Uni. Les résultats suggèrent que les pratiques pédagogiques au sein du milieu familial sont essentielles au développement de dispositions à l'activité physique et à la santé. Les résultats sont à l'effet que la famille fonctionne en tant que champ « pédagogique » où les histoires personnelles et les conditions sociales exercent une forte influence sur les corporéités des enfants.

The neoliberal and neoconservative Governments throughout the Western world have emphasized individual responsibility through their school, government and medical policies and media campaigns. Along with these policies, children become categorized as healthy and unhealthy and similarly parents categorized as good or bad based on their ability to deliver the appropriate health messages (Burrows & Wright, 2004; Zanker & Gard, 2008). Lone parents and low socioeconomic families are increasingly blamed for ill health behaviors, which has sparked recent academic debates on the importance of formal and informal pedagogies that shape policy and practice (Ball, 2010).

This paper explores the role of the family in teaching young people about physical activity as a healthy behavior. In particular, we focus on pedagogic

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The authors are with the Department of Sport Pedagogy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.

practices in different types of families. A second purpose of the paper is to consider how families translate physical activity messages. The parent is, therefore, considered as a pedagog and the child as a social actor (learner) in a dynamic that influences the reading of public/official discourses toward physical activity (such as the volume, intensity and patterns of activity, as well as nutrition). We locate this discussion within macro structures of power (Evans & Davies, 2004) and control within families which, for the purposes of this paper, are acknowledged as fields (Bourdieu, 1984). Our discussion is based on Ball's (2010) suggestion that it is necessary to look beyond the school establishment if we are to explain inequalities in education. To examine the pedagogical practices of different types of families in relation to physical activity participation of young people, we first explore the notion of the "pedagogized family." We then define the term "family" before discussing the intersection of family and social class, followed by the methodological steps that underpinned the study. The paper then concentrates on the accounts by young people who we interviewed regarding their parents' views about health physical activity. Finally we round off the paper with a discussion of the findings and concluding remarks.

## The 'Pedagogized' Family

According to Tinning (2010), cultural transmissions, exchanges, and (re)production of cultural values constitute informal pedagogic practices. We, thus, live in a "totally pedagogized society" (Bernstein, 2002, cited in Evans & Davies, 2006, p. 805) where pedagogic practices are evident in every site of life such as in a family or physical activity sites. The family can, thus, be seen as a pedagogical environment where personal histories and social circumstances exert a strong influence on engagement in physical activities (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). More specifically, the family is a pedagogic site which, according to Bourdieu (1984), acts as a "field" where social (re)production takes place. These pedagogical processes contribute to the development of "manifest embodiments:" (class based) attitudes, predispositions, and orientations toward physical activity (Evans & Davies, 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that attitudes and orientations toward patterns of participation in sport and physical activity may well be developed outside formal education. According to Ball (2010), the influence of the family environment is critical because families also invest in physical activity based on their attitudes toward it.

Family environments, nevertheless, differ and every learner learns differently based on, for example, economic resources, family income and structure, locality, place of birth, working hours (especially for the lone parent families or step families as explained later in the results section of this paper), and parenting of a child. In addition, gender, class, race, and ethnicity influence the family environment of young people. Families in this sense are engaged in the cultural transmission of values related to physical culture (e.g., toward physical activity participation) which could (re)produce existing structural inequalities. Dagkas and Armour (2012) named pedagogies that reproduce these existing inequalities as "pedagogies of exclusion." To further examine the role of the family in informal education of physical activity, we next discuss the different types of families in the current UK society.

## Defining Family

Based on official definition, families are formed when people have children, marry or form partnerships (Office for National Statistics, 2011). The standard biological definition of the family (used in many census data, policy documents, and demographic surveys within the UK and worldwide) restricts the family unit to persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption, living in the same residence. However, this definition of family fails to include families living apart and in multiple homes. Wise (2003) pointed to the relationship between parents and children in a household as key to defining family structure. Given the range of relationships, family structure can clearly incorporate a host of different formations. Perhaps the most common is the *two parent family* where all children are the biological children of two non-divorced parents (Wise, 2003). However, the heightened incidence of divorce in many global societies has significantly changed family demography and led to an increase in the rise of *lone parent families*. Wise (2003, p. 21) defined lone parent families as families “in which all children are the biological children of a non-married, non-cohabitating man or woman”. In addition, there has also been an increase in the number of step families. Wise (2003, p. 21) identified *stepfamilies* as “families in which the study child is the biological child of one parent but biologically unrelated to the other parent”. Finally, a growing acceptance of divorce and sexual relations outside of marriage has decreased the prevalence of the heterosexual two parent family and allowed for a more open view and existence of *same sex families* (Sullivan, 2004). As same sex couple families are choosing parenthood through a variety of means, the extent to which family members are biologically related can differ. However, young people from same sex families were not sought for this study, because some parents may choose to hide their sexuality and thus, it was difficult to identify these families.

For the purposes of this paper we maintain that family relationships are in a state of *flux* paving the way for the development of a host of different families. In addition, many of those family structures give rise to different conditions of existence. In the next section, we discuss the intersections of family and class, and its impact on young people’s dispositions toward physical activity and subsequently health.

## Family and Class

There is no single, universally accepted definition of social class. Skeggs (1997 cited in Gillborn, 2010, p. 15), nevertheless, asserted: “Class is a discursively, historically specific-construction, a product of middle class political consolidation, which includes elements of fantasy and projection”. According to Evans and Davies (2006, p. 797–8) the term social class implies “not just a categorization or classification of people with reference to some quality, but an invidious, hierarchical ranking of people which is inherently value laden.” Social class is, for Evans and Davies (2006), a set of social and economic relations that influence, dominate, and dictate people’s lives. Linking social class and family, Evans and Davies (2006) observed that middle class families facilitated high levels of participation in sport and physical activity at an early age to retain educational superiority and thus, class distinction. According to these researchers, middle class families faced fewer barriers in obtaining education than working class families (Evans & Davies, 2010). Indeed, many working class families are constrained by the need to work unsocial

hours and, in many cases, the lack of role models who can influence decision-making and facilitate opportunities to access education (Ball, 2010). While we emphasize the importance of social class in the UK context, we also introduce Bourdieu's theoretical concepts to help outline 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.

## Theoretical Implications

In this study, we draw on Bourdieu's key concepts of *habitus*, *capital*, and *field*. Habitus is a means to understand how various sociocultural mechanisms lead to the production or transformation of certain behaviors. Bourdieu (1984 cited in Maton, 2008, p. 51) defined habitus as a property of social agents that comprises a "structured and structuring, structure." More specifically, habitus is a product of early childhood experiences and in particular, socialization within the family and is understood as the manifestation of a huge matrix of embodied values carried by people of a specific social group in similar ways (Fernandez-Balboa & Muros, 2006). Habitus, thus, "structures" also (young) people's physical activity behaviors. According to Fitzpatrick (2011), habitus entails the various ways people take-up, react to, and act in a given field (in our case the family). As such the habitus operates as an internalization of class based structures: it facilitates diverse actions but these remain "within the limits of the embodied sedimentation of the social structures which produced it" (Wacquant, 1992 cited in Shilling, 2004, p. 479). To summarize, the habitus is the embodiment of social values, dispositions, and tastes developed through the process of socialization in a range of situations but especially at a young age within the family. It is a mediating notion that helps to explain the "way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions" (Wacquant, 2005, p. 316) which allows individuals to perceive, appreciate, and act in relation to particular situations. Habitus, thus, plays a crucial role in structuring young peoples' physical activity dispositions in relation to their specific family circumstances and their social backgrounds.

An individual's habitus cannot be observed independently of Bourdieu's other key concepts of capital and field. Capital refers to the ways in which a person's resources are privileged, marginalized, traded, or acquired within a given field. Bourdieu (1984) identified three fundamental types of capital: social capital which encompasses social obligations and connections, knowledge, and skills that (young) people learn and possess as a result of belonging to a specific social class; cultural capital which reflects one's education, academic qualifications, and long lasting dispositions of the body and mind; and economic capital which is immediately and directly convertible into money (Fitzpatrick, 2011). Social and cultural capital are also convertible to economic capital. Capital is something that is owned, but also something that is embodied. As such, the amount of capital accumulated by an individual will determine the range of available choices within a specific field. Field is, therefore, the social space within which interactions and events take place (Bourdieu, 1984). Like habitus, field draws attention to the relationships between various social agents occupying different positions within that given social space (Thorpe, 2009). A field is a distinct social space consisting of interrelated and vertically differentiated positions: a "network or configuration of objective relations

between positions” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). According to Bourdieu (1984), field is a specific site of cultural reproduction with particular norms and boundaries. Moreover, field is a cultural and social reality that exists in a particular time and place (Fitzpatrick, 2011). Fields are characterized by their own particular relations of power and types of capital, and are bound by time and place into spaces of cultural reproduction. As such, family as a field can be seen as a social space where young people, through their various interactions, obtain a certain habitus. Family, as such, is a field that influences young people’s actions and their dispositions toward the construction of taste and thus, participation in physical activity. In this paper, it is the intersection of social class with *physical activity* (perceived here as any form of bodily movement, such as sport, exercise, and play) and *the family* that form the basis of our investigation. The originality of this study lies in the focus of different family structures and the intersection with social class. More specifically it focuses on micropedagogies (occurring in the family field) and their effect in shaping young people’s disposition toward physical activity.

## Methods

The research question that underpinned the specific study was: “What is the role of the ‘pedagogized’ family in shaping young people’s embodiment toward physical activity?” More specifically, we examined the pedagogic practices employed in different types of family that contributed to the development of young people’s dispositions toward engagement in physical activity.

### Participants

Our data are drawn from a larger project that sought to explore young people’s subjectivities regarding the influence of family structure and social class on their dispositions and embodiment toward physical activity and health. Over a two year period 100 young people (aged 11–14) from seven (inner city) comprehensive secondary schools in the Midlands area of the UK participated in the study. There was a relatively equal gender split (52% boys and 48% girls) among our sample although gender was not a focus in this study. The schools were selected to represent the socioeconomic diversity of the local area based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD): a UK Government measure of deprivation (Noble et al., 2008). As such, the IMD was obtained for the postcode of each school (all seven schools were selected from the lowest third and initial letters were sent to gatekeepers to initiate cases) and thus represented a measure of deprivation for the school and not the individual participant (Jago et al., 2009). The limitation of the study was not engaging parents in the interview process to substantiate pedagogical practices as given and described by these young people. Furthermore, we cannot generalize to our findings to other groups with similar societal characteristics and traits, or even among all those attending the seven case schools even if the socioeconomic background of the participants was similar across all cases (Jago et al., 2009). The young people interviewed represented a variety of prominent family structures from low socioeconomic backgrounds including two parent families ( $n = 50$ ), lone parent families ( $n = 25$ ), and stepfamilies ( $n = 25$ ).

## Data Collection

We followed an interpretive research approach that allows for participants to be viewed as individuals and as part of a larger social organization (i.e., the family; Macdonald et al., 2002). In essence, the interpretive perspective ensures the participants' meanings and actions are linked to a particular time and place, enabling the significance of social phenomenon to come to the fore (Macdonald et al., 2002). Therefore, our qualitative approach complemented our theoretical perspective where Bourdieu's concepts enabled us to link the participants' meanings within the larger social context.

We conducted semistructured group interviews with two friends from the same family structure in an open room within their school. The friends were identified by the Head of the School. The interview protocol was initially piloted with 12 children (aged 11–12 years) before the final schedule was created. Paired interviews in which these participants took part with a friend have been found to create a supportive environment, encourage conversation and elicit reflective accounts of their young lives (Hight, 2003). Hence, these young people were chosen to provide an in-depth comparison of family types and to provide an insight into the experiences of those who have undergone a transition from one family structure to another. Interviews lasted between 30 min and an hour and afterward, participants received transcripts of their interviews to help confirm their accuracy. A semistructured interview protocol allowed participants to explore subjectivities related to social, cultural and environmental elements (family and social class) that contribute to forms of embodiment, and orientations toward physical activity. The interview protocol was specifically focused on the impact of family structure and young people's embodiment of physical activities. Questions ranged from "What is your understanding of physical activity and health?"; "Do you talk much about physical activity at home, with whom?"; "What activities do you normally do with your family?"; "Do you enjoy doing physical activities with members of your family, why?" and "Is there anything that prevents you taking part in physical activities more often?" The research project was approved by the researchers' university ethics committee and parental consent forms were obtained for all participants, while additional permission was gained from the Head of the School from each participant school.

## Data Analysis

The individual interview scripts were closely read by two researchers independently before being sorted into themes to help identify the different ways young people understood physical activity and health and how embodied dispositions were shaped. Given the interpretive approach, a thematic analysis was employed to assist with the analyses. More specifically, analytic induction was based on deductive (reduction of initial themes and categories) and inductive procedures (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), which involved scanning the data for categories and relationships among the initial categories, developing working typologies on an examination of initial cases and then modifying and refining them on the basis of subsequent cases (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Coupled with maximizing the chances of discovering negative cases (Robson, 2002), new categories as well as subdivisions in each category emerged. Texts were further analyzed for an understanding of how subsequent actions were facilitated or constrained by wider structural forces and in particular, their family

structure. As such specific cases were used in the results section which represented each sample division. The cases in the results section are illustrative of the ways that family structure enacts young people's dispositions toward physical activity. To enhance the study's trustworthiness and reliability the research team adopted several and diverse approaches. Peer-debriefing and members' check methods were used whereby the researchers met with a sample of participants (50% of the total sample—especially with those whose quotes are used in this paper), in small groups in a place identified by the gatekeepers to comment on transcripts and preliminary results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## Results

In the discussion of accounts that follows, direct quotes from interviews have been used to illustrate how young people's physical activity dispositions are shaped according to wider structural forces of family structure and class. Indeed, such findings are discussed according to family structure (two parent families, lone parent families, and step families) and later with regard to the effect of class. It should also be noted that all names used are pseudonyms to maintain anonymity and enhance confidentiality.

### Embedding Disposition –Two Parent Families ( $n = 50$ )

As mentioned earlier perhaps one of the most immediate sites for informal pedagogic activity is the family (Tinning, 2010). In our study, young people from two parent families highlighted the importance of their family in helping to shape their physical activity dispositions. In all cases parents were seen to provide dispositions toward physical activity based on their own involvement and continually referred to the perceived benefits of regular participation as outlined in popular culture (i.e., public/official text). In addition, all of the young people from two parent families outlined parents' continual contribution toward their development of physical capital, for example the development of physical attributes of the body; work done on the body and appearance of the body (Wright & Burrows, 2006).

Sam (a 14 year old boy) for instance, who lives at home with both his biological parents and two siblings highlighted how his mother was “always banging on about how it's [physical activity] good for life... like health and that.” Indeed, the notion of physical activity for health is a popular and significant resource which his parents draw upon to instill similar beliefs in youth and the virtues of physical activity. Moreover, Sam's parents “don't smoke or drink excessively” and “exercise regularly.” It would appear, for Sam, that such discourses are reflected in his own dispositions toward physical activity as he draws on notions of 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 favorite 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...

Sam, drawing on dominant discourses within his family, was also subject to numerous pedagogic practices that were designed to help manage his activity. His parents were both actively engaged in monitoring the activity of the whole family

and planning such activities on a wall chart. More specifically a day planner outlining physical activities (on his own or as part of family activity) such as type (playing football or jogging), intensity (brisk walk with parents) and duration (e.g., the length of football training) was designed by both of his parents. His parents were also seen to provide appropriate resources in terms of money, time, and overall management that ensured he could enact his physical activity dispositions.

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... 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...

Given the influence of his parents and their own dispositions to engage in activity when asked what it means to be healthy, Sam immediately identified it with a state of happiness: "I think if you're healthy, you're happy... and you keep yourself fit and healthy by doing activity and stuff then yeah you'll be happy."

Pedagogical practices centered on physical activity were certainly predominant in two parent families. Oliver (a 12 year old boy), who lived with both his biological parents and one sister, identified that his parents invested heavily in his and their own activity. They highlighted the health benefits of such activities and in the example below, Oliver drew attention to the different approaches his parents, particularly his mother's effort to remain active for the required length of time:

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 MBT's [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 steps they did and showing off their skills.

Oliver's own physical activity desires very much mirrored his parents as he later displayed a passion for cycling and overall love for various physical activities. Moreover, the importance of physical activity was reflected in his own beliefs as he was able to identify comparisons between those who do activity and those that didn't by drawing on different forms of media: "Cos, you see so many people on the TV and the Internet that just don't and it's obvious what happens when you don't." Importantly, Oliver also hinted to how physical activity was valued within his family by addressing the physical and social element involved in activities:

Well it [physical activity] works your muscles, I think it does a lot, [but] its social a lot of the time cos you have to organize things and be out with friends and family, so I don't think it's purely the exercise that counts, it's the social aspect of it as well.

Both Sam and Oliver appeared to be acutely aware of the dominant beliefs held within their family regarding physical activity and its subsequent importance in their daily lives. The pedagogic practices used within the family mirrored those offered in official/public texts. The practice of continually discussing activity helped to implant dispositions toward physical activity that were valued and accepted within their family environment. For Oliver and his family, it was clear that investment



in physical activity was also seen to build his stock of social capital within the immediate family and wider peer networks. In this sense Oliver's social capital was built through engagement with physical activity by developing skills, knowledge, and abilities and a sense of belonging in a particular social group.

The experiences of these two participants were similar to Amanda (13 years old) who lived with her mother, father, younger brother, and older sister. In contrast to Sam and Oliver's parents, Amanda's parents were far less active, yet still managed to transmit related values about physical activity and health. When asked if they did much activity, Amanda's response highlighted the little activity they did and how important she thought it was that her parents try and engage in some form of activity:

Not really no [in response to the question of how active parents were]... They [parents] just don't do anything, they just sit at home, think if my mum goes out she just like goes a 5-minute walk and comes back. Yeah, she don't really do anything... but they should, so the people they are trying to teach, they'd be fit and healthy, so they have a longer life.

Despite her parents' lack of engagement with activity, in part due to being "too busy these days with work and stuff," Amanda's parents still found time to support and encourage her activity while discussing activities they used to be involved with:

Sometimes they do tell me to get out the house and do some sport or something and like... go out and run about cos its like good for my health or something. My dad does sometimes [talk about activity], like when we're watching TV he goes "there you are, I used to be part of a football team" and stuff like that.

The influence of her parents meant that Amanda spent her weekends engaged in a variety of activities with her older sister who had a particular impact on Amanda's healthy lifestyle. For instance, Amanda reported regularly "jogging round the park with [her] sister" while also recognizing that her sister adopted a healthy lifestyle: "Yeah, my sister, on Saturdays she probably makes some healthy stuff and like fruit salads and everything..." For Amanda, engaging in activity and eating healthy foods was valued not just by her parents, but also her influential sister. This was reflected in Amanda's own physical activity dispositions and self-perceptions: "Yeah, I'm quite fit and healthy cos we do physical activities... Well, I do them on Saturday and Sunday with my sister and school during the week." Thus, even though her parents couldn't find time to engage in their own activity, they still supported and encouraged Amanda's activity and transmitted healthful beliefs and values where possible.

### **Embedding Dispositions—Lone Parent Families ( $n = 25$ ) and Step Families ( $n = 25$ )**

Participants interviewed from two parent families clearly identified their parents as influential in their activity involvement and in helping to shape their orientations to physical activity. Those from lone parent and stepfamilies identified physical activity as important providers of the same psycho-socio benefits as those in two parent families. This reflected the dominant perspectives (such as those formed by

popular public policies) evident across various fields (i.e., family, school, wider societal groupings). However, changes in family structure were seen to impact on parents' ability to maintain the role of "expert" and the ability to shape young people's dispositions. For example, Taylor (a 13 year old girl) identified her father as influential in shaping her desires for physical activity as he initially taught her how to swim and stated that if he "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." However, she now lived with her mother and stepfather and was only able to see her biological father on Wednesdays and every other weekend. As a result of the change in family structure and limited contact with her father, Taylor's desire to engage in activity when with her mother and stepfather was reduced:

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's activity dispositions evidently came alive when she encountered a different environment that was supportive of her own desires (swimming). Such dispositions remain embedded long after the initial conditions have gone but can be reignited when the environment is more conducive.

Fraser discussed similar behavioral changes that also changed his habitus. Fraser was 13 at the time of the interview and experienced similar transitions in family structure to Taylor. Fraser now lived with his mother and stepfather but identified his biological father as the most influential source for his physical activity engagement:

Well, erm, I don't really get it [motivation and support to engage in physical activity] from my mum, but when I go and see my dad, like he always tells me that he like thrashed his mate at a game of tennis or squash or whatever he does like activity wise....

As well as highlighting the influence of his father, the above quotation also demonstrates the value placed on physical activity in two different families and the type of support Fraser gets for physical activity differs. He reported that his mother and stepfather spent more time together which means his biological father was the most prominent source of encouragement. However, he also reported that his father lives quite a distance away. This restricted the amount of time Fraser spent together with his father. When they were together, their joint activities were limited:

Not really no [responding to a question about frequency of meetings], well he like he lives with his girlfriend and she has two children and one of them is my age and we go out on the bikes and that.

Moreover, change in the field (family structure) with the arrival of a new member (stepfather) disrupted the previously adopted pedagogic practices. Fraser developed a diverse disposition toward participating in physical activity with his stepfather:

Well I used to play tennis with him [stepfather] 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.

Though these findings paint a rather disheartening and homogeneous picture regarding young people's physical activity in specific fields such as lone parent families and stepfamilies, it was not always the case.

We also interviewed young people who managed to maintain or increase their physical activity engagement in the newly formed field. Claire, for example, lived at home with just her mother and considered herself to be reasonably active because she was "always doing something, like I'm always dancing." For Claire, the change in family structure from a two parent family to a lone parent family did initially impact on her engagement in physical activity although her mother sacrificed her own activity to help support her daughters' activity: "Well, mum stopped [her own activity] to do stuff with me! Yeah... like when ma and dad moved. Mum tried to do more stuff with me I think cos don't hardly see ma and dad much..." Furthermore, Claire reported how the change in family structure had meant that her mother now provided more support and encouragement to engage in dancing than previously when her mother and father lived together:

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... Yeah, she's very encouraging!

It was clear that for Claire, given time, the change in family structure allowed her to become aware of alternative possibilities that were afforded to her by her mother. Hence, the change in the dynamics and make up of her field (family structure) lead to changes in Claire's habitus.

## **Embedding Dispositions—Family Structure and Social Class**

Clearly, the make-up of the field (Bourdieu, 1984) has an effect on dispositions toward physical activity. The examples provided below indicate that the intersection of social class with the field of family is prominent in the development of young people's dispositions toward physical activity. Some previous research demonstrates that living in a lone parent family is closely associated with increased poverty as a direct result of lower income and living in poorer neighborhoods (Allan & Crow, 2001; Pryor & Rodgers, 2001). Our participants from low income neighborhoods cited a lack of available locations that facilitate physical activity such as parks or fields. Moreover, living in such neighborhoods meant their parents placed restrictions on where they could engage in activity since there was a fear of the lack of available safe spaces to play informally with friends. Even though the families selected in this study had similar socioeconomic backgrounds, the environment

they lived in varied and in most cases lone parent families were living in neighborhoods with high crime and less opportunities to engage with physical activities in safe play spaces such as parks.

For example, Courtney (a 12 year old boy) who lived at home with just his mother voiced concerns about playing out in certain areas where crime and gangs were prominent. "I stopped [participating in after school activities] coz 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." Courtney also mentioned that his mother worked late and therefore, couldn't pick him up from any after school activities which meant he subsequently ceased any involvement. In a later exchange Courtney and Ash (12 year old boy living with his mother) again reiterated issues of locality and safety that restricted their ability to engage in unstructured physical activity outside of school:

Courtney: You ain't gonna do it now [ride your bike] with the nights are coming [British Winter Time]... it's like five o'clock

Ash: It's like five o'clock it'll be pitch black and you won't [ride your bike] when you're coming back someone could stab you.

Similarly, Jordan and Jerome (both 14 year old boys) expressed barriers to activity as a direct result of their low socioeconomic status: lack of money and location. When asked if he was encouraged to become involved in after school clubs, Jordan highlighted that his mother continually worried about him getting home since she couldn't collect him due to her busy schedule. As a result, she chose to place his safety above his need to engage in activity, managing the risk by ensuring he was home early.

She [mother] doesn't encourage me 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

Hence, low income areas in which many of the lone parent families and step families in this study reside may be prone to more neighborhood problems of crime and low safety that ultimately impact on young people's ability to engage in play activities. For these young people the locality, combined with their parents' busy lifestyle act as a barrier to engagement in physical activity. Jerome reiterated these issues and added the lack of financial resources (economic capital) as a direct influence on his dispositions toward physical activity engagement. Citing the cost of equipment and access, Jerome highlighted how his mother's lack of economic capital means he couldn't afford the equipment to engage in certain activities: "I am good at it [badminton] 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."

## Discussion

Oliver and Sam's parents' pedagogic practices mirror Kelly's (2000) and Burrows and Wright's (2004) notion of the pedagogic family whereby parents are seen to

be responsible for making the right choices for their children's physical activity and health. In addition, all parents in this study saw their children as "project[s] of development" (Vincent & Ball, 2007, p. 1068) where physical activity engagement (physical capital) could result in increased cultural capital (Dagkas, 2011) and the development of bodies that are valued in the immediate social environment (Shilling, 1993). Constantly encouraging activity and ensuring that healthy equals happy (in Sam's case) embedded the regular engagement in physical activity within the accepted health rhetoric in public policies.

In this study, the intersection of the family's social class, cultural, and pedagogical exchanges prominently shaped young people's dispositions toward physical activity. Busy lifestyles and work schedules for lone parent families and stepfamilies meant that some parents could not continue to support and control preexisting or regulated pedagogic practices. Despite the fact that young people in lone parent and stepfamilies demonstrated positive dispositions toward physical activity, their decisions not to engage in physical activity were down to the wider structural and cultural forces of their main field (family). Moreover, economic and social resources restricted the possibilities to enact practices in line with their underlying physical activity dispositions. According to Burrows and Wright (2004, p. 90), "it is often those parents who are already 'othered' in the normalizing discourses of parenting (i.e. single parents, parents on low incomes) who are further marginalized by... moral imperatives to regulate children." Even though it might seem that we perpetuate this "marginalization" and "othering" of lone parent and stepfamilies here, the intention is to portray the multifaceted interlocking inequalities (economic capital, locality, immediate environment) that impacted on young people's dispositions toward physical activity participation. We witnessed structural inequalities that structured the families' dispositions toward physical activity. It is evident that pedagogic practices moved from health and fitness to pedagogic practices of "safety." "Good parenting" in this context reflected imperatives of "getting home safely" and "staying out of trouble" which derived from environmental elements and areas of residence. It is clear from Jordan's account earlier that a desire to engage in physical activity is constrained by social influences that are accepted as "normal" (doxa). Thus, the understanding of what could be considered "normal" living circumstances differed in different families and influenced the parents' pedagogic practices of physical activity participation.

Families employ specific rules related to the development of the child in relation to physical culture, albeit within given economic resources and psycho-social parameters. It was evident that in two parent families, the "pedagogized" family was influenced by the existing health policies and the media that endorsed the recommended physical activity and nutritional guidelines of a healthy lifestyle. In the lone parent families or step families the physical activity patterns were influenced by changes in family life and structure. In many cases, changes in the family environment (one field) directly influenced changes in the dispositions toward physical activity that directly influenced on habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; the development of the body either in terms of physical development or in terms of physical activity behavior). In this sense we retain that fields have shifting and uncertain boundaries (Fitzpatrick, 2011) which cause disjunctures and can generate change in habitus as evident in the young people's accounts in this study. However, we want to avoid further marginalizing and "othering" of these families

and acknowledge that the change in the field of family didn't always necessarily have a negative impact on dispositions toward physical activity. On the contrary, it was evident that pedagogic practices changed to accommodate the new environment. For example, Claire's mother's divorce meant that her mother committed more time to support Claire's participation in physical activity. Due to her family circumstances, thus, Claire was able to invest more time in physical activities. Claire experienced then *heterodoxy* "an awareness and recognition of the possibility of different or antagonistic beliefs" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164) that were created by her new circumstances.

## Conclusions

Our results indicated that pedagogical practices were different among different family structures based on the parents' economic, environmental, and working conditions. Ball (2010) argued that inequalities "are being formed and reproduced within... civil societies through institutional ordering... as forms of classism" (p. 158) that, in our case, was embedded in the different family structures we presented here. The "pedagogized" family in this study reproduced class distinctions and reinforced existing structural inequalities with regards to physical activity participation. Cultural transmissions (Bourdieu, 2004) *within* the family influenced pedagogical orientations and embodied practices. These cultural transmissions are closely related to economic capital and physical capital: pedagogical practices within the family environment that is structured through certain socioeconomic background are crucial to the development of embodied dispositions and forms of corporeality which can facilitate or constrain experiences based on place, locality, and environment.

Bourdieu (1996) contended that the family (as a particular social field) remains the key site of social reproduction and plays a vital role in maintaining social order and 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. Hence, the family plays a pivotal role in the reproduction of social order across generations. Early family experiences "produce the structures of the habitus which become in turn the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 78). Shilling (2004) further suggested that different bodily forms are implicated in the *production* of unequal quantities and qualities of physical capital which in effect provide different opportunities for converting physical capital into other forms of capital (Shilling, 2004, p. 477). In this study, the lone parent families and stepfamilies living in environments perceived as high in deprivation, used pedagogic practices that centered on the transmission of codes of "security" and "safety" rather than production or maintenance of physical activity practices associated with enhancing physical capital. Nevertheless, habitus can be changed with changes in fields such as in family circumstances.

To address social inequalities we need to look further into the fields where habitus is formed by intersecting economic capital with changes in the field of family. "Interlocking inequalities" (Ball, 2003 cited in Evans & Davies, 2006, p. 805) embedded within everyday practices of class and family occur in a complex and dynamic interplay of structures which involve decision making, values, and priorities. It is, therefore, important to understand what constitutes "the family

as a field” and the way pedagogic practices shape embodied dispositions toward physical activity and health in this field.

It was evident that even within similar social groupings, cultural transmissions and attention to physical culture differs. A perception of working class families as a homogeneous group is not helpful in understanding existing inequalities. The families presented in this study, irrespective of their formation, adopted diverse pedagogic practices and dispositions toward physical activity despite representing the same social groupings in society. If we are to engage in more successful community intervention to develop physical activity practices of young people in deprived areas, it is important to identify key characteristics of specific groups within similar social groupings. The present study enhances existing knowledge in the field of sport sociology by suggesting that it is important to acknowledge that different pedagogical practices permeate families within similar class configurations. In this sense social class should be examined in conjunction with other cultural categories such as family structure, ethnicity, and gender. Similarly, if we are to address existing inequalities in society, practitioners and researchers need to move away from pedagogies that are reflective of monocultural (white, middle class families) perspectives (Burrows, 2009) to avoid further marginalizing the “others” outside of the monoculture.

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