From carefree to controlled
Influences on the leisure of Australian children since the 1950s

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A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Newcastle

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Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Table of Contents

Statement of Originality  i
Acknowledgements  ii
Table of Contents  iii
List of Figures  viii
List of Tables  ix
Synopsis  x

CHAPTER ONE: ORGANISED LEISURE AND AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN  1
Introduction  1
  Play, leisure and the 21st century child  2
  Organised leisure and the 21st century child  3
Aims and approach of the thesis  5
  The Work-life Tensions project and the Australian Longitudinal study on Women’s Health (ALSWH)  6
Thesis structure  8

CHAPTER TWO: CHILDHOOD AND GENERATIONS  10
Introduction  10
Childhood  10
  Historical perspectives on childhood  11
  Childhood in the late modern era  14
  Risk and parenting  16
  Risk in childhood  19
  Constructions of 21st century childhood  23
Generation  26
  Understanding ‘generations’  27
  Social generation  28
  Generation and childhood  32
  Challenge of generational theory  35
Conclusion  35

CHAPTER THREE: PLAY, LEISURE, GENDER AND CHILDHOOD  38
Introduction  38
Leisure  48
  Leisure, children and development  49
  Leisure and childhood  51
“My brothers played football and cricket”
Generation X: “If there was sport it was done on a Saturday.’
Postcard from the 1970s/80s
“All the kids would go and meet down the park and play cricket”
“The boys played football, the girls played netball”
Generation Y: “Two things in summer and one in winter”
A postcard from the 1980s/1990s
“He’s more of a computer person”
“They were allowed to do one sporting and one cultural thing”
Generation Z: “Ballet twice a week and basketball Tuesday nights”
A postcard from the early 21st century
Home based play and leisure activities
“My first child was in swimming from seven months old”
Conclusion

CHAPTER SIX: FACTORS INFLUENCING CHILDREN’S LEISURE
Introduction
Technological advances
Baby Boomers: “I used to ride my bike to tennis”
Generations X and Y: “It wouldn’t happen if we couldn’t transport them”
Generation Z: “I just leave work and I’m in the car for two hours”
Intergenerational comparison
Leisure activities for rural and regional children
Baby Boomers: “We were rural country […] transport was a major issue”
Generations X and Y: “Occasionally it was 800klms a week”
Generation Z: “And we drive as far as Rural Town […] four hours away from here”
Intergenerational comparison
Educational and religious institutions
Baby Boomers: “I played sport, but it was with the school”
Generations X and Y: “Netball would have started at school”
Generation Z
Intergenerational comparison
Friends and peers
Baby Boomer children: “Oh, all my mates were playing”
Generations X and Y: “All their friends played sport”
Generation Z
Conclusion
## CHAPTER SEVEN: FROM GATEKEEPER TO COERCION: PARENTAL INFLUENCES ON CHILDREN’S LEISURE

### Introduction

168

Baby Boomers: “There wasn’t a parent within cooee”

169

“My mother would encourage us [...] to be inventive”

170

“The hockey connection goes right back to [...] my father”

172

“We’d go as a family”

173

Generations X and Y: “I could see that physical activity was very good for them”

175

“I remember mum being quite involved”

181

“He was always there to take me to soccer training”

184

Generation Z: “I want you to keep doing this [...] I think it’s important for you”

186

“Tracey does all that [...] she has a calendar, she writes it all down”

192

“I just do what my wife tells me to do”

194

On being a “Good” Parent

197

The Generation Z support crew

199

Conclusion

200

## CHAPTER EIGHT: FROM AUTONOMY TO SUPER-VISION: RISK AND CHILDREN’S LEISURE

“There’s just danger everywhere, who can you trust?”

203

Guarding against future risk: “It’s peace of mind I guess”

204

Reaction to current risk: “You can’t feel secure letting your kid walk to school”

206

Consequences of risk: “I was paranoid about something happening to them”

210

Global risk, local fear

217

Conclusion

220

## CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

Introduction

222

From carefree to controlled?

222

Limitations and reflections

227

Implications and Recommendations

228

Methodology

228

Generational Theory

228

Risk

229

Childhood, Gender and Leisure

230

Leisure for rural and regional children

232

Conclusion

232
APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health (ALSWH) survey mail out schedule

Appendix B: Focus group flyer/poster

Appendix C: Focus group information letter

Appendix D: Focus group profiles

Appendix E: Focus group short survey

Appendix F: Focus group consent form

Appendix G: Focus group discussion topics

Appendix H: Work-life Tensions project consent form

Appendix I: Work-life Tensions project pilot interview guide

Appendix J: Work-life Tensions project interview schedule - ‘Youngs’

Appendix K: Work-life Tension/Children’s Leisure study participant profiles, Youngs

Appendix L: Work-life Tensions project interview schedule - ‘Mids’

Appendix M: Work-life Tension/Children’s Leisure study participant profiles, Mids

Appendix N: Work-life Tensions short survey for men

Appendix O: Work-life Tensions short survey for women

Appendix P: Coding structure from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews.

Appendix Q: Organised leisure activity participation, Baby Boomers

Appendix R: Organised leisure activity participation, Generations X and Y

Appendix S: Organised leisure activity participation, Generation Z

Appendix T: Ages of Generation Z children

BIBLIOGRAPHY
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Paradigm for the study of childhood, Prout and James (1997)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Five principles of life course theory, Elder et al. (2003)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Relationship between ALSWH, Work-life Tensions project and Childhood Leisure study</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Leisure Data provided by Mid Cohort</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Leisure Data Provided by Young Cohort</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Generations and their relevant years in childhood leisure</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Erikson’s Eight Stages of Man</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Interview waves, ‘Young’ cohort participants</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Interview waves, ‘Mid’ cohort participants</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.1</td>
<td>Focus group profiles, NSW</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.2</td>
<td>Focus group profiles, QLD</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.1</td>
<td>Work-life Tension/Childhood Leisure study participant profiles, Youngs</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.1</td>
<td>Work-life Tension/Childhood Leisure study participant profiles, Mids</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.1</td>
<td>Coding structure from the analysis of semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.1</td>
<td>Organised leisure activity participation, Baby Boomers</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.1</td>
<td>Organised leisure activity participation, Generations X and Y</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.1</td>
<td>Organised leisure activity participation, Generation Z</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.1</td>
<td>Ages of Generation Z children</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Synopsis

Childhood participation in organised leisure activities has increased over the past six decades. Parents in the first part of the 21st century are inundated with often contradictory messages from government, experts and media organisations regarding the leisure activities of children. They are told simultaneously that organised leisure activities are beneficial for children in terms of development and socialisation, whilst at the same time warned against the harm that the over-scheduling of children’s activities may bring. In order to understand why children take part in organised leisure activities this research examined the influences on the organised leisure of Australian children.

This research explored the influences on the leisure of children from four different generations - Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. An interpretive, broadly feminist approach investigated influences on participation in organised leisure activities of children since the 1950s. The multi method research was primarily qualitative in nature and comprised three elements: focus group interviews with 55 participants from both urban and rural areas in Queensland and New South Wales, semi-structured telephone interviews with 87 ‘young’ participants from the eastern Australian states and semi-structured telephone interviews with 80 ‘mid’ participants from eastern Australian states. All participants completed a short demographic style survey.

Findings indicated that whilst similar influences were in effect across the generations, the way in which these influences manifested differed vastly. Influences were varied and included factors such as rapid and vast technological change, especially in the area of transport, a child’s locality in an urban or rural environment, along with the influence provided by educational and religious institutions, and friends and peers. Parents from all generations were an important influence on organised leisure activities. This influence varied across generations and migrated from a ‘gatekeeper’ role played by parents of Baby Boomers to the coercive role provided by the parents of Generation Z. In the late modern era, parental reactions to risk were found to be an influence on the organised leisure of Generation Z children. This influence included parents guarding against future risk, their reactions to current risk and the consequences of risk. Findings indicated that the leisure activities of children had largely shifted from being autonomous, child lead, and carefree
during the childhood of Baby Boomer children to being tightly controlled, adult organised and supervised in the childhood of Generation Z children.
Chapter One: Organised leisure and Australian children

Introduction

Over the past six decades Australia has undergone rapid and vast social change. This substantial change has affected all aspects of society – arguably none more so than childhood, which has undergone significant alteration since the 1950s (Hunt, 2005). More significantly for this study have been changes in the leisure and play of children with reference to gender. Social transformation following from the second wave feminist movement, combined with enormous scientific and technological change, has meant that children in the late modern era experience play and leisure in a different manner than they may have in previous times. For example, one such change appears to be a surge in the number of children taking part in organised activities. While participation rates do not exist for children’s organised sporting and leisure activities prior to 2000, anecdotal evidence would suggest that the current cohort of 21st century Australian children appear to spend much more time in such activities than their parents or their grandparents. For example, The Sydney Morning Herald has reported increases in the availability and choice of activities for children in the 21st century (Smail, 2004), while others have warned of the dangers of children participating in too many organised activities (Goward, 2011). Childhood 60 years ago, or even 30 years ago, would have looked substantially different to the childhood of children growing up in the early part of the 21st century.

In order to understand changes to childhood over time, this thesis applies a gendered lens to the exploration of changes in the organised leisure of Australian children over the past six decades. Organised leisure activities for children are defined as those activities that are usually adult organised and directed, require a level of ongoing commitment, include regular participation schedules and expectations regarding participation, emphasise skill development that is continually increasing in complexity and challenge, involve active performance requiring sustained attention and provide clear feedback on performance (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Most research on gender and leisure has its foundations in the gendered nature of adult leisure. Whilst some researchers have explored the leisure of adolescents, findings have shown that leisure participation in this age group is typically gendered (Raymore & Godbey, 1994). There is comparatively little research on the specific
gendered nature of children’s leisure and a limited amount of research that compares organised activities for children across generations with gender as a specific focus. While gender and play are well researched, this thesis adds to the gap in the literature surrounding the gendered nature of children’s organised leisure activities since the 1950s.

Play, leisure and the 21st century child

Play and leisure are not the same (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Play has most recently been defined as those activities that do not have an obvious or direct purpose (Pellegrini, 2009b). Conversely, leisure is more difficult to define with little consensus on an operational definition. Despite this a definition has been provided by van der Poel (2006) which suggests that “leisure encompasses the goals and activities people choose freely to fill their least obligated time” (p.93).

Childhood, play and leisure are tightly intertwined concepts. Play and leisure for children are essential sites of learning and development and a vital facet of growing up (Hughes, 1999). It is through play and leisure that children learn about themselves and the world around them. They learn to get along with others and sort out conflicts, practice their language skills and develop both their fine and gross motor skills (Larson & Verma, 1999). Play and leisure can also encourage independence, self-confidence, high self-esteem, and creativity (Caplan & Caplan, 1974). The importance of play and leisure in childhood cannot be overstated, and the right of the child to these experiences has been recognised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Indeed, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which was adopted in 1989, declares that all children have the right to “rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities and to participate in cultural and artistic life” (United Nations, 2010). It is against this backdrop of the basic right of the child to engage in play and leisure, the importance of these experiences for child development, and an increase in participation in organised activities by children in the first part of the 21st century, that a myriad of concerns have developed surrounding children’s leisure.
Organised leisure and the 21st century child

Children today appear to spend more time in organised leisure than they have at any time in history. Organised sporting activities such as swimming, netball and soccer along with cultural activities such as dancing and playing a musical instrument are the most popular activities for Australian children (ABS, 2009a). Parents meanwhile are inundated with mixed messages with regard to the organised leisure activities of their children. They are told simultaneously that organised leisure activities are beneficial for children in terms of health, development and socialisation, whilst at the same time warned against the harm that the over scheduling of children’s activities may bring.

In May 2011 the NSW Minister for Family and Community Services, Pru Goward, released a fact sheet for parents outlining the negative effects on families that overbooking or over scheduling children may have (FamS, 2011). Parents are encouraged to ensure their children have adequate down time and are not over committed by participation in “too many extracurricular activities” (Goward, 2011, p. 1). Others have argued that although children who take part in organised activities may be more ready for school, the children are more stressed, anxious and tired with a subsequent negative effect on mental health associated with busy schedules (Elkins, 2003; O’Brien, 2007). Further to this it has also been reported that children are so busy travelling to and from organised activities and doing homework that they have no time to play (Patty, 2009).

A plethora of parenting books also encourages parents to be wary about their children’s participation in organised leisure. David Elkind (1988, 2007) argues that children are “hurried” as a consequence of overscheduling. Frank Furedi (2001, 2002) suggests that a culture of fear surrounds childhood and this is leading to paranoid parenting. William Doherty (2003) suggests that children are “frantically overscheduled” as parents endeavour to maximise activities for their children leading to loss of “family time and family rituals” (p.6), whilst Alvin Rosenfeld and Nicole Wise (2001, 2011) contend parents often micro-manage the lives of their children, leading to what they term “hyper-parenting” and suggest that children should have more time to play freely without restrictions. Furthermore, Richard Louv (2005) has suggested that the overscheduling and restriction of children has led to a lack of involvement with nature and “nature deficit disorder” (p. 34). ‘Nature deficit disorder’ is said to lead to stress, anxiety and depression in children. As parents endeavour
to maximise the opportunities for their children the negative impacts start to accumulate. These impacts include increases in stress, the loss of family time, adverse effects on relationships and the loss of unsupervised play (Goward, 2011; O’Brien, 2007).

Positive outcomes of participation in organised leisure activities have been espoused by media and government alike. A report in *The Sydney Morning Herald* suggested that busy children are shown to do better and participation in organised leisure activities leads to beneficial outcomes not only at school, but also in family life and better emotional development (Horin, 2008). The Australian Sports Commission (2010) reported that involvement in sport specifically leads to development in self-confidence and high self-esteem and assists to ease mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. Participation is also said to relieve boredom and consequently involvement in anti-social activities and behaviours such as vandalism and crime (NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2010c). Furthermore, in order to combat the growing concerns surrounding childhood obesity the Australian Government Department of Health and Aging has committed millions of dollars to promote healthy eating and physical activity in children with key recommendations surrounding the physical activity of children. It is suggested that children participate in a combination of moderate to vigorous physical activity for up to 60 minutes each day, with specific reference made to participation in organised activities (Australian Government Department of Health and Aging, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). Despite these mixed messages, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that since 2000 there has been sustained (if not marginal) increases in children’s participation in cultural and leisure activities (ABS, 2006, 2009a). This increase in participation is not however uniform, with participation by children from low socio-economic and non-English speaking backgrounds, girls and those from sole parent households remaining steady.

It is clear that there is a great deal of contradictory information for parents regarding the leisure and play of their children. Organised activities for Australian children are seen as both beneficial and detrimental. They are seen as beneficial as they provide an arena for the development of self-confidence and self-esteem and ease mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. Organised activities are also said to help combat anti-social behaviour whilst assisting in combating obesity. Conversely organised activities are also said to lead to children who are more stressed, tired and anxious with a negative effect on mental health.
Missing from much of the social commentary on the organised leisure activities of children is an understanding or exploration of why children are participating in this type of activity. In order to increase our understanding of why children take part in organised leisure activities, it is necessary to understand what influences participation.

In July 2004, the Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition at Deakin University, Melbourne released a report which focused on children’s leisure activities (Salmon, Telford, & Crawford, 2004). The report which has a broad focus on both the organised and non-organised leisure of children suggests that two of the key influences underpinning participation in children’s leisure are ‘stranger danger’ and ‘traffic danger’. Other influences identified included heavy traffic, high cost of club fees, and it being too dark in winter or hot in summer. The report is important for a number of reasons, but significantly for this study it demonstrates and highlights the need for further research into the specific area of organised leisure activities for Australian children. It also highlights the gap that exists in understanding the influences affecting childhood participation in organised activities. Whilst the report in question explores influences on participation in all childhood leisure activities, this thesis specifically explores the influences regarding participation in organised activities and takes a further step and examines why these influences are in play.

Aims and approach of the thesis

With the intention of understanding why children appear to be spending more time in organised leisure activities despite the mixed messages with regard to the pros and cons of participation, this thesis applies a gendered lens and examines the activities of Australian children from four different generations. This enables changes to be tracked across time and the influences of both social and technological change on children’s participation in organised activities to be explored. The significance of gaining an insight into the organised leisure of children from previous generations is that in understanding the past we are more able to provide an historical perspective on the present. It is also possible to ascertain how aspects of the organised leisure of children in the late modern era have emerged from the past. This in turn provides an understanding of the organised leisure of this group of children far better than may otherwise be the case.
Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to investigate influences on the organised leisure activities of Australian children since the 1950s, with the intention of gaining a better understanding in particular of the experiences of children in the first part of the 21st century. Four generations of children are examined – those known colloquially as Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. There is a dual purpose to this method of investigation. Firstly, and most importantly, by tracking children’s organised leisure activities over the past 60 years changes over time can be demonstrated. Secondly, specific influences shaping the organised leisure activities of children can be explored, and this in turn can illuminate the effects of broader social and technological change on childhood and children.

It is important to note here that the evidence presented within this thesis relies on memory and recall of participants and as such there are limitations involved in undertaking a comparative analysis of childhood leisure across generations. These limitations are addressed fully in the Methodology (Chapter Four).

The investigation on which this thesis is based was linked to a larger project, the Work-life Tensions project, which was a sub study of the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health (ALSWH).

The Work-life Tensions project and the Australian Longitudinal study on Women’s Health (ALSWH)

The Work-life Tensions project investigated experiences of time in dual earner households. It aimed to develop a comprehensive understanding of Work-life tensions and to identify individual, family and institutional strategies that might help to address outcomes related to such tensions. The project utilised four components in the research. Firstly, focus groups were conducted both in Queensland and New South Wales. Secondly data were also collected via the “experience sampling method” (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1983, p. 41). There was also a short survey and a large number of semi-structured interviews. This thesis, which is closely tied to the Work-life Tensions project, utilised the focus groups, short surveys and semi-structured interviews from the larger project as methods of data collection.
As noted above, the Work-life project was nested within the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health (ALSWH). ALSWH was first funded in 1995 and was designed to explore factors that influence health among women who were at that time broadly representative of the entire Australian population. Forty thousand women in three age groups (18 - 23 years, 45 - 50 years, and 70 - 75 years in 1996) were selected from the Medicare database (the national health insurance system covering all Australians). Sampling was random from each age group, except women from rural and remote areas were sampled at twice the rate of urban women in order to provide adequate numbers for statistical analysis. For the last fifteen years, each of the age cohorts has been surveyed once every three years to see how their health has changed. Along with these main surveys, participants are invited to participate in a variety of sub-studies. The Work-life Tensions project was one of these sub-studies and two generations were selected from ALSWH: the ‘young’ cohort aged 26 - 31 years when interviewed in 2004 and the ‘mid’ cohort aged 52 – 57 years when interviewed in 2005. These two age cohorts were selected as, based on their ages, they were more likely to be in the paid workforce on a full-time or part-time basis, a key element when gaining an understanding of work-life tensions.

So as to address the aims of this thesis I draw upon both secondary and primary data. A data collection process consisting of the three elements referred to above was utilised in order to obtain primary data. The first element of the project involved a series of ten focus group interviews with 55 individuals from urban and rural regions of both Queensland and New South Wales. The second element comprised semi-structured interviews with 87 ‘young’ participants from the ALSWH database. The final element involved a further round of semi-structured interviews with 80 ‘mid’ participants from ALSWH. Participants from both the ‘young’ and ‘mid’ groups were located in both urban and rural areas of Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Queensland. All participants completed a basic demographic survey.

Newspaper articles, magazine articles, internet websites, reports and Australian Bureau of Statistics data were among the forms of secondary data that were utilised to inform and provide support for the arguments put forward in this thesis. Academic literature, specifically literature on childhood, parenting, generations and the study of leisure was
critically reviewed in order to assist in the explanation of changes in, and influences upon the leisure experiences of Australian children since the 1950s.

**Thesis structure**

This introductory chapter has provided a brief overview of the current state of leisure activities for Australian children in the first part of the 21st century, with specific emphasis on the conflicting nature of advice provided by government, media, social commentators and experts regarding the organised leisure activities of children in the late modern era. It also outlined both the aims and approach that the thesis takes to the research question.

Chapters Two and Three examine the literature related to the thesis topic. Chapter Two specifically explores childhood and generational theory and examines the connection between the two. Chapter Three explores gender, play and leisure in the context of childhood.

Methodological considerations are outlined in Chapter Four. A multi method qualitative approach to research was utilised including focus groups, semi-structured telephone interviews and short surveys. The chapter also outlines data collection procedures, analysis of focus group and semi-structured interviews, and a description of this doctoral project’s connection with the Work-life Tensions project and its parent project, The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health. A detailed discussion of the sample, limitations, data collection methods and methods of analysis is also provided.

Chapter Five begins the examination of the empirical data. It describes in detail each of the generations of children involved in this study. It illustrates the type of leisure activities that each of the generations took part in and explores leisure at home and in the community.

Factors influencing the organised leisure activities of Australian children from the four generations are examined in Chapter Six. These include the influence of technology with specific reference to transport and the family car, a child’s location in a rural or regional area, educational and religious institutions along with friends and peers.
In Chapter Seven, one of the key influences affecting the leisure of Australian children is examined. The influence of parents is considered and an intergenerational comparison is provided on the influence of parents from the four generations. Included in this chapter is a discussion on the different influences provided by both mothers and fathers on the leisure of their children and the notion of being a ‘good’ parent.

The last empirical chapter (Chapter Eight) explores socio-cultural constructions of risk and its influence on the organised leisure activities of Australian children from each of the four generations. It examines parental reactions to future risk, current risk and the consequences of risk. Supervision, surveillance and risk and its effects on space to play along with the effects of global risk are explored.

Chapter Nine offers broad conclusions from the research before outlining implications for both policy and theory. It notes the limitations to this study and also offers suggestions for future research.
Chapter Two: Childhood and generations

Introduction

Two key concepts relating directly to this thesis are explored within this chapter. The first is that of childhood and the second is the concept of generations. The first section of this chapter explores historical perspectives on childhood. A discussion of childhood in the late modern era is undertaken with a focus on how both risk and fear impact upon children and childhood. This is followed by an examination of the current understandings of childhood as a social construction in the 21st century. An understanding of both childhood and the social space of childhood is crucial in gaining an understanding of the influences on childhood leisure participation.

The second part of this chapter explores the concept of generations. An historical overview is provided pointing to the origins of generational theory. The discussion includes an analysis of the multiple understandings of the term generation based on kinship, cohort and social generations. The concept of generation is also discussed in relation to childhood. Some of the difficulties involved in using the term generation in empirical studies are outlined in the last section of this chapter before a justification is provided for the use of social generations as a framework for the analysis of childhood leisure participation since the 1950s.

Childhood

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, evidence that childhood is in crisis is everywhere. The assumption that childhood is not what it used to be and that this in itself signals catastrophe appears to saturate our social worlds. Nostalgia is a familiar feature of the childhood landscape. Remembering childhood commonly calls to mind benign fantasies of play and adventure; the polite and deliciously well-ordered escapades of The Famous Five or a looser version of magical freedom that bespeaks how things ought to be. (Kehily, 2008, p. 198)
The study of childhood is a relatively new area of research, which has grown over the last couple of decades into a recognised area of inquiry and analysis. Kehily (2008) argues that “childhood is in crisis” (p. 198) and a growing body of literature suggests that childhood is an important arena of research for a group that has been previously marginalised in academic study, that is, children. This section of the literature review examines the theoretical underpinnings of childhood. It begins with a brief historical overview and moves onto a review of the emerging literature surrounding childhood in the late modern era. It examines the notion of risk and fear in childhood, before exploring constructions of childhood in the 21st century.

Historical perspectives on childhood

Childhood has only recently become a subject of analysis as it was not until the 20th century that children were seen as substantially different to adults (Mead & Wolfenstein, 1955). In past centuries, children have been rarely seen or heard in documents and remain for historians an intangible and often elusive social group (Stainton Rogers, Hevey, & Ash, 1989). Nonetheless, historically the western construction of childhood has moved between two diametrically opposed views – that of “innocent angels or evil devils” (Valentine, 1996, p. 581) or “little angels” and “little devils” (Synnott, 1983, p. 79).

Whilst there are varying definitions of childhood, it has become, at least since the twentieth century a clear and distinct stage of life. It has been argued, for example, that it is a recent social construction ‘invented’ during the eighteenth century (Ariès, 1962). Aries found that there was no concept of childhood during the middle ages however, although there was a lack of awareness of ‘childhood’ this did not mean that children were ill-treated. It was only once it was understood that adults and children were different that children were subject to much harsher methods of punishment and much stricter methods of child rearing.

The notion of children as ‘evil’ or ‘innocent’ has alternated over time and throughout history (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998a). For example, during the seventeenth century children were viewed by a Puritan society as “filthy bundles of original sin” (Heywood, 2001, p.22) who needed strict training and discipline so that they did not fall into evil ways. Without the intervention of adults, children would turn out badly. As such, parents were required to
instil good values from an early age (Cunningham, 2005). This Dionysian (Jenks, 2005) image of childhood is associated with strict discipline and parental constraint. Children during this time were viewed as miniature adults, rather than being distinctly defined by biological age (Ariès, 1962). There were no specific provisions made for children and once they were able to display competence in concepts such as reasoning, strength and concentration they took on adult working roles, for example domestics and apprentices (Ariès, 1962). This puritan view of childhood has been critiqued by Pollock (1983), who suggests that although children during this time were the receptors of strict disciplinary practices from their parents, they were still very much loved and nurtured.

The modern version of childhood – which is said to have begun during the 18th century in the west (Pollock, 1983; Stearns, 2005) – was influenced by the work of Rousseau’s *Emile* which positioned children as born as innocents who are then stifled by adults (Heywood, 2001). This view of childhood has been referred to as the Apollonian view of childhood (Jenks, 2005). Children, in this model, were to be encouraged to express their natural goodness. Parents were expected to nurture and protect their children and allow them to develop their own natural potential (Cunningham, 2005). Furthermore, childhood during this period of enlightenment was seen as a time for education – especially for boys. It was also seen as a vital space for the creation of adulthood (Cunningham, 2005). Whilst these two views of childhood existed in pre-modern times, Cunningham (2005) suggests that both views of childhood may in fact persist in contemporary understandings of childhood. Further, both understandings of childhood, although appearing to be polar opposite views, may exist in parallel at the same time (Jenks, 2005).

The enlightenment view of childhood is regarded by many as the forerunner to today’s view of children and childhood (Heywood, 2001; Pollock, 1983). Children today have become highly valued emotionally and personally (Valentine, 2004) whilst in economic terms they have become of little value (Zelizer, 1985). It is clear that childhood has undergone considerable transformation over time. Childhood can and does vary amazingly from one society to another and one time period to the next (Stearns, 2005). Over the past 60 years, social, cultural and technological changes have conspired to change the nature and meaning of childhood (Hunt, 2005). Social changes, including divorce and the emergence of single parent families have reshaped the lives of children (James & Prout, 1996; Jenks, 1996). It has
been argued that social and technological change has meant that children are much more controlled by adults than in previous times (James & James, 2001). Connected to the control that adults have over children is the surveillance of children and childhood (Brannen & O'Brien, 1995; Jenks, 1996). The view of childhood as a time of natural innocence in the 21st century is under question as children become subject to increasing surveillance and tighter controls (James & James, 2001; Mayall, 2000), often in the name of child safety and protection. The very nature of childhood has altered as measures of social control are enacted which are said to lead to increasing surveillance and restriction on the everyday life of children and their leisure activities (James & James, 2001).

Additionally the nature and practices of parenting have also changed and childhood has been restructured to a point where it appears to be shortening, resulting in what Elkind (2007) terms the ‘hurried child’. Elkind’s suggestion is that children are hurried into growing up by the nature and pace of contemporary life and as such are missing out on the ease of childhood. Elkind’s thesis of the ‘hurried child’ has been criticised by more recent research that suggests that it may be normal for children in the early part of the 21st century to be busier than children in the recent past (Hofferth, Kinney, & Dunn, 2009) and that this does not necessarily mean that there has been an erosion or destruction of childhood (Lynott & Logue, 1993).

A further contemporary notion is that childhood is in crisis in the 21st century. Palmer (2006), for example, suggests that contemporary childhood is “toxic “as a result of a modern life style characterised by poor diets, lack of exercise, TV and computer games combined with the increasing stress levels of parents. Furthermore Füredi (2002) argues that childhood in the 21st century is characterised by a culture of fear in which parental anxiety leads to paranoid parenting (Füredi, 2001). Contemporary manifestations of crisis in childhood however, do not appear to be a 21st century invention. For example, Cunningham (2005) argues that the current ‘crisis’ in and anxiety about childhood is not new and similar responses to the nature of childhood can be found in the past. A key feature of contemporary notions of childhood is nostalgia (Jenks, 1996; Kehily, 2008). Remembering how childhood used to be conveys connotations of play and whimsy, freedom and adventure. This romantic idealised version of childhood struggles to exist in an era in which
Childhood is increasingly affected by technology, commercialism and visual culture (Kehily, 2008).

**Childhood in the late modern era**

Australian society is said to be a “post-traditional” society characteristic of high or late modernity, and typified by broad socio-economic and political changes such as industrialism, secularism, capitalism and increased surveillance (Giddens, 1991; Lupton, 1999c). The late modern era brings with it a move away from community and tradition and the rise of individualism (Beck, 1992). Furthermore, within this post-traditional society Giddens (1991) argues that self-identity becomes a reflexive project. In late modernity, each individual is responsible for the production of their own biographies in which individuals tell a story to themselves and to others about who they are and what they want to be. Individualism and reflexivity is not confined to adults. Children present themselves as social actors with their own rights and interests both within and outside of the family (Jans, 2004; Wyness, 1996) and are encouraged to create their own lives (Beck, 1997). Indeed childhood sociologist, Alan Prout argues “there is an increasing tendency to see children as individuals with the capacity for self-realisation, and within the limits of social dependency, autonomous action” (Prout, 2000, p. 304). For example, children demonstrate the process of individualisation in the private sphere through their power as consumers (Kehily, 2008; Prout, 2000). As such they too are affected by individualism and the fragmentation of institutions such as the family (Jans, 2004). Conversely, reflexive modernization in the late modern era (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994) has been criticised by Wyness (2000) for invoking a romantic and naïve view of the child which positions the child as dependent on adults and for failing to discuss how individualisation can challenge this dependence.

The reflexive project of the self is linked to intimacy and the idea of the ‘pure relationship’. For Giddens (1991), “A pure relationship is one which in which external criteria have become dissolved: the relationship exists solely for whatever rewards that relationship as such can deliver” (p.6). The idea of a ‘pure relationship’ is said to bring greater equality between individuals, thus undermining traditional gender divisions (Giddens, 1991). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995, 2002) also suggest that ‘individualisation’ has weakened gender roles and enabled women and men to shape their own lives and relationships. This view is
qualified however by the suggestion that until men are willing to embrace change, inequality will still be an issue for women (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). This type of intimate relationship is based on trust and communication rather than external social norms and values, thus bringing about a new version of the family, different from those in traditional societies. The idea of a ‘pure relationship’ is not exclusively a family issue; it does however have ramifications for families and importantly for this study, childhood, as new versions of the family develop. New forms of the family are characterised by the modern nuclear family and the breakup of the traditional extended family. New modern families not only consist of the nuclear family, but also include single parent families, same-sex families and step-families with children from previous marriages (Kehily, 2008). Within this new version of the family, the child and childhood is changing as the effects of the late modern era reflect broader adult concerns with identity and security in changing times (Jenks, 1996). Furthermore, the breakdown of the traditional forms of family and the resultant decline in trust has changed the adult-child relationship. Jenks (19966) argues that “the child is now envisioned as a form of ‘nostalgia’, a longing for times past, not as a futurity” (p. 19). In this sense, the adult-child bond is constructed as fundamental and pure (Brannen & O’Brien, 1996), thus connecting the idea of ‘pure relationship’ put forward by Giddens. Furthermore, Giddens (1991) argues that while the adult-child relationship is a “special case” because of the power imbalance and processes of socialisation involved in the relationship, the further a child moves towards independence, the “more elements of pure relationship come into play” (p. 98). In this new form of intimacy brought about by the processes of individualisation in the late modern era the status of the child changes. Beck (1992) suggests that “the child is the source of the last remaining, irrevocable, unexchangeable primary relationship [emphasis in original]. Parents come and go. The child stays. Everything that is desired, but not realizable in the relationship is directed to the child” (p. 118).

A key characteristic of the late modern era is the separation of time and space (Giddens, 1990, 1991). “Space time distanciation” (Giddens, 1990, p. 53) refers to the processes where increasingly in the late modern era interaction and communication between individuals has become detached. In contrast to traditional societies, “time” is separate from a specific place and requires uniform modes of measurement for example, clocks and calendars. Place from this perspective becomes what Giddens (1991) terms as “phantasmagoric” (p. 146) whereby
“local characteristics of place are thoroughly invaded by, and reorganised in terms of, distanced social relations” (Giddens, 1990, p. 20). The separation of time and space is the principal factor for the process of disembedding. Disembedding refers to “the lifting out of social relationships from local contexts and their recombination across indefinite time/space distances” (Giddens, 1991, p.242). This in turn leads to the destruction of traditional forms of community (Giddens, 1991). The internet is an excellent example of time space distanciation. This can be seen as a disembedding mechanism which brings with it new forms of community (for example the Facebook community), and thus changes not only the way children spend their leisure time but the nature of childhood itself. While Giddens argues that social relations are disembedded from everyday life, for Beck, individuals are disembedded from “traditional commitments and support relationships” which leads to a “loss of traditional security” and “guiding norms” (Beck, 1992, p. 128). Disembedding is explicitly displayed in childhood via the break with traditional family and locality. In western cultures the breakdown of the traditional extended family, connections with extended family which may be fractured by physical distance and an increase in social mobility has led to a change in the nature of childhood.

Risk and parenting

A key facet of the late modern era is the notion of risk (Giddens, 1991). “The essence of risk is not that it is happening, but that it might be happening” (Adam & van Loon, 2000, p. 2), or as Giddens (1998) suggests if the outcome is completely certain then it cannot be defined as being risky: the result is known, thus removing the essence of risk. It has been argued that two different and contradictory definitions of risk exist. The first notion is objective risk which is determined by physical facts and the second notion and the one which is applied within this thesis is the social construction of risk (Hansson, 2010). Objective risk is utilised in fields such as banking and finance, occupational health and safety and in related technical literature that relies on risk analyses. Risk in this sense is characterised in terms of certain types of objective facts concerned with the physical world and possibilities and probabilities. The social construction of risk is independent of physical facts and reliant on values surrounding subjectivity (Hansson, 2010). Within social constructionism, risk is never fully objective. Risk is constantly negotiated and constructed (Adams, 2003; Lupton, 1999c; Murray, 2009).
Within the tradition of subjectivity, three major theoretical perspectives of risk have emerged since the early 1980s (Lupton, 1999b, 1999c, 2006). Firstly, Mary Douglas (1986, 1992; 1983) adopted a cultural anthropological approach to risk. Douglas treats risk as the outcome of social processes and claims that risks are a “collective construct” (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983, p. 186). For Douglas (1992) risk is “not a real thing, it is a way of thinking, and a highly artificial contrivance at that” (p. 46). The strength of Douglas’s thesis on risk is that it allows the conceptualisation of risk perceptions both within and outside of a given culture. However, it is static in that its approach to change has a rigid typology of risk perception (Mythen, 2008). The thesis put forward by Douglas does not examine risk in respect of late modernity. For Douglas, responses to risk are the same as those found in traditional societies (Wilkinson, 2001).

A second approach to risk has been espoused by theorists who have taken up Foucault’s work on governmentality. This view of risk explores ways in which governmental and other apparatus work together to govern populations via risk discourses and strategies (Castel, 1991; Dean, 1997). Writing from the governmentality viewpoint Ewald (1991) suggests, “Nothing is a risk in itself; there is no risk in reality. But on the other hand, anything can [emphasis in original] be a risk; it all depends on how one analyses the danger, considers the event” (p. 199). From the governmentality perspective the central aspect of risk is the way in which individuals in society are encouraged to engage in self-regulation (Lupton, 1999a). This view of risk has been criticised on two fronts. Firstly it has been criticised both for its emphasis on the disciplinary function of social institutions and for under estimating the role that human agency has in determining social conditions (Mythen, 2008).

The third approach to risk is a socio-cultural approach to risk and is the approach that is utilised within this thesis. Ulrich Beck (1992, 1999, 2002, 2009; 1994) posits a “risk society thesis” which has also been put forward by Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991, 1999; 1998). The risk society thesis in late modernity is concerned with macro-social processes such as individualism and reflexivity (Lupton, 1999a), and as such is an inescapable structural part of post-traditional societies (Beck, 1992). Whilst individualism allows for more freedom in individual choice it also “recursively generates personal insecurity and reflexive-decision making” (Mythen, 2005, p. 129). As such the burden of risk transfers from institutions to
individuals. Indeed for Beck (1992), “Risk may be defined as a systematic way of dealing with the hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself” (p. 21). Further, Giddens (1999) argues that a risk society is not essentially more dangerous than previous times or generations but is one that is increasingly concerned with both the future and with safety. This in turn produces the perception of risk. Furthermore, risk has been linked to the social conditions surroundings the late modern era and additionally to a lack of trust in expert knowledge and systems (Giddens, 1990, 1991). Additionally, as noted, risk has been related to a move away from community and tradition to individualism (Beck, 1992). It has also been argued that an individual’s perception of the risks involved in different types of behaviours and activities is socially constructed and these behaviours and attitudes are also said to be affected by experiences and norms associated with the individual’s social group (Adams, 2003). Furthermore, individuals are said to move in and out of risk status as risks may change along with life circumstances. As time passes each individual is likely to face new risks as other risks are negated (Cowan, Cowan, & Schulz, 1996).

The risk society thesis proposed by Beck and Giddens has been criticised on a number of fronts. Although a number of empirical studies on risk have appeared over the last decade (see for example, Jenkins, 2006; Lupton & Tulloch, 2002; Murray, 2009) the thesis is said to lack empirical evidence and works at the level of grand theory (Dingwall, 2000; Jenkins, 2006; Lupton, 2006). The thesis has also been criticised for positing a universal social actor, without a distinct gender or age. Research by Lupton and Tulloch (2002) suggests reflexive responses to risk are shaped by factors including age and gender. Furthermore, Mythen (2007) argues that attitudes towards risk are also shaped by other social factors including class, ethnicity and location, while it has been suggested that the construction of risk maybe shaped by generation (Murray, 2009). Furthermore, it has been argued that what is deemed to be dangerous in one cultural or historical context may not be in another (Dingwall, 2000). The risk society thesis put forward by Beck and Giddens has also been criticised for focusing on the negative aspects of risk (Mythen, 2007). Risk can be positive (Austen, 2009; Lupton & Tulloch, 2002) and it has been suggested that risk can be an arena for self-actualisation and challenge (Lupton, 2006).
Risk is not static. It is constantly changing, negotiated, re-negotiated, constructed and reconstructed. Risk may change with life circumstances and each individual is likely to face new risks as others are negated (Cowan, et al., 1996). Murray (2009) introduces the notion of ‘risk landscapes’ and suggests that risk “can be ambiguous, inconsistent and dynamic, with shifts in outlook occurring within very short periods” (p. 484). A similar idea is argued by Lupton (2006) who finds that risk can be dynamic across time and space.

Whilst much academic attention has focused on the global aspects of risk, for example environmental pollution and terrorism (Beck, 2009; Lash, Wynne, & Szerszynski, 1996), a concern also surrounds localised everyday discourses of risk (Tulloch & Lupton, 2003). Localised discourses of risk in the realm of childhood have received some attention recently (Jenkins, 2006; Murray, 2009; Valentine, 1996). The next section of this literature review examines the notion of risk in relation to childhood.

Risk in childhood

Today we live in a climate of heightened risk awareness coupled with a nostalgia for an imagined past in which children played safely throughout a carefree innocent childhood. (Jackson & Scott, 1999, p.87)

Risk in relation to childhood has been explained in a number of ways. It is often understood in the context of the private / public dichotomy (Jackson & Scott, 1999; Valentine, 1996). Children in public space are seen as either at vulnerable and at risk or as being the source of risk (Valentine, 1996) connecting with notions of children as seen as either “innocent angels or evil devils” (Valentine, 1996, p. 581).

Within the public sphere the ‘at risk’ child is understood primarily in terms of stranger danger or traffic danger (Hillman, 2006; Valentine, 2004; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997). A number of research projects have found that both parents and children respond to risk in the public environment and react to them accordingly. Perceptions of risk in the community and the neighbourhood have been shown to lead to parents restricting the time children spend in outdoor play and active transport (Carver, Timperio, & Crawford, 2008; Hillman, Adams, & Whitelegg, 1990; Mullan, 2003; Tranter & Pawson, 2001). Furthermore, an
Australian study found that the perception of risk in the community led to a higher prevalence of parental restrictions on adolescent girls and children due to the fear of molestation or assault (Carver, Timperio, Hesketh, & Crawford, 2010). Despite fears of stranger danger and traffic danger parents in the late modern era are also aware that access to the outside world is an important factor in the social and physical development of their children (Jenkins, 2006). For example, in a similar finding Kelley, Mayall and Hood (1998) found that parents saw their role in relation to risk mitigation as “striking a balance between protection and compensatory supervision” (p. 16). Parents have also reported using strategies to mitigate risk in the public sphere. In a study conducted in the United States, Outley and Floyd (2002) found that in higher risk urban neighbourhoods that were “socially isolated” and characterised by “poverty and physical risks” (p. 161), parents chaperoned their children, used kinship networks and organised the leisure activities of their children in order for participation to proceed. In an Australian context, research has found that parents used strategies that included using or purchasing ‘safe places’ for children to participate in activities that may not have been readily available in their communities, creating safe spaces in their backyards or seeking out public parks that met specified criteria where children could be closely supervised (Fullagar & Harrington, 2009).

Children also respond to risk in the community and neighbourhood. For example, Harden (2000) found that children reflexively construct risk landscapes around concepts of risk and safety. The home and private sphere were linked with notions of safety and security while the public sphere was described as a place of vulnerability for children. Harden also argues that children in her study distinguished an intermediate sphere – the local sphere which existed between the private and the public and was identified in terms of its familiarity with people and places and proximity to home (Harden, 2000). This coincides with research from the United Kingdom which found that children in low socio-economic areas played in the streets near their homes as there were few safe public spaces available (Christie, Ward, Kimberlee, Towner, & Slaney, 2007). Furthermore, children are said to respond positively to preventative measures placed by parents in response to exposure to risk, and negatively when this constraint leads to a loss of autonomy (Kelley, et al., 1998). This is in contrast with a study of youth aged between 13 and 18 years carried out by Austen (2009) who found that those in her study did not view risk as a negative concept, were not worried and were not uncertain. It is therefore important to note that just as with risk itself, risk in childhood
should be contextualised “within socioeconomic, cultural and institutional frameworks” (Backett-Milburn & Harden, 2004, p. 429). Indeed, research has identified that the risk landscapes of children and parents are affected by both global and local factors (Holloway & Valentine, 2000).

Increasingly, children are being regarded as ‘at risk’ in the previously safe environment of the home. In the private realm parents are beginning to be held responsible for risk to their children. Insufficient parental responsibility (Christie, et al., 2007) leading to unintentional injuries has been categorised as a risk factor in childhood (Morrongiello, Klemencic, & Corbett, 2008). Other risk factors in the home include the impact of television viewing on children and the risk to children’s health as result of inactivity (Howard, 2005). While it is argued that use of the internet leads to slightly higher academic performance, excess screen time is also a risk factor in the private sphere as it often comes at the expense of other activities, leading to an increased risk of obesity (Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield, & Gross, 2000).

The concern with risk and ensuring safety has also been referred to as a culture of fear (Füredi, 2002; Glassner, 1999). In relation to the culture of fear, Füredi (2002) argues that risk consciousness has both historical and social contexts and that “the very definition of something as a risk is bound up with the changing relations and perceptions within society” (p.59). A culture of fear is typified by individuals perceiving the worst and reacting to the worst that could potentially happen by taking measures to guard against it. For children in the late modern era, this means that their movements are under constant supervision from parents or other appropriate adults to ensure their safety and their protection from risk. This sense of risk or fear that surrounds the lives of contemporary children ensures that most children are not left on their own, that they are not able to play outside alone and that they should be under constant supervision from a parent (Füredi, 2001). These factors and the culture of fear surrounding parents has led to what Füredi (2001) terms “paranoid parenting”. Some research has found support for this argument. For example, Murray (2009) found that the discourse of the paranoid parent had filtered through to mothers and had impacted on their “risk landscapes” (p. 483). Others have found that despite the claims made by Füredi, parents are not in the grip of paranoia, however they “are wrestling with competing sets of social expectations as well as their own rational and emotive judgement”
Furthermore, Australian research has found that both adults and children negotiate “both positive and negative dangers to participate in public life” (Fullagar, 2008, p. 124) and that in contrast to the argument put forward by Füredi (1997) that discourses of risk may lead to inaction, families actively engage in calculating both risks and benefits (Fullagar, 2008).

Others have also argued that the growth of risk aversion in the late modern era is leading to vastly different experiences of childhood than we may have seen in the past. For example, Gill (2007) argues that activities that children may have taken part in a generation ago are now branded as troubling and dangerous and parents as irresponsible. Furthermore risk aversion is said to lead to a restriction of children’s play, limits to their freedom and endangers children as they are denied basic freedoms and experiences which may leave them vulnerable (Gill, 2007). This restriction on children’s play is said to have led to “nature deficit disorder” characterised by a lack of involvement with nature and to higher levels of anxiety, depression and stress in children (Louv, 2005, p. 34).

Recent research is beginning to examine problems associated with a lack of risk in children’s lives. Australian researchers David Edgar and Helen Little (2011) have coined the term ‘Risk Deficit Disorder (RDD)’ which points to what they describe as an unhealthy trend towards the removal of all risk within communities. Edgar and Little (2011) contend that risk may be beneficial and for children taking managed risks may be “critically important for healthy childhood development” (p. 1). Furthermore, international research suggests other positive side effects to participation in risky outdoor play, for example Brussoni, Olsen, Pike and Sleet (2012) argue that outdoor risky play for children should be encouraged as children firstly have a natural inclination to want to take part in risky play and secondly that keeping children safe “involves letting them take and manage risks” (p. 3134).

Evidence from the discussion presented here suggests that it is not just the child who could be seen to be at risk, but also the institution of childhood (Scott, Jackson, & Backett-Milburn, 1998). Risk anxiety may have considerable effects on the daily lives of children, their autonomy, and the protection provided to them (Jackson & Scott, 1999) including their leisure activities. Reaction to risk, and risk anxieties can therefore be seen as contributing to the social construction of childhood (Jackson & Scott, 1999).
Constructions of 21st century childhood

‘Childhood’ is the structural site that is occupied by ‘children’ as a collectivity. And it is within this collective and institutional space of ‘childhood’, as a member of the category ‘children’ that any individual ‘child’ comes to exercise his or her unique agency [emphasis in original]. (James & James, 2004, p. 14)

Childhood, by its very nature, is transitory. Every individual will go through childhood and grow out of it into adulthood. It is an historical, cultural and developmental experience which is a stage of the life course common to all whilst at the same time different to all due to the diversity found in everyday life (James & James, 2004). It has basic physical and developmental characteristics (Jenks, 2002) which each child travels through on their way to adulthood (see for example, Erikson, 1963). What it means to be a child varies over time and space (Valentine, 1996) and across societies (Mayall, 2000). Furthermore, each culture and each generation understands and interprets childhood differently. For example, the experience of childhood may be different for children in the early part of the 21st century compared to their grandparents or indeed their parents due to social and technological change.

Over the past few decades social constructionism has gained prominence as a means by which to understand childhood. In this understanding, the ways in which we make sense of the world, that is our beliefs, understandings, attitudes and expectations are socially constructed. From this perspective, the things that we know about children may not be what they appear. They are not “self-evident truths” (Stainton Rogers, 2008, p. 126). Instead, these realities are constructed through the meanings attached to them by others (Stainton Rogers, 2008). Proponents of this theory (James & Prout, 1990; Jenks, 2002; Prout & James, 1997; Qvortrup, Bardy, Sgriba, & Wintersberger, 1994; Stainton Rogers & Stainton Rogers, 1992), advocate childhood as socially constructed and to be understood in context. James and Prout (1990) suggest a paradigm for the study of childhood based on this understanding (see Figure 2.1, next page).
Childhood is understood as a social construction. As such it provides an interpretive frame for contextualising the early years of human life. Childhood, as distinct from biological immaturity, is neither natural nor a universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies.

Childhood is a variable of social analysis. It can never be entirely divorced from other variables such as class, gender or ethnicity. Comparative and cross-cultural analysis reveals a variety of childhoods rather than a single and universal phenomenon.

Children’s social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right, independent of the perspective and concerns of adults.

Children are and must be seen as active agents in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live. Children are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes.

Ethnography is a particularly useful methodology for the study of childhood. It allows children a more direct voice and participation in the production of sociological data than is usually possible through experimental or survey styles of research.

Childhood is a phenomenon in relation to which the double hermeneutic of the social sciences is acutely present. That is to say, to proclaim a new paradigm of childhood sociology is also to engage in and respond to the process of reconstructing childhood in society. (Prout & James, 1997, p. 8)

**FIGURE 2.1: PARADIGM FOR THE STUDY OF CHILDHOOD, PROUT AND JAMES (1997)**

By examining childhood through the lens of social constructionism, childhood is able to be removed from being a purely biological determinant, and placed securely in the social realm (Jenks, 2008; Prout & James, 1997). Childhood can be thus understood as an historical, social and cultural phenomenon (Prout, 2005) which has significance for its present, as well as both the future and the past (James & Prout, 1990). Others have argued that if social constructionists ignore biology entirely, they may in fact misconstrue the true nature of the world in which children live and grow up. Taking account of both biology and social
constructionism would overcome this concern (Prout, 2005). Furthermore, it has been argued that a range of social institutions and mechanisms, including social policy, family and the law combine with politics, economics, beliefs, policies and everyday actions of both children and adults both in and away from the home to structurally determine childhood (James & James, 2004). In the words of Woodhead (1996) “children do not grow up in a vacuum” (p. 10).

Key to the understanding of the social construction of childhood is the position of children as social agents. Children are not passively socialised nor do they have one identity (James & Prout, 1996). They are both influenced by their social circumstances and concurrently influence them (Christensen & Prout, 2005). Children in the late modern era are able to present themselves as social actors both within and outside of the family (Jans, 2004). As social actors in their own right, they are active participants in the construction of their own experiences, the society in which they live and other people’s lives. Children are often controlled by adults in the name of child welfare or conformity (James & James, 2004). Despite this, and despite having lives that are shaped by policy and practice, children as social actors are able to make a life for themselves through their interactions with other adults and children (Mayall, 2002).

All societies manage childhood through laws, rules and structures which serve to set children apart from adults (James & James, 2004). As a result, children are often excluded and marginalised in a society in which adulthood is understood to be of great importance (Qvortrup, et al., 1994). This marginalisation takes a number of forms. Children are excluded because of foreseen and unforeseen dangers in the environment, because there may be a risk to their mental health and because they are often in the care of others while parents are doing something else. They are also marginalised in legislation and in reporting (Qvortrup, et al., 1994). For example, it has only been since 2000 that statistics have been gathered in Australia on the organised leisure activities of children. Furthermore, Prout (2000) argues that public policy “is marked by an intensification of control, regulation and surveillance around children” (p. 304). Children have been referred to as human “becomings” rather than human “beings” (Uprichard, 2008, p. 303). Alanen (1994) suggests that this can be referred to as “adultism” (p. 28). Children are seen as less than adults. They are in the process of ‘becoming’ an adult as opposed to being seen as an individual person.
Childhood has also been situated as a structural form (Qvortrup, 2009a). Although childhood has been described as transitory in nature for each individual child, childhood is said to be a structural feature of all societies; it is not merely the period of early life (Alanen, 1994). Childhood in this sense is regarded as a relatively stable permanent structure in modern social life with the same significance as gender or class. This structural approach to childhood implies a macro approach to the study of childhood, researching childhood as a collective as opposed to the individual child. This approach is carried out by identifying specific social structures that may impact upon a child’s daily life and living conditions that may produce common unifying circumstances. These commonalities in childhood mean that children can be classified as a generational group who share social, cultural and material similarities (Alanen, 2001). This view is shared by Jens Qvortrup (2009a) who contends that childhood is “a permanent [emphasis in original] form of any generational structure” (p. 23). It is with this in mind that the next section of this literature review addresses the concept of generations.

**Generation**

*Generational theory seeks to understand and characterize cohorts of people according to their membership of a generation [...] It is a dynamic, socio-cultural theoretical framework that employs a broad brush-stroke approach, rather than an individual focus. Hence, it features patterns and propensities across the generational group, rather than individuals. Generations and generational units are informally defined by demographers, the press and media, popular culture, market researchers and by members of the generation themselves.*

*(Pendergast, 2010, p. 1)*

Research in generational theory is not a new phenomenon. The term is complex and meanings can vary across and within studies (Narvanen & Nasman, 2004). In the following discussion, an historical understanding of generations is traced before contemporary variations of the term are examined. Within this thesis I use social generations as a construct for defining groups of people based on the tradition of Karl Mannheim (1952). This notion of generation is investigated and extended and theories of generation and childhood are explored. The last part of this chapter is dedicated to defining the social generations used within this study.
Understanding ‘generations’

In ancient Greece, three distinct categories of generation were recognised by philosophers of the time. These categories included the child, the youth and the old person. Each generational unit was easily distinguished from the next, for example youth was a time of action and old age a time of contemplation and reflection (Nash, 1979). There were exceptions to this rule – for example Solon’s division of a lifetime into ten stages of seven years each and Puthanoras who endeavoured to divide life into four categories of twenty years each (Nash, 1979). Generally, however, for philosophers in ancient Greece, generations were founded upon the basis of age. These historical understandings of generation are based around the notion of time that is, the number of years between the ages of parents and their children. This view of generations is found in most cultures (Arber & Attias-Donfut, 2000). It was Plato however, who first identified generational conflict as a considerable force for social change (Braungart & Braungart, 1986).

In contemporary research the term has been used in a number of different ways and has a range of meanings (Arber & Attias-Donfut, 2000). Generation has been variously described with reference to generational descent, for example a parent generation and an offspring generation. This meaning of the term comes from kinship studies and relates to lineage between grandparent, parent and children (Pilcher, 1995). Whilst lineage or kinship descent has primarily been used by social anthropologists in referring not only to parent-child relations but also to the wider realm of kinship relations (see for example, Goody, 1973; Strathern, 1973) it has also been used in sociology for the study of grandparent, parent and child generations (see for example, Brannen, 2004).

The term ‘generation’ has also been applied to a political generation – a generation in history that comes together to work for social and political change – for example the 1960s generation (Braungart & Braungart, 1986). A further usage of the term generation is from a life stage perspective (Kertzer, 1983). Here the term generation is used to denote a group of people living in a particular historical period. For example in Australia this could be the ‘stolen generation’ in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were removed from their families by state and federal governments under the guise of child protection and welfare.
A further understanding of the term generation has been utilised to denote an age cohort, such as the 1950s cohort or the 1990s cohort (see for example, Carlsson & Karlsson, 1970). The terms ‘cohort’ and ‘generation’ have often been interchanged. However the two, in generational theory are not the same. The term ‘cohort’ refers to a “group of persons born in the same time interval and aging together” (Ryder, 1965, p. 844). A cohort is a demographic term, referring to people born in the same year or group of years who then age together and experience specific social changes and life transitions, for example the Second World War, at approximately the same chronological age (Kertzer, 1983; Marshall, 1983; Ryder, 1965). The use of cohort when referring to generational studies has been deemed static and artificial and a technical division of the population in which age categories are artificially contrived for statistical purposes (Miller, 2000). Research has called for the avoidance of defining generations strictly on the basis of chronological cohorts but argues for the inclusion of people’s accounts of their generational experience to be “linked with an historically informed political economy” of that generation (Vincent, 2005, p. 579), thus allowing it to become possible to account for the effect of politics and the economy on each generation. In contrast to a cohort, a generation shares membership of the cohort and develops behaviours and attitudes that are different from any other group in society (Braungart & Braungart, 1986). Generations are therefore distinct cultural phenomena and a generation does not fit neatly into a birth cohort (Alwin & McCammon, 2003).

Social generation

While the roots of generational theory hark back to ancient Greece, contemporary research and discussion owes much to the work of Karl Mannheim (1952) who attempted to incorporate a generational thesis with a theory of social function (Kriegel, 1979). For Mannheim, relationships based around struggle and conflict was seen as influential to the evolution and formation of generation. Mannheim’s (1952) classic account of generations is based around three major premises. These premises include location, actuality and unity.

Location – the life chances of individuals with respect to wealth, power, social values and political beliefs are bounded by their place in time and space.
Actuality – individuals within a generation are orientated towards one another by their location and this contributes to a “common destiny” of those within a particular historical and social unit. A group of young people become an actual generation “in so far as they participate in the characteristic and social intellectual currents of their society and period” (Mannheim, 1952, p. 304).

Unity – individuals within a generation recognise common attitudes and principles with regard to socio-cultural conditions.

For Mannheim (1952) the “sociological phenomenon of generations is ultimately based on the biological rhythm of life and death” (p. 290). Whilst Mannheim’s generational thesis is very useful in understanding generations and relationships between generations, he does not take account of or make reference to gendered social relations; Mannheim is unconditionally talking solely about young men. In addition to this, Mannheim’s thesis does not consist of nor mention children in any form, except as objects of socialisation. Others have however taken Mannheim’s theory of generations and applied it to both gender issues (Pilcher, 1998) and childhood (Alanen & Mayall, 2001). Pilcher (1998) used Mannheim’s theory of generations to compare three generations of women and their accounts of a range of gender issues, which included sexuality, abortion, equality and the domestic division of labour and found that due to their membership of different cohorts, women do not share the same gendered life courses. Alanen and Mayall (2001) applied social generations to the study of childhood and found Mannheim’s theory of generations is applicable to children. These concepts are discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

Another influential theorist in the area of generational thought from a social generational perspective is José Ortega y Gasset. For Ortega y Gasset a generation is a new assimilation of the social body which includes both silent majority and outspoken minority. It is a negotiation between the individual and society. Members of each generation are endowed with certain characteristics which distinguishes them from previous generations. However, underneath this general sign of identity, individuals differ considerably. The thesis put forward by Ortega y Gasset indicates that each individual within a generation is more similar to other individuals within that generation than those outside of the generation (Ortega y Gasset, 1961). For example, a child born in the 1940s is much more similar to others born during the same time - even though they may have vastly different socio-
economic circumstances - than those children born in the 1990s due to social and cultural change. This point is also taken up by White Riley (1979) who suggests that because of social change, different generations not only age in different ways but each generation cannot and does not “follow in the footsteps of their predecessors” (p. 41).

The concept and use of ‘time’ as a frame for generational analysis was taken up by Abrams (1982) who argues that identity is made within the “double construction of time” (p. 256) - where a person’s life history and world history combine to alter each other. Abrams also argues that a sociological generation may encompass many biological generations where there has been no change in the social world, and an unchanged system of meaning (for example in a traditional society). Abrams’ argument is based in part on Erikson’s eight stages of ‘man’ (sic) (Erikson, 1963) where psychological development occurs in stages and identity is constructed both psychologically and through social interaction. Erikson’s eight stages of man is examined in relation to childhood in Chapter Three.

Michael Corsten (1999) takes Mannheim’s concept of generations a step further and makes a distinction between historical and logical time which was first presented by Robinson (1962) in relation to economic growth. Logical time refers to “the outline of a linear progress of time-points distinctly succeeding one another” (Corsten, 1999, p. 256). A cohort of people grouped together based on their year of birth could be said to be categorised according to logical time. Corsten (1999) argues that cohorts grouped together on the basis of logical time “do not necessarily imply the existence of generation-specific backgrounds of experience” (p. 256). Corsten (1999) contends that historical time refers to a series of social events. Therefore, members of a generation not only share assumptions of background, but also share a sense that other members of that generation have and share similar assumptions.

Members of a generation are said to share “a sense that converts my time to our time or the times of my generation” (p. 258). The inclusion of an argument surrounding linear time and historical time in a theory of generations dismisses the idea of a generation based on an age cohort. Instead it takes into account and concentrates on the shared assumptions of those with who may have differing birth dates (Mayall, 2002).

Giddens (1991) also takes up the concept of time in relation to generations. For Giddens, the concept of generations in the late modern era only makes sense against the backdrop of standardised time. In traditional societies the passing of generations carried with it
“connotations of renewal” (p. 146). This concept of renewal loses most of its meaning in the late modern era where “practices of the past are only repeated if they are reflexively justifiable” (p. 146).

Cultural sociologists have also extended Mannheim’s notion of generation as an actuality and developed it based on Bourdieu’s notions of “habitus, hexis and culture”. For example, they argue that “generational cultures become embodied in their cultural dispositions (dress, language and emblems) and the postures of individuals (walk, dance preferences and songs)” (Eyerman & Turner, 1998, p. 93). Further, Gilleard (2004) suggests that the difference between a ‘cohort’ and a ‘generation’ is:

Not so much […] the basis of it representing a specific set of ‘socialising’ experiences for a particular aggregate of individuals, but instead as a distinct, temporally located cultural field [emphasis in original] within which individuals from a potential variety of overlapping birth cohorts participate as generational agents. (p. 114)

Mannheim’s (1952) concept of generations is not without its critics. For example Kertzer (1983) pointed to the conceptual confusion surrounding the term generation, and the empirical imprecision of the concept. Kertzer proposed the removal of the broad socio-cultural meaning of the term (e.g. Generation X) and retention of the term generation to refer to kinship relations. The difficulty with this proposal has been that social commentators, the media and lay people have not discarded the socio-cultural meanings of the term generation. Terms such as Generation Z and Baby Boomers are used to describe different social generations and to locate individuals and groups within different historical time periods (see for example, Devine, 2011; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009). An alternative has been proposed by Pilcher (1994) who, drawing on the traditions of Mannheim, suggested a difference between generations based on kinship effects as suggested by Ketzer (1983) and social generations. Pilcher (1994) suggests the use of “generation when reference is made to kinship relationships and social generation [emphasis in original] when reference is made to any cohort related phenomena” (p. 483).
Generation and childhood

The concept of ‘generation’ is said to be key in the study of childhood (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998b; Mayall, 2002). Mayall proposes two central notions in the study of generations. The first is that of ‘generationing’. This is said to be:

The relational processes whereby people become to be known as children, and whereby children and childhood acquire certain characteristics, linked to local contexts, and changing as the factors brought to bear change. (Mayall, 2002, p. 27)

Generationing, Mayall argues, is necessary to determine the processes surrounding the construction and modification of childhood. The second key notion in the study of childhood generations is the understanding of the degree to which individuals occupy a generation and regard themselves as “generationally positioned” (Mayall, 2002, p. 161). Childhood is said to be fundamentally relational with adulthood. It is defined as different to adulthood by those who have the power to define it, that is, adults. For these reasons Mayall (2002) argues, the study of generationing is essential.

The childhood of those who grew up in the 1960s will unquestionably be viewed differently than the childhood of those who grew up in the 1980s or the childhood of 21st century children. As technology, law, policies, social practices and discourses change across generations so does the nature and character of childhood (James & James, 2004). Furthermore, childhood in western cultures is said to be culture specific and to change over time (Jenks, 2002). This is notwithstanding the fact that childhood does however, remain constant and universal as a social space (Qvortrup, et al., 1994). Whilst age expectations and competencies can be generationally specific “at any point in time they turn out to be individually and momentarily negotiable” (James, et al., 1998b, p. 59).

Leena Alanen (2001) and Berry Mayall (2001) turn to Mannheim’s (1952) account of generations which is based on the concepts of locality, actuality and unity and suggests that this can be useful in the study of childhood and generations. Mannheim’s explanation of generations allows groups of children to be viewed on three different levels. The first is that each group of children can be located historically and socially at a given time. Secondly, Mannheim’s account allows us to understand a group of children as an actual generation of
people who participate in social events. Thirdly, it allows us to view children as a generational unit who think and work together. There are of course restrictions surrounding the employment of children under the age of 16 in most western democratic societies. However, children do ‘leisure’ together and play together and ‘school’ together. At the same time it has been argued that children do not form generational units (where people not only form a common bond based on common goals, but can put into practice a programme of activity) due to their relative powerlessness within generational relations (Mayall, 2002). Notwithstanding this relative powerlessness, children are participants in social life and Mannheim’s theoretical framework is applicable to children (Alanen, 2001; Alanen & Mayall, 2001). Furthermore, Alanen and Mayall (2001) argue that generational order should be the central organising concept of the social study of childhood.

Jens Qvortrup is an influential theorist in generational relations and childhood. Qvortrup (2009a, 2009b) positions childhood as a permanent structural form. Children begin their association with the structural space of childhood from birth and leave it at a culturally specific age. Childhood, from this generational perspective, is therefore a permanent structural form that children pass through on their way to adulthood. This does not mean that childhood remains static. Although, as a structural form childhood remains a permanent fixture, the nature of childhood is constantly changing (Qvortrup, 2009a). Children as a generational unit move out of the generation of childhood into the generation of adulthood. Here, Qvortrup uses the term generation to refer not only to an age group, but also a life phase. This has been criticised as being problematic as it lacks clarity and can lead to confusion (Narvanen & Nasman, 2004).

Bourdieu (1993; 1988) proposes the idea of a ‘social generation’ where similar experiences are shared by groups of people which will later influence their experiences with relationships. This conception of a ‘social generation’ enables us to manage one of the major difficulties in studying childhood, that is, how to handle the large differences in age that an understanding of childhood conveys. For example a one year old is considered a child, as is a twelve year old. However, developmentally and socially they are bound to be at vastly different levels. By using Bourdieu’s (1993; 1988) notion of a social generation, we are able to define children of disparate ages as the one generation because of shared experiences of
specific social, political, cultural and economic conditions, which are subject to specific understandings of childhood.

Parallels can be drawn between the study of childhood, generation and gender. Both gender and childhood can be seen as relational concepts (Alanen, 1994). Gender enables an understanding of women’s relationships with men, and vice versa. In the same fashion generation can be used to assist in understanding the relationship children have with adults (Mayall, 2000). There are also clear differences between the study of gender, generations and childhood (Alanen & Mayall, 2001; Oakley, 1994). Gender for the most part is a relatively stable identity. Childhood is a temporary and transitional state for individual children, however, as has been previously argued, it is also a structural site that remains after a child has passed through on her/his way to adulthood. A further notable difference is that children are researched by adults, whereas women are researched by both men and women. It must be noted however, that this argument is at odds with critical constructionist research in leisure, childhood and family studies. Davies (2003) for example argues that social constructivism allows people the chance to think about themselves as neither man nor woman (or boy nor girl) but as an individual. As such priority is placed on the child and the social process of how children ‘do gender’.

There are clearly benefits to using the concept of generation in the study of childhood. Firstly, it allows childhood to be separated from “institutional contexts such as the family, schooling or welfare systems” (Prout, 2002, p. 70). In understanding childhood as a relational concept it allows children and adults to be understood within a system of relationships between generations (Alanen, 2001). At an individual level it allows us to recognise that relations between adults and children take place subject to differing historical, social and political notions (Mayall, 2000). For example, research on recreational experiences of girls in rural areas has found that the use of generation within childhood research “encourages researchers to look at status differentials between children and adults in order to understand both the notion of childhood and the real lived experience of it” (Tucker, 2003, p. 122). At the same time, Tucker (2003) argues that a focus on the generational aspects between children and adults may lead to other influences on children being ignored. A critical discussion of the literature pertaining to gender and childhood is offered in Chapter Three.
Challenge of generational theory

The challenge within generational theory is in combining quantitative methods such as age and time with the qualitative experiences of social generations (Pilcher, 1994). This is evidenced in the reality that there is no clear or absolute consensus on when one generation begins and the next ends (Pendergast, 2010). Many theorists use a typical range of 20 – 22 years for each generation and others suggest a shorter range of up to 15 years; however a review of the literature finds that any number of combinations has been used to identify when a generation begins and when it ends with variations occurring both between and within nation states. For example, Howe and Strauss (2000), researchers based in the United States, argue that the ‘Millennial’ generation are born between the years 1982 and 2000, whilst McCrindle et al. (2009) argue that the corresponding generation in Australia known as ‘Generation Y’ share a year of birth between 1980 and 1994. To add to the empirical confusion, others within Australia define Generation Y as those born between 1976 and 1991 (Grose, 2005) or even between 1978 and 1994 (Sheahan, 2005). This does not only apply to Generation Y, but also to ‘Baby Boomers’, ‘Generation X’ and ‘Generation Z.’

The name of each generation also varies significantly between researchers, social commentators and the media. Whilst Baby Boomers are almost universally known as such or as ‘Boomers’, Generation X has also been known as ‘the MTV generation’, and ‘X-ers.’ Generation Y has also been known as the Millennials, the ‘dot com’ generation, and the ‘MySpace’ generation, while Generation Z has been known as ‘iGeneration’, the ‘new Millennials’ and the ‘Internet’ generation (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009). This is not an exhaustive list of all generational descriptors, but a sample of some of the most popular signifiers for each generation.

Conclusion

The first section of the chapter explored childhood and revealed that social, cultural and technological changes over the past 60 years have led to changes in the nature of childhood (Hunt, 2005). Despite this, historic western constructions of childhood which have position children the diametrically opposed “innocent angels or evil devils” (Valentine, 1996, p. 581)
still persist in the early part of the 21st century (Cunningham, 2005). These views may exist in parallel at the same time (Jenks, 2005).

In post-traditional late modern era which is characterised by a risk society (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991) childhood has been shown to be influenced by individualism and reflexivity. As such, children are viewed as social actors with their own rights and interests both within and outside the family (Jans, 2004; Wyness, 1996). This thesis takes a socio-cultural approach to risk which suggests that society is not more dangerous than in previous generations, but one that is concerned with the future and safety (Giddens, 1999). In post-traditional societies the at risk child is often understood in terms of ‘stranger danger’ or ‘traffic danger’ (Hillman, 2006; Valentine, 2004; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997). This concern with ensuring safety has lead to a ‘culture of fear’ (Füredi, 2002) in which children are not left of their own, are not able to play outside alone and are under constant supervision from a parent (Füredi, 2001).

From this perspective it has been argued that childhood is in crisis as children are under tighter surveillance and control than previous times in history (James & James, 2004; Mayall, 2000). This reaction to risk and risk anxieties contribute to the social construction of childhood (Jackson & Scott, 1999). Furthermore, childhood is a structural feature of all societies not merely a period of early life (Alanen, 1994) and a permanent form of any generational structure (Qvortrup, 2009a). Childhood is a temporary and transitional state for individual children, however it is also a structural site that remains after a child has passed through on her/his way to adulthood.

The second part of this chapter explored the concept of generations and found that is was a complex term and that meanings varied across and within studies. This thesis utilises the concept of social generations based on the tradition of Mannheim (1952). The use of social generation within this thesis enables children of disparate ages to be defined as a generation because of shared experiences of specific social, political, cultural and economic conditions shared by children (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu & Collier, 1988).

The challenge within generational theory is in combining quantitative methods such as age and time with the qualitative experiences of social generations (Pilcher, 1994). There is in fact, no clear or absolute consensus on when one generation begins and the next ends.
(Pendergast, 2010). It has been found that there are a number of different combinations used between and within nation states to identify various generations. Additionally, each generation has a number of different names for example Generation Y is also known as the Millennials, the ‘dot com’ generation and the ‘MySpace’ generation.

In the next chapter, so as to understand influences on the organised leisure of children a review of the relevant literature related to gender, play, leisure and childhood is discussed.
Chapter Three: Play, leisure, gender and childhood

Introduction

This chapter is in three parts. As this thesis focuses on leisure and gender across four generations, the chapter moves from the previous discussion on childhood in the late modern era and generational theory to examine the concepts of play, leisure and gender in relation to childhood. The first part of the chapter explores the concepts and relationships between play, leisure and childhood. It also examines the literature surrounding theories of life span development with reference to leisure and play including Erikson’s eight stages of man (1963). Leisure is not the same as play and a discussion is provided on the difficulty in defining leisure. This is followed with a consideration of the literature pertaining to leisure in childhood, influences on leisure, outcomes of participating in leisure and organised leisure in childhood.

The second section of the chapter moves away from a discussion on leisure and critically evaluates current literature on gender. It includes a discussion on biology and the division of labour, gender as a social construction, gender socialisation and social learning theory.

In the third part of this chapter leisure is again examined, this time bringing in gender as a variable. Most research on gender and leisure had been undertaken from an adult perspective, however there is a significant amount of research that exists on gender and childhood play. The limited research on gender and organised leisure of children is evaluated. The final section offers a conclusion to the chapter and points to gaps in the literature.

Play

Play is not the same as exploration (Hutt, 1971; Piaget, Gattegno, & Hodgson, 1962). Play has been described as being older than culture (Huizinga, 1970) and a voluntary activity (Caplan & Caplan, 1974; Huizinga, 1970) that is intrinsically motivated (Ellis, 1973; Huizinga, 1970), actively engaging (Hughes, 1995) and occurs in the absence of external constraints (Iso-Ahola, 1980a). Play is also described as being non-literal (Hughes, 1995; Mannell &
Kleiber, 1997) or as Huizinga (1970) prefers to describe it, not ordinary or real life. Although play is not real life it is also “serious business” (Bruner, 1975; Huizinga, 1970), it has its own course and meaning and is not the same as leisure (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Play, it is argued, is the main form of leisure for children from birth to adolescence (Gordon & Gaitz, 1976) and the principal business of childhood (Jolly, Bruner, & Sylva, 1976). More recent research has suggested that play can be generally defined as those activities that do not have an obvious or direct purpose (Pellegrini, 2009a).

Although children do not differentiate between work and leisure (Ellis, 1973), play is said to be a social function which prepares them for work related tasks of later life (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Furthermore, play theorists such as Piaget (1962, 1999) and Vygotskii (1978) have argued that play is essential for later successful functioning in adulthood. Bruner (1975) argues specifically that the key functions of play are practice and experience, achievement, and interaction leading to effective learning, whilst Caplan and Caplan (1974) suggest that play is important as a precursor to adult competence in problem solving and creativity.

One of the key motivators in play is the need for optimal arousal and as children learn new things through their interactions with the environment a cumulative effect leads to increasing complexity in play activities (Ellis, 1973). Furthermore, Ellis (1973) claims that the goal-orientated adult incursion into children’s play has changed how children play.

Four different types of play have been identified by play theorists (Pellegrini, 2009b). These have been distinguished as locomotor, object, social and pretend play. Locomotor play is physically vigorous play and includes activities such as climbing, chasing and rough and tumble play (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998a). Participation in vigorous play is influenced by both social and hormonal events and results in a gender difference which sees boys participating in this type of activity more than girls (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998b). Object play includes activities such as crafts and playing with blocks and the use of other objects in play such as dolls, jigsaw puzzles and cars (Smith & Pellegrini, 2008). Object play allows children to play without external constraint and may assist in the development of problem solving skills (Smith & Pellegrini, 2008). Social play is play in the context of social interaction (Hughes, 2009). Within social play children learn to focus on rules and become aware of rules that govern social interactions (Hughes, 2009). The last category of play identified is pretend play. Pretend play or fantasy play involves actions, the use of objects and verbalisations that
are non-literal. Often this involves a specific role, for example a doctor, fireman or teacher (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998a; Smith, 2009).

Play in the 21st century

Play in the early part of the 21st century has brought new challenges to researchers. As social and technological change has propelled the populace rapidly through a digital revolution, the way in which children play has altered. Sixty or even 30 years ago, children were far more likely to play independently in their own neighbourhood than they are today (Malone, 2009). This change is not only confined to the streets or neighbourhoods. The ways in which children use nature areas have also changed. For example, a qualitative study from Norway found that children’s use of nature areas near their homes had changed considerably. The spontaneous and self-initiated use of the nature areas had altered and these spaces were now being used as part of planned, organised and adult-controlled activities (Skar & Krogh, 2009). The impact of these changes to the play of children has resulted in an acute decrease in children’s independent mobility and environmental play (Malone, 2007).

Current research suggests that there are a myriad of factors influencing the play of children in their homes and neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood play is being curtailed as parents react to both fears for their children and to dangerous children in the neighbourhood (Valentine, 1996). Other factors that influence the space children use for free play include parental fears regarding stranger danger (Valentine & McKendrick, 1997) and concerns surrounding increased traffic flow (Davis & Jones, 1996), both of which lead to parental concerns regarding the safety of the neighbourhood and streets as spaces to play.

It has also been argued that children in the early part of the 21st century have less time to play as organised activities (Fishman, 1999) and screen time (that is the amount of time children spend in watching TV, using the internet and gaming) has increased (Wen, Kite, Merom, & Rissel, 2009). Despite this, researchers have also suggested that children have differing types of play depending on their social background. Sutton (2008) found that street play is important for disadvantaged children and argues that they engage in this type of play as a reaction to having less space and fewer opportunities for other types of play.
At this point, it is useful to highlight the benefits of free play to children. Independent free play is said to develop resilience, sense of place, sense of self-worth, social connectedness and environmental knowledge (Malone, 2009). Time for unstructured play also allows children to follow their own interests, express their personality and learn ways in which to structure their own time (Rosenfeld & Wise, 2001).

Play theory is intertwined with life span development theory. Theorists such as Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget and Mildred Parten have all developed age related theories of how children play. These theories are addressed in the next section of this review of the literature.

Play and life span development

Although similar in nature, life span development and the life course differ. Life span development psychologists typically focus on cognitive, emotional or motivational aspects of a person’s life (Shanahan & Porfelli, 2002) and the individual’s development through a typical life course (Hetherington & Baltes, 1988). Life course sociologists are more likely to focus on social context and roles (Shanahan & Porfelli, 2002) and to relate lived experiences of individuals to their developmental processes (Elder & Giele, 2009). Differences aside, the two are similar in that they strive to understand the human experience over a long-term or life-long period. This perspective allows an understanding of the way in which the life experiences of adults and children have affected their values and attitudes (Hareven, 1994).

Five general principles are said to guide life course theory. These principles provide a framework for the study of the life course (Elder, Kirkpatrick Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). In the paradigm put forward by Elder et al. (2003) (see Figure 3.1, next page) the life span is subsumed by a life course perspective. Therefore although the two concepts differ, a life course perspective takes account of life span development.
The Principle of Life-Span Development: Human development and aging are lifelong processes.

The Principle of Aging: Individuals construct their own life course through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstance.

The Principle of Time and Place: The life course of individuals is embedded and shaped by the historical times and places they experience over time.

The Principle of Timing: The developmental antecedents and consequences of life transitions, events, and behavioural patterns vary according to their timing in a person’s life.

The Principle of Linked Lives: Lives are lived interdependently and socio-historical influences are expressed through this network of shared relationships. (Elder, et al., 2003)

**FIGURE 3.1: FIVE PRINCIPLES OF LIFE COURSE THEORY, ELDER ET AL. (2003)**

A person’s life course is generally viewed as a series of changes that occur in a somewhat orderly fashion between birth and old age (Neugarten & Hagestad, 1976). Age is also said to provide only a relative indication of a person’s position within the life span due to the wide variations that can and do occur between individuals in terms of development. Age is therefore only seen to be meaningful in terms of indicating whether an individual is older or younger than someone else (Neugarten & Hagestad, 1976).

A more recent thesis on the life course suggests that it is predominantly an age-graded succession of socially defined roles and events that occur within historical time and place. This means that changes in the life course of individuals may have consequences for development and that historical change may also vary the life course and development (Elder, et al., 2003).

Whilst sociologists and psychologists view the life span or life course somewhat differently and focus on different nuances with regard to theory and practice, this review firstly focuses on the contribution made by Erik Erikson to life span and development. For Erikson (1963)
psychological development across the life span occurred in fixed stages in which identity is constructed psychologically as well as through social interaction. Erikson (1963) proposed what is widely known as the “eight stages of man” (Erikson, 1963; Erikson & Erikson, 1997) (see Table 3.1, this page), which identifies a central “psychosocial crisis” that arises at various ages within the life course and needs to be overcome before that individual can move onto the next developmental stage.

**TABLE 3.1  ERIKSON’S EIGHT STAGES OF MAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Psychosocial Crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Infancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic trust v mistrust (HOPE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy v shame, doubt (WILL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Play age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initiative v guilt (PURPOSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>School age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industry v inferiority (COMPETENCE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Adolescence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity v identity confusion (FIDELITY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Young Adulthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intimacy v isolation (LOVE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Adulthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generativity v stagnation (CARE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Old Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity v despair, disgust (WISDOM)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The central concern here is with those psycho-social stages proposed by Erikson which are relevant during childhood and include infancy, early childhood, play age and school age. Basic trust vs. basic mistrust is the central crisis identified by Erikson during infancy. People during this phase of development are said to gain a basic sense of ego identity. One outcome of this phase is trust and hope for the future in which the child develops a sense that the world is a safe place and that people are reliable and dependable. The alternative outcome is mistrust which brings with it suspicion, insecurity and fear of the future. The second stage in Erikson’s model of psycho-social development occurring during early childhood is autonomy vs. shame and doubt. By the end of this stage of development people are said to gain either a sense of autonomy and self-esteem or otherwise have feelings of shame and doubt about their capacity for self-control. The ability to initiate activities which may be reinforced if given autonomy and encouragement in play versus the fear of punishment and guilt about one’s own personal feelings are the alternate outcomes of Erikson’s third stage of psycho-social development – initiative vs. guilt which is said to occur during play age. The final psycho-social stage during childhood is industry vs. inferiority where people acquire either a sense of competence and achievement and confidence in their own ability to make and do things or alternatively unfavourable reactions from others may cause feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. This occurs during school age (Erikson, 1995).
The model of life span development proposed by Erikson and widely used in leisure studies has been criticised for not only placing too much emphasis on age as a form of social stratification, but also focusing on the nuclear family and western values (Hunt, 2005). The developmental model proposed by Erikson could also be criticised for not taking account of variations due to gender, ethnicity and social class. Hunt (2005) further argues that Erikson’s model of life cycle development was proposed within the throes of modernity and that in this era of late modernity, it is problematical to suggest that people move through clearly demarcated stages as they may have in previous generations. For example, it is more difficult in contemporary society to demarcate the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence. Others argue that Erikson’s ideas provide us with an overview and basis of predictable psychological issues that people address as they pass through the various stages of life (Kleiber, 1999).

Erikson’s theory on identify formation and psychosocial crisis although widely utilised is just one of the theories of life span development. Robert Havighurst (1972) proposed a developmental approach to the life span based on life stages and developmental tasks. For Havighurst a developmental task is:

A task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks. (Havighurst, 1972, p. 2)

Developmental tasks are considered by both individuals and societal institutions as processes that are required in order to make your way through life successfully (Kleiber, 1999).

Whilst Havighurst’s (1972) model of developmental tasks was formulated many decades ago, it is useful in the provision of knowledge and presents an overview of developmental tasks at a given age. Not surprisingly, given the period in which it was written, it too can be criticised for being very gender specific in some of the tasks. For example, Havighurst (1972) suggests “most girls find it easy to accept the role of wife and mother, with dependence on a man for support” (p. 38). This theme is taken up again later where Havighurst suggests that during adolescence a developmental task is “to develop a positive attitude toward family
life and having children; and (mainly for girls) to get the knowledge necessary for home management and child rearing” (p. 59). Like Erikson’s model of development, Havighurst’s proposal can also be criticised for not only being too age specific, but also for its focus on the traditional family, western values and failing to take account of issues of social class, ethnicity and gender. Havighurst’s model of development has been criticised for making the assumption that all tasks are appropriate for all people (Sugarman, 2001). Furthermore, Sheehy (1996) argues that age norms have shifted since Havighurst’s theory was first proposed. Examples of shifting age norms include prolonged adolescence, the birth of babies in later life and the earlier onset of puberty.

A stage based theory of development was also put forward by Levinson (1978) who focuses on development from the end of adolescence through adulthood. Levinson (1978) lumps childhood and adolescence together as a distinct life stage, but does note that life is never standardised, and suggests that there is an average or most frequent age for the beginning and conclusion of each era. Although Levinson focuses on the adult life span, he does cover childhood briefly in his analysis. Transition into childhood begins pre-birth and continues for two to three years after birth, where the infant develops into a separate person and learns ‘me’ from ‘not me’. The transition from early childhood to middle childhood begins at five or six years. At this time the child’s social world not only expands to include school, peer group and neighbourhood, but the child also begins to work out emotional struggles, become more disciplined, industrious and skilled. Transition to puberty and adolescence begins between twelve and thirteen years (Levinson, 1978). Levinson’s theory has been contested on the basis of race, gender and culture (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006) and a lack of attention to sexual orientation (Sugarman, 2001).

Other life span theorists include Gordon and Gaitz (1976) who discuss the life course with reference to twelve life stages of socio-cognitive development and Rapoport and Rapoport (1975) who looked more specifically at leisure and the family life cycle with a focus on role transitions. However there is no mention of the role of children in their thesis and they begin the family life cycle at adolescence.

There are a number of developmental theorists who have focused on childhood and childhood play. These theorists include Jean Piaget (1962), Mildred Parten (1929, 1932, 1933) and Erik Erikson (1963; 1997). In the following section of this chapter a critical discussion of
the concepts put forward by these theorists is provided. In Erikson’s (1997) eight stages of man (see page 41, this chapter), the first phase is that of infancy, understood to last for approximately the first two years of life. Erikson (1963) terms the play that occurs within this period autocosmic. Play during this phase is bounded by the infant’s own body and whatever s/he may have in their hands (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Piaget (1962) defines this period as a sensory-motor period of cognitive development in which infants participate in practice play. It is a time where infants primarily participate in what Parten (1929, 1932) describes as solitary play where they play alone. Notwithstanding Parten’s theory, Barnett (1991) suggests that play performs a crucial role in bonding between parent and child during the first year of life. Furthermore it has also been suggested that parents carry out a vital role in the social development of infants through play and games (Orthner, Barnett-Morris, & Mancini, 1994). During this interaction between parent and child, the child develops either trust or mistrust, according to Erikson’s (1963) psycho-social stages of development. A positive outcome of this stage is the emotional security which is required for play, exploration and experimentation (Kleiber, 1999).

At the end of infancy and between the ages of one or two to three or four years, children move from the autosphere where they have participated in autocosmic play to what Erikson (1963) refers to as the microsphere. During this early childhood phase children are more likely to function independently (Belsky, Lerner, & Spanier, 1984). Play moves to the near environment, or to those items (toys etc.) which occupy the environment surrounding the child. At this stage, symbolic or pretend play (Piaget, et al., 1962) emerges and children start to move towards parallel play (Parten, 1932) where the child will play independently but the activity that is chosen brings them alongside other children. Children are influenced by their siblings, who play an important role as play partners (Orthner, et al., 1994). Although the influence of parents is still strong children begin to establish autonomy (Erikson, 1963). It has been argued that this is vitally important to enable children to participate in leisure activities freely later on in life (Kleiber, 1999). Once children have overcome their trust vs. mistrust and autonomy vs. doubt issues, they move on to what Erikson (1963) terms ‘Play Age’ and the next stage of psycho-social development which is defined as initiative vs. guilt. The successful resolution of this stage of development ensures that the child is able to optimize opportunities for leisure and enjoyment later on (Kleiber, 1999).
As a child grows and develops, their play moves from the microsphere to the macrosphere (Erikson, 1963). During this time (termed as ‘School Age’ (Erikson, 1963)) children are said to have greater curiosity and are more environmentally oriented in their play (Orthner, et al., 1994). Activities revolve around symbolic or pretend play and games (Piaget, et al., 1962), and they move from parallel play to more associative play (Parten, 1932), where they will play with other children. Children start to share but still are not fully able to take the perspective of others (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Major social, cognitive and physical changes also occur during this period as children generally start school and engage in organised activities (Iso-Ahola, 1980a).

From around seven years, children start to play games with rules (Piaget, et al., 1962) and organise themselves cooperatively for play activities. Parten (1932, 1933) describes this type of play as co-operative play. Children play together in an organised group and there is a sense of belonging or not belonging to that group. Peer relations become increasingly important and engender activities which are no longer under the complete control of parents (Orthner, et al., 1994). During this phase children are challenging the issues of industry vs. inferiority (Erikson, 1963) and are likely to participate in activities which allow them to establish competence, such as youth groups and sporting groups (Kleiber, 1999).

While the work of theorists such as Erikson (1963), Piaget (1962) and Parten (1932, 1933) has been widely accepted by many scholars each of the theories put forward by these scholars has its limitations. Erikson’s eight stages of man has been criticised as being vague and difficult to test (Sigelman & Rider, 2011). The development framework offered by Erikson is also linear in nature when pathways of human development are often non-linear (Lachman & James, 1997) and it ignores female perspectives of relationships and connectedness (Gilligan, 1982). While many scholars accept aspects of Piaget’s thesis, his theory has been criticised on a number of fronts. For example, Sigelman and Rider (2011) argue that Piaget wrongly suggests that there are broad stages of development, that children and their ability to perform various tasks are underestimated and that little attention is paid to the social influences on cognitive development. Furthermore, the work of Parten (1932, 1933) has been criticised as offering a simplistic view of play during childhood (Coplan & Arbeau, 2011) in which for example, it has been argued that older children participate in solitary play and
work their way into play groups by being onlookers then play in parallel with others before joining (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2007).

**Leisure**

Leisure is not simply play. A definition of leisure is however quite difficult to provide. Despite this a basic definition has been provided by Hugo van der Poel (2006), “leisure encompasses the goals and activities people choose freely to fill their least obligated time” (p.93). To date, however, there has been no consensus on an operational definition of leisure. The definition has shifted from a focus entirely on leisure activities to a much broader psychological definition which has some focus on the power of the individual as key to determining leisure experiences. In line with the definition provided by van der Poel, leisure has been described as both a state of mind and as the discretionary or free time from duties and responsibilities (Kleiber, 1999; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). As such leisure may include facets of intrinsic motivation (Mannell, Zuzanek, & Larson, 1988; Neulinger, 1981), fun and enjoyment (Podilchak, 1991), self-actualisation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) and perceived competence (Edginton, 1998). Although the notions of freedom and free time feature heavily in definitions of leisure, Rojek (2009) argues that is no longer adequate to consider the definition of leisure from the standpoint of the individual and that realistically, there can be no one definition of leisure. Leisure, argues van der Poel (2006), is said to be a multi-faceted phenomenon which is generally regarded as voluntary and “activities have a higher leisure content the less they do with the provision of means of sustaining life and the more they belong to the range of activities one is allowed to pursue at will” (p.103). Furthermore, organised or structured leisure activities for children could be defined as those activities that are usually adult organised and directed, require a level of ongoing commitment, include regular participation schedules and expectations regarding participation, emphasise skill development that is continually increasing in complexity and challenge, involve active performance requiring sustained attention and provide clear feedback on performance (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). A more complete discussion with regard to organised leisure activities is offered later in this chapter.

The positive effects of leisure participation have been well documented (see for example Hutchinson, Bland, & Kleiber, 2008). Research has shown that participation in leisure type
activities is said to assist in the reduction of stress (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000). The degree to which this is applicable to children under the age of twelve is in question, although it has been found that children from twelve years of age participate in structured and unstructured leisure activities to manage stress in their lives (Hutchinson, Baldwin, & Oh, 2006). Other positive effects of leisure participation more generally include increasing happiness and enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989), fostering a sense of self-determination, including self-control and competence along with promoting personal well-being (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993). Further, participation in leisure activities is said to be able to provide opportunities for achievement and mastery (Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005; Kleiber, Hutchinson, & Williams, 2002). Leisure is also said to positively affect self-actualisation, mood, self-esteem, life satisfaction along with a sense of connectedness and belonging (Iso-Ahola, 1994).

Leisure, children and development

There are numerous ways in which one may define development, but perhaps one of the most useful in terms of leisure is the one supplied by Mannell and Kleiber (1997) which defines development in the following manner:

Development is […] systematic and predictable change by which people become quantifiably different in some way from what they were before, even as they maintain other aspects of themselves. (p. 245)

Development is further said to be influenced by three different types of primary events. These influences include normative age-graded events, normative history-graded events and non-normative events (Baltes, Cornelius, & Nesselroade, 1979). Stage based theories of development such as those that have been put forward by Erikson (1963, 1995), Levinson (1978) and Havighurst (1972) are based on normative aged-graded events. During childhood, these influences may include such events as starting school or preschool. These changes apply to most members of a given society and are dependent on social expectations and norms (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Normative history-graded events involve change usually associated with significant historical events. For example, changes in attitudes
towards women and the effects of terrorism. Non-normative events are those unexpected life events such as disability and divorce (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997).

Development does not just occur as a matter of course: individuals play an active role in the process (Kleiber, 1999). Moreover, Lerner and Busch-Rossnagel (1981) argue that individuals are “producers of their development” (p. 117) and demonstrate through the use of a Piagetian perspective that children are also producers of their own development and play an active role in the developmental process (Liben, 1981). Children via their interaction with their environment influence the world around them and this impact feeds back to influence them. Therefore “children must be conceptualised as active agents in their own development” (Belsky et al., 1984, p. 5). Of course, there are other influences on development during childhood; these include the family, peers, school and the media (Belsky et al., 1984). It is further argued that leisure is an important arena for optimizing human development and self-actualisation. This argument is based on two primary principles: firstly, that “leisure is a context for relative freedom for self-expression”, and secondly that “development can be at least partially self-directed” (Kleiber, 1999, p. 16).

Kleiber (1999) further argues that leisure experience is associated with development via four principal means. Leisure is said to be derivative, adjustive, generative and maladaptive. Leisure occurring as a result of developmental change and life circumstances is said to be derivative, whilst leisure can be seen as adjustive in that it is able to act as a buffer or respite from serious life events or developmental changes. Leisure can also be seen as generative in that it can be a “context for generating growth and personal transformation” (Kleiber, 1999, p. 26). The final area in which leisure is associated with development as argued by Kleiber (1999) is that of maladaptive leisure. Maladaptive leisure is said to occur when there is overinvestment in a leisure activity at the expense of development.

The concern with both developmental and socialisation theories surrounding childhood and leisure is that they position the child as both “subordinate and dependent” (Wyness, 2000, p. 2). The assumption of complete dependence by children on adults has been challenged by both Alanen (1998) and Buchner (1990). Alanen (1998) suggests the contribution of children within the home is integral through their roles in daily routines which traditionally may have been seen as a parental role. This new role undertaken by children in late modernity indicates a broader shift in the roles of parents and children. Furthermore, Buchner (1990)
argues through involvement in peer-group leisure, children have much greater autonomy and a much stronger position in the marketplace than children with traditional dependency ties to family. Key to both arguments is the supposition that children are social actors in their own right who are active participants in the construction of their own experiences (James & James, 2004).

Leisure and childhood

During the early 1980s research on leisure in childhood focused on outcomes in adulthood. For example, Iso Ahola (1980a, 1980b) suggested that play and leisure in childhood was essential in laying foundations for future involvement in adult leisure. The concern with this research is that it positions children as a human ‘becoming’ (Alanen & Mayall, 2001; Uprichard, 2008). The importance of the activity does not lie in the meaning of the experience for the child, but what it means for the child when she/he becomes an adult. As time has passed, research on children and leisure has become more diverse although remaining relatively sparse in nature. While there are a number of studies addressing adolescence and leisure, the existing research on children generally explores benefits associated with participation in leisure activities or alternately examines what influences a child to participate in leisure. In this next section of this review I explore the existing literature on children and leisure, firstly with regard to the influences that lead children to take part in leisure activities and secondly I examine the outcomes that participation in leisure activities have for the child.

Influences

One of the key influences on the leisure activities of children identified in the literature is parents. This influence varies by gender, social class and/or race. For example, sons are often less dependent on parental approval and support for participation in sports and exercise activities than daughters (JOPERD, 2004), whilst girls participation in sports increases when influenced by their mothers (Seabra, Mendonca, Thomis, Peters & Maia, 2008). Equally, it has been suggested that working class children have more independence and freedom in their leisure activities than middle-class children (McMeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Zeijl, et Poel, du Bois-Reymond, Ravesloot, & Meulman, 2000).
Parental influence takes a number of forms and can be seen to be both positive and negative. Whilst the positive factors appear to outweigh the negative, it has been suggested that parental incursion into child leisure activities can be potentially constraining or leisure can be suppressed when parents control the leisure activities of their children (Kleiber & Barnett, 1980). More recent research has found that the amount of pressure that parents place on their children can lead to negative experiences in leisure (Anderson, Funk, Elliott, & Smith, 2003).

Parents also use strategies to enable their children to take part in leisure activities. Parents act as enablers and arrangers of leisure. Mothers, for example, play an important role in the transportation of children to and from various activities and events (Henderson, 1996). Other researchers have reported that parents not only are active as arrangers of leisure activities but also act as chaperones and use kinship networks to assist with their child’s participation (Outley & Floyd, 2002). Furthermore, children who have parents who are supportive are more likely to take part in leisure activities (Anderson, et al., 2003).

The influence of parents on the leisure activities of their children cannot be understated. Research suggests that parents ensure that not only is time available for their children to take part in leisure activities, that they also ensure that this time is structured and not wasted (Ennew, 1994). Furthermore, the leisure of children is often taken up with the acquisition of cultural capital (Chisholm, Brown, Buchner, & Kruger, 1990) as parents ensure their children spend adequate amounts of time in leisure activities that have a valuable outcome. For example, Adler and Adler (1994) suggest that the adult influence on the play and leisure activities of children represents “a means for them to reproduce the existing social structure and to socialize young people into […] corporate work values” (p. 309).

Other factors influencing the participation of children in leisure activities, especially those activities such as organised sports, include the financial cost of participation. This is especially relevant to families with lower incomes (Hardy, Kelly, Chapman, King, & Farrell, 2010). Indeed, it has been shown that children from middle socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds spend more time in sporting clubs and organised activities (Brockman et al., 2009; Sener, Copperman, Pendyala, & Bhat, 2008). These include activities that have a focus on public performance and skill development (Lareau, 2000, 2003). Children from middle SES families also tend to have more opportunity for organised activities that are overseen by
adults than lower SES children (Zeijl, du Bois-Reymond, & te Poel, 2001). Children from lower SES areas tend to spend more time in unstructured activities such as visiting kin, ‘hanging out’ and informal play (Lareau, 2000). Furthermore, arrangements for activities in lower SES families are often left to the children themselves (Lareau, 2003). In an Australian setting, research has found that children from lower income families are less likely to take part in sports, music or dance lessons (NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2010a; Taylor & Fraser, 2003).

Time pressure has been found to be a factor in participation in leisure activities for many people with factors such as age, gender and family type predicting time pressure (see for example, Gunthorpe & Lyons, 2004). Time is also an influence on the leisure activities of children. In research conducted in 2010, a key reason for the discontinuation of sporting activities noted by children was restriction on the amount of time children had available for participation (Siesmaa, Finch, Blitvich, & Telford, 2010). This ties with other research that suggests that a major influence on a child’s participation in organised sport included the time commitments, not only of the child but of the family (Hardy, et al., 2010).

Outcomes: ‘The good, the bad, and the ugly’

A number of outcomes from children’s participation in leisure activities have been identified in the literature. These outcomes are varied in nature and include what Duda and Ntoumanis (2005) have succinctly described as “the good, the bad and the ugly” (p. 326). Although this description was applied in relation to organised sport more specifically, it also works well in the leisure arena. In the next part of this literature review the outcomes of child participation in leisure activities are explored and ‘the good, the bad and the ugly’ are examined.

The literature suggests that positive outcomes from the leisure participation of children far outweigh those outcomes that could be seen in a more negative light. Leisure participation is said to lead to better adjustment in children (Harrison & Narayan, 2003; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001), enhanced self-discipline and self-concept (Eccles & Barber, 1999), improved well-being (Fletcher, Nickerson, & Wright, 2003) and in the case of sport participation the ability to compete and to deal with both failure and success (Duda & Ntoumanis, 2005).
Other researchers have identified how participation in leisure activities promotes academic and behavioural competencies (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; McHale, et al., 2001), can lead to higher grades (Fletcher, et al., 2003), can have a positive effect on educational status in young adulthood including a greater chance at completing high school, increased rates of college attendance (Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997) and greater educational aspirations (Guest & Schneider, 2003). Furthermore, participation in activities such as video game playing has been shown to have a positive effect on the intelligence of a child (van Schie & Wiegman, 1997).

A good deal of the research published in the last couple of years refers to children’s participation in physical activity (see for example, Brockman, Jago, & Fox, 2010; Hesketh et al., 2010; Hinkley, Salmon, Hesketh, Crawford, & Okely, 2010; Jago, Fox, Page, Brockman, & Thompson, 2010; Loprinzi & Trost, 2010). Much of this research comes from a public health or preventative medicine background and addresses issues to do with childhood obesity. This type of research is useful as much of the physical activity undertaken by children occurs in a leisure context. Participation in leisure activities has been shown to have positive health outcomes for children, for example organised sports have been shown to provide opportunities for children to increase their levels of physical activity and develop physical skills (Committee on Sports Medicine and Fitness & Committee on School Health, 2001).

Other positive outcomes identified as a result of participation in leisure activities include the opportunity for children to make and sustain friendships and peer relationships (Heath, 2005), identity affirmation (Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2001) the provision of the opportunity for children to learn about cultural practices other than their own and to develop friendships with children from a variety of cultural backgrounds (Tirone & Pedlar, 2005). Participation in leisure activities as a child has also been found to lead to positive adult outcomes such as income and occupational status (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003), continued engagement in sport and other leisure activities (Raymore, Barber, Eccles, & Godbey, 1999) and enhanced psychosocial adjustment (Iwasaki & Smale, 1998).

Although not as significant, a number of negative consequences have been reported as a result of participation in leisure activities. Participation in sport in particular has been shown to be associated with increased aggressiveness (Duda & Ntoumanis, 2005), higher alcohol consumption (in the case of adolescents) (Eccles, et al., 2003) and tobacco use
(Melnick, Miller, Sabo, Farrell, & Barnes, 2001). Furthermore, the amount of time that children spend on screen time, that is, watching TV, playing games and using the internet may come at the expense of physically active leisure which increases the risk of obesity (Subrahmanyam, et al., 2000). Other research suggests that children and adolescents who had been subjected to teasing were less likely to continue playing sport and taking part in other physical activities (Slater & Tiggemann, 2011).

Organised leisure activities

The focus of this thesis is on the organised leisure activities of children. It is important to note that organised leisure activities are often referred to as structured activities; however for the purposes of this thesis I use the term organised activities. In the next section the existing literature that explores this type of activity for children is reviewed and the current debates surrounding participation are discussed.

Dance groups, sporting clubs, bands, church groups and drama groups: these are just some of the activities that can be classed as structured or organised as opposed to unstructured activities. Structured leisure activities have been variously defined. For example, Larson and Verma (1999) describe structured leisure activities as those that are freely chosen, physically or mentally stimulating to the individual whilst at the same time containing some guiding parameters. A more complex definition is provided by Mahoney and Stattin (2000) who suggest that structured activities are usually adult organised and directed, require a level of ongoing commitment, include regular participation schedules and expectations regarding participation, emphasise skill development that is continually increasing in complexity and challenge, involve active performance requiring sustained attention and provide clear feedback on performance.

It is important to note that unstructured play and structured or organised leisure activities are not dichotomous variables. There is a continuum at which one end consists of unstructured passive activities such as watching television and at the other highly organised or structured activities that have a very definite structure, require ongoing commitment, have definitive rules of play and emphasise the attainment of specific skills and may include activities such as competitive netball or football. A vast range of activities that are more or
less structured exist on the continuum dependent upon often external forces. For example, playing cricket with friends at the park could be viewed as an unstructured activity with a with variable rules and little ongoing commitment. The same game of cricket, overseen by adults, with specified rules and an ongoing commitment could be viewed as an organised or structured activity.

Children who take part in organised activities benefit from a number of positive outcomes. Time spent in organised activities has been shown to be related to elevated self-confidence, higher levels of academic performance, more involvement with school, fewer behaviour problems, less likelihood of taking drugs and decreased probability of engaging in risky behaviour (Elkind, 2007). Furthermore organised or structured activities are said to provide opportunities that are often neglected by schools (Mahoney, 2005). Children who take part in organised activities are less likely to drop out of school as adolescents or to be arrested as young adults than similar children who are not involved in this type of activity (Steiner, 2001). Additionally, higher test scores and class grades have been associated with participation in organised activities (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999) and children from lower income families are also said to benefit both academically and socially from their participation in structured outdoor activities (Casey, Ripke, & Huston, 2005). Moreover, those children who participate in team sports report greater affiliation with their peers, competitive excitement and enjoyment than those who do not participate in team sports (McCarthy, Jones, & Clark-Carter, 2008).

Whilst the positive outcomes of participating in structured leisure activities are numerous, researchers and social commentators have raised concerns in recent times with regard to the amount of time children spend in organised activities. It has been argued for example, that when the leisure time of children is allocated to a multitude of activities, children have far less time for unstructured play, less time to pursue self-awareness and less time to spend in family activities and relationships (Elkind, 2007; Fishman, 1999). It has been claimed that parents who over-schedule their children feel as though they are not being good parents if they don’t have their children involved in all kinds of activities. This has been referred to a ‘hyper-parenting’ (Rosenfeld & Wise, 2001). The outcome appears to be children who are under pressure to perform and demonstrate success (Elkind, 2007; Rosenfeld & Wise, 2001). In this vein, Heath (2011) argues that parents should avoid “the more is better trap or the my
child is busier than your child syndrome” (p. 124). Furthermore, children who participate in lots of organised activities and have less free time are more at risk of harm because they are missing out on those free and spontaneous activities that occur during free play (Malone, 2009). The solution to a balanced childhood Elkind (2007) argues, is that children should go to school, do a little homework, and play childhood games after school. Despite the concerns regarding over-scheduled children, there are dissenting views. For example, Sener, Copperman et al. (2008) found that children participate at the highest rate and for the longest duration in passive unstructured activities inside the home and Hofferth et al. (2009) proclaim that the over-scheduled child is, in fact a myth.

The following section of this review of the literature moves away from an examination of leisure and childhood and provides a critical discussion of gender.

Gender

In the following section of this chapter the concept of gender is explored. This study has a broadly feminist framework and as such places gender at the centre of analysis. In doing so the organised leisure activities of both boys and girls are investigated. Firstly, the concept of gender is examined followed by a discussion of the main theoretical approaches to the relational nature of masculinity/ies and femininity/ies. I begin with theories encompassing biology and the division of household labour which were pre-eminent in the 1950s and 1960s before moving on to look at the social construction of gender and theories of gender socialisation at the other end of the theoretical spectrum. The last part of this chapter explores the relationship between gender and leisure before specifically addressing gender and leisure in childhood.

Defining gender

Gender is used to describe men and women dependent on social factors; for example, social role, behaviour and identity. Gender refers to those roles that are socially constructed; to the behaviours, activities and attributes that are considered appropriate for men and women. Additionally, gender has been described as a “system of social practices” that maintain and create gender distinctions and “organizes relations of inequality on the basis of these
distinctions” (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999, p. 191). Furthermore, Shaw (2003) suggests that gender refers to the “sum of an individual’s experience of life as a woman or man over his or her lifetime” (p. 200). Gender is also said to encompass an individual’s learned beliefs and attitudes towards femininity and masculinity (Shaw, 2003). Indeed, gender not only varies amongst individuals, but across cultures (Underwood & Rosen, 2011) and history (Scott, 1999).

‘Gender’ as a term came into common usage in the 1970s (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). It is a term that has been described as both contradictory (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002) and complex (Holmes, 2007) and has been used in a number of different ways. It can include the ways in which people experience masculinity and femininity, sexuality and reproduction, identity, social relationships and may also include ideas and discourses (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Gender is encountered in every aspect of our lives including family, community, work and leisure (Shaw, 2003).

Biology and the division of labour

Before the 1970s, biological determinants were used to describe the behaviour of men and women. An individual’s biology was seen as key to the sexual division of labour. Biological differences such as women bearing children and the perceived greater physical strength of men were seen as the basis of the roles of men and women. For example, Murdock (1949) in a survey of 224 societies demonstrated that males undertook roles that included lumbering, mining and house building in line with their perceived superior physical strength. Women, because of their role as child bearers, were thought to be better suited to those tasks that could be undertaken closer to home. This included activities such as the preparation of food and care of children. Murdock’s theory was based on the notion of the universal and essential nuclear family. This assumption has since been widely challenged by feminists and family theorists (amongst others) (for example see, Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Chodorow, 2001; Demo & Acock, 1996). Murdock interprets his data from a white western male perspective and has been criticised in two key areas. Firstly, for judging the role of all women on the western house-wife mother model and secondly for espousing the myth that women are unable to carry out heavy and demanding work due to biology (Oakley, 1972).
In the 1950s, Talcott Parsons and Robert Bales explored concepts surrounding the family and socialisation. They argued that roles within the family were biologically determined. Women who bear and nurse their children were said to have a stronger relationship with their children than that between father and child. Parsons and Bales (1955) posited that women had an *expressive* role within the family unit. This role involved the provision of emotional support, warmth and security. In contrast, men had the *instrumental* role of breadwinner. This role was said to lead to stress as men competed in an achievement oriented society. It was seen as a woman’s task to relieve this stress through the provision of love, consideration and understanding. The authors further argued that for the family to operate effectively there must be a clear cut sexual division of labour within the family.

Bowlby and Fry (1953) posited a similar argument to that of Parsons and Bales, by suggesting that the place of a mother was in the home, caring for her children. This was seen as especially critical during the early years where infants and young children should experience a “warm, intimate and continuous relationship” with their mother (Bowlby & Fry, 1953, p. 13). The mother-child relationship during this period was held in high regard and seen as the most important key to child development (Levy, 1957).

Parsons (1955) and Bowlby (1953) clearly argue that the role of a woman is to be looking after home and family and therefore not in paid employment. A number of studies have shown that maternal employment has no adverse effect on child development. In fact, many positive effects including higher academic outcomes for children, benefits in social conduct and higher confidence and effectiveness in daughters have been shown to be a direct result of maternal employment (Hoffman, 1999). Oakley (1972) further argues that the *expressive* role of housewife is not necessary for the function of the household and family. Furthermore, the role of mother is a cultural rather than a biological construct. In this same vein, Oakley (1972) argues that gender roles are culturally determined and that biological characteristics do not bar women from particular occupations.

As the above evidence suggests, prior to the women’s movement, the association of the woman with the family was almost absolute. The role of women was very much restricted to the private sphere, whilst men in their roles of breadwinners were attached firmly to the public sphere. This is reflected in research from the field of sociology at the time. Nearly all sociology was written by men and for men. The study of women was virtually non-existent,
unless as wives and mothers. Furthermore, the status of women as subordinate was not recognised nor seen as a social problem.

The political movements centred on women in the 1960s and 1970s saw a move away from the sex roles and biological determinism of the 1950s. Oakley was not the first feminist theorist to bring into question roles for males and females based on sex. Simone de Beauvoir (1972) first published *The Second Sex* in 1949 in French. Within this text she famously suggests that “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (de Beauvoir & Parshley, 1972, p.295). de Beauvoir argues that masculinity is seen as a norm, whilst femininity is seen as ‘other’ and women are continual outsiders.

To overcome the issues surrounding biological determinism, feminists have argued that social factors have a considerable effect on the behavioural and psychological differences between males and females (see for example, Freud, 1994; Lorber, 1994; Maccoby, 1988). The differentiation between biological sex and gender enables feminists to argue “that differences between men and women are socially produced and therefore, changeable” (Mikkola, 2008, p. 2).

**Social construction of gender**

Social constructionism considers reality as local and context bound, changing across time (Burr, 2003). Within social constructionism our world is internally constructed and we collectively and individually create meanings from our experiences (Sarantakos, 2005). Gender is socially constructed and is the product of socialisation that is “based on socio-political rather than biological considerations” (Freud, 1994, p. 37). It varies across and between cultures and refers to the psychological and cultural aspects of being male or female (Hatchell, 2007; Malik, 2003).

Gender is constructed and reconstructed through humans interacting with each other (Lorber, 1994). This process of interaction is known as “doing gender”, whereby “the doing of ‘gender’ involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micro political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculinity and femininity” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126).
The social construction of gender generally begins with the “assignment of a sex category on the basis of what the genitalia look like at birth” (Lorber, 1994, p. 55) and continues throughout life. From infancy, children are wrapped in blue or pink blankets depending on their gender and people respond to this accordingly. Once children begin to speak, they learn to refer to themselves in a gender specific fashion and as members of their gender. Throughout adolescence girls and boys generally behave in gender specific ways. Parenting is also gendered with different meanings surrounding what it means to be a father or mother. The entirety of these processes form the social construction of gender (Lorber, 1994).

**Gender socialisation**

Connected to the social construction of gender is the concept of gender socialisation. Within gender socialisation, nurture and a child’s upbringing is said to be connected with how an individual displays masculinity and femininity. According to Wharton (2004) “Socialisation refers to the processes through which individuals take on gendered qualities and characteristics and acquire a sense of self” (p. 31). Davies (2002a, 2002b), provides a post-structural approach to gender socialisation and suggests that children are active in the construction of their understandings of what it means to be a boy or a girl. Children, it is argued, learn that they must be socially identifiable as either male or female from an early age and use signifiers to position themselves as either a boy or a girl. These signifiers include the way a child chooses to dress, their hairstyle, how they speak and the activities in which they choose to participate (Davies, 2002b). Identifying as a boy or girl is not a singular process. An individual may display masculinity or femininity differently in different circumstances. For example a boy may display a different form of masculinity with his parents compared to with his friends (Davies, 2002a). Children learn the discursive practices of their society and to position themselves as either male or female (Davies, 2002b). Positioning oneself as a male or female is also a physical process, for example femaleness in children is generally signified by skirts and ribbons, dolls and prams, whilst trousers and coats, guns and superhero costumes signify maleness (Davies, 2002a). These are learnt behaviours. Humans learn the behaviours that are expected from males and females in society (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Biological tendencies for men and women or girls and boys to behave in certain ways are able to be overridden by social and cultural effects (Wharton, 2004).
Social learning theory focuses on how individuals learn from their environment and within a social context. The theory considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modelling. Albert Bandura (1977) is considered one of the leading proponents of this theory. Social learning theory is based on the notion that children learn gender behaviour from the society around them. These behaviours are learnt through the processes of observation, imitation and reinforcement and thus the behaviour of children is shaped into female or male appropriate behaviour. In many instances this is done through rewarding appropriate behaviour and discouraging inappropriate behaviour (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). This theory proposes that gendered behaviour is shaped by a vast array of influences, which may include parents, teachers, the media and the education system. For example, parents often unconsciously treat their male and female children differently (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Children develop gender behaviours through reinforcement and observational learning. This occurs in two ways, firstly through overt socialisation by parents through dressing children in gender appropriate clothing and unconsciously through descriptions of their children. For example, boys may be described as being strong and coordinated while girls may be described as being tiny and delicate (Renzetti & Curran, 1992; Wharton, 2004). Girls are often discouraged from ‘rough’ sports such as football and are more likely to be given dolls to play with whilst boys are given trucks and blocks (Kimmell, 2000). Books, television, and other media influence children and their gender association. Children’s books often portray children in stereotypical ways: for example, females as followers and helpers and males as adventurers and leaders (Renzetti & Curran, 1992).

Gender and leisure

The placement of gender in research in the leisure arena has been central in a range of studies over the past couple of decades. Feminist contributions to the understanding of leisure have been based in a number of theoretical perspectives including symbolic interactionism (Bella, 1989; Samdahl, 1988; Shaw, 1985), socialist feminism (Deem, 1986; Green, Hebron, & Woodward, 1990) and post-structuralism (Aitchison, 2003; Wearing, 1998).
Much of the early research and theorising focused on the area of women’s leisure constraints (Anderson, Ward, & YWCA of Australia., 1975; Deem, 1986; Glyptis, 1989; Gregory, 1982; Shaw, 1985) while the concept of leisure as an empowering aspect of women’s lives has been examined by feminist writers such as Green and Hebron (1988), Wimbush and Talbot (1988), Henderson and Bialeschki (1991) and Henderson (1996). Other research on women and leisure has focused on femininity, appearance and sexuality (Frederick & Shaw, 1995; Shaw, 1992), on the perception and meaning of leisure to women (Allen & Chin-Sang, 1990; Henderson, 1990) and on the relationship between leisure and women’s family and caring responsibilities and roles (Bedim & Guinan, 1996; Tirone & Shaw, 1997). Leisure for women has also been found to be socially constructed around notions of femininity, family and motherhood (Henderson, Hodges, & Kivel, 2002; Shaw, 2001). Other research on gender and leisure has focused on the role of social structures and gendered power relations (Green, et al., 1990; Yule, 1997) and the role of leisure in the reproduction of dominant ideologies (including resistance) (Green, et al., 1990; Wearing, 1998). Conversely, much research on gender and leisure has been criticised for its focus on white middle class women – women who are relatively advantaged (Aitchison, 2000; Wearing, 1998). The field has also been criticised for holding onto out dated notions of social structures (Rojek, 1997) and explanations from the past that may prevent researchers from asking new questions (Roberts, 1997; Rojek, 1995).

Research on gender and leisure with its focus on the lives of women and girls, has traditionally ignored the social construction of masculinity. When compared with the depth of existing research on women and leisure, the research on men, masculinities and leisure is relatively modest. In one sense there is a plethora of information regarding the leisure of men. The majority of research is considered “malestream” (Renzetti, 1993, p. 219) and most research not only in the leisure studies arena, but of social life in general has been androcentric and based on the experiences of white middle to upper class men. Missing from this research is an exploration of masculinity and the relationship between men and gender (Coltrane, 1994). Recent research has begun to overcome this significant gap in the literature. Aitchison and Scraton (2006) and McKay (2000) have edited publications addressing the concepts of masculinities in the sporting arena, whilst other research has shown that men may also face issues surrounding gender and masculinity in other areas (Kimmel & Messner, 1998). Henderson and Shaw (2006) argue that the concept of
masculinity should be brought into gender studies and should be added to, rather than replace research into women and femininities. The important focus for this thesis is a particular understanding of gender and leisure during childhood.

**Gender, play, leisure and childhood**

Most research on gender and leisure has its foundations in the gendered nature of adult leisure. Whilst some researchers have explored the leisure of adolescents, findings have shown that leisure participation in this age group is typically gendered (Raymore & Godbey, 1994). There is comparatively little research on the specific gendered nature of children’s leisure and a limited amount of research that compares organised activities for children across generations with gender as a specific focus. While gender and play are well researched, this thesis adds to the gap in the literature surrounding the gendered nature of children’s organised leisure activities across four generations.

**Gender and childhood play**

Gender appears to play a pivotal role in the leisure and play activities of children (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2009; Cherney & London, 2006). Research suggests that from an early age, children exhibit signs of recognising appropriate gendered behaviours and activities (Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). Early research conducted during the 1970s demonstrated that boys and girls displayed different behaviours during leisure time.

Girls and boys have very distinctive styles of play. Boys are more likely to be involved in rough and tumble play, are competitive, like to establish superiority through play and leisure and use direct commands (Maccoby, 1998). Girls participate in a more cooperative type of play which is egalitarian in nature, based on fair play, forming relationships and using polite suggestion (Maccoby, 1998). Maccoby (1998) further argues that distinctive cultures emerge in these gender-segregated play groups. Boys’ groups tend to be larger than girls’ and they play more roughly, with more physical aggression. Boys are more much more interested in issues of competition, dominance, the maintenance of status (Maccoby, 1998) and spend more time in unstructured play that has less supervision than that of girls (Fabes, Hanish, & Martin, 2003). Girls’ groups are generally smaller groups of two or three, and girls engage in more cooperation and turn taking than boys do. Girls’
friendships are more likely to be based on shared personal characteristics, and girls spend more time interacting with or playing near adults (Fabes, et al., 2003; Maccoby, 1998).

Girls spend more time playing indoors in a more static type of play, whilst boys spend more time playing outdoors in active and dynamic play (Harper & Sanders, 1975). Furthermore, evidence suggests that boys and girls prefer different types of activities with young boys showing preferences for playing with blocks while younger girls spend more time in arts and crafts (Pelligrini & Perlmutter, 1989). This type of gender specific behaviour carries through to middle childhood, where research has demonstrated that girls have a preference for indoor games, dolls and playing house whilst boys prefer ball sports, cars and war games (Etaugh & Liss, 1992). Other gender differences in middle childhood outlined by Ruble and Martin (1998) include boys’ preferences for watching cartoons and adventure programs on television, spending more time in outdoor chores and leisure activities and engaging in more sports and more structured activities. Girls were shown to be more involved in less structured activities, spend more time in indoor household tasks and chores, and are more likely to be involved in more shopping and socialising (Ruble & Martin, 1998).

During the early 1990s a child’s gender was found to be a major predictor of both participation in and interest in sports and vocational activities (Garton & Pratt, 1991). More recent research has found that children reinforce their gender identity through play and leisure (Boyle, Marshall, & Robeson, 2003). Furthermore, Boyle, Marshall and Robeson (2003) argue that children engage in what they term “borderwork” (p. 1326) – where boys and girls play together but something about the play reinforces the gender divisions rather than diminishes them. Gender is also significant in the type of activity that boys and girls choose to participate in (Medrich, Roizen, Rubin, & Buckley, 1982). Furthermore children with same sex siblings have been found to be more likely to display gender stereotypical behaviour than those with opposite sex siblings (Colley, Griffiths, Hugh, Landers, & Jaggli, 1996).

It is important here to note recent research which points to a crisis in boyhood (Pollack, 1999). Boys are said to suffer from depression, angst and sadness as a result of having to live up to the dual expectations of withholding emotion and at the same time being more sensitive and egalitarian (Pollack & Shuster, 2000). Furthermore, the depression and angst felt by boys is said to lead to learning difficulties, aggressiveness and violence (Pollack,
Of key importance is involvement of fathers (Biddulph, 2008). Boys who have fathers that are engaged in the lives of their sons and importantly who spend time playing with them are said to have better outcomes. For example, Biddulph (2008) argues that rough and tumble play by fathers with their boys teaches self-control and how to handle aggression. This type of play is seen as a socially acceptable form of physical touch and closeness (Biddulph, 2008; Messner, 1999).

**Gender and organised childhood leisure**

Gender is also a factor in the organised leisure of children. Research outlined below demonstrates the differing participation of boys and girls in organised activities. Children prefer activities that are consistent with their gender and participate in gender typical activities more than atypical activities (McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999). Gender differences also exist in attitudes towards sports and social activities (Eccles & Wigfield, 1993; Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles, & Wigfield, 2002).

Girls spend time in organised activities outside of the home: taking lessons, doing academic activities, engaging in outdoor play and socialising (McHale, et al., 2001; Posner & Vandell), and in skill based and self-improvement activities (King et al., 2007). At home they are more inclined to participate in instrumental activities, more self-enrichment activities, and activities that follow rules and that are social in nature (Gill & Persson, 2008; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; Sandberg & Hofferth, 2001; Zeijl, et al., 2000). Girls have also been found to spend more time in indoor leisure pursuits in private spaces (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2009) such as time alone in their bedroom with music, television and videos (James, 2001).

Studies have also found that girls perceive unstructured activities in places such as theme parks which may be dominated by groups of boys to be unsafe (James & James, 2001). Girls who come from areas with a low socioeconomic profile (SEP) are the most disadvantaged in terms of parental support for participating in sport (Dollman & Lewis, 2010). Furthermore, teasing and concerns surrounding body image contribute to a reduction in sport participation for adolescent girls (Slater & Tiggemann, 2011). Girls’ participation is also influenced by their mother and they are reported to show a greater propensity for practising sports when their mother does (Seabra, Mendonca, Thomis, Peters, & Maia, 2008).
Boys spend more time outside in organised activities (McHale, et al., 2001; Posner & Vandell) and in team sports (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Larson & Verma, 1999; McHale, et al., 2001; Rosenblum, Sachs, & Schreuer, 2010). Indeed research has suggested that boys not only spend more time in team sports, but they do it with greater frequency and with more friends (Rosenblum, et al., 2010). Boys are also said to face strong socialisation pressure to participate in sports and competitive games (Rosenblum, et al., 2010). Participation in organised sport by boys is a key signifier of masculinity (Wheaton, 2000) which allows boys to “release pent up emotional energy, feelings of fear, anxiety, humiliation, and rage” (Pollack & Shuster, 2000, p. 274). Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) often displayed in competitive sport may oppress boys with masculinities deemed abnormal (Frosh, 2001; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011).

Gender is a significant factor in the organised activities of children (Cherney & London, 2006). One of the main ways children display their gender identity is through participating in gender specific activities (Jacobs, Vernon, & Eccles, 2005). Despite efforts towards equality, in terms of gender stereotypes, girls are also said to receive greater social latitude in their sports participation than boys (Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). Gender differences in activity participation begin early in childhood and continue throughout middle childhood (Jacobs, et al., 2005). Furthermore while boys and girls participate in the same numbers of activities, girls take part in a broader range of activities including sports, arts, crafts, hobbies and clubs. Conversely, boys have been found to participate in a large number of activities that could be classed as team sports (Jacobs, et al., 2005).

Conclusion

This chapter began by examining the concepts of play and leisure in childhood. It provided a review of the literature on play, life span development, development and leisure and play in the 21st century. It found that the most recent definition of play referred to those activities that had no obvious or direct purpose (Pellegrini, 2009b). Play and leisure were also found to be intertwined with theories of life span development such as Erikson’s eight stages of man (Erikson, 1963, 1995) and development theories more generally such as those posited by Parten (1932, 1933) and Piaget (1962). A key concern with development and socialisation theories was how within these theories children were positioned as subordinate and
dependent on adults (Wyness, 2000), a view which fails to recognise children as social agents in their own right who are active in the construction of their own experiences (James & James, 2004).

Although difficult to define, leisure is not simply play, but a multi-faceted phenomenon generally regarded as voluntary (van der Poel, 2006). Positive effects of leisure participation include reductions in stress, increasing happiness and enjoyment, fostering self-determination and competence and the provision of opportunities for mastery and achievement. While research on play and children is extensive, research on leisure and children is sparse but diverse in nature and includes influences on participation in leisure and outcomes of participation. Much of the existing research on children and leisure may be more generally categorised as research on leisure and adolescents. Research specifically targeted at children and leisure is limited in comparison.

A review of the literature finds that participation in organised leisure activities by children has positive effects including increased confidence and self-worth, and benefits both academically and socially, and negative effects which generally have focused on over-scheduling and hyper-parenting (Rosenfeld & Wise, 2011) in which children are under pressure to perform and demonstrate success. Despite this others have claimed that the overscheduled child is a myth (Hofferth, et al., 2009). Missing in much of the research on the organised activities of children is an examination into what influences children to participate in leisure. The aim of this thesis is to address this gap in the research and examine what influences participation in organised activities.

As this thesis utilises gender as a key point of comparison, this review of the literature also included a discussion of the relevant literature related to gender. Specific reference was made to biology and the division of household labour prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s which posited women as primary caregivers ensconced in the private realm and men as primary breadwinners entrenched in the public sphere. Gender socialisation theories and social learning theories were also reviewed.

Current existing research on gender leisure and childhood suggests that children prefer to play in organised activities that are consistent with their gender (McHale, et al., 1999). Girls prefer to take part in lessons, outdoor play and socialising (McHale, et al., 2001) and
participate in a broader range of activities than boys (Jacobs, et al., 2005). Boys spend more time playing outside in organised activities and play team sports in larger numbers (Rosenblum, et al., 2010). Girls have more social latitude in their activities than boys and thus are more able to participate in atypical activities than boys (Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). Despite these findings much of the existing research on gender and leisure is from an adult perspective and whilst some research exists on gender and adolescence with a comparatively small amount of research on gender, childhood and leisure. While gender and play is well researched, this thesis adds to the gap in research that exists on gender, leisure and childhood.

The next chapter in the thesis provides a description and critical discussion of the methodology utilised in this study. It outlines the paradigmatic framework employed and elucidates the multi method feminist qualitative methodology utilised to investigate the organised leisure activities of Australian children over the past six decades.
Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter details the methodological approach that has been taken in this thesis. The methodology is based in qualitative research and utilises an interpretive paradigm, backed by a broadly feminist epistemology. This methodology was specifically chosen as the most appropriate approach given the aims of the thesis. The chapter begins with an examination of the paradigmatic framework and its consistency with the theoretical framework of the thesis. The strength of feminist qualitative research in addressing childhood experiences of leisure is discussed and the feminist qualitative research design for the study is explained. In the last section of this chapter an explanation is provided regarding data collection and analysis procedures. The chapter also contributes to a discussion on the use of feminist research methods when examining leisure and childhood.

Paradigmatic framework

A paradigm is a set of propositions that contain a worldview. It refers to a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that informs both methodology and epistemology and guides the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Whilst paradigms vary greatly, within qualitative research they are closely linked with the beliefs that researchers bring to the research (Creswell, 2007). An interpretive paradigm, underpinned by social constructionist ontology and a feminist epistemology guides this qualitative research project.

Broadly an interpretive paradigm is interested in how people make sense of their social world and is concerned with the processes of interaction through which people make meaning in social contexts (DeVault, 1990; Hemingway, 1995). This approach to research has its roots in the work of Max Weber (1949) (amongst others) which was concerned with verstehen or the understanding of social life. The focus of this paradigm is the development of interpretations of meanings that make up life’s realities (Humble & Morgaine, 2002).

Underpinning the interpretive paradigm utilised within this research is constructionist ontology. Ontology refers to the nature of reality (Sarantakos, 2005) and asks what can be
known about reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A constructionist ontology views reality as a social construction which is “local and context-bound”, changing with time (Burr, 2003, p. 92). Within constructionist ontology our perception of the world is internally constructed and we collectively and individually create meaning from our experiences. Meanings and reality are not fixed and can change over time via interaction and experience with the world (Sarantakos, 2005). Within constructionism, there is no objective reality, no absolute truths. Individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2007).

Closely linked to the constructionist ontology and interpretive paradigm that is employed within this research is a feminist epistemology. Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and asks how we know what we know (Sarantakos, 2005). Within an interpretive approach to research, epistemology “assumes multiple subjective realities that consist of stories or meaning produced or constructed by individuals within their ‘natural’ settings” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p.18). Feminist epistemology in particular is concerned with the way in which gender influences knowledge and the knowing subject (Aitchison, 2005). A key concept of feminist epistemology is that of the situated knower and therefore of situated knowledge. Situated knowledge reflects the particular viewpoints or perspectives of the subject (Anderson, 2011). Therefore, feminist epistemology is concerned with and interested in understanding knowledge for women (Hesse-Biber, 2010) and the ways in which gender influences what we know as knowledge (Anderson, 1995). Whilst there have been debates regarding the existence of feminist epistemology (see for example, the introduction to Alcoff and Potter’s Feminist Epistemologies, (1993)), feminist epistemologists argue that gender plays a pivotal role in shaping our perspectives, that is, in shaping how we know what we know (Anderson, 1995). Feminist epistemologies recognise the lived experiences of women as legitimate sources of knowledge (Campbell & Wasco, 2000) and advocate that there is no one way of knowing, there are multiple realities (Ezzy, 2002).

The strength of using a feminist epistemology within this research which focuses on childhood leisure over the past 60 years is twofold. Firstly, it allows gender to be placed at the centre of analysis. This allows an understanding of the way in which the situated knowledge of the participants reflects their experiences of leisure in childhood and the experiences of their children’s leisure. Secondly, participants are given a voice which takes account of their gender and their situated knowledge. The application of a feminist
epistemology also recognises that there is no single truth or reality within childhood experiences of leisure. This reality changes across time and each person has a story to tell regarding their childhood leisure experiences. These experiences may be affected by factors such as their gender, age or their location in either an urban or rural community.

A qualitative approach to research

*The findings from qualitative studies have a quality of “undeniability.” Words, especially organized into incidents or stories, have a concrete, vivid, meaningful flavour (Miles & Huberman, 1999, p.1)*

Drawing on the ontological and epistemological philosophies of constructionism and feminist epistemology, this research utilises a primarily qualitative methodology as the basis for its research design. Whilst qualitative methodology is diverse in nature, there are a number of central tenets that go towards identifying research as qualitative. Generally qualitative research seeks to explore phenomena through the use of flexible methods such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups. It is used to describe and explain experiences, relationships, variation and group norms and takes a broad approach to the investigation of social phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Qualitative research methodologies are interested in understanding the meaning and experiences of human lives and their social worlds and, in this instance, influences on the leisure experiences of childhood. The central aim of this research, in line with qualitative research methods, is to endeavour to study these experiences as broadly and as deeply as time, energy and resources allow (Henderson, 2000). Employing qualitative research methods within this study ensures that the life worlds of those involved are described from the inside out. The strength of using qualitative research within this setting is that it allows us to “create a deeper, richer picture of what is going on in particular settings” (Goodwin & Horowitz, 2002, p. 44), offering thick descriptions of phenomena (Sarantakos, 2005). This type of naturalistic inquiry provides firsthand knowledge of the subjectivity of human life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

One of the underlying philosophical assumptions within the paradigmatic framework of this thesis is that of feminist epistemology. Linked to the feminist epistemology employed
are feminist qualitative research methods. It is important to note that methods are the research techniques, procedures and practices of research, whilst methodologies are the theories or philosophies that inform the research and justify it (Harding, 1987; Taylor & Rupp, 1991). Feminist methodology has therefore been described as “research as praxis” (Lather, 1986, 1991). That is, the way in which the theory is enacted, embodied or realised is deeply embedded in the feminist beliefs and feminist theories that are involved in the research. The next section of this chapter explores feminist qualitative research methods utilised within this study. These methods are underpinned by a paradigmatic framework (methodologies) that support feminist qualitative research methods.

**Feminist qualitative research**

In order for gender to be at the centre of analysis, qualitative feminist research methods have been employed. Positioning gender at the centre of analysis provides an understanding of the complexity of being female or male within a broader cultural context (Henderson, 1994). In doing so, this research shifts the focus of research practice from men’s concerns uniquely, to encompass the perspectives of women and children (DeVault, 1999). It has been shown that using feminist perspectives to gather stories from both women and men enhances mutuality and respect in the research process, whilst demonstrating that oppression can be felt regardless of gender or sexuality (Peters, Jackson, & Rudge, 2008). Indeed, a feminist approach has been applied in research settings on other oppressed groups such as gays and lesbians (Dahl, 2010), people with disabilities (Morris, 1992), ethnic minorities (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1983; Mohanty, 1988) and importantly for this study, children (Lindsay & Lewis, 2000).

Feminist qualitative research combines feminist theoretical perspectives with qualitative research design (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). There is a considered range of thought regarding the best methods to fit feminist research (Reinharz, 1992; Thompson, 1992). Indeed there is said to be no one feminist method, instead feminism is said to be a perspective as opposed to being a method (DeVault, 1990; Oakley, 1998; Reinharz, 1992) and any research method can be made feminist (Deem, 2002; Moss, 2006). Further, feminist researchers in the leisure arena, such as Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw and Freysinger (1999) also contend that in feminist based research the method used is not as important as the
topic. The way in which theory is applied to the topic along with the benefits regarding the construction of knowledge associated with undertaking the research are considered to be a more important focus (Henderson, et al., 1999). The ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies create the feminism in feminist research (Gilgun, 1999). Within this study the use of a constructionist ontology combined with a broadly feminist epistemology centres this research as a feminist research project. This study is informed by feminist theory and aims to produce knowledge of gender, leisure and childhood that may be of assistance for use in the effective change of gendered oppression (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). The use of feminist qualitative research methods encourages a reciprocal relationship between the researchers and research participants. This shared relationship gives way to data that by its very nature is noted for both its richness and depth (Bloom, 1998).

As has been noted by Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) feminists do not have to study women or gender. Feminists can and do apply feminist research methodologies to other arenas. This study, which examines the influences on childhood leisure since the 1950s, utilises feminist methods in the study of childhood. Researchers such as Leena Alonen (1994) and Ann Oakley (1994) have advocated the use of a feminist framework for the study of childhood. This is because women and children are often linked socially. They share certain social characteristics. They are both part of ‘minority’ groups (Oakley, 1994) which are often constructed as being ‘less than’: women as being ‘less’ or ‘other’ than men and children as being ‘less’ or ‘other’ than adults (Oakley, 1994; Qvortrup, et al., 1994). Although the approach has been criticised for placing the child in the position of a minority group, which may be splintered with many voices and demands to be heard (Jenks, 2008), the strength of this approach lies in its commitment to the interests of the child (Jenks, 2008). It places the experiences of childhood as one of the central tenets of research. Within this study, the application of feminist research methods to the study of childhood has a dual purpose. Firstly, it endeavours to make a difference to the lives of both women and children through social and individual change (Letherby, 2007) brought about by the acquisition of knowledge related to the leisure activities of children. Secondly the use of feminist research methods allows childhood to be placed at the centre of the analysis.
Key to feminist research is an acknowledgement of reflexivity in the research process and the significance of the researcher in shaping not only the research process but the outcomes of that research (Keightley, 2010).

Whether we like it or not, researchers remain human beings complete with all the usual assembly of feelings, failings, and moods. And all of those things influence how we feel and understand what is going on. Our consciousness is always the medium through which the research occurs; there is no method or technique of doing research other than through the medium of the researcher (Stanley & Wise, 1993, p.157)

For this Childhood Leisure study this means acknowledging that as the researcher and writer, I am a white middle class Generation X woman, born in the 1970s with parents who experienced childhood in the 1950s as Baby Boomers, and younger siblings who may be classed as Generation Y. I also have three Generation Z children growing up in the early part of the 21st century. These factors alone influence my interpretation of data and this interpretation flows from the cultural, historical and personal experiences I hold as the researcher. There are both strengths and challenges associated with my prior knowledge of each of the generations involved within this study. As a Generation X woman, with Generation Z children and Baby Boomer parents I have firsthand experience and a certain level of ‘inside knowledge’ of each of the generations (Kellehear, 1993). This meant that it was relatively simple to establish rapport with both focus group and interview participants and that I had an understanding of the issues faced by parents; especially by the Generation X parents of Generation Z children. The challenge with having a level of prior knowledge is that any preconceived notions that I may have held, may have led to an unconscious distortion of results based on this knowledge (Kellehear, 1993). Throughout the entire research process, I was consciously aware of these challenges and ensured that findings were evaluated carefully to counteract any possible distortion.

Guarding against preconceived notions has been described as trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The aim of trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the findings are “worth paying attention to” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Within qualitative research four key areas are considered to ensure the trustworthiness of research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility within this study
has been assured through the adoption of appropriate, well recognised research methods, random sampling of individuals, description of the background, qualifications and experience of the researcher, thick descriptions of the phenomena and examination of previous research to frame and support findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The issue of transferability within this study is addressed through the provision of background data that assists in establishing the context of the research and detailed descriptions of the phenomena allowing for comparisons to be made (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of overlapping research methods, which include both interviews and short surveys addresses the issue of dependability. Dependability is also ensured through the provision of an in-depth methodological description that could allow the study to be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The issue of confirmability is addressed in this study through the admission of the researchers beliefs and assumptions, the recognition of the limitations in the methods utilised in the study and their potential effects and the provision of an in-depth methodological description, which allows for the research results to be examined.

Research design

This study was connected to a larger study, which examined the work-life balance of dual earner parents in Australia. The project, known as the Work-life Tensions project, is in turn, a sub study associated with the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health (ALSWH), which is administered by Women’s Health Australia (WHA). ALSWH aims to track the health and well-being of Australian women for at least 20 years. ALSWH was first funded in 1995 and both this study, which is known as the Children’s Leisure study, along with the Work-life Tensions project commenced in 2003. Figure 4.1 (next page) demonstrates the relationship between the three projects. This study is based on data that was collected during 2004 and 2005. It is a snapshot of a particular time and place and therefore has limitations to the generalisability of its results.
FIGURE 4.1: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ALSWH, WORK-LIFE PROJECT AND CHILDHOOD LEISURE STUDY

Work-life Tensions project

The four year Work-life Tensions project commenced in 2003 and aimed to examine work-life tension and the way time was experienced by women in dual-earner families from two age cohorts (young and mid age) and in different geographical locations (urban and rural). The focus of the project was on the management of work-life tensions and strategies utilised by women and other family members to manage these tensions. The role of leisure, the workplace and other family members in managing work-life tensions were also explored as part of the project.

The Work-life Tensions project utilised four methods of data collection; focus groups, Experience Sampling Method (ESM)(Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987), semi-structured telephone interviews and linkage with the Women’s Health Australia main survey. ESM was used to gather data on the time use of adults. Participants were sent a personal digital assistant (PDA) which ‘beeped’ a number of times throughout the day. Each time the alarm sounded, participants were required to complete a short questionnaire on time use. Later in the project short surveys were added as an additional data collection method to obtain
demographic data from participants. This method of data collection was seen to be the most unobtrusive and convenient way to gather demographic information from those who volunteered their time to take part in the study. Later in this chapter there is a more detailed description of the sampling procedures, focus group interviews, semi-structured telephone interviews and short surveys which were utilised in the Children’s Leisure study.

As previously noted the Work-life project is a sub study of ALSWH.

**Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health (ALSWH)**

The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health is planned to track the health of women in Australia for at least twenty years. 41,000 women were first surveyed in 1996 and agreed to be involved in nested studies along with the core three yearly surveys. The three age cohorts – the ‘young’ cohort born 1973 - 1978, the ‘mid’ cohort born 1946 - 1951 and the ‘old’ cohort born 1921 - 1926 are being surveyed on wide ranging health and well-being issues. A detailed schedule of ALSWH survey mail outs can be found at Appendix A. Those taking part in ALSWH were randomly selected from the Medicare database which is maintained by the Health Insurance Commission and contains the name and address details of all Australian citizens and permanent residents.

**Children’s Leisure study**

Research methods for this study, which focused specifically on children’s leisure, were very closely tied with the methods set down in the Work-life Tensions project. The Work-life Tensions project employed five techniques in obtaining data – focus groups, short surveys (completed by participants), semi-structured interviews, ESM (experience sampling method) and data linkage with ALSWH. The Children’s Leisure study utilised three of the five Work-life Tensions project methods – focus groups, short surveys and semi-structured interviews. The focus of this study was on the influences affecting the leisure of children. Adult time use data, obtained via ESM, which may show attendance at children’s leisure activities, may not have indicated why the parent was in attendance. This collection of data was beyond the scope of this project and is a potential area for further research.
Data collection methods were set down by the Work-life Tensions project management team prior to the commencement of this thesis. The research design for the main project had been adopted before the Children’s Leisure study was formulated. Specific research questions that drove this study were not embedded into the design of the project and were added retrospectively, once the research design had been completed. This meant that, rather than designing a research project in the traditional fashion, around a relevant problem, issue or concern, the driving force became the type of knowledge or story that this particular sample and this type of research method may uncover. Importantly, interview guides for the Work-life Tensions project had not been set prior to the commencement of the Children’s Leisure study. Specific questions addressing the aims of this thesis were included in both the focus group interviews and the semi-structured telephone interviews.

The Children’s Leisure study had three key data collection elements; Focus groups, semi-structured interviews with 87 ‘young’ cohort participants from ALSWH, and semi-structured interviews with 80 ‘mid’ cohort participants from ALSWH. Each of the research elements include qualitative interviewing through use of focus groups or semi-structured telephone interviews and collection of demographic data through participant completion of short surveys. The next part of this chapter describes these elements in more detail.

**Element one: Focus groups and short survey**

A series of ten focus groups were conducted in both urban and regional areas of Queensland and New South Wales between June and October, 2003. The focus groups were held with the intention of informing the design of the semi-structured telephone interviews that took place during 2004 and 2005 and to obtain a broad picture of the leisure and organised recreation of children.

Whilst focus groups have been utilised by feminist researchers in a number of settings (for example see Jowett & O’Toole, 2006; Montell, 1999; Pini, 2002; van Staveren, 1997), the author of one of the most thorough texts on feminist research methods, Shulamit Reinharz (1992) differentiates between focus groups and feminist group interviews. Reinharz (1992) indicates that feminist researchers using feminist group interviews are likely to grant interview participants ‘expert’ status with regard to topic under discussion. Focus group
interviews regardless of the granting of ‘expert’ status have been argued to be beneficial to the study of gender because they provide a “more egalitarian relationship between the researcher and the research subjects, and consciousness raising and empowering interaction among participants” (Montell, 1999, p.67).

The use of focus groups as a part of the overall research strategy provided a number of advantages. Combining several smaller focus groups lead to a relatively large sample for the purposes of data analysis, the results were available quite quickly, and data was obtained for a minimum cost outlay (Kruger, 1988; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Importantly focus groups are said to be a socially oriented research method where the researcher or interviewer provides a supportive and encouraging environment whilst asking focused questions. This in turn promotes open discussion and encourages the articulation of differing opinions and opposing points of view (Bryman, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Element one sample

Two separate teams were responsible for conducting focus group interviews. The first team was located at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales and the second at Griffith University, Queensland. Both teams used the same interview guide and short survey to collect demographic data and used similar recruitment methods. The team from the University of Newcastle organised the focus groups in New South Wales, whilst the team from Griffith University was responsible for the organisation of focus groups in Queensland. My part in this was the organisation of groups in New South Wales. Therefore, the next part of this chapter talks specifically about the organisation of those focus groups held in urban and rural areas of New South Wales.

A small number of focus group participants were invited to come together to discuss the research topic on one occasion (Bryman, 2008; Finch & Lewis, 2003). A goal of between ten and twelve groups with four to eight participants per group was set based on current academic thinking for sufficient data saturation (Finch & Lewis, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Sarantakos, 2005). This number of participants was seen as the optimum number per group to both stimulate discussion and exploration of an issue, while allowing each individual the time and space to contribute to the discussion.
Focus group participants were recruited via both email and posters at workplaces and within organisations (see Appendix B), which included local government organisations, a sports club, a community welfare organisation, and a university. Naturally occurring groups at workplaces and organisations (Kitzinger, 1995) were selected and targeted as potential sites for the recruitment of focus groups as the Work-life Tensions project was specifically targeting individuals living in dual earner families. It has been suggested that focus groups can be particularly difficult to organise (Bryman, 2008; Marshall & Rossmann, 2011) where non-attendance and cancellation of groups can be common. In this project two methods of focus group recruitment led to different outcomes. The first method involved contact with an insider from an organisation or workplace who was the primary contact person for that focus group. This individual placed posters in the workplace and emailed an electronic version of the poster to all colleagues asking for interested individuals to email or phone either myself or the Work-life Tensions project chief investigator to record their interest in the project. I then contacted these individuals via email and provided further information on the project with dates and times the focus group discussions were to be held. A copy of the letter sent via email to respondents can be found at Appendix C. This was an extremely valuable method of recruitment. Personal email contact with individuals lead to high participation rates in the groups and ensured a minimum of no shows. Those who did have to cancel did so by email before the group convened. The second method of focus group recruitment involved the contact person at each organisation placing posters advertising the research in appropriate places at their workplace. This was the least effective method of recruiting participants and in fact led to the cancellation of one group.

Focus group participants were to be paid $20 each to cover the cost of expenses and time. However, as focus group participants were recruited through contacts at workplaces and focus group discussions were conducted during working hours, the employers involved asked that the participants not be paid. In lieu of payment, lunch was provided for all participants.

The majority of focus groups were well attended with an average of six participants in each group, although one group did have eight participants whilst another group was cancelled because no-one attended. In accordance with feminist methods and to ensure that individuals had the opportunity for their voice to be heard, a variety of groups were
organised based on gender. This included one group which was an all-male group, and the discussion leader was also male. Also included were four groups of mixed gender participants and five groups who were all female.

A total of 55 participates took part in the groups with a breakdown of 38 women and 17 men. Ages of participants ranged between 26 and 65 with the majority aged between 36 and 45 (n=33). Children within the households of the participants included 21 aged between one and five, 17 aged between six and eleven; thirteen aged between twelve and 18 and four over the age of 18. The average number of children per household was 2.3 and 19 of the parents who participated indicated that they had additional caring responsibilities. The parents who participated included both full time and part time employees with 18 participants employed between 16 and 34 hours per week, 33 employed between 35 and 48 hours per week and three employed 49 hours per week or more. Thirteen of the parents worked as volunteers and/or had additional study commitments. Whilst the majority of the participants were professionals (n=23), the focus groups also included managers and administrators (n=8), associate professionals (n=13), advanced clerical/service workers (n=7) and intermediate clerical sales and service workers (n=4). Appendix D contains a complete focus group sample description.

**Element one data collection and analysis**

Each focus group had two group leaders, the Work-life Tensions project team leader from the University of Newcastle and a representative of the Children’s Leisure study, which in all instances was me. Upon arrival at the focus group venue, participants were given a short anonymous survey (see Appendix E) to complete, a consent form (see Appendix F) and a desk label on which they could write their names.

Focus groups were guided by a group of topics set down for discussion, which included those topics that were directly related to the Work-life Tensions project and more specifically to Children’s Leisure study. This interview guide was semi-structured and questions relating to the Children’s Leisure study included the type of activities children took part in and how these activities were managed in the household. Appendix G has a copy of the focus group interview guide. The semi-structured interview guide set down a list of topics for discussion and included possible probes to ask of participants. Not all
questions were asked of all participants; while most topics were covered some were not covered due to time constraints. All focus groups were audio taped.

The flexible format encouraged an open group discussion and allowed unanticipated themes to emerge (Bryman, 2008). This allowed the voices of all participants to be heard. This flexibility whilst advantageous can also be a weakness in focus group discussions. Weaknesses occur when participants move too far away from the topic and unnecessary data is collected (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To overcome this issue prompts were used to direct the discussion.

At the completion of each focus group, discussions were transcribed and emerging themes were used to inform the next focus group. As such the questions asked in each group altered slightly between groups with different nuances in questioning reflecting these emerging themes. For example, the first focus group was asked to comment on the organised activities of their children in relation to their home based activities and how these activities were managed by the family. Taking into account emerging themes from this focus group, the Children’s Leisure study question for the next focus group changed slightly with the nuance focused on the type of activities children took part in, the management of those activities and the decision making behind the activities. This process continued throughout the focus groups phase of the project.

Whilst the focus group interviews were successfully implemented and a vast array of rich data was obtained there were some small difficulties that required attention during the research project. As mentioned, all focus group interviews were audio taped and transcribed. There were some difficulties during the transcription process of ensuring that all voices were heard and in one instance where the focus group was conducted during a lunch break prevailing noise in some cases made parts of the focus group inaudible. There were also times when it was difficult to distinguish who was talking due to the nature of the discussion with one person taking up where the previous person had finished up. There were also instances in which participants spoke at the same time.

Once all focus group interviews had been transcribed, they were subjected to a thematic analysis using Nvivo software (QSR, 2007). Each focus group was given a pseudonym to protect the anonymity of the organisation or workplace. Each participant was also given a
pseudonym to protect their anonymity and so that their ‘story’ could be tracked through the interview. Those sections of the narrative in which it was difficult to ascertain who had spoken were given a generic label. The focus group discussions were read and re-read and ‘nodes’ were assigned to specified themes. Each of the questions in the Childhood Leisure study was assigned an individual ‘node’. This enabled a cross comparison of answers between individuals from different focus groups. Further ‘nodes’ were assigned to themes centred on time spent in leisure, parental experience of children’s leisure, potential benefits of participating in leisure for parents and children, and the notion of success and leisure.

The focus groups were limited in that the vast majority of participants were professionals and associate professionals, leaving an under-representation of those whose occupations were classed as intermediate clerical sales and service workers and no representation of workers whose employment may be defined as intermediate production and transport workers, elementary clerical, sales and service workers, and labourers and related workers (ABS, 2007).

Focus group participants were asked to complete short surveys on arrival at the focus group venue. These surveys were used to obtain demographic data and were anonymous. The survey included eight questions on demographic information such as gender, age, occupation, number of children and children’s ages. One section was used in particular for the Work-life Tensions project and asked questions specifically to do with time use. The short survey also asked the participants to provide the gender, age and occupation of their partner. All data obtained from the short survey was placed into an excel file and used in the Children’s Leisure study to provide a sample description and to contextualise the information provided in the focus group discussions. A copy of this excel file can be found at Appendix D.

**Element two: Semi-structured telephone interviews - ‘young’ cohort**

The second and third elements of this study were closely related and both involved the use of semi-structured interviews. In this section of the chapter the second element, semi-structured interviews with ‘young’ cohort participants, are discussed.
In-depth semi-structured interviews are said to seek to understand the “lived experiences” of the individual (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 14) and are usually long in duration (from between 30 minutes and several hours). They are also qualitative in nature, that is they are both flexible and open-ended (Patton, 1990). The goal of this type of interview is gain rich data from the perspective of the individual involved in the study on a particular subject (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) – in this instance influences on the leisure activities of children. Furthermore, in-depth interviews conducted by feminist researchers may offer a unique perspective to in-depth interviewing as they are often conscious of issues of power and authority that may affect the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2007). This is especially important for the study of women as using in-depth interviews goes some way to overcome the past which saw women largely ignored in social research or having men speak for women (Reinharz, 1992).

In-depth semi-structured interviews were chosen as one of the data collection methods as they allowed both the women and men in the project to speak and be heard in their own voice. This type of data collection technique also allowed the examination of themes related to the leisure of children from four distinct periods of history which included the 1950s/60s the 1970s/80s the 1980s/90s and the early part of the 21st century.

The in-depth interviews were semi-structured in nature and the interview schedule for the ‘young’ cohort contained open-ended questions from the Work-life Tensions project, the Children’s Leisure study and a second PhD thesis. Each of the PhD candidates was allocated one open-ended question within the interview schedule. An outcome of being connected to a larger project (the Work-life Tensions project) meant that there was a relatively small amount of time within the interviews to ask the open-ended semi-structured questions required for the Children’s Leisure study. Crossover between some of the interview questions meant that many questions did however provide both contextual data and thick descriptions that were utilised in the Children’s Leisure study.

Originally the plan was to conduct face-to-face interviews with all participants, however distance, time and budgetary constraints conspired to ensure that interviews were conducted via the use of an in-depth semi-structured telephone interviewing technique. There were drawbacks to conducting interviewing over the phone. The extra difficulty in establishing rapport with the respondent and the loss of the impact of visual clues (e.g. eye contact and gestures) was initially of some concern (Hesse-Biber, 2007). However, while
telephone interviewing is said to compromise rapport, probing and the interpretation of data, there was little evidence within this study to suggest that data loss or distortion did occur or that there was any misinterpretation or that the quality of findings were compromised. One major advantage to this project in using telephone interviews was that it allowed respondents to disclose sensitive information more freely. Indeed two participants described having alcoholic parents and another participant indicated that she was glad that the interview was anonymous after describing how her parents had left her and her siblings locked in a car out the front of a pub when they were children. It has been suggested elsewhere (Novick, 2008) that telephone conversation has been reported to contain several features that render it particularly suitable for research interviews. Telephone interviewing is a cost effective method of data collection especially when compared to the expense of face-to-face interviews (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). It has also been suggested that interview data obtained from telephone interviews is more focused (Deem, 2002) and that it increases participants’ perception of anonymity (Greenfield, Midanik, & Rogers, 2004; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Telephone interviews have been used in a range of research situations (see for example, Musselwhite, Cuff, McGregor, & King, 2007; Smith, 2005) and importantly, this method has been successfully utilised in feminist research studies such as those described by Deem (2002) and McGraw, Zvonkovic and Walker (2000).

**Element two ‘young’ cohort sample**

Two cohorts of participants from ALSWH were specifically targeted as populations from which to draw the sample for both the Work-life Tensions project and the Children’s Leisure study. The first cohort to be sampled was the 1973 - 1978 ‘young’ cohort, who were aged between 26 and 31 years when interviewed in 2004. This group of ALSWH participants were purposively sampled on the basis of predisposed characteristics (Babbie, 2010). For the purposes of this study participants had to have identified in the 2003 ALSWH survey as having a partner, at least one child and be in paid work. These sample criteria were in direct relation to the Work-life Tensions project which explored work-life tensions in dual earner families. An additional purposive sampling criterion also utilised was geographical location. All participants needed to reside in the eastern Australian states. This included Queensland, New South Wales (NSW), Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Victoria and Tasmania. Other Australia states were excluded from the study due to differing time zones between potential participants and interviewers, and the associated difficulties of contacting
participants during the telephone interview stage of the project. Indeed the changing
time zones on the east coast also caught interviewers unawares, with one participant receiving a
phone call for their interview time one hour early due to daylight saving changes in NSW
and not Queensland.

From this identified population group of ALSWH 1973 - 1978 ‘young’ cohort women who
had a partner, at least one child, who were in paid work and residing in one of the eastern
Australian states, a random sample was drawn. These participants were invited by letter to
participate in the Work-life Tensions project and Children’s Leisure study. In total 210
young women and their partners were randomly selected and invited to take part in the
project. Follow up phone calls were then made to invited participants who had not
responded to mailed invitations. Fifty two couples accepted the invitation to participate.

Before the semi-structured interviews took place with ‘young’ cohort participants, each
person completed the ESM phase of the Work-life Tensions project. Upon completion of the
ESM phase a follow-up phone call was made by WHA to participants and an interview time
was scheduled for the semi-structured interviews.

ESM and semi-structured interviews were conducted in four waves between September and
December of 2004. At the end of the first wave of ESM one female participant withdrew
with no reason given for her withdrawal from the project, one couple separated and
withdrew at the end of wave two, another couple withdrew immediately before the
beginning of phase three with no reason given for their withdrawal and one male withdrew
after seeing his wife complete the ESM phase of the project. At the end of the fourth ESM
wave, 98 participants remained. Table 4.1 (next page) shows the number of participants at
the completion of each wave of ESM data collection who were available for interview.
### Table 4.1: Interview Waves - ‘Young’ cohort participants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Number of Participants in Wave</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Number of withdrawals</th>
<th>Number of participants remaining</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2 (1 female, 1 male)</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3 (1 female, 2 males)</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Element two data collection**

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted at the end of each of the ESM waves. Both PhD students attached to the Work-life Tensions project conducted interviews with all ‘young’ cohort participants. Interviews were carried out between September and December of 2004. WHA contacted all participants to arrange telephone interviews. The interview time line was then emailed to both PhD students in a password protected zip file. This file contained an ID alias in numerical format, the full name of the participant and their phone numbers, including home, work and mobile numbers. The numerically formatted ID aliases attributed to the participants were unique to the Work-life Tensions project and used in all data analysis. They are also used within this thesis as document identifiers. Each couple who took part in the project were attributed an ID alias that linked them together as a couple, and a further identifier was added to each individual to indicate gender. For example couple 107672 were further delimited with an ‘F’ for female or ‘M’ for male. Thus 107672F was a female ‘young’ cohort participant and 107672M was a male ‘young’ cohort participant and the partner of 107672F. This was important for data analysis as it allowed couples to be easily linked together as a family group. All participants from the ‘young’ cohort are also identified by the numeral ‘1’ at the beginning of their ID alias.

Care was also taken to ensure the anonymity of participants. The logs of telephone calls and paper consent forms were held by WHA (a copy of the Work-life Tensions consent form is available at Appendix H). WHA provided each individual with an ID alias. All electronic information was kept in an electronic password protected files. Audio tapes were returned to WHA on the conclusion of interview transcription and wiped. Each individual was provided with a pseudonym in addition to their alpha-numeric ID alias. The only
individual with access to information that linked participants to their identity was the
ALSWH data manager. She was not in possession of any of the data.

Prior to the full roll out of wave one interviews, one participant was interviewed to pilot test
the interview schedule (see Appendix I). This interview was transcribed and sent to the two
chief investigators associated with the Work-life Tensions project and both PhD candidates.
From here a meeting was held to discuss the formatting and sequence of questions.
Wording to some questions were changed and the sequence of questions changed in order
to provide a better flow to the interview and to ensure minimal influence of questions on
each other (see Appendix J).

The first wave of interviews was conducted with half of the total ‘young’ cohort female
respondents (n=24) plus 1 male respondent. Wave two involved interviewing the partners
of those in wave one. This included 22 male and 1 female respondents. There appeared to
be a negative influence on the male participants because of the later timing of their
interviews and there was one male partner who withdrew after watching his wife in
particular complete the ESM phase of the project. In order to eliminate any possible
problems after the completion of these first two waves of interviews the third and fourth
waves were not divided along gender lines. Table 4.1 (previous page) shows the proposed
interview waves of ‘young’ cohort participants.

A total of 97 appointments were made for interviews with ‘young’ cohort respondents. Of
these 97 appointments, interviews were conducted with 87 individuals representing 46
families. One couple and one female participant repeatedly missed scheduled interview
times and eventually their pursuit was abandoned. Seven participants declined to be
interviewed. There were also issues with contacting participants. One family had moved
house while another had changed their phone number between accepting the invitation to
participate in the project and the semi-structured telephone interviews. A number of
participants forgot their interview time and extra time was spent trying to contact them to
reschedule interviews. There were also issues with the recording equipment, with the loss
of one entire interview and parts of two further interviews.

Each of the semi-structured telephone interviews was audio recorded and each interview
had its own individual tape. Recording of the interviews allowed each of the interviewers to
give full attention to the interview, thus preventing the need for pauses in the interview whilst notes were taken (Elliott, 2005). Recording of the interviews also allowed data to be captured that may have otherwise been missed. For example, laughter, intonation and pauses in dialogue (Elliott, 2005). Recording each of the interviews also provided a permanent record of the interview that is available to be listened to again and again if required (Kvale, 1996). Each telephone interview was conducted by one of the two PhD candidates involved with the Work-life Tensions project. On average, the interviews took between thirty and forty five minutes with some continuing beyond an hour, while others barely reached the twenty five minute mark.

Standardised open-ended questions which used the exact wording and sequence of questions for each interview (Henderson, 1991) were used as the semi-structured interview questions and when deemed necessary further probing style questions were asked at the discretion of the interviewer. Respondents who were interviewed were able to respond to the questions in any manner. Semi-structured telephone interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim upon completion of the interviews. All interviews were transcribed during the interview phase of the project. For example, interviews from the first wave were being transcribed as interviews from subsequent waves were taking place.

Of the 87 interviewees 38 were located in urban areas and the remaining 49 from rural regions. All of the men were in paid work, six women were taking maternity leave and two of the women were students. Occupations varied significantly within the sample and included a sky diving instructor, a wine maker and a minister of religion. Three of the women described themselves as stay at home mothers. The entire ‘young’ cohort had children living within their households with ages ranging from just a couple of days to twelve years. Whilst the majority were aged between two and four years, there were also significant numbers of children under the age of two (n=22) and between the ages of five and nine (n=22). Most families had two children, with the numbers of children in each family ranging from one to a maximum of four children. Further detailed breakdowns regarding location, occupation, ages and number of children for the ‘young’ cohort can be found at Appendix K.
Element three: Semi-structured telephone interviews ‘mid’ cohort

The same style of semi-structured telephone interviews were employed to obtain data from ‘mid’ cohort participants. The use of a semi-structured interview technique was outlined on pages 87-89, and therefore will not be repeated here.

Element three ‘mid’ cohort sample

The second cohort of participants from ALSWH targeted was the 1946 – 1951 ‘mid’ cohort, who were aged between 54 and 59 years when interviewed in 2005. Like the ‘young’ cohort, this group of ALSWH participants were purposively sampled on the basis of predisposed characteristics (Babbie, 2010). For the purposes of this study participants from the 2004 ALSWH ‘mid’ cohort survey who had a partner, children and were in paid work were invited to take part in the Work-life Tensions project sub study. Again, as previously noted, these criteria were in direct relation to the Work-life Tensions project which explored work-life tensions in dual earner families. An additional purposive sampling criteria again also utilised was geographical location. All participants needed to reside in the eastern Australian states.

From this identified population group of ALSWH 1946 - 1951 ‘mid’ cohort women who had a partner, children, who were in paid work and resided in one of the eastern Australian states, a random sample was drawn from ALSWH participants. These participants were invited by letter to participate in the Work-life Tensions project and Childhood Leisure study. In total 210 mid women and their partners were randomly selected and invited to take part in the project. Follow up phone calls were then made to invited participants who had not responded to mailed invitations. Fifty couples accepted the invitation to participate.

As with the ‘young’ group, before the semi-structured interviews took place with ‘mid’ cohort participants, each person completed the ESM phase of the Work-life Tensions project. Upon completion of the ESM phase a follow-up phone call was made by WHA to participants and an interview time was scheduled for the semi-structured interviews.

ESM and semi-structured interviews with the ‘mid’ group were conducted in three waves between May and October of 2005. At the end of the first wave of ESM three couples withdrew with no reason given for their withdrawal from the project and an additional male
participant withdrew. At the end of the second wave a further two participants withdrew with no reason given for their withdrawal. At the end of wave three a further three participants had withdrawn. Table 4.2 (this page) shows the number of participants at the completion of each wave of ESM data collection who were available for interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Number of Participants in Wave</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Number of withdrawals</th>
<th>Number of participants remaining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7 (3 females, 4 males)</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4 (2 female, 2 male)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 (1 female, 2 males)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Element three data collection

Similar to the ‘young’ cohort, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of each of the ESM waves. During the first wave of telephone interviews for the ‘mid’ cohort, the second PhD student withdrew from the project due to illness, and therefore I interviewed all ‘mid’ cohort participants. WHA contacted all participants to arrange telephone interviews. The interview time line was then emailed to me in a password protected zip file. In the same manner as the ‘young’ cohort participants, this file contained an ID alias in numerical format, the full name of the participant and their phone numbers, including home, work and mobile numbers. All ‘mid’ cohort ID aliases were also delimited with an ‘F’ for female or an ‘M’ for male. Thus 201631F was a female ‘mid’ cohort participant and 201631M was a male ‘mid’ cohort participant and the partner of 201631F. All participants from the ‘mid’ cohort are identified by the numeral ‘2’ at the beginning of their ID alias.

The same procedures for ensuring participant anonymity were in effect for the ‘mid’ cohort as was for the ‘young’ cohort. The logs of telephone calls and paper consent forms were held by WHA. WHA provided each individual with an ID alias. All electronic information was kept in an electronic password protected files. Audio tapes were returned to WHA on the conclusion of interviews and wiped. Each individual was provided with a pseudonym in addition to their alpha-numeric ID alias. Again the only individual with access to information that linked participants to their identity was the ALSWH data manager. She was not in possession of any of the data.
After learning from our experiences with the ‘young’ cohort, all ‘mid’ cohort waves were mixed gender. A total of 86 appointments were made for interviews with ‘mid’ cohort respondents. Of these 86 appointments, interviews were conducted with 80 individuals representing 47 families. One male declined to be interviewed, although his wife did offer to answer the questions for him. Her offer was declined. Two participants from wave two were due to go on holidays when their interview was due: these interviews were delayed and participants were interviewed in wave three. A further five interview participants were very difficult to pin down. After repeated attempts to contact them, their interviews were eventually abandoned. There were no issues with recording equipment for the ‘mid’ cohort interviews. Each of the semi-structured telephone interviews was audio recorded and each interview had its own individual tape. On average, the interviews took between thirty and forty five minutes with some continuing beyond an hour. All interviews were transcribed verbatim throughout the three waves of interviews.

At the conclusion of the first two ‘mid’ cohort interviews, I felt that the interview schedule did not fit the ‘mid’ cohort and that it was aimed more toward the young cohort. Contact was made with the chief investigators from the Work-life Tensions project regarding my concerns and an improved interview schedule was implemented with feedback from all involved in the project. A copy of this ‘mid’ interview schedule can be found at Appendix L. In keeping with interpretive feminist inquiry, it was also at this stage that my own questions for the Children’s Leisure study expanded and took on different nuance. Semi-structured interview questions may be modified and questions added, deleted or adapted (Cargan, 2007) in accordance with responses from interviews. As such, interview responses from the first two ‘mid’ cohort participants lead to a change in the ‘mid’ cohort interview schedule.

Eighty interviews were conducted with 47 families represented. Of the 80 interviewees, 49 participants stated that they resided in a rural region of Australia whilst the remaining 37 were located in urban regions. A clear majority of both the mid female participants (n=21) and male participants (n=13) were professionals and similar to ‘young’ cohort participants had an eclectic mix of occupations which included photographers, librarians, and toolmakers, whilst two male participants listed their occupation as retired. Children of mid cohort participants ranged in ages from 13 to 35 years. Twenty-four ‘mid’ cohort families
had children living at home, whilst the remaining 23 families were ‘empty nesters’ with no children living in the family home. In families with children still residing in their family homes, the majority of the children were aged between 19 and 24 years. A more complete breakdown of this information can be found at Appendix M.

**Short surveys**

In order to obtain the maximum amount of data with the minimum amount of inconvenience and disruption to participants, some information was obtained from project participants in the form of a short survey. This short survey can be found at Appendices N and O. The short survey was utilised for both male and female participants from both age cohorts. The survey asked participants to provide information on their occupation, if they had more than one paid job, number of children, children ages, the number of children they had living at home and if those children lived with them all the time. The short survey also asked participants to indicate how much time they had spent in the previous week on activities such as paid work, home duties, work without pay, providing care, unpaid voluntary work, studying, travelling by car, active leisure and passive leisure. The last part of the short survey asked participants to indicate a yes or no response to a number of items taken from the Canadian Time Pressure survey. These questions provided an indication of how time pressured participants were feeling. This last section of the survey was primarily for the Work-life Tensions project and was not utilised in the Children’s Leisure study.

Short surveys were sent out to all participants via mail and completed prior to the completion of the semi-structured telephone interviews. These were returned to WHA on completion of the ESM phase of the project. WHA assigned an ID alias to each of the short surveys. The surveys were copied and sent to each of the researchers involved in the project and they were matched to their semi-structured interview.

There were a couple of cases in which short surveys were not returned prior to the semi-structured telephone interviews. These surveys were completed by the interviewer at the end of the semi-structured telephone interview.
Data analysis: Semi-structured interviews

Within feminist research, the research process plays a significant role in the production of knowledge. Both the researcher and the research participant are involved in the production of ‘data’ (Diaz, 2002). Although it is impossible to create a research process that is able to completely erase the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Acker, Barry and Esseveld, 1983), within feminist research the knowledge held by participants is highly valued as expert knowledge (Fonow & Cook, 1991). With this in mind data analysis began with the transcription of each of the semi-structured interviews.

Transcription of interviews for the ‘young’ cohort was shared equally between the two PhD students attached to the Work-life project with each student transcribing the interviews that they had conducted. After the withdrawal of the PhD student based at Griffith University, I transcribed half of the interviews and the remainder were transcribed by a research assistant employed by the Work-life Tensions project. As soon as transcription had been completed for each interview wave, interviews were saved to a folder and this was shared with other researchers involved with the Work-life project. Interview transcripts contained no identifying information that could be traced to any individual. Each transcript contained a pseudonym and their ID alias.

Data analysis began during the transcription process of the interviews. As I transcribed each of my interviews I made notes and kept memos on particular themes that appeared to be emerging whilst they were still fresh in my mind. It was at this stage links began to form between relative theory and ideas voiced by participants (Ezzy, 2002). Once I had transcribed each of my interviews or had received an electronic copy from either the PhD student at Griffith University or the research assistant from the Work-life project, they were converted into a rich text file (RTF) and transferred into Nvivo (QSR, 2007). Here the transcripts were read and re-read and coded both thematically and descriptively using the QSR qualitative software programme Nvivo (QSR, 2007). Breaking down raw data into categories of unique and coherent themes which are significant to those who have participated in the research and which address the aim of the research is classed as coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Coding is an integral part of data analysis and is used to retrieve and organise chunks of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
Coding occurred in three phases. The first phase of coding was open coding (Ezzy, 2002). It was at this stage that coding of large blocks of text as opposed to single words occurred (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) to identify emerging themes. Here the data was explored and ‘nodes’ were attributed to the data based on meanings, feelings and actions of the research participants (Ezzy, 2002). Sections of data were highlighted and coded at ‘nodes’ for comparing and contrasting at a later stage. In the first instance all interviews were coded with meaning coming directly from the interview data. Observations and insights from the data were noted and in this initial stage of coding, literature and preconceived notions were ignored in favour of listening to the data coming from the interviews. In line with this, any emerging themes were coded with relevant words or phrases that came from the interview data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Recurring regularities that revealed patterns which could be sorted into categories or themes were coded in this fashion (Patton, 1990).

The second phase of coding involved examining each of the ‘nodes’ and breaking them down into smaller child or secondary ‘nodes’ (see Appendix P for coding structure). Throughout the data analysis process, negative cases that did not fit cohesively within the overarching themes were continually sought out (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006) in order to disprove the emerging hypothesis (Patton, 1990). The emergence of a negative case ensured that the original hypothesis was again examined and reformulated to take into account negative cases.

The third level of coding involved examining themes for coherence or difference and adjusting or expanding as required. As the coding progressed, each of the codes were explored and relationships between the codes were compared (Ezzy, 2002). Known as “axial coding” the result of the exploration of relationships between the codes leads to “axes of central categories” (Ezzy, 2002, p.91). Axial coding was left to late in the analysis of data in order to ensure I had a deep understanding of the themes that had emerged from the data, without losing the voice of the participants or the meanings that they had attributed to the information that they had provided. Coding was concluded once all of the incidents relevant to the research aims had been classified and coded (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The coding structure was revisited often throughout the entire project to check for inconsistencies or changes based on new understandings of the data. To this effect, nodes were often merged and changed. The last stage of data analysis involved taking the themes
that had emerged during the coding process and moving beyond merely describing what had been found to applying relevant theory to the themes. The process of data analysis was ongoing through the research process including the writing of the thesis.

**Cohorts and generations**

Within this thesis, I use the concept of social generations in the tradition of Karl Mannheim (1952) as a basis for defining the generations. This is used for two key reasons. Firstly, the cohort sample for ALSWH is based on the year of birth of *women* who are involved in the ongoing ALSWH project. Their partners who were recruited for this and the Work-life project may or may not have shared similar birth dates. The use of social generations accounts for those who may have differing birth dates, but shared experiences (Mayall, 2002). Secondly, the use of Alanen’s (2001) concept of childhood and generation in the tradition of Mannheim (1952) is used to locate the current generation of children as a social generation.

Data from the ‘young’ cohort and ‘mid’ cohort was used to explore influences on the leisure activities of four generations of Australian children. In chronological order the ‘mid’ cohort participants who took part in this study were able to provide rich evidence of the leisure experiences of their own childhood, growing up in the 1950s and 1960s; this group for the purposes of this study were given the label of ‘Baby Boomers’ (ABS, 2009b; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009). The ‘mid’ cohort was also able to provide evidence of influences on leisure activities of two generations of children. The first generation of children - known in this study as ‘Generation X’ - had a year of birth (YOB) between 1966 and 1980 (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009). The second generation of children are known in this study as ‘Generation Y’ and have an approximate year of birth ranging between 1980 to the mid-1990s (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009). The ‘mid’ cohort was also able to provide data on the influences on the leisure activities of their grandchildren. For the purposes of this study this generation of children is known as ‘Generation Z’ (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009). These children were born between the mid-1990s and 2005\(^1\). Figure 4.2 (next page) provides a

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\(^1\) 2005 was the year ‘mid’ cohort participants were surveyed.
diagrammatic depiction of data that was able to be collected from the ALSWH ‘mid’ cohort participants.

The ALSWH ‘young’ cohort participants who took part in this study were able to provide vivid evidence of their own leisure as children, growing up in the 1970s and 1980s. This ‘Generation X’ (ABS, 2009b; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009) group was also able to provide data pertaining to influences on the leisure of their own children. As noted above, these ‘Generation Z’ (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009) children had a year of birth sometime between the mid-1990s and 2005. Figure 4.3 (next page) provides a diagrammatic depiction of the data that was obtained from the ‘young’ cohort.
As discussed within the literature review, there is much contention surrounding the definition of each generation and indeed definitions vary considerably between social scientists, social commentators and the lay public. For this study, I use the definition of generations as provided by Australian social scientist and social commentator Mark McCrindle (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009). This definition of generations is provided within the Australian context and it provides the best fit for the participants from this study.

Influences on the leisure activities of children in this thesis are explored from a generational perspective. While appearing obvious, it is important to note that a child’s date of birth does not indicate the same time period in which that child was participating in organised activities. For example a ‘mid’ cohort participant who was born in 1948 who is classified as a Baby Boomer would have participated in leisure activities as a child during the 1950s and the early part of the 1960s. A ‘young’ cohort participant born in 1974 who is classified as belonging to Generation X would have experienced leisure activities as a child in during the 1970s and 1980s.

The children of the ‘mid’ cohort participants from this study are Generation X and Generation Y children. As such, although of different generations, they do have a commonality of experience because they have parents who come from the same generation, that is, Baby Boomers. Figure 4.4 (next page) depicts the Generations and the time frame in which children from this study were participating in organised leisure activities.
The Baby Boomer sample

A total of 80 Baby Boomers representing 47 families from the mid cohort participated in this project. Baby Boomers had children who ranged in ages from 13 years to 35 years. Sixty of the children were from Generation X, 49 children were from Generation Y and one child was a Generation Z child. There was one family who had both Generation Y and Generation Z children, 12 families with only Generation Y children, 24 families who had both Generation X and Generation Y children and ten families with only Generation X children.

The Generation X sample

A total of 87 Generation X individuals representing 46 families from the young cohort participated in this study. Generation X families had children who ranged in age from two months to twelve years. These children were from Generation Z and the total was 101. Data on the organised leisure of a further 60 Generation X children who were aged between 25 and 35 years in 2005 was obtained from their Baby Boomer parents who were part of the mid cohort.
The Generation Y sample

Data on organised leisure activities was obtained from 49 Generation Y children of Baby Boomer parents who were part of the mid cohort. These children were aged between 15 and 24 years when semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2005.

The Generation Z sample

There were a total of 101 Generation Z children who were the children of young cohort Generation X parents. These Generation Z children were aged between 2 months and 12 years. One Generation Z child had parents from the Baby Boomer mid cohort. This child was 13 years old.

A note on the use of memory in research

Memory is not like a video record. It does not need images, and images are never enough: moreover, our memories shade and patch and combine and delete […] the best analogy to remembering is storytelling. (Hacking, 1998, p. 250-251)

The use of memory was an important component of the interview phase of this research. Both ‘mid’ and ‘young’ participants were asked to recall events and activities from the past. In some instances this meant that participants were asked to recall events that may have occurred up to 50 years ago. In social research, memory allows the past to be explored and interpreted in the present (Keightley, 2010). This process of remembering, reliving and recalling of past experience is an historical construction of a life story (Maynard, 2004).

Memory can be particularly unreliable. However, the issue is not whether memory is faulty or accurate. The past, whether recent or distant is interpreted and reinterpreted by taking into account a person’s own understanding and knowledge (Lawler, 2002). All participants in this study interpreted and reinterpreted their past experiences through the telling of a story via the in-depth semi-structured interviews. Further, Lawler (2002) argues that each of us tells stories about our lives, to ourselves and to others. It is by way of these stories that we are able to make sense of the world.
Remembering is said to be a process that is ongoing and therefore memories are not fixed through time and consequently cannot be exactly replicated in the future (Keightley, 2010). This exact study, conducted six months later may have drawn different conclusions because knowledge gained by participants within that time frame may have led them to answer questions in a different manner. The conclusions that are drawn in this study are therefore historically specific (Keightley, 2010).

In order to overcome some of the challenges brought by the construction of knowledge based on memory, this study uses triangulation to check the consistency of data sources and theories (Fetterman, 1989; Henderson, 1991). A variety of methods including focus group interviews, semi-structured in-depth interviews, secondary data sources, and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) information have been applied to this research to address issues of validity.

**Design Limitations**

The data collected for this study was captured in the first decade of the 21st century, and thus captures the experiences of these respondents at that particular moment in history. Furthermore, a known limitation of most qualitative studies is that they cannot be completely verified because the exact circumstances of the original project can never be fully reconstructed (Huberman & Miles, 1998). This can, in part be overcome by detailing the research process precisely and acknowledging known limitations to the study.

Methodologically there were both advantages and disadvantages in being connected to both the Work-life Tensions project and ALSWH. Firstly, obtaining a sample of willing participants was a less onerous task than it may have been if this study had not been connected to both the Work-life Tensions project and ALSWH. However, being connected to a larger project there was a small amount of time within the interviews to ask the open-ended semi-structured questions required for the Children’s Leisure study. Given that each interview lasted between thirty minutes and one hour the maximum amount of time spent on the questions included in the interview schedule for this project was approximately ten minutes. Although this is a limited amount of time to gain the depth and understanding required to make judgements and assessments on the data provided by the interviewees,
other questions within the interviews were able to provide a rich and deep understanding of aspects of the lives of those who took part in the study. These questions provided excellent background information and also placed in context much of data that were provided for the questions that related specifically to the Children’s Leisure study.

Perhaps one of the major limitations of the project came from a change in the interview schedule between the ‘mid’ cohort and the ‘young’ cohort. The ‘young’ cohort was interviewed first in 2004 followed by the ‘mid’ cohort in 2005. It was only at the conclusion of the 87 young interviews, the first pass at data analysis for that cohort and a change of gear from thinking about the ‘young’ cohort to thinking about the ‘mid’ cohort that a marked theme of changes across time came to the forefront. This understanding came to the forefront after one of the interviews had been completed from the ‘mid’ cohort and on review I felt that the interview was not the correct ‘fit’ for the cohort. A meeting was held with the two chief investigators from the Work Life Tensions Project and the two PhD students attached to the project. From here a comprehensive review of the interview schedule was undertaken and the interview schedule was adapted. Had this theme been discovered earlier, additional data from the ‘young’ cohort may have been obtained via the use of questions which aimed to reveal differences in the leisure in their own childhood compared to those perceived in the childhood of their parents and their children.

The sample design for this study focused on dual-income families in both the mid and the young age cohorts. The experiences of single income families and sole parent families may differ and therefore I make no claim as to the generalisability of these results to these family types. The data obtained however is extremely valuable in understanding the influences on leisure of children and how these influences have changed across time.

Within this study a gendered lens is applied to the research. There are however, other potential sources of inequality and difference that have not been given consideration. These factors which include socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexuality, Aboriginality and religious affiliation were not part of the sampling frame for this project and questions surrounding these factors were not asked in the interview stage of the project. Therefore the generalisability of these results is limited.
Holidays, travel and tourism could also be seen as organised leisure activities. However, the thesis excludes this type of organised leisure as its focus is purely on the day-to-day, after school activities that contribute to the general flow of a child’s week. While holidays could be seen as an important component of childhood and of organised leisure, this is an area for further research, and beyond the scope of this project.

ALSWH is tracking the health and well-being of women, therefore the entire ALSWH sample is made up of women. The male participants in this project were the partners of both the mid and young cohort women who were ALSWH participants. The age of these partners is unknown. Therefore it is difficult to ascertain exactly which generation the male participants in this study belong to. Mid cohort Baby Boomer women may have partners who are from the previous generation, known as the ‘Lucky Generation’ (ABS, 2009b; Mackay, 1997; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009) or indeed from Generation X. In the same manner, young cohort participants may have partners who are Baby Boomers or possibly from Generation Y. There was no evidence from the semi-structured interviews that this was indeed the case. Whilst two ‘mid’ cohort male participants reported that they had retired, analysis of their semi-structured interview data did not show a marked difference in their experiences when compared to others in the cohort.

A further limitation to the design of this research was the use of memory or remembered experiences of childhood to gather data from participants regarding their leisure experiences. Nostalgia is a key feature in the landscape of childhood and as argued by Kehily (2008), recalling and remembering childhood may be associated with “magical freedom that bespeaks how things ought to be” (p.198). There is evidence however to suggest participants from this study did not always remember their childhood through a nostalgic lens and there were reported instances of childhoods characterised by broken families, absent fathers and orphaned children who had no meaningful relationship with the ‘family’ in which they lived.

The evidence presented in this thesis relies on the memory of Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y participants. The voice of Generation Z is heard only through reports from their parents as such a comparative analysis of childhood leisure experiences across generations is limited by these factors.
Conclusion

This research study was not designed in the traditional fashion. The research methods had been set prior to the conception of the Childhood Leisure study. Therefore the research design dictated the type of study that was to be carried out. A multi method qualitative study that is broadly feminist in nature was employed to determine the influences on the leisure activities of children since the 1950s. A feminist qualitative approach to research is both appropriate and beneficial for this research as it places both gender and the child at the centre of analysis. This method of research and analysis contributes to the understanding of leisure in childhood across four generations, commencing in the 1950s and continuing through until the early part of the 21st century. A broadly feminist framework was also appropriate as it fitted with the similar frameworks utilised by both the Work-life Tensions project and ALSWH.

With this connection to the Work-life Tensions project and ALSWH, the sampling frame for this study was in place prior to the commencement of the Childhood Leisure study. The sample consists of primarily dual income families located in both urban and rural areas of the eastern Australian states. Dual income families were specifically targeted in the Work-life Tensions project because it explored work-life tensions in dual earner families. With this focus on dual income families the generalisability of results to other family types is in question. The methods employed do however provide a rich and deep understanding of the influences that surrounded the organised leisure activities of children from four generations – Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z.

The following four chapters draw on the qualitative findings from each of the three research elements. Chapter Five describes the organised leisure activities of the four generations of children. Chapter Six examines factors that influence the activities of children which include technological change, locality, educational and religious institutions and friends and peers. The chapter following (Chapter Seven) examines parental influences on organised leisure. The final empirical chapter explores the concept and influence of risk in relation to the organised activities of children since the 1950s.
Chapter Five: Childhood leisure: A portrait of four generations

There was no running around to activities what-so-ever [...] my two brothers and I used to walk to the picture theatre of a Saturday afternoon and take ourselves to the pictures and take ourselves to the swimming pool. (Anna, Baby Boomer child, 208341F)

You know, when we were young [...] you sort of played a sport, a winter sport; you didn’t do singing and drama and all these extras. You know the boys played football, the girls played netball. (Annette, Generation X, 112455F)

We used to let them do one sporting and one cultural thing otherwise they’d inundate themselves with all sorts of things. (Christian, father of two Generation Y children, 206730M)

The girls have sport Saturday [...] they have softball of a morning. Umm, netball in winter of a morning and then they’ve got touch of an afternoon. Three of them play touch². (Dion, father of four Generation Z children, 112455M)

Introduction

This chapter both describes and illustrates the leisure of each of the four generations of Australian children involved in this study. These generations represent four recent time frames and include descriptions of childhood leisure as it occurred in Australia during the 1950s/1960s, the 1970s/1980s, 1980s/1990s and the early part of the 21st century. As was outlined in the methodology chapter, these descriptions of childhood leisure have been taken from in-depth semi-structured telephone interviews provided by two cohorts; the mid cohort and the young cohort. A full description of this sample can be found at Appendices K and M. Each section of this chapter commences with a brief description in the form of a post card, of the prevailing social, cultural, economic and political aspects of each time period in order to provide a context within which each generation is considered. It is both appropriate and important to situate the participants within this context as this type of

² Touch: touch football, based on a non-tackle version of rugby league.
background information assists in the provision of a more complete picture and a fuller
description of the childhood of those involved in this study. The chapter describes and
discusses the childhood leisure of children from each generation, both at home and in the
community. Particular emphasis is placed on themes that emerged from the interview data
including the nature of free play at home (including the role of parents) and the location of
leisure activities in the community. It includes a description of the activities in which both
boys and girls participated. Each of the four generations is examined in turn and differences
and similarities between the generations are considered. Apart from the postcards from
each era, which act as positional vignettes and provide a brief contextual framework for
each of the time periods investigated, descriptions of the leisure activities provided in this
chapter are based solely on empirical data uncovered during the research process.

The chapter is primarily descriptive in nature and aims to demonstrate how the children
from each generation experienced leisure. Chapters six, seven and eight will take the
themes discussed here and move from a primarily descriptive focus to an analytic approach,
drawing upon relevant literature and theory to explain the differences in influences on the
leisure experiences of the four generations.

Baby Boomers: “We used to [...] play in the streets”

A postcard from the 1950s/60s

The childhood of Baby Boomers was characterised by a relatively stable political climate
with one solid point of reference: Sir Robert Menzies, Australia’s longest serving Prime
Minister, held office from 1949 to 1966. This fairly stable political climate was evident
despite concerns about communism which permeated almost all aspects of public life
(Griffiths, 2005; Macintyre, 2009). Australians were still very ‘British’, despite one million
immigrants arriving on Australian shores from post-war Europe by 1955 (Knott, 2007) –
indeed the National Anthem was still God Save the Queen, school children saluted the British
Flag until 1953, and a picture of the Queen was in every classroom (Kociumbas, 1997).
Despite a relatively stable domestic political climate, the Baby Boomer child grew up during
the Cold War. The struggle between capitalism and communism for world domination was
moving towards its peak. Children during this time period grew up in an era that promised
economic growth and low unemployment: or no future at all if one of the superpowers decided that nuclear war was a better option (Mackay, 1997).

Play experiences for Baby Boomer children were characterised by large amounts of free play. Television arrived in Australia in 1954 (Andrews & Curtis, 1998) and by the end of the following decade most households had a TV. However, children did not come home from school and sit in front of the television: they arrived home from school, did some homework and went outside and played (Townsend, 1988). Games included rounders, hopscotch, marbles and street cricket (Townsend, 1988). Boys had meccano sets and train sets and girls had dolls dressed in “virginal white” and doll houses with miniature furniture (Kociumbas, 1997, p. 211).

Saturdays were spent attending the local matinee at the movie theatre, swimming in the local pool, going to the beach or playing games in the street with other neighbourhood children (Townsend, 1988).

By 1966, 40 per cent of the Australian population was under the age of 21 with a large proportion of children living in families in the suburbs. The suburbs with rural ideals of open space were said to be the place to raise children. Suburbs were new and growing, with little infrastructure in the way of playgrounds, streets, footpaths or fencing (Peel, 1997).

Most mothers were homemakers during the 1950s and 1960s and it was unlawful for married women to work for the Commonwealth Public Service until 1966. Overall labour force participation for women stood at 34% by 1961 (ABS, 2011).

“My mother would encourage us to sort of be inventive”

A substantial amount of the leisure and play of childhood was conducted in the private sphere of the home and surrounding environments during the 1950s and 1960s. This free play and leisure was defined by gender and affected by parental roles. These factors are explored as the leisure activities of children from this time period is discussed in more detail.

As described in the postcard from the 1950s and 1960s, the leisure activities of Baby Boomer children appeared to be carefree and fun. There was plenty of time for free play outside of
the influence of parents, despite wider economic and political issues that may have been in force. This is echoed by responses participants involved in this project. For example, Carol explained the freedom that she had as a child, “I grew up at City Beach and we used to go to the beach whenever we wanted to, and play in the streets with all our friends” (Baby Boomer, 201631F). Marie was able to provide images from her childhood which depicted free and spontaneous play:

Then the other thing that I can remember is that it was really hot […] and my mother used to let us sleep outside […] my mother would sort of encourage us to sort of be inventive and build cubby houses and do all that sort of thing around the home and in the neighbourhood. (Baby Boomer, 206730F)

Mothers and fathers had very clearly defined roles; fathers were breadwinners located within the public sphere whereas mothers were firmly entrenched within the suburbs, within the private sphere. Participants described how the roles of their parents were defined by gender. Sara provided a typical example:

My mother was a stay at home mum, because their generation my father believed that he was the breadwinner and he was proud to support his wife to be able to stay home and bring us up. (Baby Boomer, 203325F)

Typically, mothers of Baby Boomer children spent their days looking after their home, children, and husband, ensuring that their housework was completed, and meals were prepared. Often weekdays were regimented with the responsibilities of keeping a household running smoothly. For example, Donna said, “Well, mum was a stay at home mum, um and had a very regimented type routine whereby Monday was washing day, Tuesday was this, Wednesday was something else” (Baby Boomer, 207669F).

While the role of many mothers was that of the ‘stay at home mum’, Shiralee described how her mother was able to combine her role as primary caregiver and ‘stay at home mum’ with paid work outside the home reflecting the three out of ten women who were in the paid workforce by 1961 (ABS, 2011):
I think she probably had to stand up to my father to be allowed to work more than one day a week, which she did [...] she did it because she was an extremely intelligent person and she needed the social outlet and the mental stimulation and she bought a motorbike in order to, she made the decision because she needed transport because we didn’t even have a car. (Baby Boomer, 207802F)

There was also one instance in which a Baby Boomer child, Jill, reported that she did not have a father so her mother took on the combined responsibilities of homemaker, primary carer and breadwinner, “Well I didn’t have a dad, so my mum worked really, really hard and um, I probably don’t know how she did it, no pension, no nothing, I just don’t know how she did it” (Baby Boomer, 211583F).

Suburbs during this time were full of ‘stay at home mums’ which meant children were free to roam and if your mother was one of the few who did work, there were always other mothers in the neighbourhood who would look out for you (Townsend, 1988). This is revealed in the following example from Sean who described his experiences of being home while his mother was taking part in the paid workforce:

Mum would work and leave me at home and five of the neighbours, if I did anything wrong I’d get a smack in the head from all of them [laughter] [...] Yeah and so those aunties and uncles, so called aunties and uncles, in that street we lived in were, were as much a part of our immediate family as our true aunties and uncles were. (Baby Boomer, 201893M)

Children during this era spent much of their childhood playing in the streets within their communities. Although mothers were generally at home, in their role of homemaker, there was no formal parental supervision of their children. Children were encouraged by their mothers to play outside with their friends and peers.

In contrast to the role that mothers played as homemaker and primary carer, fathers were generally primary breadwinners and often sole financial supporters of the family. Within this study Baby Boomer children described the role their fathers played in the home and in their lives. For example, Joe talks about his father’s role as provider:
I don’t think dad was anywhere near as ahh, you know, he was a good provider I guess, a provider, I don’t know how good but a provider, and strong in his own way. But ahh, he didn’t really have […] as much input into the rearing of his children as mum did. And I’m not saying that because he was busy or whatever, I mean he was a tradesman and he worked five days a week and as I said we never went hungry. (Baby Boomer 201872M)

Within this study, fathers almost exclusively fulfilled the role of breadwinner. An exception to this was Elliott who explained how his father took on both role of mother and father when his mother died, “My mother died when I was about five so, my father had three children, myself and two girls, and he started his own business as well so you know, things were fairly hectic” (Baby Boomer, 202700M). There was another instance in which Jeanette described how both her mother and father were in paid work and her father assisted with those household chores that would have been seen as a primarily female responsibility, although her mother still did the majority of the work:

For a lot of my childhood my mum did work and Dad was always, really a big help, he was always someone who’d you know get the tea on or um, yeah he’d do a load of washing or whatever, he could do those sort of things, that didn’t worry him […] I mean I suppose most of the work was still left to Mum, like Mum would do the shopping, no actually they shopped together because Mum didn’t drive […] Dad would have to take her to get the groceries. Yeah, but the bulk of the housework would have fallen back on her. (Baby Boomer, 205897F)

There were also a couple of instances in which Baby Boomer children lived with their grandparents due to the death of both parents. For example, Rick explained:

I lost both my parents when I was young. So I haven’t had an experience before that to compare with. I guess the only thing that I can say is that I lived with relations where there was no family relationship at all. (Baby Boomer, 201378M)

It is also worth noting that there is a sense of the ‘absent father’ from a number of Baby Boomer children in this study. Baby Boomer children indicated that their fathers were often absent during their childhood, either not connected to the family unit, working away or at
play. For example, Joe described how his mother was the person who held the family together:

My dad was a good provider and strong in his own way. But ahh, he didn’t really have too much input into the rearing of his children as mum did […] Mum in my opinion was the dominant factor in our childhood. (Baby Boomer, 201872M)

Peter described how his father worked all week and did not have a lot of time to spend with his children:

My father - if he wanted to come home for the weekend - he then wanted to be with some of his friends or play golf which didn’t leave a lot of time for us […] My father, for instance was a very quiet person but we did respect him and ah, we probably weren’t as close to my father. (Baby Boomer, 200331M)

Lastly, Bruce described how his father was physically absent, “My father was at sea. He was a marine engineer. Um, he was person who came and went occasionally when his ship was in port” (Baby Boomer, 200806M).

Gender played a significant role in the lives of children during this period in various ways. Children’s roles were defined by gender in the same manner as the roles of their mothers and fathers. Leisure, sport and recreation activities slotted in around chores that children were expected to perform. These chores were often gender specific with girls taking care of the inside jobs and boys taking care of the outside. Peter describes how his job “was to mow the lawns and to help look after the garden” (Baby Boomer, 200331M). Whilst Sandra said, “I used to polish the floors with a polisher at my place when I was thirteen. Mmmm. It would be Saturday after I finished netball” (Baby Boomer, 200138F).

With mothers at home with their children and fathers fulfilling the role of breadwinner, the majority of leisure activities for children during this time period were undertaken in the family home or the surrounding streets. Leisure activities were not however, confined to the home and immediate environs. Children during this era also took part in organised leisure activities in the community, or the public sphere.
“My brothers played football and cricket”

Baby Boomer children took part in organised leisure activities which, for the most part, were conducted within their local communities. These activities included both sporting and community or civic based activities. Although varied, such participation was not as prevalent as home based leisure. Gender again had a substantial effect on the type and number of activities that were undertaken by children. The church and schools as providers of leisure activities for children played a crucial role during this time. The following section of this chapter describes the organised leisure activities that were undertaken in the public realm. A full list of activities in which Baby Boomer children participated can be found in Appendix P.

Community and civic based activities were popular with children growing up during this era. For most this took the form of Cubs for boys or Brownies and Guides for girls. Kurt described his participation in Scouts in the following passage:

I was in, in the Scouts, the Cubs and Scouts and probably that was about all, I was never into sport very much [...] and my parents just said, “It would be a good idea to join the Cubs” and that was it and off I went. I used to go to Sunday school that was another activity. But there wasn’t a [...] that was generally over one day, like a couple of hours on one day. Whereas Scouts you’d have camps etcetera. (Baby Boomer, 210609M)

At the same time an increasing number of children took part in church activities such as Girls’ Friendly Society (GFS) and Sunday school, reflecting the 30 per cent of the Australian population who were actively attending church services each week (Hilliard, 1997). As is shown in the following quotes, it was not uncommon for this to be the only organised leisure that children took part in over the course of the week. For example, Marie describes the role that church activities played in her childhood, “we’d go to church once a week, maybe we’d be taken to a youth group to do with the church, you know during the week

3 Cubs: Junior Scouts, aged between seven and ten years

4 Brownies: Junior Girl Guides aged between seven and ten years.

5 Girl Guides: the parallel movement to Boy Scouts.
and that would be probably the only structured activity” (Baby Boomer, 207343F). Similarly, Joe had the following to say:

When we were sort of 13 or 14, my sister and my other brother and I were you know, tied up with a church social group and all that sort of stuff. You know, we met people and did all those sort of things. (Baby Boomer, 201872M)

Although church attendance during this time was relatively high and many children took part in church activities, it did not mean that they enjoyed attending, or even wanted to attend. For example, Louise explained, “I used to have to go, have to go to Sunday school on a Sunday; it wasn’t what I wanted to do” (Baby Boomer, 212036F).

Key to the type of activities participated in by children from this generation was their gender. Organised sporting, leisure and recreation activities were cut along gender lines. Girls played netball or did ballet. Boys played football and cricket, and also hockey, tennis, and basketball. For example, John responded by saying, “So yeah I did swimming, I did football, rugby union and rugby league” (Baby Boomer, 200138M). Whilst, Rick, another Baby Boomer child said that he “played rugby league, rugby union, swimming carnivals that sort of thing” (Baby Boomer, 201378M).

For girls who took part in this study, the range of activities available (especially in the sporting arena) was more limited and included ballet, physical culture and netball. Cecily described “doing dancing, but my mum never drove me there and it was a bit of a hassle” (Baby Boomer, 2001252F), whilst Narelle had the following to say, “Yeah um […] I did Brownies and I went to youth club and I played netball and I played tennis and whatever else was going along, yeah” (Baby Boomer, 201298F).

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* During the 1950s and 1960s netball was called girls’ basketball. It was not until 1974 that a change was made to rename the sport netball.
Girls could no more take part in a football match than a boy could take part in a netball game. Community and civic activities such as Boy Scouts⁷ and Girl Guides⁸ were also strictly gendered. As the names suggest, Boy Scouts and Cubs were for boys only and Girl Guides and Brownies were for girls only.

Children who took part in this study also demonstrated how more emphasis was placed upon boys’ leisure activities both in schools and at home. For example, Cayla explained:

> And my brothers played football and cricket on the weekend so they were always running around for them [...] and my parents weren’t involved with me in sport, but yeah, ok, I was a girl. I think that is a very sexist statement to make, but I think that they were involved with my brother a bit more. (Baby Boomer, 205934F)

Similarly, Sara, spoke of her experiences as a girl:

> Ahh, well as I say I lived at Southside, on the beach, and I went swimming a lot with my friends. I went roller-skating with my friends. I didn’t, I really didn’t play a lot of sport [...] although my brother played organised cricket and golf and other sports like that. (Baby Boomer, 203325F)

While overall few parents were involved in the organised leisure activities of their children, female respondents reported that it was more likely for their parents to have been involved with their male sibling’s leisure activities.

Participation in organised leisure was not popular during the primary school years of Baby Boomer children. Children from this era began to take part in organised sporting and leisure activities during their high school years. This is described by Anna, who said:

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⁷ Boy Scouts have since changed their name to Scouts and now accept both boys and girls.

⁸ Girl Guides have since changed their name to Guides; however the organisation does not accept boys.
I played no sport as a primary school aged child, at all. When I was in high school and could, we were living in a different town then, and I could push my bike around, I used to take myself off to basketball and swimming and different things. But I was never driven to things like that (Baby Boomer, 208341F).

It is important at this point to recognise that despite the previous discussion of the leisure activities of Baby Boomer children, organised activities were fairly uncommon amongst this group of children. Of the 80 mid interviews undertaken, a minority reported taking part in organised activities. Those who did participate included Cecily who said, “I remember doing dancing, but my mum never drove me” (Baby Boomer, 200152F) and Kyle, who explained, “The area I lived in was heavily into hockey and cricket. I played both of those” (Baby Boomer, 205656M).

Other Baby Boomer children reported spending their free time leisure activities in and around the home or doing things that they were able to organise without parental involvement. Anna explained, “There was no running around to activities what-so-ever [...] my two brothers and I used to walk to the picture theatre of a Saturday afternoon and take ourselves to the pictures and take ourselves to the swimming pool” (Baby Boomer, 208341F). This was reinforced by Gina who said, “We took part in no outside activities; we weren’t allowed to […] you played in your own backyard” (Baby Boomer, 2210514F).

To briefly summarise the experiences of Baby Boomer children: those who took part in this study spent most of their leisure time in free and spontaneous play activities unencumbered by rules and regulations set down by parents, teachers or other adults. Mothers were generally (although not in all cases) at home and not in paid work. This meant that the newly forming suburbs of the 1950s and 1960s were full of ‘stay at home mums’ and their children (Townsend, 1988). Children spent a vast amount of time playing outside in the streets with their friends in games such as hopscotch, rounders, marbles and street cricket. Organised leisure included community based activities such as Sunday school, Boy Scouts and Brownies. However, the activities of children during this time were limited in variety and gender specific – boys played football, cricket and tennis and the girls played netball or did dancing.
The next section of this chapter explores and describes the leisure of Generation X children who grew up in Australia during the 1970s and 1980s. It situates the children within the relevant context of that era and compares and contrasts their experiences with those of the Baby Boomer children who grew up during the previous two decades.

**Generation X: “If there was sport it was done on a Saturday.”**

Postcard from the 1970s/80s

In stark contrast to the childhood of Baby Boomer children, Australian children who grew up during the 1970s and 1980s were faced with an uncertain political climate which included the sacking of the then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in 1975 by Governor General Sir John Kerr (Whitlam, 2005), increasing levels of unemployment (Borland & Kennedy, 1988), a recession (Gruen & Sayegh, 2005), and the stock market crash of 1987 (Roll, 1988). The cold war was still in full swing, Australia had seen its first international hijack attempt (of an aircraft), its first case of HIV/AIDS, the end of the Vietnam War and the Hilton Hotel bombing (ABC TV, 2002).

It was commonplace to have a colour television in your home by the end of the 1970s and a VCR and microwave oven by the mid-1980s (Macintyre, 2004). Unlike children from the 1950s and 1960s, whose options for organised activity were limited, 1970s and 1980s era children began to have a much greater array of options to choose from when it came to spending that time when they came home from school in the afternoons. By the mid-1970s, children’s television had become more accessible to a greater number of children and children were spending time in the afternoon watching television programs such as *The Brady Bunch* and *Skippy*. Rapid technological change began to have an effect and by the early 1980s *Donkey Kong*, one of the first and most popular hand held games, had been introduced in Australia. While outdoor games such as hopscotch, backyard cricket, ‘elastics’ and ‘chasings’ were still popular, many Australian children now had an array of after school activities to choose from which included game playing on early versions of personal computers, hand held games and watching TV.

The roles of both the mothers and fathers of children from this era were evolving with the radical social changes that had begun to occur in the late 1960s and which continued
throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Mothers were returning to work in increasing numbers (Kelley & Evans, 2008) and the single earner family of the previous generation was beginning to disappear (Bittman & Mahmud Rice, 2002). This was the era of the first latch key children, those children who would arrive home in the afternoons with their mothers and fathers still at work, and let themselves into the house (Long & Long, 1983).

“All the kids would go and meet down the park and play cricket”

Although the range and choice of after school activities was increasing dramatically for this group, like their counterparts from the previous era, many Generation X children spent their after school time out of doors with friends and peers, in games not organised or supervised by adults. For example, Chris explained:

We were in a big Catholic community in Capital City\(^9\) around there, and it was mostly like in them days you could just up and go. All the kids would go and meet down the park and play cricket and footy all day and after school. There was never really much time for parents really. I guess that sounds cruel. (Generation X, 113998M)

Conversely, other children from this era reported coming home from school and staying indoors. It was not as common for children to play outside in the street as it had been in the previous era. As mothers increasingly moved into the workforce, the numbers of children who were home alone increased rapidly. Harry, a Generation X child, reported that with both parents working, time after school was spent doing chores:

When we were a little bit older into late primary school, early high school, mum and dad both worked so um it wasn’t unusual for us to come home and sort of get dinner ready or something or um do some chores around the house, waiting for one of them to get home and get dinner ready for the other one. (Generation X, 105818M)

\(^9\) All town names are pseudonyms or generic terms
Although the mothers of Generation X children were moving out of the private sphere and into the public sphere in increasing numbers, many mothers did not enter the workforce until all of their children were at school and in some cases high school. Lyndell’s mother was an example:

Oh, my mum didn’t work from the time that my eldest sister was born. So that was 1974, ’til the time that my youngest brother was in kindergarten and my youngest brother is four years younger than me. So, [figuring and counting] ’88 I suppose he went to school. (Generation X, 100230F)

This was supported by a comment from Charmaine, who said, “Umm, well when we were young mum didn’t work. Mum only started work when I was twelve so she was always at home. Dad always worked and mum was always the home mum, like did everything at home” (Generation X, 112584F).

While attitudes were relaxing when compared to those of the previous era and despite the reality that mothers of Generation X children were moving into the paid workforce in increasing numbers, there was still pressure for mothers to stay at home. Many mothers were combining paid work and home duties, ensuring however, that they were at home in the after school hours. For example, Annette explained, “mum she was at home; she was home when I got home from school every day” (Generation X, 112455F). Similarly, Angela had the following to say, “She was always there to put us on the bus and meet the bus (we were out of town) so, maybe she could fit the hours in to meet the bus” (Generation X, 110192F).

The above examples illustrate that it was not uncommon for mothers of children in this era to ensure that any paid work outside the home fitted in with school hours. In this way the mothers were able to combine their dual roles of primary caregiver and secondary income provider.

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10 Kindergarten varies between Australian states. In states such as New South Wales it refers to the first year of primary school education. However in Victoria, for example, it refers to the year prior to entering primary school. Children in Kindergarten are generally aged between four and six years.
Whilst the role of mothers was changing, the role of fathers had changed little from the previous generation and they were still considered the primary breadwinner and sole provider. For example, Charmaine described the role her father took in their household:

He wanted to be the sole provider, the breadwinner, back in those, that sort of era it is expected. And I mean he was from, that sort of age as well. I mean I know back then lots of both parents did work, but he sort of never really wanted her to go to work. (Generation X, 112584F)

This was not the case for all, and there were instances in which fathers of Generation X children had roles other than that of primary breadwinner. For example, Amy explained how her father was a single parent:

I think my father um; well he in a sense took on both roles. He did rely very heavily on my grandmother which was actually my mother’s mother um, he did he still had a very good relationship with her and he’d um send me down to visit her periodically when he needed a break um […] whether it be to go out on a date himself or you know just to have some free time away from me. (Generation X, 104436F)

In another instance, Greg described how his father worked hard both at work and at home, “My father worked a lot more. Um he worked multiple jobs […] and then when he did come home he would do all the round the house stuff. He never sat down” (Generation X, 104056M). Whilst Georgie described how her father had to give up work after a motorbike accident, which resulted in her mother returning to work:

When she went back to work was when dad fell off his motorbike and he was flat on the floor for three years waiting for an operation to have done on his back. So that was why she went back to work […] and then dad did what he could crawling around on the floor because he couldn’t walk. He used to just crawl everywhere. (Generation X, 103930F)

During the childhood of Baby Boomer children, divorce was both frowned upon and uncommon. Although still socially unacceptable, the Family Law Act of 1975 made it much
easier for Australians to get a divorce. Marital breakdown was an important factor in the childhood of some Generation X children. In many cases this meant fractured families and absent fathers. Keith described how this provided the opportunity to spend free time during holidays and on weekends doing those things that were not part of their daily routine:

He had two lots of two children from two different relationships. And I guess like I said, a number of my friends my age, when marriages broke down thirty odd years ago, you know the father was almost completely out of the scene. So after my mother and my father separated he didn’t have much contact with us. I guess we would see him every second, third or fourth weekend. We used to spend it on the farm […] you know on the farm, spent time together riding motorcycles rounding up cows, shearing sheep, riding tractors and all of that sort of stuff. I mean it was great fun, seven, eight, nine years of age on a farm you know, riding motorbikes and driving tractors round the paddocks and all of that sort of stuff. It was great, particularly when it wasn’t a daily routine. It was just every now and then. You know, every school holidays, umm, for a week or two, a few weeks over Christmas.

(Generation X, 100853M)

As mentioned previously in the case of Amy who was from a single parent family with a father, there were other reported cases of single parent families such as Julie’s:

Mum was a single mum, so she had my brother and I pretty much on our own all the time, my Nan lived around the corner though. But yeah, she worked two jobs and we struggled around, but we still got to do everything that we wanted to do as far as sporting activities or whatever. Mum still did that as well. (Generation X, 110638F)

The roles of the parents of Generation X children affected the leisure activities undertaken by their children at home and in the private sphere. For some children, the move into the paid workforce by their mothers meant time home without parental supervision in the afternoons after school, and household chores. The evidence from this group of participants suggests that whilst it was not uncommon for children to spend their free time playing outside, it was becoming less common than it had been for children from the previous era.
The major change between Baby Boomer children and Generation X children was the way in which children spent their leisure time in public sphere activities located in the wider community. The following part of this chapter will examine these changes in more detail.

“The boys played football, the girls played netball”

In a further change from the previous era, the organised leisure of Generation X children transformed dramatically. This generation of children reported taking part in a variety of sport and cultural activities. These included football, cricket, hockey, and swimming for boys, and netball, tennis, swimming, and dance for girls (see Appendix Q for a full list of the activities participated in by children from this era). Although second wave feminism was gaining momentum during this period, and equality for women was very much at the forefront of political debate (Caine & Gatens, 1998) any effects did not filter down to the organised leisure of children which was still conducted very much along gender lines. Boys, as in the previous era, took part in those activities that were seen as stereotypically male, such as football and cricket. Girls participated in intrinsically female pastimes such as dance and netball. For example, Max described the sports that he was able to play as a child, “you know they would take me to sport. I mean I played basketball, I played Aussie Rules, I played soccer, I did martial arts, and dad would take me to all of those” (Generation X, 110620M). Generation X girls also took part in those activities that were gender appropriate. Harvey, the father or two Generation X girls described the activities that his daughters took part in, “so from primary school on, or before primary school both the girls were involved in gymnastics, callisthenics, ahh then basketball and netball when they got a bit older” (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation X children, 211033M).

In a marked change from the previous era, the number of activities from which children could choose increased exponentially and girls from this era especially benefited. The half a dozen activities that were available to girls in the 1950s and 1960s, expanded and increased to include dozens of activities including dance, ballet, netball, basketball, music, and running.

A further key change from the previous era was parental attitudes towards girls’ participation in sporting and leisure activities. Parents were more likely to accept and
support participation for both their sons and daughters. There was still however a lingering emphasis placed on the leisure activities of boys. For example, Annette explained:

You know, the boys played football, the girls played netball. And you know [...] my brothers were quite good footballers, so um, we spent a lot of time going to football on the weekends and doing things for the boys. (Generation X, 112455F)

For Generation X children, growing up in Australia during the 1970s and 1980s, participation in organised sport was becoming an expected part of growing up. Despite this, activities participated in by these children were limited; usually to one activity during winter and in some cases an additional activity during summer. For example, Annette said:

You know, when we were young [...] you sort of played a sport, a winter sport; you didn’t do singing and drama and all these extras [...] and you know I didn’t even play a summer sport. (Generation X, 112455F)

Invariably, these activities and experiences occurred on a Saturday, with perhaps one afternoon a week set aside for training if you were a girl playing netball and a couple of afternoons a week if you were a boy playing football. The remainder of a child’s free time after school was spent doing homework and playing with friends. For example, Tina explained how sport, leisure and recreation activities fitted into the flow of family life:

I remember if there was a sport it was done on a Saturday, if there was dancing it was Saturday and it wasn’t you’d come home from school and you’d just play with your friends or do your homework. (Generation X, 107342F)

Parents of children from this era described how their children’s activities, especially sport, became a social occasion enjoyed by the whole family where involvement was a way of life. This is in contrast to Baby Boomer children where parents were rarely involved in the organised leisure of their children. Donna, the mother of two Generation X children, described how her family enjoyed tennis as a family activity:
Where we played most of our tennis used to have a kid’s competition and probably from the age of about seven or eight they were actually playing in that. It got to the stage where, oh, probably mid-way through high school we used to […] one would play with each one of them in tournaments and we’d play mixed doubles […] well I’d play with the boy and he’d play with the girl or if was men’s and women’s doubles we’d play, you know. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation X children, 207669F)

This was not limited to organised activities. Evidence suggests that family time was very important to parents during this time period. As such many children spent their weekends taking part in family oriented activities that often included weekends away and Sunday drives. For example, Adam said, “we used to go water skiing, up at Smalltown, that’s why we had the caravan at Ruraltown […] until I was probably about 10, 11, something like that” (Generation X, 110284M). Another example was provided by George who explained, “my parents always encouraged a family day. We used to always go for drives and things like that. So every weekend we’d be off to some destination to spend time with the family. My dad encouraged that a lot” (Generation X, 105984M).

In summary then, the leisure of Generation X children was characterised by a good amount of free and spontaneous play. This generation of children spent time outside playing with their friends in unstructured activities; however they also spent time in those more organised activities outside of the home such as football, tennis, swimming and cricket for boys and netball, dance, swimming and tennis for girls. While a gender divide existed there were more activities available than in the previous era that both boys and girls were able to participate in, for example, swimming.

As previously noted, it was also common for Generation X children to participate in a winter leisure activity such as netball for girls and football for boys. Some children also took part in a different activity during the summer months. Generally, these activities occurred on a Saturday with one or two days set aside during the week for training. Leisure activities of children from this era were also very important to families as a social or family outing and they became a means of spending quality family time together.
The next segment of this chapter explores the leisure of Generation Y children who grew up during the 1980s and 1990s. It provides a description of these activities and a contextual background, while comparing and contrasting the leisure of children from this era with those of Generation X and Baby Boomers.

Generation Y: “Two things in summer and one in winter”

A postcard from the 1980s/1990s

Generation Y children who grew up in Australia during the 1980s and 1990s saw a return to a relatively stable political climate. Bob Hawke was Prime Minister from 1983 to 1991, followed by his Labor Party colleague Paul Keating who held office until 1996. The stock market crash of 1987 followed by a recession in the early 1990s combined with increasingly high unemployment (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009) and housing interest rates which reached 17% (Reserve Bank of Australia, 2011) meant many families struggled to make ends meet. While the Cold War had come to an end Australian troops were involved with Peacekeeping missions in East Timor (Londey, 2011) and the first Gulf War under the banner of United Nations (AWM, 2011).

At home, the Australian Republican Movement was launched as Australians began to question their ties to the British Monarchy (ABC, 2010) and in a landmark decision, the High Court of Australia recognised native title rights for Aborigines (TSRA, 2011). While in Tasmania the worst peacetime massacre by a single gunman on record occurred at Port Arthur resulting in the death of 35 people (ABC, 2010).

Generation Y children were the first to grow up with internet and mobile phone technology (Grose, 2005). Mobile phones came to Australia in 1987 and were followed two years later by the internet. Pay TV was launched in 1994, and the DVD player replaced the VCR. Children’s programming began to be more age specific and included preschool programmes such as Playschool and Bananas in Pyjamas, viewing for older children included Totally Wild and Saturday Disney.

In response to rapid increases in dual earner families, which saw 49% of families with both parents in the paid workforce by 1990 (ABS, 2000) there was an increase in the use of formal
child care. Between 1984 and 1999 the number of children in formal childcare doubled, and the number of children using before and after school care tripled (ABS, 2002) ensuring that streets that were once full of children in the 1950s were becoming increasingly deserted.

“He’s more of a computer person”

By the end of the 1980s, the carefree play seen in the childhood of Baby Boomers was disappearing at a rapid rate. The home based leisure and play activities of Generation Y were transforming as they were affected by factors including increasing rates of formal child care and the introduction of technological advancements such as pay TV, the DVD player and the home computer.

This technological development was a key factor in the home based play and leisure activities of Generation Y children. Computers were becoming an integral part of childhood in this era. Luana explained, “both of my children are computer nuts so um they tended to um, we’ve always had a good computer system at home, we’d tend to get involved in that” (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 206496F). A similar point was articulated by Peter:

But I got him into soccer, and he didn’t mind playing, he quite liked it. But as soon as he got into high school, he said “I’m not playing sport.” He’s more of a computer person, sitting down in the kitchen, but you know. (Baby Boomer, father of one Generation Y child, 200331M)

While Generation Y children were spending time indoors using computers in the home, they were also spending time outdoors playing. Peter had the following to say:

I used to you know, play cricket with them in the backyard, that was the big thing […] he used to say to me “Come on dad, can we whack the ball?” And we’d go out and have a bit of a cricket game and so […] we used to enjoy that and the whole family would come out and [there’d] be great laughter. (Baby Boomer, father of one Generation Y child, 200331M)
While the previous two statements from the same participant may appear to contradict each other, the key here is the type of activity. Peter’s son rejected the idea of adult organised outside of the home activities once he reached high school. At that stage computers held more interest for him than participating in a structured sporting activity. This did not appear to influence the spontaneous free play activities such as cricket in the backyard with his family.

The continual increase of mothers moving into the paid workforce also changed the nature of children’s play. In the late 1980s and 1990s Australian children were beginning to spend more time in before and after school care or Out of School Hours care (OOSH). This time after school, which Baby Boomer children had spent playing in the streets with their friends, was contracting for Generation Y children and becoming more structured. For example, Sandra had the following to say:

Both of them went to after school care every day. Primary school, out of hours, like you know we could never pick them up, so they went to after school care. OOSH, out of hours, OOSH care. And so they had activities there [...] and in the holidays they would go to vacation care. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 200138F)

Whilst the above quote from Sandra demonstrates that some mothers were working outside of school hours and placing their children in before and after school care, other mothers, such as Cecily, attempted to fit their working hours within school hours:

I’ve always worked, even when they were fairly young I used to do work that is um, it sounds weird, I used to deliver garlic, crushed garlic so I used to take Heather with me and I sold Tupperware you know, I could take her with me, and I did some babysitting [...] And when she, when she started school um, I actually started working at the primary school so um, yeah I’ve always sort of worked, but worked around them. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 200152F)

Not all mothers had entered the paid workforce when their children were at school. This is revealed by Harrison who said, “Oh, the wife gave up work when we had kids; she didn’t
work for thirteen years when we had the kids” (Baby Boomer, father of one Generation Y child, 211583M). Harrison further demonstrated how his role of father and primary breadwinner also changed once he had children, “I didn’t work in cricket season. I did the cricket bit Saturday mornings. I’d probably go and look at a job early Saturday morning and then to go cricket and then go to work after probably” (Baby Boomer, father of one Generation Y child, 211583M). This change in the role of fathers was also expressed by Bruce:

I was freelance so between the two of us we managed to get pretty involved with the kids’ schooling and related activities. It just meant for both of us a lot of work at nights and weekends when the kids were asleep to catch up on cash earning work. (Baby Boomer, father of one Generation Y child, 200461M)

In summary, one of the most considerable effects on the leisure of Generation Y children was the move by mothers into the paid workforce. For some children this meant they were not at home in the afternoons after school, they were in formalised OOSH care away from the home. The second key factor in the home based leisure and play activities of children in the private sphere was the introduction of the home computer. This was the first generation of children to have access to the internet and this became a notable part of leisure in the home for this generation of children. The next section of this chapter explores the leisure activities of Generation Y children in the wider community.

“They were allowed to do one sporting and one cultural thing”

Similar to their Generation X counterparts, Generation Y children took part in a variety of activities. These covered a broad spectrum and included both sporting and cultural activities. Sporting activities included swimming, basketball, cricket, netball and football, while cultural activities included art and drama classes, violin and piano. For the first time, parents also reported that their children were taking part in educational activities such as languages and tutoring after school.

Leisure activities during this time period, whilst still gender specific began to show some variation. Popular activities for girls included netball, ballet, dancing and gymnastics.
There were also descriptions of girls participating in activities that were not conventionally female activities. There was a report of one girl who played cricket with her twin brother, another who took part in Judo and another who joined Scouts\textsuperscript{11}. This is in stark contrast to the Baby Boomer children who took part in activities that were gender specific, with no reports of girls taking part in activities that were seen as stereotypically male. The increasing numbers of girls playing traditionally male sports coincided with a general trend during the 1980s and 1990s in Australia which saw an influx of women into male dominated sports (Burroughs & Nauright, 2000). There were no accounts of Generation Y boys participating in activities that could be seen as typically female. The most popular activities for boys included football, soccer, scouts, swimming and cricket. For the most part girls and boys continued to take part in activities that fit with their gender profile as Carol said, “Yeah, my son played football and my daughter was a dancer” (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 201631F).

A key difference in the organised activities of Generation Y children when compared to both Baby Boomers and Generation X children is the emergence of educational leisure activities for children. While one family reported that their Generation Y children took part in maths tutoring after school, the extent to which this was ‘leisure’ for the child is questionable. Another family described how their Generation Y children learnt a language as one of their after school activities. This was explained by Elaine:

\begin{quote}
When they were doing Japanese […] they also used to have the cultural component of it, like dress-ups and origami and the food and stuff like that, so it wasn’t just purely sitting there and learning how to speak it, the language. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 206730F)
\end{quote}

Generation Y children were able to enjoy a vast array of organised activities in the community. Whilst the number and type of activities were similar in nature to those of Generation X activities, new activities for Generation Y included activities that had an education base such as languages. At the same time children were also spending time after school in non-leisure activities such as tutoring. Tutoring did not replace the organised

\textsuperscript{11} Scouts, a traditionally male group allowed girls to join the organisation in 1981 (Scouts Australia, 2011).
leisure activities of Generation Y children but was an addition to their weekly schedule. For example, Louise had the following to say:

They both used to do Kumon Maths [...] they both used to do sport um, my daughter did horse riding ah my son was in the Air League, then he was in the Cubs then he was in the Scouts and my daughter was a Cub. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 212036F).

The number of activities participated in by children during this time period also increased. Parents reported that their children took part in both summer and winter activities and described how they placed limits on the number of activities that their children could take part in. Sean explained how he limited his children to two activities in summer and one in winter, “We ah, took them to sport, they were allowed to play two things, they were allowed to do two things in summer and one in winter. Their selection, we didn’t care what it was” (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation Y children, 201893M). Other families also described placing limits on the number of activities their children could take part in. For example, Christian described how he limited his children to one sporting and one cultural activity:

And then um, Paul got himself into, he was also doing trombone, we used to let them do one sporting and one cultural thing otherwise they’d inundate themselves with all sorts of things, you know. So they were always allowed to do one sporting and one cultural thing, yeah. And then Joanne, well she did PCYC. (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation Y children, 206730M)

An important difference between the leisure and organised activities of Baby Boomer children, Generation X children and Generation Y children is the age at which participation in leisure activities first began. As was outlined earlier in this chapter, Baby Boomer children began their participation in organised leisure activities usually during their high school years. Generation X children generally began taking part in these types of activities sometime during their time in primary school. Generation Y children began their careers in organised leisure activities at a much earlier age. For example, Shiralee said, “Jess started the violin at age three years and ten months and kept it up all throughout her school life” (Baby Boomer, mother of one Generation Y child, 207802F). Another Generation Y mother,
Cecily described her daughters participation in dance, “Julia was involved in dancing which she started when she was three and actually did dance as a HSC subject, so yeah, a lot of dance” (Baby Boomer, mother of one Generation Y child, 200152F).

For this generation of children if one activity did not suit, they moved onto something else until they found an activity they enjoyed. For example, John described how his daughter who had tried a number of different activities eventually settled on basketball and netball, “the basketball started when she was in year five. Ah, the netball started when she was in year six” (Baby Boomer, father of one Generation Y child, 200138M). Likewise, Jeanette described how her daughter had taken part in many activities over the course of her childhood:

Yeah well my daughter did Jazz Ballet, yeah […] and she used to have swimming lessons from time to time, she had music lessons for a little while […] well yeah she had organ lessons for a couple of years, and then she had some drum lessons for about a year when she was older, she used to have tutoring after school when she was in year seven and eight, yeah. (Baby Boomer, mother of one Generation Y child, 205897F)

While Generation Y children were able to take part in a number of different activities and change the activities they participated in regularly, parents made sure that they were committed to the activity that they had chosen to do. For example, Sean had the following to say:

We had a deal with them that we would take them anywhere that it required but whatever they picked they had to stick at it for six months and they were the rules […] They did a couple of things they didn’t really like but we said, “tough you’re going to have to go through and do them til your six months is up, that’s the rules”. (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation Y children, 201893M)

In summary, rapid changes in technology meant that Generation Y children were increasingly using computers as a leisure activity within the home. This generation of children were still spending free time playing outside however, the location of activities had moved to the backyard from the streets and neighbourhoods. Due to the increase of
mothers in the workforce, Generation Y children began to spend time in OOSH care. Educational activities appeared for the first time in children’s leisure time. Although the extent to which this is leisure is in question. A gender divide was still evident in the organised leisure activities of children however there was evidence that girls were starting to take part in activities that did not fit with their traditional gender role. Generation Y parents also sought to limit the number of activities their children could take part in.

Generation Z: “Ballet twice a week and basketball Tuesday nights”

A postcard from the early 21st century

In a return to the stable domestic political climate of the Baby Boomers era, the childhood of Generation Z children saw one Prime Minister, (John Howard) in office from 1996 to 2007. It was an era of relatively low unemployment (ABS, 2008b) and low interest rates, unlike the childhood of Generation X which was characterised by record high interest rates and high unemployment. It was also the digital era, typified by undercurrents of globalisation and consumerism (Wiseman, 1999). The 21st century brought with it both manmade and natural disasters such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami, global warming, the ‘war against terror’, and terrorists acts such as 9/11 which have had a massive cost in human life.

Many families had more than one television in their home and it was not uncommon for children to have their own TV in their bedroom. Of course, technology in the homes of Generation Z children did not end with television. It was the digital age and many families had a multitude of technology within their homes such as an X-box, Play Station or Wii, DVD players and set top boxes (for Digital TV). The array of gadgetry available to keep children amused after school was immense, and included iPads, iPods, mp3 and mp4 players, Nintendo DS’s, and PSPs (Play Station Portable) as well as the internet and computers. Children were keeping in contact with their friends via electronic means; increasingly using email, instant messaging, mobile phones and text messaging and social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace.

Community and sporting organisations met the demand for preschool activities by offering programs which were specifically targeted at the preschool age group. AFL (Australian Football League) offered an Auskick program for children as young as four years, ballet
classes were available for children from three years and many PCYC (Police and Community Youth Centres) offered Kindy Gym\(^\text{12}\) for children from one year old (Stewart, Nicholson, Smith, & Westerbeek, 2004).

It was common for Generation Z families to have both parents in some form of paid work (Alexander & Baxter, 2005).

Home based play and leisure activities

The very nature of home based play and leisure activities has changed considerably across the four time periods that are examined within this thesis. For children in the first decade of the 21st century the digital revolution meant that the options and array of choice for free play and leisure in the home had increased dramatically.

Parents also had to contend with and manage the vast array of technological leisure and recreation gadgetry (for example, PlayStations, X Box, Pay TV, DVD’s, iPods, online instant messaging, and SMS messaging) which was available to Generation Z children. This type of computer based electronic leisure was simply not widely available to children in previous eras. Although this type of technology based activity was beginning to appear in the leisure activities undertaken by Generation X children and computers and gaming were beginning to make inroads into the home based leisure of Generation Y children, Baby Boomer children had nothing resembling the technological leisure options that children of the 21st century had. The closest Baby Boomer children came to technologically based leisure was a radio and, if they were very lucky, a television. As a reaction to the increasing array of technology available to Generation Z children, parents of 21st century children planned outings to counteract the amount of time children spent with technological based leisure. For example, Henry described how he combated the amount of time his children spent watching television, “me and Matt like to go fishing, Ella’s not real interested in it. Ahh, and its only just locally here. Just to get them out of the house and get them away from the television and such” (Generation X, father of three Generation Z children, 110638M).

\(^{12}\) Kindy Gym – preschool gymnastics programme
Parents also reported an array of home based activities participated in by their children. These free play and leisure activities took place with family and friends and were generally overseen by adults. Parents reported that their children spent time in free play in a variety of locations. For many children these activities occurred in the home. Matthew explained:

We have a deck here, so on the deck there’s a set up there with all his paints and play dough and stuff like that and he can go out there and play with that and then on the other side of the house he’s got a lawn and he can go out and play with balls and the sand pit and there’s a little swimming, like a kiddies sort of swimming pool. (Generation X, father of two Generation Z children, 107869M)

Other parents from this era described instances where their children spent their free play within the framework of an outing with family, extended family or friends. For example, Amelia said, “we’re very family orientated […] we’ll go to nanna and pop’s and have a play there with the cousins or we’ll go around to our friends’ place around the corner and play with their child” (Generation X, mother of one Generation Z child, 104154F). Whilst Lauren said, “we meet up with other friends, who have children the same age; we meet up on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and go to the lagoon or something like that” (Generation X, mother of one Generation Z child, 107869F).

A significant change has occurred in the nature of the free play and leisure activities that were described by parents of Generation Z children. Free play for this era of children is often ‘organised’ free play, overseen by adults. Matthew has “paints and play dough and stuff like that” (107869M) set up for his child’s free play; plus a sandpit, balls and a swimming pool, whilst Lauren organises the free play of her children by meeting up with friends. This is a change from previous eras where Baby Boomer children were outside playing in the streets and Generation X children were “down in the park playing footy and cricket” (Generation X, 113998M).

Changes to home based play and leisure activities have been considerable over the time period explored in this thesis. Alongside these changes have been major changes in the organised leisure activities of children in the community. These changes are explored in the next section of this chapter which discusses the activities of Generation Z.
“My first child was in swimming from seven months old”

While it was common for Baby Boomer children and a proportion of Generation X children to spend much of their leisure activity time away from their parents. The empirical data in this study indicate that the play and leisure experiences of Generation Z children tended to be dominated by structured play experiences overseen by adults. Children as young as three months old were participating in organised or structured activities such as swimming lessons and playgroups or mother groups. By their very nature these activities were structured at the very least around a time schedule and adult organisation and supervision. For example, Sarah said, “we go swimming every Wednesday morning for, um about an hour and he’s done that since he was three months old” (Generation X, mother of one Generation Y child, 109967F). This is further demonstrated by Hayley, who had the following to say:

My first child was in swimming from seven months old um and that’s a mother and baby swim session up till they’re three so I get in the water with them […] Um and he’s now in the three year old group he does it by himself now I don’t have to get in with him. Um and my baby started at eight months so he’s swimming too now. (Generation X, mother of two Generation Z children, 103035F)

This is an important change from Generation X and Baby Boomer children who started participating in organised leisure activities at some stage during their schooling. For Baby Boomer children this type of activity usually commenced somewhere between late primary school and early high school, while Generation X children began this type of activity usually during their early to mid-primary school years. Although parents of Generation Y children did report participation in organised leisure activities from as young as three, this was not common. For Generation Z children, adult organised activities have taken hold at a much younger age than that of their counterparts from previous eras.

In the early part of the 21st century Australian preschool children were involved in a variety of structured sporting, leisure and recreational pursuits. These activities include ballet, music appreciation programs, playgroups and swimming lessons. A full list of activities participated in by Generation Z children can be found at Appendix R. In the following interview excerpt, Kim explained, “Yeah, like my little girl, she is three, she does dancing, I
take her to dancing on a Monday” (Generation X, mother of two Generation Z children, 110399F). Whilst Corinne stated, “normally on weekends we go to mini maestros on Saturday. That’s like a musical sort of programme for kids; we do that Saturday morning” (Generation X, mother of two Generation Y children, 102861F).

Parents of school aged Generation Z children also reported their children’s involvement in a multitude of organised leisure activities. These activities not only took up weekends but a considerable amount of after school time as well. By way of example, Rebecca explained:

That’s all [Motocross] Luke’s doing at the moment. Like he has just finished Taekwondo […] that used to be Thursday nights. And Emily, she is ten, she has Jazz ballet twice a week and then she has basketball Tuesday nights as well.

(Generation X, mother of two Generation Z children, 112609F)

This is stark contrast to Baby Boomer children, where the majority of children were not involved in organised leisure. It also contrasts with Generation X children, who were involved in this type of activity but usually restricted to one activity in winter and perhaps one activity in the summer.

Generation Z children had more choice than previous generations. Parents reported their children participating in a wide variety of activities which included soccer, football, ballet, music, dance, tennis, softball, netball, touch football, playgroups, martial arts, motocross and church related activities. Both boys and girls from this time period had more choice in the type of leisure activity than their parents, or grandparents. Similar to previous eras, the types of activities undertaken by both girls and boys from this group were gender specific. Dion described the activities that his daughters were involved in, “ahh, the girls have sport Saturday. Umm, they have softball of a morning. Umm, netball in winter of a morning and then they’ve got touch of an afternoon. Three of them play touch” (Generation X, father of four Generation Z children, 112455M). Whilst Amelia explained, “my kids play netball and football, so on Saturday we are generally travelling to one of the towns in the district” (Generation X, mother of three Generation Z children, 113586F).

Whilst traditional forms of football in Australia (for example rugby league and rugby union) have long been linked with hegemonic masculinity (see for example, Donaldson, 1993;
Swain, 2000), touch football in Australia is widely seen as the acceptable form of football for girls. Touch football was introduced in Australia in the 1970s and was perceived to be a safe alternative to rugby league and rugby union for females (Burroughs & Nauright, 2000). It was also a precursor to the introduction of rugby league and rugby union competitions for girls and women in the 1990s. Across all generations in this study boys took part in organised sporting activities that reinforced their hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005), such as football and cricket. It has also been argued that sport has contributed to the oppression of women (and girls) as it has been a focal point for the mobilisation of bias against women (Bryson, 1983).

The most popular activity participated in by children from this era was swimming lessons, followed closely by mothers’ groups or playgroups. Both of these activities are non-gender specific. A high proportion of the Generation Z children involved in this study were in the preschool age bracket (for a full breakdown of the ages of Generation Z children see Appendix S). This is generally the age in which children begin to learn to swim. Culturally in Australia, swimming lessons are highly valued and seen as an essential component of a child’s education in a country where a large proportion of the population lives within driving distance from the ocean beaches and where summers can be long, hot and dry, and swimming pools are popular and proliferating.

In a substantial change from previous eras, the roles of Generation Z parents have continued to change. Mothers feel the weight of expectation and obligation both to look after the family and home as well as to contribute financially to their household. Heather explained the pressure she felt trying to combine both work and family:

I think there is more pressure these days, more um, I don’t know if it is peer pressure, or just expectation. But, um you are sort of expected to be a mum, you are expected to work, and you are expected to be a wife as well. (Generation X, mother of two Generation Y children, 105984F)

Although most parents placed a high priority on the organised activities of their children, there were families who made conscious choices regarding the timing of their children’s involvement. They were cognisant of the extra pressures they believed these types of
activities can place on children at a young age. Tony described how his children did not take part in organised leisure activities until after the first year of primary school:

We’ve decided that the younger children should not be involved until after the first year of school, so that they are socially adjusted and comfortable at school. So they can get into a routine for the first year of school. ‘Cause it can be very daunting.

(Generation X, father of three Generation Z children, 107672M)

The activities of children from this era did not only benefit the children themselves. Many parents reported a range of personal benefits as a result of having children who took part in these activities. Rachel described a vicarious sense of enjoyment in watching her children take part in leisure and sporting activities, “Um, football I love watching it, and I love watching him [...] And he loves it, so that is really good to see him happy and running around” (Generation X, mother of two Generation Z children, 110638F). Furthermore Teresa explained that her children’s leisure activities were the site of new friendships and valuable support:

Umm, especially with Luke racing the motorbikes, we have met so many people travelling away and even, people that live where we live, that go away with us now as well, and that is really nice. Like we have got to know families with the same interests and, so that has been a benefit. Yeah, it’s a real social thing. When we were younger you would think oh, yeah, you know, to be socialising you need to go out drinking type thing. Whereas now, you tend to do more as a family with other families. Yeah. Like we, every Tuesday night, like if I’m not working or whatever, we both go and watch Emily play basketball. It’s good to get involved in what they do and show that we are interested. (Generation X, mother of two Generation Z children, 112609F)

Similarly, Derek described how through involvement in the organised leisure activities of his children, he was able to establish links within his local communities:
Rural Town is only a small town, it is only about 2,000 people, um [...] to fit in with a small community is quite hard to do, because normally it is closed in, sort of [...] so the more things that you get involved in, the more that you become accepted as being part of the community. So we are not just the people down at the [shop], or whatever. (Generation X, father of two Generation X children, 112584M)

Another parent, Leah, described how the participation of her children in organised activities lead to increased family time and time with her children:

Umm, other than spending time with the children, like that is the main reason that we do it on the Monday. Because then Alice can get to do those type of things and we can both support her and watch her. So the whole idea of Monday is to spend time with the family and the children. (Generation X, mother of two Generation Z children, 106551M)

Furthermore, Dion explained that the leisure activities of his children lead to extra work contacts and networking opportunities:

I do also get a few contacts for work as well, as I said I work for myself, and um, I’m a telephone technician, and there’s always, you know, parents who might have their kids at school and might have some work [...] Yeah, you can sort of work it a little bit that way. (Generation X, father of four Generation Z children, 112455M)

Parents found substantial beneficial outcomes as a result of their child’s participation in organised leisure activities. Whilst these beneficial outcomes were an important component of the participatory process, they were not vital to participation. If the beneficial outcome for parents did not exist children would still take part in that activity. This is evidenced by the fact that many activities that children took part in did not impart any benefit to parents. Jessica, for example declared, “but with Taekwondo, no, there is no real benefit for me, it’s just a pain really” (Generation X, mother of two Generation Y children, 100853F).

In summary, Generation Z children usually began their leisure ‘career’ at a very early age, with the data providing examples of children as young as three months taking part in organised swimming lessons. For this generation of children there was a plethora of leisure
activities available, not only for school aged children but also for children who had yet to begin school. Preschool children for example, were able to take part in modified versions of AFL and netball. They could take a dance class, visit the local mothers’ group or playgroup, attend a music appreciation class or pop in to the local Kindy Gym. The activity list available to school aged children was comprehensive and included a range of activities from choir and dance, to football, soccer, netball, softball, tennis, swimming and motocross. Parents gained personal benefit from their child’s participation in organised leisure activities which included vicarious enjoyment, work contacts, friendship networks, community links, and the emotional benefits of spending time with their children.

It is important to note here that the age groups from the four Generations are not homogenous. Those who were Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y were able to provide evidence from a leisure career, which began at birth and ended as they transitioned into adulthood. Conversely, it was only the parents of Generation Z who were able to provide evidence of the leisure activities of these children, and not the children themselves. Furthermore, information was only available up until the time of the interview. Given the ages of the children (the majority were in the preschool age group) this does have an effect on making intergenerational comparisons.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated in this descriptive chapter, the character, location and range of the leisure experiences of children involved in this project have changed considerably over time. Both the organised leisure and free play activities of children from each generation was effected by social norms of the time. It was typical for example, that Baby Boomer children would spend time in free and spontaneous play and that some activities were appropriate for boys (such as football) but were not appropriate for girls. Similarly, it was not acceptable for Generation Z children to play in the street by themselves, whilst participation in football for example was becoming more acceptable for girls.

Baby Boomer children spent vast quantities of time in free and spontaneous play both outside and in the home. Generation X children, whilst still spending time in free and spontaneous play began to spend more time in organised leisure activities. In this era,
children were participating in one organised leisure activity in winter and changing to another activity in the summer time. The leisure of Generation Y children was affected by rapid developments in technology (and lower costs) which saw children spending more time using computers during their free time, while in organised leisure, educational activities started to appear. Generation Z children spent their free and spontaneous play at home and not in the neighbourhood. However, this generation of children spent more time in leisure activities organised and supervised by adults, both at home and in the community.

The type and number of activities that children take part in has increased exponentially. Baby Boomer children took part in a limited range of activities which commenced in late primary school and early high school. Generation X children were able to take part in more activities than those from the previous era and their participation commenced at a younger age. There were reports of Generation Y participating in organised leisure activities from as young as three, while Generation Z children commenced their leisure career in early childhood and had a large range of activities from which their parents could choose. The options available to children have increased considerably for both girls and boys. Activities such as AFL, cricket, rugby, netball, dance, and swimming have relaxed once stringent gender rules to allow for the participation of both girls and boys. Despite this there were few instances of children taking part in activities that were not gender specific.

Across all eras, a majority of children involved in this study reported participating in gender specific activities such as netball or dance for girls and the boys reported playing rugby or cricket. This reflects findings by Burroughs and Nauright (2000) who found that sport was one of the most significant sites for the maintenance of the gender order. A small number of Generation Y girls took part in activities not aligned within traditional gender boundaries, such as judo and cricket.

Perhaps one of the biggest changes that have occurred in leisure across the four eras is that of parental involvement. Parents of Generation Z children have a much greater role in the activities of their children than any other time in recent history and this is examined further in Chapter Seven. The next chapter will delve into the influences on the leisure of Australian children from the four generations. It begins to explore some of the underlying factors affecting participation which include factors such as technological changes in
transport with a focus on the family car, urban or rural location, the role of educational and religious institutions, and the influence of friends and peers.
Chapter Six: Factors influencing children’s leisure

Introduction

This chapter explores those factors that influenced the organised leisure activities of children. Despite outward appearances of seeming disconnectedness these factors which include the influence of technological change, locality, educational and religious institutions, and friends and peers do not exist in isolation and are in reality connected to each other. The chapter is in five parts. The first section considers the concept of technological change with a particular focus on transport. Closely tied to issues related to changes in transportation is a child’s locality, more specifically their location in rural and regional areas and this is examined in the second part of this chapter. Next the influences provided by educational and religious institutions such as schools and the church are examined before a discussion of the influence of friends and peers is undertaken in the fourth section. The final section concludes this chapter and provides a link to Chapter Seven.

In this study, Generation X and Generation Y children share the same ‘mid’ cohort Baby Boomer parents. Therefore there is a similarity in the data provided by parents on the leisure experiences of Generation X and Generation Y children. As a result, these two generations are considered together. Where a meaningful difference exists between the two generations this is highlighted and discussed.

Technological advances

There is no doubt that there has been an enormous and rapid expansion of technology since the 1950s. There has been a multitude of changes from household appliances to transport to technological innovations in the leisure arena. For example, Bronwyn reported, “we didn’t have a washing machine [...] so mum boiled up the copper” (Baby Boomer, 210609F). Another woman, Gina remembers not having a television and “listening to the serials on the radio” (Baby Boomer, 210514F). With rapid growth in technology, households of Generation X children included automatic washing machines, microwave ovens, VCR’s, televisions and hand held computer games such as Donkey Kong, while Generation Y saw the introduction of the first mobile phones, DVD players and the internet. The digital
revolution brought Pay TV, iPads, iPods, the Nintendo DS, PlayStation, and computers along with a multitude of other gadgetry into the homes of Generation Z children.

One key technological advance that has had a substantial effect on children’s leisure is changes in the transport arena. Access to transport of various forms had a substantial role in influencing the activities of children from each of the generations. As availability and access to transport has increased, so too has childhood participation in organised activities. The next section of this chapter explores how intergenerational changes in transport have influenced the organised leisure activities of children.

**Baby Boomers: “I used to ride my bike to tennis”**

Children from this generation indicated that access to a family car for the purposes of transport to and from organised activities was not an option. Firstly because in many cases there was no family car, for example, Carol declared, “There was sort of no running around, ‘cause there was nothing to run you around in. You got on a bus and just went” (Baby Boomer, 201631F). For those families who did have a car, it was generally used by fathers for the serious business of earning a living. When a Baby Boomer family did buy a car, mothers did not drive. This meant that if children wanted to take part in organised leisure, they had to find their own way. These activities usually occurred in their local communities and therefore children were able to either walk or ride their bikes to their chosen activity. This is demonstrated by Peter who said, “My mother never drove so, usually I would be the person who had to get on a bike and ride myself to play sport because I had no-one to take me” (Baby Boomer, 200331M). Similarly, Jeanette explained:

> Well I walked. It was only about four blocks from where I lived and you know back in those days there was no problem with a little kid walking off to something like that. So I was nine when I started tap dancing and I was fourteen when I finished. (Baby Boomer, 205897F)

Transportation, or more appropriately the lack of vehicular transport was an important influence on the organised leisure activities of Baby Boomer children. If children wished to
take part in an activity it was up to the individual child to organise their own participation. This is typically described in the following interview excerpt from Donna:

Donna: Yeah, we moved to a place where there was a, like a little village with a tennis court and I used to ride my bike to tennis on a Sunday afternoon.
L: And they had a competition?
Donna: Oh, just more social because there was sort of five or six different families that would [...] come and play. But mum and dad weren’t interested, I think they had played when they were younger but they weren’t interested in playing again, so I’d just ride my bike up. (Donna, Baby Boomer, 207669F)

For others riding or walking was not a suitable form of transport due to factors associated with distance. Sandra reported that she needed to find her own way (minus parent) to her school and from her school, and find her way to the court, field or pitch that she was to play on that day. This often meant travelling across suburbs, using a variety of transport, leaving home quite early in the morning and not returning until sometime in the early evening:

And I don’t know if you know Capital City at all. And I had to get to the school and from the school we used to have to catch a ferry to the city and then the bus. And one of the schools that we played against was Cityside and we lived at Beachside. I think we played at eleven o’clock or ten o’clock and I think we got home at seven o’clock that night. (Baby Boomer, 200138F)

For those children who were driven to an activity, fathers in their public sphere role and often sole driver of the family vehicle were the providers of transport. For example:

My father used to, my mum um, didn’t drive, I used manage to do things after school. A lot of them were school related things, sort of things, and on the weekend my dad would take me to whatever I had to go to. (Elizabeth, Baby Boomer, 201872F)
I don’t remember any other Dad’s, well, two of the girls in my netball team didn’t have cars, their fathers didn’t [...] or their mothers didn’t drive. Their families didn’t have cars, actually, back in the vintage. But my father was often the man who was you know, picking up me and Mary and Karen and Gabrielle. You don’t mind do you dad [laughs]? Dad would pick up me and then have four other people. (Sandra, Baby Boomer, 200138F)

Mothers of Baby Boomers children, in their mainly private sphere role, did not drive or if they did drive they did not have access to a vehicle. This had consequences for the participation in organised activities. For example:

You see my mother had nine children [laughs] so and ah, and we lived in a country town so um, you know, she’d ah, she couldn’t drive so we weren’t taken anywhere. (Sharon, Baby Boomer, 200228F)

I didn’t, I really didn’t play a lot of sport. My mother couldn’t drive and we didn’t have car until I was 16, so I guess that limited a lot of stuff. And my parents came from the country and they were very quiet people and you know in many respects they, they didn’t push us to do anything. (Sara, Baby Boomer, 203325F)

Lack of public transport (especially in rural areas), low rates of car ownership and mothers who did not drive conspired to ensure that if Baby Boomer children wanted to take part in an organised leisure then they needed to be self-reliant and motivated enough to make their own way to their chosen activities.

Access to transport has played and continues to play a crucial role in the leisure of children. Baby Boomer children whose participation in organised activities was at best minimal had to utilise various means of transport in order to participate. Car ownership in Australia, during the 1950s was approximately one car for every nine Australians (McQueen, 2004) with this number increasing over this and the next decade (ABS, 2005a). This is reflected in findings from this study which indicates that few families had cars. The families that did have cars rarely used them to transport children to organised activities. This generation of children walked, rode their bikes or made use of public transport in order to participate in leisure activities. They came from families with a distinct lack of car ownership. For those
families who did have a car, its use for transporting children to and from activities was not so much frowned upon as not considered. Cars were for men and for earning a living, for example Shiralee said, “My father was a policeman […] and he had a police vehicle […] which we weren’t allowed to use” (Baby Boomer, 207802F).

Many of the mothers of Baby Boomer children involved in this study did not drive or did not have access to a vehicle for transportation. This had a dual effect on families, it reinforced the role of mothers in the private sphere and fathers within the public sphere, whilst at the same time ensuring that children remained within the private realm of home with their mothers as primary caregivers.

Generations X and Y: “It wouldn’t happen if we couldn’t transport them”

The effects of rapid and substantial technological change that had begun in the post World War II period were appearing in the daily lives of Australian families during the childhood of Generations X and Y. Technological advances in transport led to parents reporting cars as a fundamental item necessary in enabling participation in organised leisure activities. Many children were only able to participate in activities if they were driven. For example, Brent explained, “it wouldn’t happen if we couldn’t transport them though” (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 206319M). This is echoed by Narelle, who had the following to say with regard to transporting her children to and from their organised leisure activities:

> Um, like everyone else I guess you just, well I suppose I had three kids at primary school at one stage, at that stage of my life, um, you just work out that you run that one to that place and you maybe drop them there and run the other one to that place. I never sort of dropped the kids off and then did something else, I was always going there with them, yeah, and I had a car so I could do all that. (Baby Boomer, mother of three Generation X children, 201298F)

Two car families began to be the norm and parents found it increasingly complicated to negotiate the schedules of their children’s activities and to ensure they had the right child at the appropriate field at the correct time. This is demonstrated in the following examples in
which mothers describe their experiences of ferrying their children to and from their activities:

It was a bit difficult at times. I would be driving one way, and my husband would be driving the other. Because they were after school things; training was after school, and dance lessons were always after school. You know, I would be jumping out of bed some days and throwing clothes on and driving her to dancing and, but we did it. (Carol, mother of two Generation Y children, 201631F)

The weekends were a bit tricky, my husband ended up sort of taking one boy to soccer at one end of the Sunnyside Coast and I took the other one and my daughter to wherever she was playing, which was usually not the same place. And we did that. (Hannah, mother of two Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 206527F)

Several parents of Generations X and Y children from this study had the use of two motor vehicles which assisted in the transport of their children to and from activities. Other parents were able to organise carpooling arrangements to assist in the transportation of children. Brent explained, “Yeah, we just ended up with rosters for driving and things for ourselves and other people who had children doing the same things” (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 206319M).

Although it is clear from the preceding evidence that cars played a major role in the childhood of Generations X and Y children, there were still however instances in which children walked or rode their bikes to their chosen activity. For example Deanna said:

But in fact living in Regional Town when they got a bit older my sons used to ride their bikes to where they were going to go […] and so that’s how it all got sort of fitted in. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 207720F)

Cars played an integral role in the ability of parents to provide the opportunity for their children to take part in organised activities. Parents of Generations X and Y children in this study detailed how increasingly they drove their children to their sport and leisure
activities. “Mums Taxi” (Thompson, 1999) became one of the catch phrases of the late 1970s and 1980s. For example:

Well I guess we were professional chauffeurs for a long time, and ahh, you know, I don’t know that was just your routine. So you know, we have always been the parents, you know, who have been the chauffeurs and go along and show interest and all of that. We loved all of that actually. (Joe, Baby Boomer, father of three Generation X children, 201872M)

Look it was really very busy. And that, that hectic program went on I suppose, right through primary school and got worse in high school because obviously high school they finish school later and they’ve got so much homework and we were taxi drivers for the last three or four years, so yeah. So that was, you just did that because everybody did it I suppose. (Courtney, Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 201893F)

Private car ownership increased during the 1970s and 1980s and soon it was not uncommon for families to have more than one vehicle. As technology advanced and cars became more affordable with more options and disposable incomes increased, car ownership for Australians increased to approximately one vehicle per four people by the 1970s (Lee, 2003). Within 30 years the importance of the motor vehicle had escalated to the point of necessity in aiding a child’s participation in organised activities. During the 1970s a significant majority of Australians lived in the suburbs (Troy, 1995). Suburbs, however, had little infrastructure in the way of public transport for getting to and from work, or for transporting children to and from organised activities. Hand in hand with increasing rates in car ownership over this period were growing rates of participation in organised leisure. Few Baby Boomer children had the luxury of being transported to their activities in a car. Instead they walked or rode their bikes. Conversely, the majority of Generation X and Y children were only able to participate because their families had a car and in some cases two. With the beginning of second wave feminism, mothers began to drive and cars were being used for other things besides earning a living. Generation X and Y children began to rely heavily on private transport to take part in organised leisure and consequently activity participation increased.
Generation Z: “I just leave work and I’m in the car for two hours”

The organised leisure activities of Generation Z children were increasingly spread across their local communities and in many cases regions. For those children who did take part in activities in their local communities, they did not walk or ride their bikes; they were driven, usually by their mother or father, but often by grandparents, other family members or friends. Parents of Generation Z reported spending a major proportion of their afternoons after school and work transporting their children to and from their various sporting, leisure and recreational pursuits. For these families, two family cars were absolutely vital in order to enable parents to have their children at the correct places at the appropriate times.

Annette, for example, described her experiences of transporting her children to and from their organised leisure:

Cassandra does tennis, umm, and they play netball and tennis, softball, touch. And do drama and two are in the school choir. So that is all afternoon running around pretty much as well. I just leave work and I’m in the car for two hours until I get home. I mean we are lucky everything is within, you know, ten or fifteen minutes from home. So it’s not a great amount of commuting time or anything.

(Generation X, mother of four Generation Z children, 112455F)

Although Generation Z families have access to two vehicles which assists with the transportation of children to and from organised activities, families still have to contend with road systems typically designed for the purposes of enabling workers (traditionally men) to get to and from their places of employment rather than women and children (Massey, 1994; Wyer, 2001) who have the task of travelling often complex routes between home, school and leisure.

Intergenerational comparison

The parents of Generation Z spent much more time transporting their children to and from their various activities than parents from previous generations. It was rare for parents of Baby Boomer children to transport their children to any organised leisure activity. Parents

13 Touch football
of Generation X were taking their children to one activity a week - usually one in winter and one in summer, participation had increased for Generation Y children and parents had begun to use strategies to assist with the organisation of these activities (for example, limiting the number of activities a child could participate in). Parents of Generation Z reported transporting their children to multiple activities per week and in some cases more than one activity per day.

Families in the late modern era generally have access to two cars. In part this is a reaction to mother’s lonely existence in the suburbs combined with the second wave feminist movement and the radical changes in the social order that commenced in the 1960s and continues to shift and move in the late modern era. For Generation Z children private car transport was absolutely vital to their participation in organised activities with a two car family almost a necessity. By 2003 there was approximately one car for every two Australians (ABS, 2005b). Transport by foot or push bike was rare and families relied on a support crew of trusted friends, relatives and grandparents to ensure that their children had the opportunity to participate.

Children in the late modern era relied heavily on cars for participation in their organised activities. Generation Z children were driven to their leisure activities for a number of reasons. Parents responding to the risk of both stranger and traffic danger reacted by removing their children from the streets and driving them to activities. Ironically, one of the key reasons parents remove their children from the streets is in reaction to traffic danger (Barker, 2003; Valentine, 1997), yet in making this decision parents contribute to the cause of the problem and produce more traffic (Kearns & Collins, 2003). The use of cars to transport children to and from their organised leisure activities would appear to give some support to the argument that cars have become one of the institutionalised spaces of childhood (Valentine & McKendrick, 1997). These spaces are said to be created, structured and organised by adults in so that children are able to remain under SUPER-vision, surveillance and protection (Brannen & O’Brien, 1995; Philo, 2000), these concepts are examined in more depth in Chapter Eight. Australian research has shown that one of the most significant transport trends has been the increase in car use by mothers, and that the car was used by mothers as an aid in managing complex daily routines and to assist in the notion of “good
mothing” (Dowling, 2000, p. 345). The concept of ‘good’ mothering and the idea of being a ‘good’ parent are discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Leisure activities for rural and regional children

Whilst participants from each generation described how access to transport enabled participation in organised leisure activities, this was especially relevant for children living in rural and regional areas of Australia. Notwithstanding the intergenerational differences due to technological change and more specifically transport children in rural and regional areas from all generations outlined substantial limitations to participation due to their locality. In the next section of this chapter the influence of a child’s location on their participation in organised leisure activities is examined in more detail.

Baby Boomers: “We were rural country [...] transport was a major issue”

Not all children from this era had the same access to participation in organised leisure activities. Children living in rural areas were restricted in the amount and type of activity that they could take part in. In 1950 one in five Australians lived in a rural community (ABS, 2001), this number continued to decline over the following decade, and continues to decline today (Peters, 2007). Rural and regional children in this study reported a lack of opportunity to participate in organised activities when compared to their urban counterparts. A general lack of facilities, transport and infrastructure meant that rural children spent little time participating in this type of activity. Baby Boomer children who lived in rural areas were restricted in the amount and type of leisure they could take part in. For example Kyle said, “The other thing is that we were rural country, um, so transport was another major issue. Opportunities weren’t there. We certainly didn’t see anything like what my kids have seen” (Baby Boomer, 205656M).

There were distinct differences in access to organised activities between those who lived in small or remote rural communities when compared with those who lived in larger regional areas. Children who grew up in small rural communities had restricted opportunities to participate in organised leisure experiences, while those in larger regional communities had more access to these facilities. For example:
I grew up on cane farms in North Queensland so he was always involved in that [...] and Dad was tired because he was out working somewhere. So he never really, it was a different lifestyle to what we live in the city. We were never really involved in sporting organisations or anything like that, it was only through school, so my mother she was mostly she was on school committees and helped out like that. Organised sporting activity didn’t really exist up there in those days. (Rob, Baby Boomer, 210631M)

I participated in everything that I could play. I grew up in a town called Large Town and it was a bit of country/city, the population at that stage was about 20,000 people and ah, we played sport, that’s what we did. (Evan, Baby Boomer, 202720M)

Reliance on a vehicle to enable participation was vital for children living in rural and regional areas. For example, Monique had the following to say about her experiences of organised activities in a rural location:

Yeah, we lived in the country when I was younger, and we had to be driven to all the activities we did. Which was never a burden too them, or they never showed it was a burden, but it must have been a bit of a drag at times. (Baby Boomer, 202720F)

As was demonstrated in the previous discussion on technological change and transport, few Baby Boomer families had access to a car except for the purpose of earning a living. For children living in rural and regional Australia the lack of access to a family car combined with distance led to greater restrictions on their participation in organised activities. In many cases the extreme distances involved with participation in rural areas and lack of public transport often meant that Baby Boomer children were only able to take part in organised leisure if they were driven to activities.

Generations X and Y: “Occasionally it was 800klms a week”

Generation X and Y children living in rural and regional areas had difficulties in accessing public transport to organised leisure activities. The most common issue reported by those within this study was the distance between their homes and the location of activities. As the
following interview excerpts demonstrate, parents in rural and regional areas reported driving hundreds of kilometres a week to ensure their children were able to take part in organised leisure. This demonstrates how important and valuable these activities were for both parents and children. Anna had the following to say:

We had two cars because we live a long way from anywhere because most of these meetings, activities were in Large Town. At the time, um we just drove [...] I did the Saturday run, Rob did the Tuesday youth orchestra run, I think I did the early Wednesday morning run, he did the Thursday afternoon, this sort of thing. Yeah Rob would say occasionally it was 800 kilometres a week. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 208341F)

In a similar vein Gina described her experiences of running her children to and from their chosen activities:

“Football, football! Oh, my! Three afternoons a week training, ah my life was football. [...] sometimes, it was nothing to drive 170 k’s for their football matches, and all three boys might have their football matches at different ovals”. (Baby Boomer, mother of three Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 20541F).

As the above evidence demonstrates, parents of Generations X and Y living in rural areas often had to travel large distances to enable their children to take part in organised leisure. It is also interesting to note that there were no reports of non-participation by rural children from this era due to lack of facilities. There were no questions in the interview schedule that surrounded access to and availability of facilities, this is a known limitation of this study and an area for further potential research.

Generation Z: “And we drive as far as Rural Town [...] four hours away from here”

For Generation Z children who lived rural areas, where infrastructure and facilities were limited in comparison with urban areas, sport especially was a way of life. Parents from these communities reported driving for up to four hours on weekends to take their children to their sporting activities. For example, Julie and Amelia had the following to say:
They have swimming lessons on a Monday afternoon and the eldest one plays football, so he trains on a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon and plays on a Saturday [...] And we drive as far as Rural Town, which is about four, three and a half, four hours away from here, so we do a fair bit of travelling on the Saturday, but this is only in winter, um, his football. And the middle one has just decided that she wants to do dancing, so probably in January she’ll start doing that. It’s just we’re 15 minutes’ drive from town, so it’s gotta [sic] be something they really want to do, so, otherwise there is no use taking them in and out. (Julie, Generation X, mother of three Generation Z children, 110638F)

The winter months are a little bit different again, because um, my kids play netball and football, so on a Saturday we are generally travelling to one of the towns in the district. We’re in a town, so there are other towns that we travel to. So, Saturday’s are pretty hectic. (Amelia, Generation X, mother of three Generation Z children, 113586F)

Findings indicate that many families in rural areas had to travel long distances to enable the participation of their children in organised leisure activities. In an effort to balance hectic rural lifestyles, other parents of Generation Z children reported that their children took part in this type of activity if and when they have the available time. For example Rachel suggested:

Depending on how busy I am what between the farm and the winery that I’m trying to get going. Like if it is a quiet time of the year I’ll probably take them into Kindy Gym or swimming or a different activity to try and wear ’em out. But if I’m too busy, I just, you know, I tend not to. (Generation X, mother of two Generation X children, 111497F)

Intergenerational comparison

The organised leisure activities of rural and regional Baby Boomer children fell into two broad categories. The first group of children, who resided in small rural farming communities, had little access to organised activities. There were few opportunities for participation and fewer prospects for transport to those activities. The second group of
children were those who lived in larger regional communities. This group of children had more opportunities for participation; however, in order to be able to participate, children had to have someone transport them to the activity. Comparatively, Generation X and Y children who resided in rural and regional areas whilst still restricted were able to participate in this type of activity more readily than their predecessors, as Jill said, “it’s just what you do in small towns” (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation X children, 211583F). This generation also had to contend with factors associated with distance in order to participate. Many parents reported travelling hundreds of kilometres a week in order to ensure participation. There was no data however that demonstrated a child’s non-participation due distance or lack of opportunity in rural areas; this may be a reflection that no such children exist, or that they were not captured within the sample of this study. This is an identified area for further research. Generation Z children from rural and regional areas, although still restricted by access to venues and greater distances were participating in organised leisure activities in greater numbers than at previous times with their parents driving many hours to ensure their participation. It was an accepted part of life in rural and regional areas. These results support earlier research that suggested factors associated with distance and transport were issues for those residing in rural and regional areas (Warner-Smith & Brown, 2002). Other research has also found that sport especially is a dominant factor in rural communities (Trost et al., 1997), with Australian research suggesting that rural children spend more time playing club sport, less school sport and more sport overall than their urban counterparts (Carroll, Stanley, Lewis, Ridley, & Dollman, 2010). Recent research has also suggested that for those who live in Australian rural communities, sport is a major form of social interaction for children which plays a fundamental role in communities that have a limited choices for activity participation (Eime, Payne, Casey, & Harvey, 2010).

It is also important to note that there is not one rural or regional Australia. As argued by Mugford (2001), “the only thing they have in common is that they are not metropolitan” (p. 2). More importantly, “there is neither one rural childhood nor one group of rural children” (Matthews, Taylor, Sherwood, Tucker, & Melanie, 2000, p. 142). Data from the NSW Commission for Children and Young People (2010b) shows that the more remote the area in which children live, the less opportunity they have for participation in organised activities. Within this study, remoteness was not a factor in the non-participation of Generation Z
children however it was reported as a factor in the non-participation of Baby Boomers as children. Remoteness was not a variable in the sampling frame of this study. Whilst participants were able to report their location as rural this description encompassed both rural and remote areas.

It was not only children from rural areas who were restricted when it came to participating in organised activities. Aboriginal children, for example, who were taken from their families (the ‘stolen generation’ (Whitlock, 2001)) and moved into internment camps, orphanages and other institutions under the banner of child welfare, had limited access to participation in organised activities and in fact indigenous Australians were not classed as citizens until the referendum of 1967. The extent to which immigrant children took part in organised leisure is also in dispute, with no evidence from this study to distinguish if they took part in these types of activity and what type of activity they may have participated in.

The next section of this chapter moves from the discussion of locality to the provision of activities. Most notable in this study was the role religious and educational institutions played in this provision.

**Educational and religious institutions**

Schools and churches were key institutional influences on the organised leisure activities of children from each of the four generations within this study. These influences varied vastly between generations. For example, schools have played a major role in the organised leisure experiences of children across time; however the influence has manifested itself differently in each of the generations. The church which in this study encompasses primarily Christian based religions also has had a substantial influence on the leisure activities of children and more specifically Baby Boomer children. This influence appears to have lessened as time has passed. The influences provided by institutions such as schools and churches are examined in following section of this chapter.
Baby Boomers: “I played sport, but it was with the school”

For children from this era, much of the available organised leisure came under the jurisdiction of educational institutions such as primary and high schools. While at school, children were introduced to activities such as netball for girls and football, tennis and cricket for boys. These activities were also often undertaken on weekends outside of school hours. Like many other aspects of childhood during this era, school sport was strictly gendered – football, cricket and tennis for boys and netball for girls, for example Harvey said:

There was a tennis court in behind the church, ahh, there was a bit of a grass patch there where you played kick to kick as far as the football goes and the cricket and that was it. And the girls had two courts for basketball, or netball as it was, basketball it used to be called and now it is netball (Baby Boomer, 211033M).

It was rare for Baby Boomer children to be involved in an organised sport unless it came under the influence and jurisdiction of the school they attended. Parents of Baby Boomer children assumed a gatekeeping role and provided support for participation in an activity. Schools and churches in many instances provided the competition, the infrastructure, the equipment and place for an activity to occur. School based sporting activities occurred outside of normal school hours and children took part in this type of activity on weekends for example:

The basketball was a school thing that was played on the weekends, but it was part of the college I went to. (Karen, Baby Boomer, 202720F)

Well for example, sport wasn’t organised like it is here, it was very much part of what you did when you were at school. No parental involvement whatsoever. (Deanna, Baby Boomer, 207720F)

Sport is everything, sport is God here, and well I think in the 1950s and 60s it wasn’t. It wasn’t, well in the sixties and the late fifties sport was a school organised competition not a, not a home organised competition. (Troy, Baby Boomer, 207720M)
For those children who attended private schools or catholic schools participation in organised activities (most notably sport) was a compulsory component of their education. For example, John said:

We had to at a catholic school. They sort of forced you to do all these things, you didn’t have any choice, I mean if […] there was a swimming carnival on you had to be there and you had to swim um, so that was I suppose in the end a lot of the ah pressure to do these things came from the school too. (Baby Boomer, 200138M)

Despite the crucial role that schools played in the provision of sporting activities for children, school sport was set aside for those students who had the appropriate ability. If you were not good enough, you did not play. If you did not look the part, you also did not play. Bruce described how he was characterised as being a ‘bookworm’ and as a consequence was unable to participate in organised sport at school:

Well I wear glasses, have done since I was seven and as a result of that I was always um, you know slotted in at school as being the bookworm who couldn’t see anything so therefore you couldn’t play cricket or football. (Baby Boomer, 200461M)

Furthermore, school sports were selective during this era and children were chosen to play in school sports teams based on ability. Cayla explained that you had to be selected to play in the school team and if you were not good enough you did not have the opportunity to participate, “Well when I was in primary school you didn’t play cricket or football or anything unless you were good at it, you weren’t in the team” (Baby Boomer, 205934M).

Although schools were responsible for the provision of the majority of the structured sport, leisure and recreation activities of children, there were a couple of instances in which participants described taking part in activities that were provided by other community groups such as tennis clubs and youth groups. The following passages demonstrate activities participated in by children which were not connected to their formal education for example, Patricia described the activities that she was able to take part in, “Ahh debating society, sort of […] acting club um, that type of thing, I, I also joined a recreational club and played a bit of sport, which was unrelated to school sport” (Baby Boomer, 200331F). Whilst
Bruce said; “Um, I played ah, tennis pretty well every weekend with a local social club, not with the school I was at ah, from about when I was you know, 10 through to 18, that would be the main one” (Baby Boomer, 200461M).

Participants also explained how the church provided a steady influence on their organised leisure activities during their childhood. The church gave children the opportunity to take part in this type of activity outside of the home. For example Narelle had the following to say, “I mean that’s what our lifestyle was though, you went to church dances and balls and all that sort of stuff so it was there for you” (Baby Boomer, 201298F). Another woman explained how the church provided activities for children, “I participated in sport activities but that was mainly through school and ah through the neighbourhood church” (Debbie, Baby Boomer, 212484F).

Both schools and the church played a substantial role in the provision of opportunity for Baby Boomer children to participate in organised activities. Without the influence of schools and the church and the infrastructure provided by these entities this generation of children would have had little prospect of participating in organised leisure.

Generations X and Y: “Netball would have started at school”

There was a steady decline in the influence of schools and the church on the organised leisure activities of children during the childhood of Generations X and Y. This move away from the school and church centred activity of the previous generation was in part due to the increasing roles being played by the parents of Generations X and Y. Schools continued to play an important role in introducing children to organised activities that they may not have had the opportunity to take part in otherwise. Interest in an activity often started at school and participation continued outside of school. For example, Owen said, “Yeah well the basketball would have, and netball would have started at school” (Baby Boomer, Father of four Generation X children and two Generation Y children, 202870M).

Similar to those experiences of Baby Boomer children, schools provided the opportunity for Generations X and Y children to take part in leisure activities. However, in a change from the previous generation, increasingly in the public education system, school sport became a
compulsory part of the school curriculum which occurred during school hours. School sport also became much more inclusive. Generation X children were encouraged to participate in school sporting activities whilst Baby Boomer children at state schools indicated that they were only able to participate in school sporting teams if they displayed the necessary aptitude. For example, Peter said, “when they were at school they had to do some sort of sporting activity but that was sort of, during school hours they sort of used to do just a bit of Little Athletics and things like that” (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation X children, 200331M). Conversely, another father, Henry articulated the role that the primary school his children attended took in the provision of sporting activities in the community, “Well yeah, cricket for example; I think the primary school probably had six or ten teams playing in the comp, things like that” (Baby Boomer, father of four Generation X children, 205934M).

Similar to the experiences of their counterparts from the previous era, there were Generation X and Y children who took part in school based sport outside of school hours. These sporting teams were connected to schooling in the private sector (such as catholic schools). If you were at a private school you did not have a choice, you had to participate. This is demonstrated in the following passage by Nicole:

Nicole: Um, well after school, um, they played for school teams but they also played for after school. I mean my eldest son he umm [...] he got into a rep team and he was at a private school at that time and they always had to play on a Saturday, um so he was doing both. He was playing for a rep team and um, after school. I actually probably put my foot down because it was too much.

L: Those teams that your son was in; did the school encourage him to participate?

Nicole: Oh, at the private school, you have to participate, whether you like it or not. That’s the rules. (Baby Boomer, mother of one Generation Y child, 203434F)

Conversely the role of the church during the childhood of Generations X and Y began to play a less significant role than it had for Baby Boomer children. The church during this time period moved away from the provision of organised sporting activities to ‘Sunday school’ type activities. This role is demonstrated by Graeme, who said, “The little girl got herself involved in the Brownies but never went on much with that one. And ahh, they
were both in church Sunday school situations too” (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation X children, 200806M).

The influence of the church and the extent to which children were involved in church related activities contracted sharply when compared with Baby Boomer children, mirroring the move away from the church and religion which was occurring in the wider community (McAllister, 1988). This accords with a view espoused by Giddens (1990, 1991) which suggests that the move away from traditional institutions such as the church is a result of disembedding that is characteristic of the late modern era.

**Generation Z**

The myriad of outside of school organised activities saw a lessening in the role played by schools and the church on the leisure of Generation Z children. Schools still played a role, however given the ages of the Generation Z children in this study the depth of this role is not certain. Many of these Generation Z children were pre-schoolers (see Appendix S for a breakdown of ages of the children from Generation Z) without the influence of formal state provided education.

Of those children who did attend school, individuals who attended private schools such as Catholic schools were influenced to participate in activities by the school. Organised activities for Generation Z were more likely to start outside of school and lead to participation in school based teams. This is in direct contrast to Baby Boomer children who were likely only to take part in activities that were organised by either their school or the church.

Although affiliation with religious groups has remained steady during the childhood of Generation Z children (Bouma, 2002) and despite a shift towards more fundamentalist churches the role of the church in relation to organised activities of children had weakened considerably in comparison to previous generations. Generation Z children from this study did take part in Sunday school in limited numbers and although a small number of families acknowledged their regular church attendance and in fact one family had a parent who was a Minister of Religion, church related leisure activities did not rank highly amongst the
activities of Generation Z. Churches did not provide the opportunity for children to take part in organised sporting activities like they had with Baby Boomer children.

**Intergenerational comparison**

In all eras educational institutions acted as providers of organised activities. Sport especially was compulsory for those children from Generations X and Y and Generation Z whilst at school. Private schools also provided the opportunity for children to take part in activities outside of school hours for children from all eras.

The gradual move away from traditional institutions such as the church and schools in the provision of organised leisure activities of children reflects the move away from community and tradition and the rise individualism which is characteristic of the late modern era (Beck, 1992). In the post-traditional communities (Giddens, 1991) of Generation Z children the minimal role of both schools and the church reflect the move towards individualism and self-identity as a reflexive project in which organised leisure activities enable children to present themselves as social actors.

Perhaps one of the key influences linked closely to schools and the church was the influence of friends and peers. Relationships formed between children at educational and religious institutions led to participation in organised activities. In the following section the influence of friends and peers is examined in more detail.

**Friends and peers**

The next section of this chapter examines the role that friends and peers played in organised leisure participation of children. Each generation is examined in turn and an intergenerational comparison shows that the influence provided by friends and peers has remained remarkably unchanged despite the vast array of social changes that have occurred over this time period.
Baby Boomer children: “Oh, all my mates were playing”

Friends and peers were crucial to the participation in leisure activities of Baby Boomer children. Children from this generation took part in organised leisure as a direct result of friends or peers taking part in an activity. For example Patricia explained, “I think peer pressure, a lot of my friends were doing it and I thought I would be nice to join up with them and do those things” (Baby Boomer, 200331F). Whilst Lance suggested, “Oh all my mates were playing, we played with a group of mates, we all played on the same team so that was why I went” (Baby Boomer, 206527M).

The influence of friends and peers was an unconscious influence both on the part of the friend and on part of the individual who was influenced to take part in a given activity. As the following interview excerpt from John demonstrates how there was little conscious thought behind the decision to participate:

I suppose all the kids in the area were doing the same thing. So all the friends I had they all went and played football, ah. You either played [...] rugby union or you played soccer [...] Like all your mates are going up to the club you might as well come along too and give it a go, you didn’t think about it. (Baby Boomer, 200138M)

The influence of friends and peers was the most common influence on the organised leisure of Baby Boomer children. This generation were more likely to take part in an activity if a friend or peer was participating.

Generations X and Y: “All their friends played sport”

Similar to the experiences of Baby Boomer children, the friends and peers of Generation X and Y children had a considerable role in influencing children to participate in a given activity. This influence was similar to the influence that was provided by the friends and peers of Baby Boomer children. The influence was unconscious on both the part of the child and the friend. Parents of Generations X and Y reported that their child’s participation occurred as a result of friendships that were based outside of the activity. For example, Harvey explained, “Just the environment they were brought up in, all their friends played sport and they went along and played sport” (Baby Boomer, father of one Generation X child
and one Generation Y child, 211033M). This overt influence provided by the friends and peers of Generations X and Y is also demonstrated in the following interview excerpts from Henry and Luana:

They get it from other kids when they were in primary school and that, you know their friends decided they will play sport so they come home, you know can we play sport, well of course you can. And I think that is well, you know; now you’re in fourth class you gotta [sic] go and play sport. (Henry, Baby Boomer, father of four Generation X children, 205934M)

They started a club up near our house um, so it meant we didn’t have to go into town and some of his friends were going so he started doing that, he did that for quite a few years. (Luana, Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 206496F)

As evidenced above the role of friends and peers in influencing the leisure of Generations X and Y had not changed considerably from the previous generation, this is despite social and technological changes that were occurring in the wider community and the gradual breakdown of traditions as families moved away from the influence provided by church and state.

Generation Z

The influence of peers on the leisure activities of children is said to become more significant during adolescence (Kleiber, 1999). Due to the relatively young ages of the children from Generation Z who are described in this project the influence of friends and peers on their organised leisure activities is not ascertainable. There is however evidence from other studies which suggests that the role of peers in the leisure activities of children is extremely significant. For example, Australian research has found that playing with friends and making friends was a key element for sports participation of teenage girls (Eime, et al., 2010), similarly Hungarian research suggests that during early adolescence girls’ sports participation is particularly influenced by the social influence of peers (Keresztes, Piko, Pluhar, & Page, 2008). Other research in the sporting sphere has also demonstrated how being with and making new friends are important components of sports participation and
that this influence of peers can have both positive and negative consequences, for example companionship and loyalty or betrayal and conflict (Weiss, Smith, & Theeboom, 1996). The key concern with these studies is their focus on adolescent youth. There is little evidence within the literature that points to the influence of friends and peers on children under the age of twelve. There is also little evidence provided in this study of the influence of friends and peers on the organised leisure of Generation Z children. Prior to school entry the influence of friends and peers was not ascertainable.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced four key factors influencing the organised leisure activities of Australian children. These factors which include technological advances, locality, educational and religious organisations and friends and peers do not exist in isolation and are interlinked.

The chapter has shown that changes in technology, especially with reference to advances in transportation and access to a family car have had a pervasive influence on children’s leisure. While children growing up in the 1950s and 1960s commonly walked, rode their bikes or used public transport to move to and from organised activities, Generation Z children in the early part of the 21st century reported access to a family car as a necessity which enabled participation. Access to transport and a family car was especially important for children from rural and regional locations who reported restrictions on their leisure activities as a result of factors surrounding distance and access to facilities. This was especially noteworthy for Baby Boomer children living in small rural areas where there were few opportunities for participation and even fewer prospects for transport to an activity. Conversely, Generations X and Y and Generation Z children living in rural and regional areas with access to family cars reported driving hundreds of kilometres in order to take part in organised activities.

Rapid and substantial social changes which have included second wave feminism and a move away from traditional societies to the late modern era defined by individualism and reflexivity (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991) has seen the influence of educational and religious institutions on the organised leisure of children diminish. Schools and the church in the
1950s and 1960s were key providers of infrastructure, facilities and competitions for children’s leisure activities. In the early part of the 21st century the influence of schools and the church has taken a back seat as facilities, infrastructure and competition has been provided by other organisations.

Despite the social and technological changes inherent within Australian society since the 1950s one of the key influences that has remained steady and has shown little evidence of change is the influence of friends. Respondents from all generations reported taking part in organised activities as a result of friends participating in those activities.

While this chapter has examined some of the broader influences on the organised leisure activities of Australian children, the next chapter examines one of the key influences on children’s leisure and that is that of the parent.
Chapter Seven: From gatekeeper to coercion: Parental influences on children’s leisure

I don’t remember my mother being involved with us at all. I played sport on a Saturday, but it was with the school. And we got there on our own. There wasn’t a parent within cooee\textsuperscript{14}. And I don’t know if you know Capital City at all, and I had to get to the school and from the school we used to have to catch a ferry to the city and then the train. And one of the schools that we played against was Westside and we lived at Beachside. I think we played at eleven o’clock or ten o’clock and I think we got home at seven o’clock that night. (Sandra, Baby Boomer child, 200138F)

I wasn’t one of those kid’s parents that wanted me kid to play footy because I did it and was good at it, you know all that sort of bullshit. Um no, whatever they wanted to do they could do it, if they didn’t want to do it well, you know what I mean, if you’re not happy doing it, don’t do it. Um, they wanted to play footy we followed the footy, if they wanted to play cricket we followed the bloody cricket […] But I didn’t say “you’ve got to do this” or “you should do this”. (Logan, father of two Generation Y children, 207343M)

Well, as far as my daughter goes she’d probably be happy not to do tennis (laughs). But I think she needs that physical activity in her life ‘cos she’s not a very physical person. So I do, it sounds terrible, but I do pretty much say I want you to keep doing this; I think that it’s important for you um, unless you want to choose some other sport. (Brittany, mother of two Generation Z children, 104605F)

Introduction

Parents played an integral role in the organised leisure activities of all generations of children involved in this study. While this influence has manifested itself differently in each time period, as the following discussion demonstrates, there were common basic features that underpinned the influence that parents had on the leisure of their children. The following sections detail the intergenerational changes in parental influence explored in this thesis. They chart the changes in the influence of parents, from the parents of Baby Boomers

\textsuperscript{14} Cooee – “call used to attract attention” (Turner, 1991, p. 153)
who did not consciously exert their influence and who primarily acted as gatekeepers, to the parents of Generation X and Generation Y who played a more conscious role in the leisure of their children, and moves further to examine the coercive influence of the parents of Generation Z.

Baby Boomers: “There wasn’t a parent within cooee”

Parents of Baby Boomers had a conflicting influence on the organised leisure of their children. This influence was fundamental to how children took part in leisure activities; however at the same time the influence exerted by this group of parents was largely unconscious. The role of the parent was that of a gatekeeper. Parents were generally not the instigators of a child’s participation in an organised activity although they were happy to support the child’s decision to participate emotionally and financially. It was rare however, for a parent to be involved in the organisation of an activity or transportation to that activity. For example Sandra said, “I don’t remember my mother being involved with us at all. I played sport on a Saturday, but it was with the school. And we got there on our own. There wasn’t a parent within cooee” (Baby Boomer, 200138F). This view is reinforced by Lance who had the following to say:

I can remember my dad taking me a couple of times to the rugby ah but it wasn’t consistent. He never went to training with me because of his work. It was more or less ah “Yeah do you want to go and play rugby? Yeah? On your bike there and bike home”. (Baby Boomer, 206527M)

Conversely, involvement in community style leisure activities usually came as a direct result of parental influence. These activities included those associated with the church or community based activities, such as boy scouts or girl guides. More often than not these activities came about because the child’s parent was already involved in some way. For example, Narelle explained, “Um, I suppose it was my parenting for a lot of it, my Mum was heavily involved in Brownies and Guides, um she was um the […] what is it? [The] chief, person” (Baby Boomer, 201298F).
“My mother would encourage us [...] to be inventive”

Both mothers and fathers influenced the leisure of their Baby Boomer children; however this influence differed between the parents. As the following interview excerpt demonstrates, mothers shaped the activities of their children which occurred within the private sphere, thus mirroring the domestic roles undertaken by this generation of mothers who were tied to the dominant ideology of the homemaker (Kaplan, 1996). Elaine described how her mother was involved in her leisure activities, “my mother would encourage us to sort of be inventive and build cubby houses and do all that sort of thing around the home and in the neighbourhood” (Baby Boomer, 206730F).

Free play and after school activities such as hopscotch, rounders15 or cricket in the street and building cubby houses16 in the backyard were common home based leisure activities undertaken by this group of children. These findings are comparable to the key activities discussed in Helen Townsend’s (1988) description of the lives Australian Baby Boomer children.

It is crucial to note that these influences do not exist in isolation. Parents, especially mothers, influenced their children in this manner as a reaction to roles enforced upon them by a hegemonic male society which saw women ensconced as homemakers and men as breadwinners (Bulbeck, 1997). Whilst feminists have argued that urban design typically constructs cities for male workers and the suburbs as a private space for mothers and children (Massey, 1994), it is important also to recognise that the notion of the ‘private sphere’ and the ‘public sphere’ has altered over time. For Baby Boomer children the neighbourhood was very much a part of the private sphere that encompassed a safe place which was aligned with home. The public sphere was more closely aligned with those organised activities that Baby Boomer children undertook in the community and outside of their neighbourhood – for example football, netball and community group involvement.

Mothers influenced the free play activities of their children which occurred at home and in the neighbourhood. There was an instance however, in which the mother of one child

15 Rounders - a game that is played with ball and bat and resembles baseball
16 Cubby house – a small, usually timber, house in the backyard used by children for play.
played a pivotal role in the organised leisure of her children. Elaine described how the activities her mother undertook in the public realm influenced her own activities. It must be noted that this was the exception rather than the rule:

My mother and I used to play, we’d call it basketball then, but it was similar to netball and um, I was pretty involved with it in primary school and high school and my mother used to like to be involved and so she became an umpire. (Elaine, Baby Boomer, 206730F)

As the evidence provided in Chapter Five suggests, mothers of Baby Boomer children were more likely to encourage their children to take part in free, spontaneous activities that were not structured by time, adults or adult rules and procedures.

The mothers of Boomer children who took part in this study were responsible for the provision of basic food and shelter, looking after homes, children and husbands. While the role of mother of Baby Boomer children was that of the ‘stay at home mum’ who looked after the home, children and husband, some mothers did go against the prevailing accepted notion of what it meant to be a mother and participated in the paid workforce. For example, “I think she probably had to stand up to my father to be allowed to work” (Shiralee, Baby Boomer, 207802F). This concept of motherhood aligns with academic literature of the time which posited that mothers should hold an “expressive” role in the household (Parsons & Bales, 1955). The role involved the provision of emotional support, warmth and security. A similar position was offered by Bowlby and Fry (1953) whose attachment theory suggested that the role of mother was at home caring for her children and family. This was seen as especially critical when the child was young, the relationship between mother and child was to be “warm, intimate and continuous” (Bowlby & Fry, 1953, p. 13). This was said to be the most important key to child development (Levy, 1957). The work of Dr. Benjamin Spock (1946) also had a key influencing role on parenting during the childhood of Baby Boomer children. Spock criticised smacking children, popularised more flexible feeding routines and advocated a relaxation in strictness.
“The hockey connection goes right back to [...] my father”

In contrast to the predominantly private sphere influence of mothers, fathers of Baby Boomer children had more influence over those activities that were undertaken in the public sphere. This influence generally took the form of role modelling. Those children who did participate in organised leisure were often involved in activities that their fathers had enjoyed. Joe described how his participation in hockey was modelled on his father’s participation:

The hockey connection goes right back to, I guess my father, because he and lots of others came back from the second world war in 1945, I don’t know why, but he got involved in hockey as well, which has sort of been a pretty important part of our life and he and some other people formed a hockey club and I guess that is why my brothers and I started playing hockey. (Baby Boomer, 201872M)

Furthermore Sean described how he was able to enjoy leisure activities with his father. This type of organised activity tended to be revered by children who years after could recall in detail the experience of taking part in organised leisure with their fathers:

Dad was a crazy sportsman, I managed to play one game of cricket with my dad, I was pretty young, I was only 12 but I managed to play a game of cricket with me [sic] dad and I managed to bat with my dad, and even now, I’m 59 and even now it brings goose bumps, and, and I remember that as clear, in colour, if you could plug something in my ear and put it on the telly it would be as clear and in colour now as it was then. (Baby Boomer, 201893M)

The role modelling influence of fathers was not confined to their sons; in one instance it also extended to a daughter. Evidence from this interview suggested that a father’s interest in a particular activity could influence the participation of his daughter. In this example Abigail describes how her experiences of running were influenced by her father’s participation in the sport, “My father was a runner, so I suppose I used to train and you know, run with him” (Baby Boomer, 209438F).
Despite the evidence from Abigail, a father’s influence on his daughter’s leisure was uncommon during this time. During the 1950s fathers and their daughters moved in different spheres. Fathers were connected to the public sphere through their role of breadwinner, although they did have the ability to freely move into the private realm. Daughters were doubly ensconced in the private sphere – based on their gender and their status as child. This particular instance is also uncommon because of the activity undertaken. Abigail was one of the few participants who reported participating in running as an activity – whether male or female, and from any of the generations.

For those Baby Boomer children who did participate in organised leisure, their father’s interest had a substantial influence on their involvement in an activity and the type of activity. For example, Liam described how his father was involved in his activities for no other reason than to support his son’s participation, “He, sort of followed us around to whatever we were doing and, ah to the detriment of his own, whatever he wanted to do” (Baby Boomer, 207802M).

This influence was not overt. The activities were led by the children and the fathers’ role was similar to an extra in a movie – there to support the key role of the actor – who in this instance is the child.

A father’s role was tied to dominant ideologies of breadwinner and sole provider. This concept of fatherhood was explicit in academic thinking of the time. For example, fathers were to hold an “instrumental” role within the household in the role of breadwinner (Bowlby & Fry, 1953). The relationship between fathers and children during this time was beginning to change. The highly influential “Baby and Child Care” book published by Spock in 1946 advocated that fathers should play an active role in raising their children and that each parent could have a special and loving bond with their children.

“We’d go as a family”

An additional influence on the leisure of Baby Boomer children was the family more generally. In some families, the relatively low level of disposable income played an
important role in a child’s ability to undertake certain activities when compared to the families of later generations (ABS, 2001). An example of this is provided by Courtney:

Um, I remember once I tried to go to Little Ath17, Little Ath, but it seemed that whatever I started I could never stay, and I don’t know perhaps because you’re a kid, perhaps my mother couldn’t afford it. I tried to go marching, I went to marching once and um then my mother pulled me out. And I realised of course years later as an adult it was because she couldn’t afford the uniform because my mother didn’t have any money anyway. (Baby Boomer, 201893F)

Family leisure also influenced the activities of children from this era and was often part of their family’s lifestyle. These activities were led by parents instead of the child. This did not necessarily involve active participation in a sport or leisure activity – it could extend to the support of their local sporting team. For example, Owen explained:

We’re in the, what we call AFL18 now but it used to be CFL19 and Beachside had a, they’ve got their own team and we used to go all the games, up on the train to go to Capital City. And we walked down to where they played in Beachside, but we’d go as a family. The girls played, played netball which was outside the grounds and they’d be finished by quarter time then they’d just come in. ‘Cause they knew where we’d be and we’d all stay there as a family. The whole family would go […] I had seven other siblings so there was eight of us in my family but we all went together […] And there was other families that used to go with us that lived in the area near us and we’d all stand together and, with your soup and your sandwiches, and that was always on a Saturday. (Baby Boomer, 202870M)

In summary then, for children growing up in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s, parental influence had a central role in the leisure activities in which they participated. This influence was conflicting in its nature. Parents influenced their children unconsciously through their dual roles of gatekeepers and role models. The influence was however

17 Little Athletics
18 Australian Football League
19 Country Football League
substantial. It not only affected the participation in leisure of their children, but also the type of activity the children took part in. This veiled, unconscious influence differed between mothers and fathers. Mothers of Baby Boomer children encouraged those activities in the private sphere, reflecting their predominantly domestic roles. Conversely, fathers had more influence over those activities that occurred within the public sphere. This reflected the dominant ideologies of female homemaker and male breadwinner. There was some crossover, which did see mothers have some influence on the public sphere activities of their children, but conversely, there was no evidence to suggest that fathers were involved in influencing the activities of their children in the private sphere. The key for children during this period was that although parents influenced the type of activity they took part in; there was little evidence of an overt influence on children to take part in any particular activity. In the majority of cases evidence indicated that parents were not actively involved in the organised leisure of their children.

The role of the Baby Boomer parents in the organised activities of their children was strongly associated with their gendered roles within the family. Baby Boomer children involved in this study did not take part in organised activities in large numbers. They spent the majority of their time outside of school hours in spontaneous free play activities which usually occurred within the private sphere. This type of activity was often encouraged by their mothers who were for the most part were not involved in public sphere organised leisure activities of their children. Children organised their own participation in these types of activities and rarely relied on their mothers to assist them with participation, organisation or transportation.

Generations X and Y: “I could see that physical activity was very good for them”

In this study, Generation X and Generation Y share the same ‘mid’ cohort Baby Boomer parents. Therefore there is a similarity in the influence provided by parents on the leisure experiences of Generation X and Generation Y children. As a result, these two generations are considered together. Where a meaningful difference exists between the two generations this is highlighted and discussed.
Parents of Generations X and Y influenced the organised leisure activities of their children. However, unlike the gatekeeping influence of the parents of Baby Boomers, the influence provided by parents of Generations X and Y was much more explicit. Cecily explained:

> We always had a piano in our house, and I remember saying to my mum, “How come I never learnt” and she said “I asked you once and you said no.” [...] And I thought, oh, why did you listen to me? So that’s why I think with the music thing I always thought I wouldn’t really ask them I’d just get them into it and they could decide that they didn’t want to later on. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 200152F)

It is clear from the evidence provided that parents began to perceive obvious beneficial outcomes as a result of their child’s participation in organised activities and actively encouraged participation. These beneficial outcomes were varied and wide ranging and participation was encouraged for a number of reasons:

Because it provided their children the opportunity for socialisation:

> You know, we started them off at junior cricket when they were quite young; it was probably just to have them somewhere with other kids. (Harrison, father of one Generation X child and one Generation Y child, 211583M)

Because activities were seen as beneficial for the health and well-being of a child:

> Yeah, well it keeps the kids healthier and off the streets, and anti-smoking, thank god. And just, I don’t know, I just think that it is healthier, it’s nice to have kids involved in something. (Carol, mother of three Generation Y children, 201631F)

> I could see that, physical activity was very good for them. It is very healthy mentally [...] people who move and play sport are a lot healthier of mind than kids that don’t. (Leo, father of three Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 203325F)
Because structured activities taught children team building skills:

I mean I’m pretty much an advocate for sport and, and I think the thing about sport is that sport gives the individual the opportunity to participate. Hopefully will teach them sportsmanship ah, will teach them some aspects of bonding with the team; ah you know there are a whole range of things. (Sebastian, father of two Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 210050M)

Because of the parent’s interest or participation in that activity:

Well my daughter, I influenced her definitely with her dancing. ‘Cause I just love it.
I just think it makes, it feels very nice, straight and postured and everything. (Carol, mother of three Generation Y children, 201631F)

Because of their location in a rural community:

It’s just what you do in smaller towns. Like soccer’s really big in smaller towns so it’s good for young children. Cricket’s the other, you know, soccer winter, cricket summer. Like in smaller towns, like Rural Town is a small town compared to Newcastle and Sydney and stuff, you need to have your children in sport, yeah. (Harrison, father of one Generation X and one Generation Y child, 211583F)

Parents of Generations X and Y also described how they encouraged their children to take part in activities as a reaction to experiences of their own childhood. Linda explained how not having the chance to participate in organised leisure as a child made her ensure that her own children had the opportunity:

At the time I was thinking, like I had a pretty deprived childhood myself and it was like a reversed psychological turnaround where I was perhaps making up for all the things that I missed out on and the children were getting everything that I never ever had. And I think that was probably one of the reasons. (Baby Boomer, mother of three Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 205656F)
It was not only Generation X and Y children who benefited from being involved in organised activities. Parents of Generations X and Y described how the activities their children were involved in brought joy to their own lives. Harrison had the following to say:

Oh, I enjoyed it. Yeah I enjoyed my time down at cricket, more so as they got a bit older […] it became a thing that you were sort of half a coach and half a scorer and umpire you know, you really, it was really quite enjoyable really. (Baby Boomer, father of one Generation X child and one Generation Y child, 211583M)

This is reflected in evidence provided by Generation X children who also described how their parents had enjoyed the time spent with their children in leisure activities. For example Harry explained how his father was involved in his activities:

I was in sports a lot and he was very heavily into that as well so I think he enjoyed the fact that um, he got to watch me and also be involved in the team. All be it coaching or training or things, yeah, no, it was good. He enjoyed it. (Generation X, 105818M)

Despite the beneficial outcomes in terms of development and socialisation outlined above, parents of Generations X and Y valued organised activities as a site of connection with their children. Sean explained:

I got some very good advice from an old guy when I started my apprenticeship he said, we were mucking around one day and he said, “Son when you have kids, by time they get to seven you’ll realise they start to take, they’ll realise what you’re talking about and they can take some instruction” and he said “From that day on you’ve got seven years before they say ‘Look Dad I don’t really want you running around with me and me mates.’ And if you don’t make the best of those seven years you’ll regret it for the next forty.” And he was dead right, he was dead right. So we just did things with our kids we, we ah played sport, we ah took them to sport. (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation Y children, 201893M)

Participation in organised leisure was not always a positive experience for parents:
Sometimes, I found the soccer and the um, you know the soccer early in the morning at the field, I found that an absolute chore. To stand on the sidelines of a freezing field while they run around keeping warm, umm, but um, oh I don't know. I mean I used to enjoy it I think. It was part of what you had to do. (Nicole, Baby Boomer, mother of three Generation Y children, 203434F)

The overt and conscious influence provided by parents included both encouraging and supporting their child’s participation in organised activities. This influence had a broad range and on one end of the continuum parents compelled their children to take part in organised activities. In his response, Henry described his role in influencing his children to take part in organised activities, “I mean if they didn’t play sport we would certainly make them play sport, but we didn't have to because they were always willing to play sport, they still play sport” (Baby Boomer, father of four Generation X children, 205934M). Kellie also explained:

Me, I made them. I pushed them a bit because I just thought it to be very isolating, my daughter did do the table tennis off her own bat, but badminton and tennis I just thought, because one was a winter thing and the other was summer. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 206319F)

Conversely, from the opposite end of the spectrum, Generation X children described their experiences of not being involved in structured activities or remembered a childhood where their parents were not involved or did not encourage and support participation. For example Derek said, “um, I made state swimming and played for NSW Under 16 Rugby League, I don’t think he ever saw me swim and I don’t think he ever saw me play footy” (Generation X, 112584M). Furthermore, Chloe had the following to say:

They never really got us into sporting activities or, it was always like it was just a bit too much of a hassle, too much hard work for them [...] I think that my brother played cricket for a little while, and that was it. He only played for two or three months. I wanted to play tennis, but I never did. We never really got involved in group things. (Generation X, 106122F)
From a parent’s perspective, Teresa described the following when asked about the influences on the leisure activities of her children:

I guess there are two sides to that question and in some ways it was what influenced them not to participate. They are not big participators in sport and I think that is probably partly because we’re not […] How can I say this? We’ve had a definite educational philosophy that young children shouldn’t get involved in too many activities so we actively discouraged it while they were young. As they’ve got older […] a particular interest in music has come from them and from me so I have encouraged them to be involved in the musical stuff. (Baby Boomer, mother of two Generation Y children, 200461F)

Although the influence provided by parents on the leisure activities of their children was much more overt when compared to the influence of parents from the previous generation, there was a continuum and a broad range of influence that can be imagined somewhat in the shape of a bell curve. The evidence provided by Logan is indicative of this attitude:

I wasn’t one of those kids parents that wanted me kid to play footy because I did it and was good at it, you know all that sort of bullshit. Um no, whatever they wanted to do they could do it, if they didn’t want to do it well, you know what I mean, if you’re not happy doing it, don’t do it. Um, they wanted to play footy we followed the footy, if they wanted to play cricket we followed the bloody cricket […] But I didn’t say “you’ve got to do this” or “you should do this.” (Baby Boomer, father of two Generation Y children, 207343M)

As the above evidence demonstrates, a fundamental shift occurred in the influence of parents on the leisure activities of their children. While parents of Baby Boomer children provided a gatekeeping influence on the activities of their children, they were not however very involved in these activities of their children. In comparison, parents of Generations X and Y were much more proactive in ensuring that their children took part especially in organised leisure activities.
“I remember mum being quite involved”

As the mothers of Generations X and Y began to move in increasing numbers into the paid workforce (Townsend & Madden, 1994), they also began to exert much more influence over the activities of their children. Similar to the role modelling behaviour displayed by parents of Baby Boomer children, mothers of Generations X and Y described how they felt they influenced their children by their own participation, Narelle provided the following example:

I think probably I had a big influence on it because I was like, I was still playing netball and tennis and things like that so they probably knew that was a good, a good sort of life and without really saying “you must do it.” I never did that, they just took it up. (Baby Boomer, mother of three Generation X children, 201298F)

The movement of mothers from the private sphere into the public sphere also meant that Generation X and Y mothers were much more involved in their children’s leisure activities. This generation of mothers began to take on the role of taxi driver (Thompson, 1999). This was a reference to the amount of time mothers spent in transporting their children to and from school and other activities. Evidence of this is provided by Karen:

I was the home mum and while the kids were at school I, I did all my home duties and prepared tea and as soon as they came home from school um, it was afternoon tea and homework and then it was on the road. And, the youngest child um, the eldest child’s 32, um, and the four eldest are between 26 and 32 and the other are younger. But the very young, the 15 year old, she, she kind of grew up in the capsule, in the car. (Baby Boomer, mother of four Generation X children and two Generation Y children, 202870F)

Whilst there is evidence to suggest mothers spent numerous hours transporting their children to and from activities, this was not the experience for all mothers and those without access to a car were confined to their neighbourhoods. Some Generation X children were therefore limited in the amount and type of organised activities that they were able to take part in. Gillian explained:
Umm, well my mother never worked. She had three of us, and she also never drove. My father had the car at work. So he wasn’t there to help much, like she always said the first three years were the hardest [...] We didn’t do any sports or anything. (Generation X, 104056F)

Those mothers who did have a car and who were able to provide transport for both themselves and their children began to be more involved in their children’s organised leisure activities. Lyndell described her mother’s involvement in playgroup, “I remember mum being quite involved in our playgroup and she was quite involved in our school for a while” (Generation X, 100230F). Whilst Sarah recalled her mother playing sport with her:

I can remember going off and playing basketball on a week night and netball. She played when I was playing, like we would often have our grand finals and we’d sort of be playing on the courts next to each other. (Generation X, 109967F)

Although mothers were taking on extra responsibilities with regard to the organised activities of their children, they were delegated the responsibility of completing the domestic chores which served to reinforce the culture of male hegemony (Dempsey, 1992). Cayla described how the division of labour existed within her family. Whilst she was responsible for household chores, her husband was responsible for chauffeuring children to and from sporting events:

It was mainly the husband [laughs]. Since they played, well the eldest boy particularly, well the eldest and the youngest played rep soccer and cricket and stuff and we had to, he did all the running around, I mean we’re at Rural Town and he’d have to go Regional Town for training, you know, two and half hour trips to get to training, that sorts of stuff. Yeah I’d, I’d do the, I’d spend the weekend doing the housework and the washing and stuff and he’d get to do the, he did all the rep trips around. And the littlest one was in Little Athletics, that’s right, he was a state long jumper or something, gee that was a long time ago. They were all very athletic. Um, yeah on Saturdays we’d go, we’d all go to soccer, I’d sit in the car and knit generally, or sit on the sideline and knit. (Baby Boomer, mother of four Generation X children, 205934F)
Interestingly, the above narrative from Cayla also demonstrates how mothers of Generation X were combining their private roles with the public activities of their children. Cayla, in taking her knitting to the soccer, holds on to her homemaker role, providing further evidence of the changing nature and blurring of boundaries between the public and private spheres (Darke, 2002).

Similar to the mothers of Baby Boomer children, mothers of Generations X and Y children played a significant role in the home and in promoting free time activities with their children, Matilda explained:

> It seems to me that looking from […] mum and my childhood I think there was less toys, there was less pressure to go out on activities, or you know, playgroups and that weren’t very popular, and I know that mum always had time to do um, crafty and things at home with us. (Generation X, 102671F)

Evidence provided by those involved in this study suggests that for this generation of mothers there was still the expectation that their primary responsibility was the care of their home, their children and their husband. This generation of mothers also encouraged their children to take part in free and spontaneous leisure activities unstructured by time and adult rules and regulations. During the 1970s and 1980s participation in organised leisure by children grew exponentially, and mothers were on the front line supporting, enabling and encouraging their child’s participation. This support for children’s participation combined with ever increasing rates of car ownership and the appearance of the two car family resulted in many mothers taking on the role of taxi driver or chauffeur.

A key difference between the childhood of Baby Boomer children and that of Generations X and Y children was the level of involvement by mothers. The influence exerted by the mothers of Generations X and Y was overt and ranged from compelling their children to participate to encouraging and modelling participation. In comparison, the influence of the mother of Baby Boomer children was limited to gate keeping and modelling participation. Mothers of Generations X and Y were much more involved in the organised leisure of their children and took a more hands on approach to their activities. In line with the blurring of traditional roles and boundaries surrounding the public and private spheres (Darke, 2002) the role of the mothers of Generations X and Y children looked substantially different to the
private sphere role of the Baby Boomer mother. Second wave feminism conspired with technology to move the mothers of Generations X and Y out of the suburbs, out of the private realm and into the public. These mothers moved into the workforce in increasing numbers and those involved in this study indicated that this had generally occurred after their children had moved into primary school or high school.

In the next section of this chapter, the influence of fathers of Generations X and Y on the leisure of their children is examined.

“He was always there to take me to soccer training”

In a fundamental departure from the role assumed by fathers of Baby Boomer children, fathers of Generations X and Y were not only involved in their children’s organised leisure activities, they had begun to consciously influence and encourage their child’s participation. Ethan explained the role his father played:

   Whenever possible he was always there to take me to soccer training or take me, he was just there. He watched my sister play netball or whatever the case might be. Um yeah he was just there to be a dad. (Generation X, 102473M)

This change is reflective of wider social changes which saw the role of fathers expanding from that of ‘breadwinner’ to encompass a role that was more connected to the nurturing of their children (Aldous, Mulligan, & Bjarnason, 1998). The conscious role undertaken by the fathers of Generations X and Y extended to a hands-on role in which they were actively involved, for example as coaches and managers of their children’s sporting teams. For example, Paul said, “He found it very enjoyable to take us to sport and he used to coach us as well and he’d get right involved” (Generation X, 103101M).

Not all fathers of Generation X children were involved in the leisure activities of their children. Graeme described how the pressure of being the primary breadwinner and sole provider for the family meant that his father did not have the opportunity to spend a lot of free time with him during his childhood:
Um, he was out of the door by, I think five thirty in the morning and he wasn’t home until six thirty at night and he worked Saturdays as well. I don’t see that he had as much time to spend with us […] I think earlier he wasn’t around as much, so it was always mum because she didn’t work. (Generation X, 103930M)

Although fathers from all eras provided some influence on the leisure of their children through the modelling of behaviours, fathers of Generations X and Y children had an active role when compared with the parents of Baby Boomer children. Fathers of Generations X and Y took up positions as coaches, transported their children to and from activities and supported their children by being in position as spectators. This reflected their changing role which was beginning to include not only their traditional role as breadwinner but also a more practical participatory role.

The role of mothers and fathers of Generations X and Y were rapidly changing in the face of criticism of the dominant discourses that surrounded parenting and the roles of both mother and fathers. For example, Oakley (1972) dismissed Bowlby and Fry’s (1953) notion of the “expressive” housewife and “instrumental” breadwinner arguing that the role of mother is a cultural rather than a biological construct and that gender roles are culturally determined and biological characteristics do not bar women from particular occupations.

In summary then, for Generation X and Y children, growing up in Australia between the 1970s and 1990s parental influence had a central role in the leisure activities in which they participated. The influence that parents provided was wide ranging and was based on a continuum which saw at the one end parents compelling their children to participate, while at the other end of the continuum were parents who were not involved at all. Parents encouraged their children to participate in activities based on a number of perceived outcomes including socialisation, health and well-being and team building skills. The influence differed between mothers and fathers. Mothers, while still encouraging those activities in the private sphere were also actively involved in the leisure of their children in the public sphere. The new foray into the public sphere by mothers included taxiing children to their activities, role modelling and compelling participation. The role of fathers was also shifting. Fathers were taking a more hands on approach and had begun to include coaching and managing teams, along with transporting their children to activities and role modelling participation.
Generation Z: “I want you to keep doing this [...] I think it’s important for you”

The influence provided by the parents of Generation Z children on their organised leisure activities was tightly interwoven into the fabric of the daily lives of this generation. More than any other time in recent history evidence from the parents of this generation demonstrated that their influence and involvement was integral to the leisure participation of their children.

Young Generation Z children generally had limited ability to say “no” to take part in an activity. The decision to participate was often typically with the parent. A child could protest in the form of screaming or crying, but ultimately if the parent believed the benefit of the activity outweighed the child’s displeasure or discomfort in taking part, then the child would participate in that activity. This is demonstrated by Phillip who described his experience of taking his young daughter to swimming lessons, “Yeah, she screamed for like 95% of it, so sort of made things a bit interesting but otherwise it was you know” (Generation X, father of two Generation Z children, 102323M).

For the most part these activities were those that parents saw as an essential component of their child’s development and contributed directly not only to their health and well-being but also their safety. The most prominent example of this type of activity was swimming lessons. It was not only Generation Z infants and preschool children who were required to take part in organised activities and it was not only swimming lessons that were seen as an essential activity. Parents of school aged children also compelled their offspring to take part in other organised leisure activities. For example Brittany explained:

Well, as far as my daughter goes she’d probably be happy not to do tennis [laughs]. But I think she needs that physical activity in her life ‘cos she’s not a very physical person. So I do, it sounds terrible, but I do pretty much say I want you to keep doing this; I think that it’s important for you um, unless you want to choose some other sport. (Generation X, mother of two Generation Z children, 104605F)

It would however be erroneous to suggest that Generation Z children did not have any say in the type of organised activities in which they took part. Many Generation Z children
participated in organised activities not only because they wanted to, but because they enjoyed participating. Although there were cases (as outlined above) which demonstrated a child’s displeasure at taking part in an organised activity, for the most part parents suggested that their children enjoyed the time they spent in this type of activity. Donna explained, “It was the best thing I’ve ever done. I started it off [swimming] when she was nine months old so um, she loves it and I like taking her” (mother of one Generation Z child, 112323F). Likewise, Brittany described her daughter’s love of piano:

Her piano is very, very expensive and that bothers me but I think it’s great and she does singing during her school time as well so they complement one another and she just loves it so there is no way I could stop her from doing that. Same with dancing she really enjoys that and um she’s got her friend there as well. (Mother of two Generation Z children, 104605F)

A major shift had occurred in the role undertaken by parents compared with Generations X and Y and Baby Boomers as children. The parental influence on the children of Generation Z was coercive in nature and parents of this generation of children consciously and overtly worked to ensure that their children participated in organised leisure activities.

Conscious choices and decisions were made by parents to have their children take part in activities based on a number of expected beneficial outcomes. Children taking part in organised activities were being protected from an environment and community characterised by risk. Swimming lessons reduced the risk of drowning and taking part in organised activities provided an arena for children to undertake physical activity in a safe environment. For example Amy explained:

Well it’s my peace of mind um, so that in the future I know that she will be able for herself in the case of an emergency. Um, but I suppose it’s just something that I can give her to help in you know in what she can do for herself in the future. I think swimming probably more of an essential um, it’s something that we both feel that she has to learn and whether she chooses to take it further and you know take it on competitively, well that’s her own choice but at least to have the basics and to be able to swim and to be able to, you know, get to the side of a pool and pull herself out um, is an essential. (Mother of two Generation Z children, 104436F)
The safety of their children was a major concern for Generation Z parents and the issue of risk and child safety is taken up in more depth in Chapter Eight. It was not however the only concern nor was the obviation of risk the only beneficial outcome for a child involved in an organised activity. Although beneficial outcomes varied considerably, there were common underlying themes that emerged. Annette explained that organised leisure activities provided her children with appropriate life skills through socialisation:

Ohh, I just think, that just to play sport is really good for them. Umm, to be involved um, ‘specially because they are not from a really big place. Like a lot of their activities beforehand that they were involved in were with kids they went to school with. Whereas these other activities, they meet kids from other backgrounds and different schools as well. (Mother of four Generation Z children, 112455F)

In his response, Max suggested that organised activities can be a site for building confidence:

Ballet, is more, we haven’t got as much out of it, because we can’t go in and watch it. It is all behind closed doors [...] It is a matter of her coming out excited and happy and telling us what she did [...] But it’s just a matter of her enjoying it, she loves to dance. She gets more confidence and things, so. (Father of one Generation Z child, 110620M)

Learning to be a team player was also cited as a beneficial outcome. Annette said:

And yeah, so I just think it’s good for them and to play a team sport. One of the girls, um, is quite into gymnastics. It is a very lonely sport, and it was really hard the fact that it was only one child that we were spending all that time with. Umm, and then we sort of really felt that she needed to play, like something that involved others [...] you rely on them and they rely on you. (Mother of four Generation Z children, 112455F)

Furthermore, Amelia described how participation in this type of activity was a site for development, “and I really like being with the kids and my kids friends and just seeing them developing and its really good when you are teaching them something new” (mother of three Generation Z children, 113586F).
Parents also described how these types of activities provided their children with new opportunities and life experiences they may not have had otherwise whilst aiding in their development. These activities were seen by parents as a valuable and important part of childhood in the 21st century. For example, Nellie had the following to say, “It was obviously, it was good to know that your daughter is heading in the right direction as far as life experiences and knowledge like swimming and education and things like that” (mother of two Generation Z children, 102323M). This was reiterated by Amy:

I mean there is obviously things that I’d like her to try like things that will probably take her to like whether it be piano or you know dancing or whatever. There’s things we would like to let her at least experience in the future so she can determine for herself whether she’d like to do them. (Mother of two Generation Z children, 104436F)

Parents also saw organised activities as an essential arena in which their children could participate in physical activity:

He’s not a very social child; he’s not a very sporty child, so it is definitely beneficial for him, because he’s needs to do some sort of physical activity outside of school. And he is definitely not a team sport sort of child. (Jessica, mother of two Generation Z children, 100853F)

Parents placed a high priority on the organised activities of their children. The value that this group of parents placed on these types of activities is exemplified by Emma who declared, “I just do it. You know, everything else waits” (mother of one Generation Z child, 113510F). Similarly, Brittany explained:

There is no way I could stop her from doing that [dancing] and it just has to fit in with our routine and if I ever get stuck and can’t take her my mum thinks it’s very important to so she’ll often say, “No drop her here then I’ll take her if it means she is gonna [sic] miss out”. (Mother of two Generation Z children, 104605F)

Parents appeared to do their absolute utmost to ensure their child had the opportunity to participate. Evidence of this is provided by Lyndell who explained:
Coen, last year went to music classes. So I would take time in lieu of work, umm, every Wednesday, and I would take time off from work, because his day-care centre is situated across the road from my work. I would just walk him back to day-care [...] I was lucky enough that they would let me do that. Yeah um, but it was with a big impact, even though it was only an hour and a half out of work it was a lot of fussing around on a Wednesday morning in the end, for what he got. It just wasn’t worth it. So yeah we haven’t done it this year. We probably will do it again next year, throw ourselves into it again. (Mother of two Generation Z children, 100230F)

While parents of Generation Z children placed a great deal of importance on the organised activities of their children, these same activities were often the source of inconvenience, hassle and conflict with family schedules. For example Jennifer explained, “It’s a lot more work for me, especially the dancing. The dancing pretty much kills me on a Monday because I usually have to have dinner ready before we go” (mother of two Generation Z children, 107073F). In addition, Heather had the following to say:

Umm, Monday’s at four o’clock is always a pain, because it’s nearly, because once the kids have finished school it is bedlam out there on the roads, and everywhere, um, and then of course when she finishes at 4.45 it’s like, I should be already getting dinner on by that stage. So, that is really a hassle. (Mother of two Generation Z children, 105984F)

**Intergenerational comparison**

Parental influences on the organised leisure activities of children has changed significantly since the 1950s, at the same time however, there are threads of similarity that run through each of generations. Role modelling has been shown to be important and this is borne out in the literature. For example, Trost et al. (2003) found that parents influenced the physical activity of their children through role modelling and as supporters. Further research has also found that parents influence physical activity, particularly of girls through role modelling (Madsen, McCulloch, & Crawford, 2009), while other research has pointed to parental influence on children’s physical activity in varying age groups. For example, Loprinzi and Trost (2010) found that parental support for and role modelling of physical activity influenced the activities of their preschool children, while Davison (2003) found that
role modelling of parents influenced the physical activity of nine year old girls. Although these quantitative studies shed light on the type of influence that parents have on the physical activity of their children, this influence is not contextualised within broader socio-cultural frameworks. Nor has this research sought to understand why parents influence children to take part in physical activities. From the area of sports research, evidence also suggests that parents influence their children through role modelling behaviour (Eime, et al., 2010) whilst other research with similar findings demonstrates that parents facilitate the initial entry into sport for children, play vital supporting roles and provide both transportation and financial support (Partridge, Brustad, & Babkes, 2008).

This study finds that parents of Generations X and Y and Generation Z influenced the organised leisure activities of their children based on a number of developmental and social outcomes. This influence did however vary between the generations. Parents of Generations X and Y were consciously aware of the benefits of participation and the associated outcomes; however these outcomes were more often than not a side effect of participation and not the primary reason children took part in organised leisure activities. Parents of Generation Z were more likely to ensure their children took part in organised activities based on expected outcomes, for example participating in swimming lessons to gain the life skill of learning to swim.

Parents of Generations X and Y and Generation Z were aware of the role they played in the leisure of their children and were interested in ensuring participation in activities based on positive socialisation outcomes (Kleiber, 1999). Whilst influences varied between the generations, with different nuances the outcomes from each of these generations did have a number of factors in common. Similar outcomes between Generations X and Y and Generation Z included socialisation, team building skills, child development and the benefits of children participating in physical activity. In addition to these shared outcomes, parents of Generation Z felt that childhood participation in organised leisure activities also provided their children with the opportunity to learn valuable life skills and experiences in a safe environment. This connects with research by Shaw and Dawson (2001) who found that parents use leisure to teach their children about health and fitness, the environment and other ethical or social values. Canadian research has also found a number of outcomes from participation in organised sporting activities. The attainment of life skills were identified as
an outcome of participation in organised sporting activities specifically (Holt, Black, Tamminen, Fox, & Mandigo, 2008), whilst further research has found that teamwork and social skills were outcomes of participation in organised sporting activities for children (Holt, Kingsley, Tink, & Scherer, 2011).

This study highlights the positive influences of parents on the leisure activities of children. There were no reported instances of negative parental influences on the leisure of children, although this type of influence has been reported, especially in the sporting realm in other studies. For example, Jeanes and Magee (2011) found that “outbursts of aggression, verbal abuse and threats of physical violence by fathers were an ongoing and regular feature of the elite youth football” (p. 280), while Willms (2009) found that a fathers attention to his daughters sporting activities could be “experienced as domineering, manipulative and disempowering” (p. 142). Furthermore, parental influences on organised leisure activities of their children could either encourage or discourage participation (Davison, 2004), although in this study it was far more likely for Generation Z children to be encouraged to participate, there was evidence from Generations X and Y of parents who discouraged participation.

“Tracey does all that [...] she has a calendar, she writes it all down”

Mothers played a major role in the organised leisure activities of their Generation Z children. These mothers were the chief organisers, managers, implementers of plans and traffic controllers. Dion explained how his wife had the task of coordinating the activities of their children:

Yeah, Tracey does all that, she knows what is going on, she has a calendar, she writes it all down. Yep, she definitely does all that. They actually fit into Tracey’s routine. She finishes, she works two or three days a week and she finishes at school time and then she starts carting them around, from place to place. She’s got it all worked out. You know she has to here at this time, drop this one off there. And there is pretty much something on every day, training for those other sports, yeah. (Father of four Generation Z children, 112455M)
Unlike previous generations, whose roles were that of gatekeeper (mothers of Baby Boomers) and role modellers (mothers of Generations X and Y) mothers of Generation Z children took an active approach to their children’s leisure activities. Evidence suggested that mothers had begun to coach and manage the sporting teams of their children. By way of example, Annette said, “Like I have been team manager, and I have coached them. And you know, I always go and watch them” (mother of four Generation Z children, 112455F).

This maternal change from previous generations reflects a general underlying change in gender roles which has seen mothers move out of the private (mothers of Baby Boomers) and into the public sphere (mothers of Generations X and Y) to become firmly entrenched in the public sphere to the point where it is seen as unremarkable for mothers of Generation Z children to take positions in public life. It must be noted however, that whilst mothers are able to manage teams and take administrative positions in clubs seen as predominately male, the foray into coaching male gendered leisure activities such as male sports including football and male basketball is very limited (see for example, Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Walker & Bopp, 2010-2011).

**Intergenerational comparison**

An intergenerational comparison shows that the mothers of Baby Boomer children influenced the leisure experiences of their children in the private sphere, with some evidence suggesting that mothers were beginning to influence those activities undertaken in the public realm. The influence provided by the mothers of Generations X and Y varied greatly. Mothers during this time were moving into the workforce in increasing numbers and this entry into the public realm is reflected in their influence on the leisure activities of their children. Many mothers from this period were not only influencing the participation of their children, but also enabling participation and transporting their children to activities. The mothers of Generation Z had tight control of the leisure activities of their children and this was subsumed in the role this group of mothers played. They were the plan implementers, traffic controllers and organisers of the leisure activities of their children. It has been argued that one of the socially defined roles of women could be seen as leisure experience facilitators (Shannon & Shaw, 2008). This argument is based upon Raymore’s (2002) concept that suggests, “Facilitators to leisure are factors [...] perceived or experienced by individuals to enable or promote the formation of leisure preferences and to encourage or
enhance participation” (p. 39). Certainly the role of mothers of Generation Z would accord with the leisure facilitator tag. Within this study, mothers carried out the majority of organisational responsibilities for the leisure of their children. This coincides with research from the United States that suggests mothers do far more of this type of organisation when compared with fathers (Lareau & Weininger, 2008).

“I just do what my wife tells me to do”

While the mothers of Generation Z children were the chief organisers, managers, plan implementers and traffic controllers, fathers played a supporting role as hands on helpers. Fathers transported their children to activities (if asked to by the child’s mother). Henry described his role supporting the leisure of his children:

Ahhh, well my wife does most of it, because it’s during the day and I’m at work, and/or straight after school. We’ve got some friends who we do some carpooling with. Yeah, I just do what my wife tells me to do. It’s not quite that bad, but yeah [laughs]. (Father of three Generation Z children, 110638M)

Fathers also had an active role in assisting at the activities their children took part in. Reece described the role he played in assisting at Little Athletics, “Basically they do require, obviously parents to help with measuring, you know, shot put, the discus, and the long jump. And you know, if no-one is there to help, I’ll step in and help out” (father of three Generation Z children, 113811M). Another Generation Z father explained his role in assisting at his children at swimming lessons:

Well, generally I was always in the water with the younger one. Yes. When the, when the oldest one was a baby and unable to swim, I would get in with him, ahh, then he went up to the next sized pool and then I ended up back in the pool with the younger one. (Nicholas, father of two Generation Z children, 100230M)

Furthermore, Bruce had the following to say with regard to his involvement in the leisure activities of his children, “Yeah, I actually enjoy going and doing these things with them. ‘Cause I play basketball too. Which um, I train my daughter. I get a bit of enjoyment out of both the sports that they do” (father of two Generation Z children, 112609M).
Intergenerational comparison

In a comparison of the four generations, the fathers of Baby Boomer children in their public sphere roles of breadwinner had little direct influence on the leisure of their children other than that of role modellers and occasional transporters to organised activities. Fathers of Generations X and Y, still in their public sphere role of breadwinners took a much more active approach to their child’s leisure activities. These fathers transported their children to and from activities and began to take on coaching roles. The role of fathers of Generation Z was similar to that of fathers of Generations X and Y. Both generations transported their children to and from activities and coached or managed their children’s sporting teams. This accords with research by both Thompson (1999) and Willms (2009) who have pointed to the influence of fathers on the leisure of their children in the sporting arena, highlighting their roles as role models, and their functions of assisting with playing techniques and coaching. Evidence from this study suggests that fathers of Generation Z in comparison to the previous generation of fathers spent a considerable amount of extra time involving themselves in the leisure activities of their children. This reflects the changing nature of fatherhood and the resulting paradigm shift in what it means to be ‘father’ (Tiedje & Darling-Fisher, 1996).

The role of fathers of Generation Z has shifted from that of the Baby Boomer father and Generation X father. Fathers of Generation Z are expected to take a much more active and involved approach to fathering and although many would consider themselves to be primary breadwinners, the role of mothers in the public realm and the workforce means that, in many families, the father is part of the dual earner team that is needed to support the family and pay the mortgage. When it comes to the leisure activities of their children, fathers of Generation Z are very much hands on helpers. This change is demonstrated by Cherie, the mother of three Generation Z children described the differences between her father and her husband as a father:
I guess it is similar, but I do know that my Dad changed his very first ever nappy on my daughter, and I am one of three. So, I think that my Mum probably didn’t get as much help from my Dad as I probably get from my husband. I think that um, from what I have seen that men are a bit more involved. But my Mum didn’t work until - I am the youngest - didn’t work until I was in about year 5 or 6 or something and I had my older brother and sister to look after me. So, kind of similar, but there are some differences I guess. (Cherie, mother of three Generation Z children, 102473F)

This difference is also demonstrated by Lyndell who also points to the hands on role of her husband and the difference between the role of her father and her husband as a father:

Um, and I look back now and think how different it is as far as my husband’s role in the house. I remember my mum saying in the house, whenever we got in trouble “I will tell your father about it when he gets home.” You know if I said that to my boys they would go “Good! Tell Daddy what I did.” I’m not saying that my husband plays a bigger role, but he is a lot more hands on with them. Maybe I play a lesser role than my mother did, ’cause I’m not there full time all the time. (Lyndell, mother of two Generation Z children, 100230F)

For fathers, the leisure of their children is seen as a key component of their role and a context for parenting (Such, 2006), a site where fathers are able to pass on values to the next generation (Harrington, 2006, 2009; Kay, 2009), and a means of spending quality time with their children outside of the home (Coakley, 2009). Fathers, as has been highlighted within this study, influenced their child’s leisure participation through their roles of coaches, transporters and role modellers. This is compared to mothers of Generation Z who influenced the leisure of their children through their roles of leisure experience facilitators (Raymore, 2002).

As the previous section of this chapter has demonstrated influences provided by parents of each of the generations involved in this study have altered over time in line with social changes occurring in the wider community. The parents of Baby Boomers acted as gatekeepers and role modellers, the parents of Generations X and Y fulfilled their roles of role modellers whilst at the same time encouraging and possibly compelling their children to take part in activities which had some positive outcome for the child (such as socialisation
and team building skills). Parents of Generation Z were more likely to coerce their children into undertaking organised leisure activities.

On being a “Good” Parent

This section of the chapter explores the current notions of being a “good” mother, father or parent with reference to the influence that this has on the organised leisure activities of children. As this is a relatively new phenomenon within the late 20th and early 21st centuries the emphasis here is placed on the parents of Generation Z. However, notions of the ‘right’ way to parent have influenced parenting and thus children and childhood for a number of years. A brief review of the parental roles and the dominant discourses of parenting have been provided for the parents of Baby Boomers and parents of Generations X and Y previously in this chapter. These are used to provide a counterpoint and evidence of social change and influence that notions of “good” parenting has on the organised leisure activities of Generation Z children.

The roles and expectation of mothers of Generation Z had shifted and altered when compared with mothers of Baby Boomer and Generation X children in particular. It was much more common for mothers of Generation Z to be in the workforce, certainly this generation of mothers often returned to work soon after the birth of their children. Mother of Generation Z were expected to combine their traditional homemaker roles with new roles which included transporting her children to and from their various activities and making a contribution to the household in the form of paid work. A mother’s role had expanded and altered. Those involved in this project felt that they were expected to participate in paid work and look after their families and homes. Cherie spoke about how she felt about the stress of obligation and expectation to work both inside and outside of the home:
There was none of this rushing around and trying to fit everything in I think in that time you didn’t feel obligated to do so many things at the school and so many things um for the preschool and playgroups and it wasn’t expected I guess that you worked. I mean my mum worked from home she was a seamstress so she had the opportunity to work from home. Now you always get the question, “so what do you do?” And if you say “I stay at home”, “it’s oh, do you?” So you get that sort of question thrown at you all the time and I don’t think you had that stress that you felt obligated that you had to work. (Mother of three Generation Z children, 107342F)

While many mothers have taken on the task of paid employment, they have not relinquished one of the key underlying notions of motherhood – the ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982). Responsibility and commitment to others is a particularly high priority for many mothers, and this is reflected in the responsibility and organisation of their children’s organised activities.

The task of juggling their work and family commitments can be stressful and mothers involved in this study enlisted a support crew to enable them to fulfil their role of mother and to make it possible for their children to take part in organised leisure activities. In most cases the support crew took the form of grandparents, other family members and trusted family friends. The Generation Z support crew is discussed in more depth in the next section of this chapter.

The social changes which included the second wave feminist movement and changes to dominant ideologies surrounding parenting that have occurred over the past sixty years have underpinned changes in the meaning of motherhood, fatherhood and the meaning of being a good parent. Coakley (2009) argues that fathers who do not actively support and encourage their children are often not seen to be “meeting widely accepted standards for good parenting” (p. 40). This could also be held true for mothers. For example, Chloe said:

And it wasn’t as important to have your kids involved in sport in those days. It has almost become a thing where, you know, you are not a good parent unless your child is involved in different sporting activities. You wonder whether it’s going too far. (Chloe, mother of two Generation Z children, 106122F)
The move away from traditional societies to the post-traditional late modern society has also placed extra pressure on parents. Participation in organised leisure by children was part of the child rearing process for parents of Generation Z. Australian research has shown that almost two-thirds of parents lack confidence in their parenting and feel pressured by the community to be a good parent (Grose, 2006). Furthermore a quarter of parents feel that they would be harshly judged if they didn’t get it right (Grose, 2006). The ideology of being a good parent affects children’s participation in organised leisure activities. Practices of good parenting are played out through the organised activities of their children. Children’s leisure has thus become an arena for the display of good parenting.

The Generation Z support crew

The support crew is a new development in family life. It was not seen in the childhood of Baby Boomers; it was beginning to appear in the childhood of Generations X and Y, and was well established in the childhood of Generation Z. The parents of Generation Z relied heavily on a support crew to assist in transporting their children between activities. In most cases the support team was in the form of the grandparents of Generation Z children, although other family members and friends also played a supporting role. This is in keeping with previous research that has found that mothers develop social networks as a response to the challenge of organising and escorting their children (Barker, 2003; Dyck, 1990). For example Keith described their support crew, “So quite often, umm, if he has school sports he will go to that straight after school and one of Judy’s parents will take him from school to the other” (father of two Generation Z children, 100853M). Kim also described how she relied on extended family members to be part of her support crew:

Yeah, like my little girl, she is three, she does dancing. I take her to dancing on a Monday. But today, like I actually had to go out of town for work, so I had to rely on her great grandmother to pick her up from childcare and take her to dancing, then drop her back off. (Mother of three Generation Z children, 110399F)

The support crew worked both ways. A mother simultaneously had a support crew and was part of a support crew. In the following response, Annette elaborates:
I’m lucky I’ve got three sisters in Rural Town. And two of them have four children each, so a lot of things we just help each other out with. We also have both our parents here as well. So, um, my mum lives around the corner from where the girls are at school. Yeah, so that is very handy. It saves a lot. They go there and wait ‘til I get there, and um, things like that so. Yeah. (Mother of four Generation Z children, 112455F)

In essence, if a parent or trusted friend or relative was unable to transport a child to their chosen leisure activity the child did not have the opportunity to participate.

The use of a support crew to enable to the care work of mothers which includes the organised leisure activities of their children has been demonstrated in other studies. Arendell (2000) found that using help not only assisted with scheduling conflicts but also eased some time bind faced in some families, whilst Barker (2003) found that while women were primarily responsible for organising and transporting their children to various activities, they also used local support networks to assist.

In summary then, the parents of Generation Z had much more control over the organised activities of their children than their counterparts from previous generations. This group of parents coerced their children to take part in activities. Parents were aware of obvious benefits to their children’s participation in organised activities which included socialisation, the development of confidence and the team building skills. Participation was also seen to enhance life skills and life experiences and provide an opportunity for children to take part in physical activity. Participation by children in organised activities was also found to be an arena in which parents were able to display good parenting. At the same time, a child’s participation in organised activities often led to stress and conflict with schedules which parents were able to mitigate to some extent through the use of a support crew of trusted friends and relatives.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that parents have an important role in the organised leisure activities of their children. This role has changed over time and has been affected by social
Parents of Baby Boomer children had a central influence on the leisure of their children through their roles as gatekeepers and role modellers. The influence imparted by this generation of parents was both veiled and unconscious and differed between genders. Mothers of Baby Boomer children were more likely to influence their children in the private realm and fathers more likely to influence those activities in the public sphere reflecting dominant ideologies which positioned the home as the private realm of women and children and the public sphere as a man’s space (Darke, 2002). The role of parents of Baby Boomer children reflected dominant gender ideologies and this filtered through to the organised leisure activities of children. Girls were doubly ensconced in the private realm through their gender and status as a child and as such opportunity for participation in organised leisure activities was restricted.

The social changes wrought by second wave feminism and a move to post-traditional societies characterised by individualism and reflexivity impacted on the parental roles of the parents of Generations X and Y children. This generation of parents were proactive in their involvement in the organised leisure activities of their children. Parents began to understand that participation in organised activities could lead to beneficial outcomes for children and as a consequence began to exert more overt influence on the activities of their children. The role of both mothers and fathers had changed from the previous generation. This generation of mothers with their gradual move into the public realm through their participation in paid work began to transport their children to and from organised activities. Mothers took the role of taxi driver (Thompson, 1999). The role of fathers also changed as fathers began to expand their roles of breadwinner with a role more connected to nurturing (Aldous, et al., 1998). This generation of fathers began to take on a role in the leisure of their children which included coaching and managing sports teams. As with the previous generation of parents, the role of parents of Generations X and Y were connected to dominant understandings of parenting. The private sphere ‘expressive’ housewife (Parsons & Bales, 1955) who offered warmth security and emotional support (Bowlby & Fry, 1953) and ‘instrumental’ breadwinner (Parsons & Bales, 1955) was giving way to a cultural understanding of motherhood and fatherhood. The changing roles of both parents influenced the organised activities of children and this combined with technological and social change led to increases in participation in organised activities for children.
The parents of Generation Z children had tight control over the organised leisure activities of their children. These activities had expected outcomes which aligned with opportunities for development and the provision of life skills and experience. Parents of this generation of children had a coercive role in the organised leisure of their children in which they ensured participation in an activity based on expected outcomes. As with previous generations the role of both mothers and fathers differed. Mothers of Generation Z children held the role of leisure experience facilitators (Raymore, 2002; Shannon & Shaw, 2008) and were plan implementers, traffic controllers and organisers of leisure activities for children. While the influence provided by fathers of Generation Z children was similar to that of the previous generation evidence from this study suggests that this generation of fathers spent a considerable amount of extra time in supporting, encouraging and ensuring the participation in organised activities of their children reflecting the paradigm shift in what it means to be a father (Tiedje & Darling-Fisher, 1996). Parents of Generation Z children were conscious of their parental role and saw participation by their children in organised leisure activities as an area in which good parenting could be exhibited. A support crew of trusted friends and relatives was used by parents of Generation Z to assist with the mitigation of stress and conflicting schedules caused in some part by childhood participation in organised activities.

This chapter has examined the clear and distinct influence of parents on the organised leisure activities of Australian children since the 1950s. In the next chapter an examination of the factors that underpin the influences explored in this and the previous chapter is undertaken. As such the broader socio-cultural influences on the organised leisure activities of children are explored. Included is a discussion on fear, danger, trust and risk.
Chapter Eight: From autonomy to SUPER-vision: Risk and children’s leisure

Contemporary meanings of childhood are shaped by the links between the past and the present, to be found in residual notions of childhood in the popular imagination and contemporary accounts of risk and crisis. (Kehily, 2010, p. 171)

We didn’t have that whole thing about needing to make sure your children were completely and utterly safe. My mother never doubted that I could quite easily […] get the train from where I live across to Cityside, without any fear, it might be all day, but I could do that […] whereas my children’s children have to be taken everywhere in a car, for various reasons, it could be for safety and all that sort of stuff. But I didn’t ever feel afraid when I was growing up. (Linda, Baby Boomer child, mother of three Generation X children, one Generation Y child and grandmother to Generation Z children, 205656F)

“There’s just danger everywhere, who can you trust?”

In the 21st century parents have been accused of ‘bubble-wrapping’ their children and keeping them from experiences outside the home where they may be at perceived risk (Malone, 2007) and of being ‘helicopter parents’ who hover over their children and fill their lives full of structured and organised activities (Howe, 2009). They are said to be anxious and out of control (Nelson, 2010), paranoid (Füredi, 2001) and practice hyper-parenting as they schedule multiple activities to fill up the free time of their children (Rosenfeld & Wise, 2001, 2011). These notions accord with perhaps one of the clearest themes to emerge from the semi-structured interview data which were concerns surrounding the safety of children. In this chapter leisure and child safety is discussed with reference to the notion of risk. Risk landscapes (Murray, 2009) are compared and contrasted between the generations and an overview of changes that have occurred across time is provided. This chapter describes how Baby Boomer children who were beginning the move from a traditional to a post-traditional late modern society did not appear to be affected by socio-cultural notions of risk. It demonstrates how the tendrils of change that began in the childhood of Generation X have reached out across time to where risk has become a pervasive influence on the leisure of children in the late modern era.

203
As was touched on in Chapter Seven a key factor influencing the organised leisure activities of Generation Z children were parental concerns surrounding child safety or more precisely a reaction to perceived risk in the community. There were three ways in which risk influenced the leisure of Generation Z children. These included guarding against future risk, reaction to current risk and consequences of risk. These concepts are examined in the next section of this chapter.

Guarding against future risk: “It’s peace of mind I guess”

Generation Z children took part in activities as a result of parental concerns surrounding future risk. A key activity in which this was demonstrated was in relation to child participation in swimming lessons. Children took part in swimming lessons in order to lessen the potential risk of that same activity. For example, summers in Australia can be long and hot and more than 80% of Australia’s population live within 50 kilometres of the coast (ABS, 2008a). Swimming lessons were seen as essential and indeed this was the most common organised activity undertaken by Generation Z children (see Appendix R for full activity breakdown of Generation Z activities). This aligns with ABS data showing the activity with the highest participation rates by Australian children was in fact swimming lessons (ABS, 2003). The rationale for parents involving their Generation Z children in swimming lessons was very much tied to issues of child safety. Gillian explained, “of course, there is the safety aspect of it. You know, we have a pool. Well yeah, we feel that that’s important, the safety aspect of it” (mother of two Generation Z children, 104056F). This sentiment was echoed by Jennifer, “we have a pool in our back yard so it was more for safety than anything” (mother of two Generation Z children, 107073F). Lastly Amy suggested, “Well it’s my peace of mind um; so that in the future I know that she will be able, for herself in the case of an emergency” (mother of two Generation Z children, 104436F).

Whilst Generation Z children took part in swimming lessons for a variety of reasons including those surrounding developmental outcomes and the attainment of life skills, the key rationale for involvement in swimming lessons for parents was to ensure that their children learnt to swim, thus easing the possible risk of drowning. Through their child’s participation in organised swimming lessons parents were attempting to guard against future risk. In this instance the future could be tomorrow, next month or next year. The
longer the child took part and the more their water safety improved, the less the risk became.

Parents of Generation Z also encouraged their children to take part in organised leisure activities in an effort to overcome the risk of a future that could be characterised by boredom in adolescence. Amelia explained how her children took part in a variety of pursuits in an effort to stave off the risk of her children having “nothing better to do” as adolescents:

I see a lot of kids just bored having nothing to do. And I have sort of looked around and saw the parents that are involved, and I have heard it too, from other areas, parents who are involved in their kids’ lives um, you know, their kids tend to do better. They feel more confident, um, and I just want really confident happy kids and not kids that are bored on weekends and walking around the streets because they’ve got nothing better to do. I want my kids to still, you know, when they are 14, 15, well; we’re off to Netball on Saturday so, and for me to be with them.  
(Mother of three Generation Z children, 113586F)

An underlying discourse exists in many parts of Australian society that suggests that if youth are not kept occupied and are left to boredom, they risk consequences of underage drinking, drug abuse and anti-social behaviour. This type of discourse is reinforced in the media, for example, in 2008 ABC News reported that boredom was behind youth binge drinking (ABC News, 2008) and in the literature, for example Patterson, Pegg and Dobson-Patterson (2000) explored the links between boredom in leisure and alcohol use in Australian adolescents. Parents, in this sense, are guarding against future risks by setting up a pattern of behaviour that they expect to continue on into the future. This also connects to the adult construction of children as either ‘little devils’ or ‘little angels’ (Jones, 2000; Valentine, 1996). In a similar vein, others have shown that children are seen as “vulnerable innocents” who need to be safeguarded and protected from the wider community (Scott, et al., 1998, p. 691). From this perspective, children who are kept occupied in approved, organised and adult supervised activities could be seen as more likely to be kept from falling onto the wrong side of the divide which would see them become ‘little devils’.
Reaction to current risk: “You can’t feel secure letting your kid walk to school”

The second area in which the notion of risk influenced the leisure of Generation Z children is as a reaction to current risk. Generation Z children were seen to live in a society that was inherently dangerous, a society in which it was difficult to know who you are able to trust. Grandparents of Generation Z described two key dangers in their reflections on the childhood of Generation Z. These included stranger danger and traffic danger (Carver, et al., 2008; Füredi, 2002; Valentine, 2004). These fears were discussed by grandparents of Generation Z who make comparisons with their own childhood. For example, Elizabeth said:

Back when I was a kid, we were allowed to play on the streets without any problems, and I don’t think that we had to be involved in stuff to get us off the streets and away from bad people, like we do these days. I grew up at City Beach and we used to go to the beach whenever we wanted to, and play in the streets with all our friends [...] So I don’t think the parents had to do as much looking after, as what we do, and probably what you do with your kids now, it would be even worse I think. I think you would have to do much more now, only for the danger part of it. Isn’t it sad? It’s just sad. (Mother of three Generation X children, one Generation Y child and Grandmother to Generation Z children, 201872F)

Olivia also described stranger danger:

I think our society too is just so horrible you know you’ve got to be so aware of stranger danger and all these things [...] There’s no really childhood, there’s no longer that age of innocence and playing and there’s no time [...] I think that’s really sad. I mean children have to be children and have to play and they have to have some time that’s just no pressure to do something [...] Yeah, I mean when are they going to be children? (Mother of two Generation X children, one Generation Y child and grandmother to Generation Z children, 205781F)

Reactions by parents to stranger danger and traffic danger first appeared in evidence provided by parents of Generations X and Y children. For example, Jill described how the location of their home, next to a busy road, meant that her children were not allowed to walk to school by themselves, “We lived close to a highway; I couldn’t let them walk to
school by themselves” (Baby Boomer, mother of one Generation X and one Generation Y child, 211583F). Another parent, Marie explained that it was safer for her children to be driven to school:

They had to be driven of course. Like on the highway, we didn’t allow them to ride their pushbikes down the highway. We felt safer driving them ourselves and knowing that they got there safely, and yeah we had to take time out admittedly. (Baby Boomer, mother of one Generation X and one Generation Y child, 207343F)

Whilst these examples outline the increasing concerns of the parents of Generations X and Y children, the concerns for safety are nested around travel to and from school. As was outlined in Chapter Seven, participation in organised leisure activities was based on expected outcomes for the child, for example, socialisation, team building skills and healthy lifestyle outcomes. Concerns surrounding child safety did not feature prominently.

Of particular note in the findings from the parents of Generation Z is the lack of data surrounding fear, stranger danger or traffic danger in relation to their children. There are a number of explanations for this. Firstly, these parents grew up during a time when stranger danger and traffic danger were becoming a part of the cultural landscape of their childhood. To this group of parents these were known dangers. They were taken as a given. This is reflected in a comment made by Evan who explained how his child knew that if she needs assistance from others at swimming club then it would be from “another adult, that she knows of course [emphasis added]” (father of three Generation Z children, 113956M).

Secondly, this type of data may have been missing from the parents of Generation Z due to the ages of their children. All of the children from this group were aged twelve and under, with a clear majority in the preschool age group (see Appendix S for a complete age breakdown). Given the ages of these children, it would be expected that they would almost always have appropriate adult supervision during their leisure time and would always be driven to their activities. There was little indication that those children who were old enough to either walk or ride their bikes to their activities did so. There was however an instance in which one mother described how her children walked by themselves to school. The children aged five and six lived close to the school and the family had moved to a rural community for a lifestyle change:
I sort of, we moved here with the thing that you know, a good lifestyle change, and the kids can walk to school even though they are only little, but school is not far from where we are and we can nearly see them all the way to the school.

(Charmaine, mother of two Generation Z children, 112584F)

In her response, Charmaine did however provide justification for her children walking to school. Her comment of “but the school is not far away and we can nearly see them all the way” suggests an understanding of known dangers and provides an explanation for allowing her children to walk to school. There was also another instance in which Brittany, the mother of two Generation Z children indicated that her daughter rode her bike to school.

Thirdly, the parents of Generation Z were not specifically asked within the semi-structured interviews any questions surrounding risk, fear or danger (nor were any of the other generations within this study). The theme encompassing risk, fear, safety and danger came from reflections made by the mid cohort group. Whilst the recollections of these grandparents provided a somewhat nostalgic view of the past (Jenks, 1996; Kehily, 2008), they were able to demonstrate through an historical perspective the changes that had occurred since the 1950s. This included their recollections of their own childhood (Baby Boomers), their children’s childhood (Generations X and Y) and their grandchildren’s childhood (Generation Z). This is shown in the following interview excerpt in which Jill spoke about her perceptions of childhood in the early part of the 21st century:

Our lifestyle was a lot different [...] I don’t, I think our young generation kids wouldn’t be game to let their kids hop on a pushbike and go to school or walk down the road and I think that’s a terrible amount of pressure for them. (Mother of one Generation X and one Generation Y child and grandmother to Generation Z children, 211583F)
Holly reinforced this position:

People have the problem that you can’t, you know, feel secure sometimes letting your kid walk to school or because if something happened to them you’ve been neglectful and it’s your fault and at the same time the kid needs the exercise.

(Mother of three Generation X children, 210050F)

In a similar vein, Robert the father of two Generation Y children aged 12 and 15 years described how concerns surrounding safety and traffic danger were not part of his childhood however they were concerns that he had for his own children:

Um, I used to ride a push bike everywhere too um, I, nowadays I think, well the streets that I used to ride with, around then, but now it’s pretty busy, and around here it’s pretty busy so maybe we worry about what they do more, I don’t know.

(Baby Boomer, father of two Generation Y children, 200152M)

These quotes demonstrate that those who have witnessed, experienced and lived through the social and cultural changes wrought by late modernity were able to provide vital evidence crucial to an understanding of the changes that occurred. Baby Boomers who took part in this study were children in the 1950s and 1960s and experienced free, spontaneous and autonomous leisure. They were parents in the 1970s and 1980s and watched this spontaneity and autonomy diminish as parents became more aware of risks in society. They are now grandparents of Generation Z children and are able to reveal the role that risk is playing in relation to children in the early part of the 21st century. Parents of Generation Z have had some awareness of the perception of risk surrounding them, even as children in the 1970s and 1980s. Risk, or more appropriately the reaction to risk is a normal part of everyday life, albeit experienced and responded to in different ways by different parents. Risk is reflexively constructed by each individual and this connects with earlier research which suggests that responses to risk are shaped by factors such as age and gender (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002) and class, ethnicity and location (Mythen, 2007). Here responses to risk appear to be generational. Murray (2009) found that responses to risk were generational based on the notion of kinship generations. Within this study, responses to risk appear to differ based on social generations with Baby Boomers placing more emphasis on risk factors than the Generation X parents of Generation Z children.
There is evidence in the literature that supports the contention that parents are concerned with rising levels of traffic and stranger danger in the community. Both are seen as significant threats to the safety of children. Researchers have found that parents respond to the threat of traffic danger by removing their children from exposure to streets and traffic (Kelley, et al., 1998; Valentine, 1997), although this, in turn leads to more congestion on the roads (Kearns & Collins, 2003; Tranter & Pawson, 2001). Responses to the threat of stranger danger, both from adults and other children are similar. For example, Kelley et al. (1998) found that parents chose to “structure their children’s activities outside the home to prevent them mixing with children they regarded as ‘undesirable’” (p. 19). Other evidence from the United States suggests that parents use a range of strategies including participation in structured activities to enable their children to participate in leisure in neighbourhoods which are considered high risk (Outley & Floyd, 2002). Whilst Jenkins (2006) found that despite parental concerns regarding stranger danger, parents were also concerned that restrictions placed on their children could harm their social and physical development.

Consequences of risk: “I was paranoid about something happening to them”

The third area in which the leisure of children was influenced is as a consequence of risk. This influence is not in response to a perceived risk, but is an outcome of living in a period of time in which risk is seen as a pervasive aspect of society. Two key outcomes were evident within this study. These include increases in child SUPER-vision and surveillance and a change in the space available for children to play. These factors are addressed in the next two sections of this chapter.

SUPER-vision

Baby Boomers, growing up in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s experienced free and spontaneous play that was autonomous and carefree in nature. As described in Chapter Five, Baby Boomers spent their leisure time going to the beach whenever they wanted to, disappearing into the bush for the day or playing in the streets. For this generation of children there was a distinct lack of parental supervision or surveillance.

Change over the course of one generation can be considerable. There were substantial changes for example between Baby Boomers and Generation X with regard to the safety of
children. Whilst Baby Boomer children were free to roam the streets with little regard for parental supervision, changes were occurring and concerns for child safety were beginning to creep into the psyche of the parents of Generations X and Y. Gina described how she and her partner had made conscious choices surrounding the safety of their children:

I was paranoid about something happening to them, so I took them to school, I took them into the playground, I picked them up in the playground and that I did until they went to high school. And by that time the three older boys went on the school bus, but the youngest boy never did. We took him right the way through school and probably ‘til the last six months. And he never ever got the bus [...] Yeah, that was the other thing that decided us [sic], and they pack those buses ‘til they were leaning on the side. We used to think it would be a matter of time before there was an accident. So for all those reasons we decided, I had the car so I would take the children to school. (Baby Boomer, mother of three Generation X children and one Generation Y child, 210514F)

Generation X children growing up during the 1970s and early 1980s were experiencing rapid social change. Theirs was a transition period between the free, spontaneous type of play of the Baby Boomer child to the more tightly controlled Generation Z child whose parents ensured that their children were closely supervised. Generation X children, although participating in organised leisure activities at a much greater rate than the previous generation were still not encumbered by overt parental (or other appropriate adult) supervision or surveillance. As Tina described, “if there was a sport it was done on a Saturday if there was dancing it was Saturday and if it wasn’t you’d come home from school and you’d just play with your friends” (Generation X, 107342F).

Participation in leisure activities was not in reaction to risk; this is despite evidence which demonstrates that the parents of Generations X and Y children were becoming aware of factors in the community that have may presented a risk to their children, and as such were beginning to increase child supervision. For example, parents were starting to drive their children to school rather than allowing them to walk, ride their bikes or catch the bus to school. Ultimately, however participation in leisure activities for Generations X and Y children was outcomes based, and not a reaction to perceived risk in the community.
Generation Z children in the early part of the 21st century were rarely out of the sight of their parents. Free play occurred at home in their yards. There was no evidence, from those in this study, of children being allowed to play by themselves without adult supervision. This result may be slightly distorted however, as data from other studies, for example Kelley et al. (1998) found that as children grow they are offered different opportunities and afforded options for autonomy that younger children were not. Children from this study were overwhelmingly from the preschool age bracket, and as such a high level of adult supervision would be expected. Notwithstanding this, the children from this study who were in the primary school age bracket (from five to 12 years of age) were not free to roam as previous generations of children had been able to. Parents wanted to ensure that their children were safe and protected and had strategies in place to ensure this. One such strategy was described by a participant in the RCO focus group. The mother of two Generation Z children explained how she needed to ensure that those who were part of her support crew were able to adequately supervise her children, without putting them in harm’s way:

[…] and who you would actually allow to take your children? So you have to build this assessment and the judging of their car, does it have seat belts? Are they going to make them put their seat belt on? Don’t laugh [...] they say, “They’ll all fit in, we’ll squish up.” I can’t have three kids to a seat belt; I couldn’t live with myself if you had an accident.

Parents of Generation Z children in this study also described adult supervised and organised activities that were undertaken away from the home which were not part of any structured group. For example, Lauren described how she would “meet up with other friends, who have children the same age, we meet up on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and go to the lagoon or something like that” (mother of two Generation Z children, 107869F). This type of organised leisure allowed the children to play freely, whilst still being supervised by an appropriate adult.

Generation Z children were therefore often under surveillance and supervision from their parents or other trusted adults. Supervision of children had become just that – SUPERvision. In late modernity, the concept of SUPER-vision can be closely linked to surveillance. Surveillance “refers to the supervisory control of subject populations” (Giddens, 1991, p.15)
which may include ‘visible’ supervision (Foucault, 1995) or the coordination of social activities through the use of information (Giddens, 1991). Parents in their supervisory role were vigilant in their surveillance of their children. The outcome of increased parental surveillance on their children is a childhood that is tightly controlled and lacking in basic autonomy and freedom. This connects with research carried out in the United Kingdom which suggests that increased monitoring of children has become a central feature of childhood in the late modern era (Fotel & Thomsen, 2004; Qvortrup, et al., 1994). This basic lack of autonomy combined with supervision of children and adult responses to risk contribute to the social construction of a controlled childhood (Scott, et al., 1998).

Furthermore, as Steeves and Jones succinctly suggest, “questions of adult surveillance and control of young people go to heart of the question of what childhood and youth are and should be, and the extent to which they are, and should be, separate realms from adulthood” (Steeves & Jones, 2010, p. 188).

**Risk and space to play**

The other area in which perception of risk influenced the leisure of children is in the spaces that they have available to play. Whilst at first glance, each generation would appear to use public and private space in a similar fashion, closer inspection however reveals a different story. Baby Boomer children spent much of their leisure in free and spontaneous play in the private sphere. For this generation of children, the street in their neighbourhood was part of the private sphere. In many cases it was an extension of the household in which children were able to spend countless hours playing street games (Opie & Opie, 1984). Baby Boomer children often played in the streets and looked out for each other. In the 1950s and 1960s there was less vehicular traffic on the roads and there was limited space in suburban backyards as households took part in the “self sufficient domestic economy” (Allport, 1986, p. 243) which for example, included vegetable gardens. These two factors combined to ensure the street was a space in which this generation of children played. The neighbourhoods in which Baby Boomer children played were full of stay at home mums and there was a genuine sense that if a parent was not looking out for their own children then there was someone in the neighbourhood who would be. Baby Boomers were free to use public space with little parental concern for safety. In this study, Baby Boomer children reported using public space in a number of different ways. For example Carol said, “I grew up at Bondi Beach and we used to go to the beach whenever we wanted to” (Baby Boomer,
201631F), while Anna stated, “my two brothers and I used to walk to the picture theatre on a Saturday afternoon and take ourselves to the pictures and take ourselves to the swimming pool” (Baby Boomer, 208341F).

Generation X and Y children also used the street as a site for play and leisure, but to a much lesser extent than Baby Boomer children. With mothers entering the workforce in increasing numbers, the private realm surrounding the homes of Generation X began to contract. Children were coming home to empty houses staying inside and were becoming known as ‘latch-key’ children. Indeed, research conducted in the United States demonstrates how access to space for children to play began to diminish as early as 1970 (Gaster, 1991; Wridt, 2004). Those Generation X children involved in this study reported spending time in a combination of outdoor free play activities and organised activities. Chris provided a description of his free play activities, “all the kids would go and meet down the park and play cricket and footy all day and after school” (Generation X, 113998M). Both Generations X and Y were also spending time in organised leisure activities such as swimming lessons, tennis, dance and football.

Conversely, Generation Z children were rarely allowed out in public spaces alone. Parents of Generation Z were concerned for the safety of their children in public spaces, including neighbourhoods, parks and the streets. Whilst the focus of this research was on the organised leisure activities of children, when asked in the telephone interviews about the activities of Generation Z outside of the home the most telling response was in what was not said. Parents of Generation Z typically provided three different response types when asked a question regarding the activities children took part in outside of the home. Firstly, a number of parents provided information on the organised activities of their children, for example, swimming lessons, netball or football. Other parents spoke about how their children took part in organised adult supervised outings such as visits to friends and family or outings to a local park. The third response type was based around free play activities that may occur inside or in the backyard of the family home, for example swimming in a backyard pool or for younger children playing in a sandpit. There were no responses

20 In order to overcome the negative connotations surrounding the term ‘latch-key’, children who have the responsibility of caring for his or herself on a regular basis without supervision are known as ‘self-care’ children.
indicating that children played outside in the street with or without friends. No responses regarding children riding their bikes, skateboarding, rollerblading or riding scooters. This is in direct contrast with ABS data (2009a) which demonstrates that children do spend time in these types of activities. For example 60% of children in the ABS survey reported spending time riding their bikes and a further 49% reported skateboarding, rollerblading or riding their scooters in the ABS data in the two weeks prior to the survey. Further analysis of questions in the telephone interview surrounding family routines did however reveal some interesting data. For example, Annette had the following to say:

Then we decided ahh, we live near the river, near the Murrumbidgee, so we said well lets go for a bike ride. So we went down to our beach, about two K21 down from our place. And the girls just had a play and a bit of a splash in the water. (Mother of four Generation Z children, 112455F)

Annette’s children were riding their bikes, in a public space; however this was with adult supervision. Other parents of Generation Z children also reported that their children rode their bikes. However the majority of these reports were from parents with preschool aged children. There was no indication whether these children rode their bikes either with or without parental supervision.

Interestingly, one woman from one of the RCC focus groups described how she deliberately took her daughter away from home to ride her bike:

[…] spending time with Jenny […] taking her for a walk along the Esplanade or, you know, with a bike or with a board, or taking her somewhere. Getting her out and doing a bit of exercise, rather than sitting at home in front of the television while I am doing the housework […] because she is an only child. I mean we have got lots of kids around in the cul-de-sac, but um, they are always out the front playing, you know riding bikes or mucking around. Yeah, but I prefer her to be [pause] you know my friend and I, we go out to the foreshore, take the bikes. And the kids are off on their bikes and we have a natter. So we get the exercise and to catch up and they get the exercise too.

21 kilometers
This response is similar to the response provided by Annette. It also demonstrates how children rode their bikes with parental supervision. This links to a view which suggests that risk to children is frequently understood in terms of public/private dichotomy: public space is defined as an adult space in which children are either seen as being at risk, or as being a source of risk (Harden, 2000; Valentine, 1996). The cul-de-sac or street in which this family lives is frequented by children playing, riding their bikes and mucking about. ‘Mucking about’ in this instance carries with it a negative connotation. The cul-de-sac is a public space inhabited by children who through their mucking about may be seen as risky. This parent chooses to sequester her child from this environment. In a similar finding, a study from the United States found that many mothers and fathers chose to organise the leisure activities of their children outside the home to prevent them from mixing with children they regarded as undesirable (Kelley, et al., 1998).

As was outlined earlier the majority of children in the Generation Z sample were in the preschool age bracket and would not be expected to have the autonomy to play by themselves in a public space. Nevertheless, this does not discount the fact that those children who were older and perhaps expected to have more independence did not report this behaviour. Other research has also pointed to a marked decrease in the amount of play or leisure conducted by children in the street across generations. For example, Clements (2004) in a study on outdoor play which was undertaken in the United States found that children spent less time playing outdoors and took part in different outdoor activities (such as less street play and more organised activities) than they had a generation previously. Karsten (2005) in a Dutch study reported that “playing” during the 1950s and 1960s meant playing outside, in contrast with children from 2003 who did not play outside for as long a period of time and had a more restricted range in which they could move freely. A further study conducted in the United States found that during the 1970s and 1980s play began to move from parks and playgroups to indoor environments (Wridt, 2004). Further, research has also found that fewer children are playing outdoors and that the location of most outdoor play is now in the home environment, rather than the street or park as it may have been in previous times (Valentine & McKendrick, 1997). Australian research has also demonstrated similar findings. For example, Tandy (1999) found that where once the street was considered a safe place for children to play, it has since become a site of potential danger.
It is worth noting here that the nature of the Australian ‘street’ during the childhood of Baby Boomer children was also vastly different from the streets in Generation Z communities. In the early post-war years there was rapid population growth and lateral expansion of Australian cities. Whole suburbs during this time were primarily settled by young families (Hugo, 1986). Lack of infrastructure and suburbs full of stay at home mothers meant that the street was a space for childhood play. The combined effects of second wave feminism, the rise of a culture dominated by individualism and technological change resulted in a change in the nature of the Australian street. Mothers who were once at home in the suburbs during the day moved into the paid work and increases in car ownership resulted in the street becoming a place that was not safe for children to play. As urban sprawl has increased the space available for children to play has decreased. The street in the Australian suburb in the early 21st century has become a public space, whereas for Baby Boomer children this was very much a private space connected to the private sphere of the home. For Generation Z children the street as a public space was seen as inherently risky. Contrary to these findings, a study undertaken in the United Kingdom in 2007 found that children from low socio-economic areas do play in local streets, with their friends near their homes. The authors found that this was in response to a lack of public space, the cost of leisure venues and inadequate parental responsibility (Christie, et al., 2007).

Global risk, local fear

As contemporary society appeared to become ever more apprehensive with regard to ensuring the safety of their future, Generation Z children existed in a society where the perception of risk could be seen as greater than in previous generations. Each of the four generations of children from this study has had to contend with external global forces that could be determined as contributing to a risk society. For example, Baby Boomer children grew up during a period when the Cold War was at its peak. At any time, either the then Soviet Union or the United States may have launched a nuclear weapon. Indeed in 1962, the world came perilously close to nuclear war during the Cuban missile crisis (White, 1996). Generation X children grew up during a time in which the cold war raged, the first cases of HIV/AIDS were being reported and terrorism was rearing its ugly head with events both at home and abroad. For example in Australia, the Hilton Hotel bombing in 1978 (ABC TV, 2004) and abroad, the bombing of a Pan Am flight over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988 (BBC,
Generation Y children saw the end of the Cold War, the first Gulf war and increasing concerns with environmental protection and global warming, while Generation Z children contended with events that included both manmade and natural disasters, for example, the 9/11 terrorist bombings in New York and Washington DC and the resultant ‘war on terror’. Closer to home, the Indian Ocean Tsunami occurred in late 2004 in which more than 175,000 people lost their lives and a further 1.5million were displaced (Murty, Aswathanarayana, & Nirupama, 2007). In essence on a global level, contemporary society is no more risky than it has been in previous times. Each generation has had its fair share of global risks that could have affected the day to day lives of individuals. The key difference between each of the generations is how these risks have been interpreted and importantly how individuals have reacted to the threats that these risks may have posed.

Concerns for child safety did not play a role in the leisure of Baby Boomer children. For this generation of children, despite global external risks such as the Cold War, notions of risk and fear did not transfer to the day to day lives of children and their parents. This is reflected in the way Baby Boomer children were able to spend their leisure and play time. Similarly, Generation X children who grew up during the cold war and were contending with the beginnings of both terrorism and HIV/AIDS, global warming and the first gulf war had fewer restrictions based around concerns for safety placed on their leisure activities than those of their Generation Z counterparts. Like the childhood of Baby Boomer children, Generation X and Y children in Australia were largely unaffected by thoughts of risk. Conversely, thoughts of risk and fear and concerns for child safety play a key role in the childhood of Generation Z children. The global and external nature of risk has a local effect on individuals from this generation. For example, Gina described how these wider societal dangers affect the childhood of her grandchildren:
Parents of Generation Z see the world as dangerous place and control how their children spend their leisure activities much more than any other time in history (Mayall, 2002). While factors on the local level play a large part in the perception of risk, global factors also play an important role (Beck, 2009; Giddens, 1991). Terrorism for example, intensifies the feeling of danger and of not being able to trust others (Mythen & Walklate, 2006). This lack of trust in others ensures that parents are vigilant with regard to the safety and well-being of their children and this in turn flows to their children’s leisure. The parents of Generation Z were much more likely than in previous generations to ensure that their children have appropriate adult supervision in both their free play activities and their organised activities. This is an important change from both Baby Boomer children and Generation X and Y children who spent substantially more time in leisure activities that were not under the supervision of adults. Contrary to this, Australian research has found that the concept of risk may be “ethnocentric” and that Australians more generally were concerned with risks located within Australia rather than the effects of globalisation (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002, p. 333).

The concern with risk and ensuring safety has also been referred to as a culture of fear (Füredi, 2002; Glassner, 1999). A culture of fear is typified by individuals perceiving the worst and reacting to this by taking measures to guard against it. For Generation Z children, this means that their movements are under constant supervision from parents or other appropriate adults to ensure their safety and their protection from risk and harm. This sense of risk or fear that surrounds the lives of Generation Z children ensures that most
children are not left on their own, that they are not able to play outside alone and that they are under constant supervision from a parent (Füredi, 2001).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an intergenerational comparison of the effects of safety, fear, danger and risk on the organised leisure activities of children. Findings indicate that Baby Boomer children participated in free and spontaneous play in the neighbourhood and their homes. This generation of children took part in organised activities unencumbered by parental supervision or control. While aspects and reactions to risk were beginning to appear in the childhood of Generations X and Y children the generation who was most influenced by notions of risk was Generation Z children.

This chapter has demonstrated that the organised leisure activity of Generation Z children was influenced by risk in three different ways. Children participated in activities to guard against future risk to ensure their safety in the case of swimming lessons or to guard against a future of boredom and discontent which could lead to anti-social behaviour, drug abuse and underage drinking in adolescence. This study finds that children participated in organised leisure as a reaction to current risk in their communities, for example public space was considered an unsafe place for children and characterised by stranger danger and traffic danger (Carver, et al., 2008; Valentine, 2004). In order to mitigate the risk of both stranger and traffic danger childhood participation in organised activities provided a safe alternative to playing in public space. Childhood leisure was also influenced as a consequence of living in a risk adverse society. Generation Z children were under constant SUPER-vision and surveillance of appropriate adults to ensure their safety. Free play occurred in the home or the backyard and rarely in public space. Activities undertaken in public space were under the supervision of adults.

To some extent findings from this chapter do give some support to social commentary that indicates parents ‘bubble wrap’ (Malone, 2007) their children and are ‘helicopter parents’ (Howe, 2009). However there was little evidence to suggest that the parents of Generation Z children were paranoid (Furedi, 2001) or out of control (Nelson, 2010). Parental reactions to risk (for Generation Z children) were unconscious and an accepted part of parenting in the
21st century. As such, parents of Generation Z children rarely expressed risk in terms of being afraid or fearful. They demonstrated their reactions to risk in their comments regarding supervision and surveillance and in their reflexive responses to risk through the leisure activities of their children. The Baby Boomer parents of Generation X and Y children and grandparents of Generation Z children, who had a childhood characterised by carefree play provided more evidence of paranoia and anxiety.
Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Introduction

Influences on the organised leisure activities of Australian children are broad; they are not confined to one realm nor can they be attributed to one overarching theory. In this chapter, I outline the broad conclusions that have been drawn within this thesis which demonstrate that influences on the leisure of Australian children are complex and multi-faceted.

The first section of the chapter outlines these broad conclusions. It brings together the findings from Chapter Five, which presented a portrait of the four generations explored within this study, and the remaining empirical chapters which examined the influences of technology (with a particular reference to transport and the family car), location in a rural or regional setting, educational and religious institutions, friends and peers, parents and risk. Following on from the coalescing of the broad conclusions, the next part of this chapter outlines the implications of this research for both policy and theory. Within the last section of this concluding chapter the limitations to the research are outlined, followed by recommendations for future research, and some concluding remarks.

From carefree to controlled?

The value and importance of this study is in the gap that it fills within the literature. This thesis applied a gendered lens to the investigation of changes in the organised leisure of Australian children over the past six decades. It found that most research on gender and leisure has its foundations in the gendered nature of adult leisure. Whilst some researchers have explored the leisure of adolescents, findings demonstrate that leisure participation in this age group is typically gendered (Raymore & Godbey, 1994). However, there has been comparatively little research on the specific gendered nature of children’s leisure and a limited amount of research that has compared organised activities for children across generations with gender as a specific focus. While gender and play are well researched, this thesis adds to the gap in the literature surrounding the gendered nature of children’s organised leisure activities since the 1950s.
A multi method qualitative study that was broadly feminist in nature was employed to examine the influences on leisure activities of Australian children. The study utilised focus groups, semi-structured telephone interviews and short surveys as methods of data collection. Interviews were transcribed and Nvivo used as a data management program for the analysis of results.

Findings indicate that Baby Boomer children spent vast amounts of leisure time in free and spontaneous activities both inside and outside the family home. Generation X children, whilst still spending time in free and spontaneous activities began to spend more time in organised leisure activities, generally one during winter, and sometimes one during summer. For Generation Y children, participation in organised activities continued to increase and parents reported placing limits on the number of activities in which children could take part. Free and spontaneous play for Generation Z children was at home and not in the neighbourhood. This generation of children spent more time in activities organised and supervised by adults.

The type and number of activities increased exponentially across time. Generation Z children had a vast array of options to choose from in relation to organised leisure and commenced participation at a younger age than their parents or their grandparents. Baby Boomer children often did not begin participating in organised leisure activities until late primary school or early high school. Generation X children began to take part in this type of activity usually sometime during their primary school years, whilst both Generation X and Generation Y children reported taking part in organised activities from as young as three years for Generation Y children and two months for Generation Z children (in the case of swimming lessons).

Activities for children from every era were gender specific. Children took part in activities that reflected their gendered identity. For example, boys played football and cricket; girls played netball and took part in dancing. There has been little change in this across generations, although there were isolated instances of Generation Y girls taking part in atypical activities such as cricket and judo.

Factors influencing participation in the organised leisure of Australian children were examined in Chapter Six. These influences included technological change, especially in the
area of transport, the location of a child in a rural or regional community, education and religious institutions and friends and peers.

Technological advances have been rapid and vast since the 1950s and this has led to change in the way children spend their leisure time. With its focus on out of home organised activities, this thesis specifically looked at transport and the use of the private car. Baby Boomer children did not have access to a private vehicle for the purposes of transport to their organised activities. This generation of children rode their bikes, walked or used public transport and generally made their own way to their activities. There were isolated reports of fathers transporting children to organised leisure, however in the majority of cases if there was a car in the family it was used by fathers in their role of breadwinner. Very few Baby Boomer families had the use of a family car. Conversely, with increases in car ownership and affordability over the next few decades, Generation X and Y children came to rely on the family car to support participation in organised activities. Parents of this generation reported the car as an essential element of the participatory process, and parents began to spend increasing amounts of time transporting their children to and from organised leisure. The terms “mum’s taxi” and “professional chauffeur” were used by respondents from this era to describe how they took their children to and from their various activities. Continued increases in car ownership in the early part of the 21st century led to parents of Generation Z utilising the car as a management tool for busy family schedules; as such the two car family become a necessity. Parents of this generation of children almost universally described driving their children to their various sporting and cultural activities. Transport by foot or bike was rare and parents relied on a support crew of trusted friends and relatives to assist with getting children to and from organised activities.

Children in rural and regional areas were found to be influenced by factors associated with distance and transport. In these areas distance was a significant influence on all generations, although somewhat mitigated by better access to transport for Generations X and Y and Generation Z. Children from small rural areas were found to have the most difficulties in participation, contrasting dramatically with children in larger rural centres where sport was seen as a way of life.

Educational and religious institutions such as schools and churches were important for the provision of organised sporting and leisure activities for Baby Boomers and to a certain
extent for Generation X children. However, as society has moved into the late modern era the influence of schools and the church have waned. Parents, private enterprise, and parent run community organisations provide the equipment and infrastructure for participation (often supported by government in the case of infrastructure).

Other influences outlined in Chapter Six included friends and peers. Generation Z children were generally too young to provide any valid data, but the influence of friends and peers on the leisure activities of both Baby Boomer children and Generation X and Y children was consistent across both generations, despite broader social and technological changes that may have been occurring.

Chapter Seven explored the influence of parents on the organised leisure of their children. It was found that parental influence was distinct; however this influence varied considerably across the generations. Parents of Baby Boomer children acted as gatekeepers and role modellers. Mothers of Baby Boomer children encouraged those activities that occurred within the domestic sphere, reflecting their predominantly private sphere roles. Fathers of Baby Boomers had little influence over the activities of children in the home and the neighbourhood, but more over those that occurred in the public sphere, mirroring their public roles. Parents of Baby Boomer children were generally not directly involved in the leisure activities of their children; their influence was not overt and was exerted through roles as gatekeepers and role modellers.

Parents of Generation X and Y children, who in this study were all Baby Boomers, were much more involved in the leisure activities of their children. The contribution to their children’s leisure ranged from compelling participation to not being involved at all. The organised leisure activities of Generation X and Y children were seen as providing a number of beneficial outcomes in line with child theories on child development. These outcomes included benefits to health and well-being and the opportunity for children to learn socialisation and team building skills. In a similar fashion to the parents of Baby Boomer children, mothers and father of Generation X influenced the leisure of their children in different ways. In line with their gradual move out of the private sphere and their foray into the public sphere, mothers began to move into the paid workforce and the manner in which mothers influenced the leisure activities of their children began to change from the previous generation. While mothers still influenced the leisure of their children around the home and
in the neighbourhood, this influence began to extend to those activities engaged in by children in the public sphere. Mothers began to take an active role through their role modelling of participation, transporting children to activities and encouraging participation. Fathers of Generation X and Y children became more active in influencing the leisure activities of their children when compared to the fathers of Baby Boomer children. They transported children to activities, role modelled participation and started to coach or manage sporting teams.

Generation Z children participated in more leisure activities than any of the previous generations. Parents spoke of obvious beneficial outcomes to their child’s participation in organised activities including opportunities for socialisation and the development of confidence and team building skills. Participation was also seen as an important area in which children were able to gain life skills and life experience. The leisure of Generation Z children was tightly controlled by their parents who both compelled and coerced their child’s participation in organised leisure activities. As the role of the Generation Z mother had expanded to include activities in both the private and public realm, so did her influence on the leisure of her children. Mothers became responsible for the organisation and planning of activities. They also took on roles as coaches, managers and administrators in their role of leisure experience facilitators. The influence of fathers on the leisure activities of Generation Z also expanded to include transporting children to their activities, coaching, assisting at activities, supporting and managing sporting teams. Their children’s participation in organised leisure often resulted in conflicting schedules and stress for parents. In order to offset this, parents used a trusted support crew of friends and family to assist with the organisation and management of activities.

Childhood participation in organised leisure activities was heavily tied to the notion of “good” parenting. The concept of a “good” parent or the right way to parent has changed across the generations with parenting ideologies reflecting expert knowledge in each era. For the parents of Generation Z children, one of the key areas where the notion of good parenting is played out is the organised leisure activities of their children.

In the final empirical chapter, concepts of safety, fear and risk were shown to be an important influence on the organised leisure activities of Generation Z children. These factors were not evident in the experiences of Baby Boomer children, nor were they a major
influence on the leisure activities of Generation X. They were however, starting to impinge on the childhood of Generation Y children. Findings indicated that parental reactions to risk varied according to current risk, future risk and the consequences of risk.

Limitations and reflections

There are a number of limitations to this study. Firstly, the study relies heavily on memory, especially for the recollections from Baby Boomers and Generation X participants regarding their childhood. Children often see themselves and their activities in different ways to their parents and this may possibly be reflected in their adult memories. There may also have been a tendency for participants to view their childhood in a nostalgic fashion and to look back through rose coloured glasses, remembering only the positive experiences. There was evidence from a number of participants that this was not the case, with examples of alcoholic parents, unloving extended families and hardship.

Secondly, children in this study were not a homogenous age category. Baby Boomers and Generations X and Y were able to provide evidence of a leisure career, beginning from birth and ending as they transitioned into adulthood. Conversely, the parents of Generation Z were only able to provide evidence up until the time of interview on the leisure activities of their children. Given the ages of the children (the majority were in the preschool age group); this did have an effect on the findings. Parental reactions to preschool children may be different to their reactions to a ten year old and different again to a fifteen year old.

Furthermore, the findings from this thesis are historically specific. They are a snapshot in time and place and based on data collected in 2004 and 2005. Therefore, there are limitations to the generalisability of these results.

Perhaps the major limitation to this study is the missing voices of Generation Z children themselves. This was a difficult generation on which to gain data. As noted, when interviews were conducted in 2004 and 2005 the majority of this generation of children were in their preschool years and unable to be interviewed. At the time the best method of data collection was through reports from their parents. Further research could explore
Generation Z perceptions of influences on their leisure activities and examine their agency in participation.

The missing voices of the Generation Z children and the reliance on memories of Baby Boomers also places limitations on the findings of this study with regard to a comparative analysis of childhood leisure experiences across generations. Despite this limitation, data gained from the parents of Generation Z and memories of Baby Boomers were rich data that was able to provide “thick descriptions” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the influences on the leisure experiences of children from each generation.

Implications and Recommendations

Methodology

The methodology for this study was tied to two broader studies (ALSWH and WLT) and as such was both constrained and enhanced by this connection. The amount of time available within the interviews for questions was limited, however as has been noted previously other questions within the interview schedule were able to provide valuable supporting information. Further research would also benefit from sampling across an entire year, including school holidays, as many organised leisure activities take time out during school holiday periods. Do Generation Z children spend more time in free and unstructured play during the school holidays when schooling and organised activities stop? And what happens when children travel away for holidays? Are children still under the same amount of supervision and surveillance? Do they have more time for free and unstructured play?

Generational Theory

Empirically the use of generations as a means of exploring social change is challenging. When does a generation start and end? Through the use of social generations drawing on the tradition of Karl Mannheim (1952), and extending this with reference to Jane Pilcher (1994) and Leena Alanen (2001) the start and end dates, months or years are only relevant as descriptors for providing context. By taking account of social generations, people of varying ages can be included within a generation. This study was able to demonstrate the use of
social generations as a valuable tool for examining both childhood and leisure. Through the use of social generations, comparisons between the childhoods of four generations of childhood and their leisure experiences could be made, examined, analysed and reported. This is important, as generational theory has not often been used to explain the differences between generations of children in Australia and thus notably this study provides a step towards filling this gap in the literature.

Risk

The risk society thesis put forward by Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) has been extended in a number of ways through empirical research. Evidence from this study supports findings from Murray (2009) who posited the idea of ‘risk landscapes’ in which risks are said to be “ambiguous, inconsistent and dynamic” (p. 484) and from Lupton (2006) who found that risk could be dynamic across time and space. This study extends that thinking by finding that the reactions of risk by parents in particular can be seen in the context of current risk, future risk and consequences of risk. Parents who perceived that teenagers with nothing ‘better’ to do may turn to drugs, underage drinking and anti-social behaviour, encouraged participation in organised leisure as a strategy to guard against this future risk. The other major future risk perceived by parents was drowning, and there was high participation in swimming lessons amongst Generation Z children, with mostly very young children taking part. Current risks included stranger danger and traffic danger. Parents restricted the activities of their children in order to combat these dangers. Significantly, Generation Z parents rarely expressed risk in terms of suggesting that they were afraid or fearful; however they demonstrated reactions to risk in their comments regarding surveillance, in their supervisory roles, and in their reflexive responses to risk through the leisure activities of their children. The consequence of perceptions of risk included markedly increased supervision and the surveillance of children, restriction of free play in the streets and a reduction in the spaces available for play. Notably, there appeared to be no correlation between gender and risk for Generation Z children. Whilst it perhaps could be assumed that girls would come under tighter ‘surveillance’ than boys, there was no evidence from this study to support this claim. This is not surprising, given the ages of Generation Z children who were primarily within the preschool age bracket and as such, a high level of surveillance would be expected regardless of gender.
In the early part of 21st century, post-traditional Australia has been described as a ‘risk’ society. As such there is a need for a greater understanding of this concept and its effects. Whilst this study is important, as its findings have demonstrated how reaction to and consequences of risk are pervasive in childhood and that reaction to risk may be generational; more investigation is needed and further research could explore the relationship between risk and generation in more depth. For example, do Generation Y parents in the early part of the 21st century react to risk in the same way as Generation X parents? Has risk become normalised and therefore an expected part of life in the late modern era? Other areas to consider include parental responses to risk within activities and an exploration of positive risk in leisure activities for children. There is also a need for child centred research involving child participants to explore the role that risk has in their lives and to understand whether they perceive risk as negative or positive or both.

**Childhood, Gender and Leisure**

This study has been able to demonstrate that the leisure experiences of children have changed markedly across generations. Childhood leisure since the 1950s can be seen to move along a continuum, which sees the type of free and spontaneous play characteristic of activities undertaken by children during the 1950s at one end. At the other end of the continuum are the highly organised, scheduled and adult controlled activities undertaken by Generation Z children. Within each generation children participated in activities from across this continuum, however activities undertaken by children from the 1950s were generally concentrated into the ‘free play’ end of the continuum, where as activities undertaken by children in the early part of the 21st Century coalesce into the opposite end of the continuum in ‘purposive’ leisure (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). The implication of these changes reflects upon the meaning of leisure in childhood and the social construction of childhood. Childhood, for 21st century children is significantly impacted by their participation in ‘purposive’ leisure activities (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Whilst in previous times childhood may have been seen as a time of free play, whimsy and adventure characteristic of having time to spend in activities that were free and spontaneous, childhood in the 21st Century is characterised by organisation, control and purpose typified by participation in wide ranging adult controlled and organised leisure activities.
This study has also shown that gender plays a vital role in the leisure activities of children and it has done so for the last 60 years. Despite the radical social changes wrought by second wave feminism and the movement of more women into the paid workforce, participation in childhood leisure activities has remained relatively unchanged. Whilst it has been shown that all children do have more opportunities to participate in a wider variety of activities, a definite gender divide still exists in what is seem to be appropriate ‘male’ and ‘female’ activities. Whilst there appears to have been some gains made with regard to equity in participation for both girls and boys, there is still a gender divide. Boys are more likely to participate in activities that reflect and reinforce ‘masculinity’ whilst girls are more likely to take part in activities that reinforce their ‘femininity’. Further research could examine the notions of femininity and masculinity in childhood leisure activities.

What does it mean to be a girl who plays netball versus a girl who plays rugby union or rugby league? Or what does it mean to be a boy who plays netball or dances compared with a boy who plays rugby league? Do children have different understandings of what it means to be a boy or girl and is this reflected in the activities that they undertake?

A change that has occurred with regard to childhood participation in organised leisure activities is with regard to the influence of parents and their gender. During the 1950s and 1960s, the gender of the parent reflected the influence they had on their children’s leisure activities. Mothers influenced activities in the private sphere, reflecting their private sphere role. Fathers influence activities in the public sphere, reflecting their more public role. This has changed considerably. The feminist movement, which sought to bring mothers out of the private sphere and into the public sphere, ensured that mothers were able to take a more pivotal role in those leisure activities that were undertaken by their children in the public realm. The changing role of mothers is reflected in this study by the mothers of Generation Z children, who organised and implemented the activities that their children participated in, adding an additional facet to the “ethic of care” (Gilligan, 1982). The implication of this is that a mother’s role could be seen as more encompassing than it may have been in previous times. This role has been extended beyond the private and into the public and as such 21st century mothers now take on additional responsibilities including the organisation of their children’s leisure activities both in and out of the public realm.
The role and nature of what it means to be ‘father’ continues to morph and change as a result of social change and technological change and this impacts upon the organised leisure experiences of children. This study has shown that fathers play a vital role in the organised activities of their children and enable their participation. Just as the role of mother’s has expanded in the early part of the 21st century, so too has the role of fathers.

Findings from this study demonstrate that both the roles of mothers and fathers have changed considerably over the past 60 years in Australia and this adds to the literature on how the influence of parents effects the leisure activity participation of children. This is important in the current political climate, which sees both government and media highlighting the health benefits of physical activity participation for children. It is clear that both parents influence the leisure of children and that mother’s take the responsibility for organisation and implementation.

Leisure for rural and regional children

This thesis was also important because it was able to add to the literature that exists on leisure experiences for children in rural and regional areas of Australia. It also illustrated how leisure experiences for children in rural and regional areas of Australian have changed since the 1950s. It has demonstrated that whilst there is neither one rural Australia nor one experience of leisure activities in rural areas, that opportunities to participate often come at a considerable time and money cost to families. There is little research that exists on the organised leisure activities of children in rural and regional areas, especially those who live in remote communities. With evidence from this study suggesting that organised leisure plays a vital role in rural communities, further research could seek to understand this role and the influences on participation in leisure in regional, rural and remote areas.

Conclusion

I began this thesis by suggesting that parents in the early part of the 21st century are provided with a plethora of mixed messages regarding the participation of their children in organised leisure activities. Parents are told that organised leisure is beneficial to their children as it provides an arena for the development of self-confidence and self-esteem and
eases mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. Organised activities are also said to help combat anti-social behaviour whilst assisting in combating obesity. Conversely parents are also warned that participation in organised activities can lead to children who are more stressed, tired and anxious with a negative effect on mental health. To understand these mixed messages an understanding of why children take part in organised activities was needed. This was carried out via an examination of the influences on the leisure of children since the 1950s. Findings demonstrated that changes over time have changed the nature of childhood and parenting. The mixed messages are a result of enormous social and technological change and a move to a post-traditional society characterised by individualism and reflexive modernisation. The outcome for Australian children has been that their leisure activities have moved from being carefree to controlled.
Appendices

Appendix A: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health (ALSWH) survey mail out schedule

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☒ Indicates a survey mail out
Appendix B: Focus group flyer/poster

The UNIVERSITY of NEWCASTLE

Research Centre for Gender and Health

Are you juggling work and family?

Many people today lead very busy lives. Researchers at the University of Newcastle are interested in finding out how working parents cope with their work and family responsibilities. How do they allocate their time? Do they feel time pressure? What are the effects of the ‘juggling act’ on their well-being? Do they have time for leisure? What kinds of support do they get, and from whom? How does the family cope with the many different interests and commitments of the family members? Ideally, how would working parents like to organise their time and their work and family commitments?

Are you a working mother who also has a working partner?
Are you interested in talking about these ideas?

If so, we would like to invite you to take part in a group discussion.

Where: Focus groups will be held at a convenient location such as a local club, and will take about one and a half hours.

When: They will be organised at a time convenient to the participants, who will be paid $20 towards expenses.

If you would like to be involved in a focus group discussion, or if you would like more information;

Please call: Leanne Fray or Dr Penny Warner-Smith
At: The Research Centre for Gender and Health at the University of Newcastle
On: 4923 6872

If you have any concerns about this project, and would prefer to discuss these with an independent person, you should feel free to contact the University of Newcastle’s Human Research Ethics Officer, Ms Sue O’Connor, on 4921 6333 or write to her at Research Branch, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308
Dear [NAME],

Thank you for your time on [DAY] and also for your offer of assistance with the research project. I am writing to let you know a little more about the project you discussed with Leanne Fray, the doctoral student working on the paper.

We have Australian Research Council funding for three years to look at 'work-life' tensions in dual-earner families, but we are interested in how busy families manage their time, rather than the structural issues of family friendly workplaces and labour processes.

The study will use a series of ‘focus group’ discussions with working mothers who have partners who are also working, and we are seeking your assistance with recruiting participants for these discussions from within your organisation. Approval has been given from the University of Newcastle Ethics Committee to do this research, but we are of course required to make sure that there is no pressure on anyone to ‘volunteer’ to be part of this research. We would like to use your email newsletter system to publicise the research and ask interested people to contact us.

Attached is the information that we would need to have posted on any email newsletter, bulletin board or noticeboard. Leanne will contact you after the Easter break to see if we can provide any further information or assistance.

If you have any queries or questions about the proposed research, please feel free to contact Leanne by phone on 4981 7757 or email leanne.fray@newcastle.edu.au or myself by phone on 4923 6872 or email penny.warner-smith@newcastle.edu.au.

Your interest in the project is appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Penny Warner-Smith

Project Manager
Work Life Tensions Project
Research Centre for Gender and Health
University of Newcastle

If you have any concerns about this project, and would prefer to discuss these with an independent person, you should feel free to contact the University of Newcastle’s Human Research Ethics Officer, Ms Sue O’Connor, on 4921 6333 or write to her at Research Branch, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308
Appendix D: Focus group profiles

Table D-1: Focus group profiles, New South Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Hrs/wk paid work</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<td>F</td>
<td>41-</td>
<td>IT support technical officer</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>51-</td>
<td>Education Officer</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>Geologist</td>
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<td>Nicole</td>
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<td>Librarian</td>
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<td>yes</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Cleaner</td>
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<td>5, 8</td>
<td>1-15 unpaid voluntary work, 16-24 hours studying</td>
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<td>Suzanne  (SP)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35-</td>
<td>Town Planner</td>
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<td>yes</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
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<td>Natalie</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>PhD Student</td>
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<td>Deanna</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-</td>
<td>Council Officer</td>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Telstra Technician</td>
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<td>Lauren</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Sales</td>
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<td>Gary</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26-</td>
<td>Production Supervisor</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>Sales Assistant</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Domestic Engineer</td>
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<td>5, 7</td>
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<td>Heath</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>41-</td>
<td>Valuer/auctioneer</td>
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<td>Clerical Work</td>
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<td>Graham</td>
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<td>Occupational Therapist</td>
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<td>Colin</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>31-</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<td>Shop Assistant</td>
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<td>Jim</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>36-</td>
<td>Union Official</td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Occupational Therapist</td>
<td>&lt;1, 5, 7</td>
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<td>49+ hours studying Care for elderly/disabled 35-40hours per week</td>
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<td>Nathan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>36-</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>35-40</td>
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<td>31-35</td>
<td>Registered Nurse</td>
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<td>Tania</td>
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<td>26-</td>
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<td>Engineer</td>
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<td>46-50</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>36-</td>
<td>CSO teacher</td>
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<td>1-15 hours family business</td>
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Table D-1: Focus group profiles, New South Wales cont.
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<th>Partner</th>
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<th>Children</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Community Coordinator</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-15 hours voluntary work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Trisha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Risk manager</td>
<td>41-48</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Communications Supervisor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16, 17, 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Computer Systems Support</td>
<td>41-48</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6, 11, 13, 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Research Officer</td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Parks Coordinator</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10, 14, 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Geoff</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>41-48</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13, 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Town Planner</td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Refrigeration mechanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-15 hours voluntary work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Research Officer</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Shop fitter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8, 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Town Planner</td>
<td>35-31</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35-31</td>
<td>Shop Assistant</td>
<td>&lt;1, 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Personal Assistant</td>
<td>25-22</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-22</td>
<td>Brickies Labourer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, 5</td>
<td>1-15 looking after elderly parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kylie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Town Planner</td>
<td>25-41</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-41</td>
<td>Town Planner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, 5</td>
<td>1-15 looking after elderly parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Personal Assistant</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-34</td>
<td>Sales Representative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5, 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Employments Officer</td>
<td>16-16</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31-31</td>
<td>Registered Nurse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16-24 hours caring for elderly/disabled person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kristy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Community Services Manager</td>
<td>35-36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-36</td>
<td>Community Program Coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Resource worker</td>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9, 10</td>
<td>16-24 hours studying, lives with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>36-36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10, 12</td>
<td>1-15 hours voluntary work, providing care</td>
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</table>

Key: 1: Regional City Council, NSW  
2: City Sports Organisation, NSW  
3: Regional City Council, NSW  
4: Regional Health Organisation, NSW  
5: Rural Shire Council, NSW  
6: Regional Community Organisation, NSW
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Hrs./wk paid work</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Nbr of Child</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jo</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Policy Admin</td>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>Construction Project Management</td>
<td>2 3, 4</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Client Service Officer</td>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>Single Parent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 15, 19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elderly parents when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rob</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Council Inspector</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Di</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 10, 11</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>40-48</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3 13, 21, 23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Terry</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>Manager/Town Planner</td>
<td>40-48</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Midwife</td>
<td>2 15, 17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nephew during week</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Executive Governance Officer</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Admin Officer</td>
<td>1 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Executive Secretary</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Mail Officer</td>
<td>2 9, 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Part time, aging mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chris2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Business Analyst</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>Sales Consultant</td>
<td>3 17, 19, 23</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Clerical Officer</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Single Parent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rob2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Surveyor</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>3 10, 14, 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sheryn</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>Admin Assistant</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>Customer Service officer</td>
<td>1 28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vija</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>2 10, 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Debra</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Office Aid</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Furniture Upholsterer</td>
<td>3 12, 18, 21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eldest child has Asperger’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lou</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 17, 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Historian</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Human Resources Manager</td>
<td>2 16, 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>2 3, 7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>Local Law Officer</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Single Parent</td>
<td>2 11, 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vicki</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Community employment</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gail</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>Develop Officer</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61-65</td>
<td>Liquor Industry</td>
<td>7 31-40</td>
<td></td>
<td>Granddaughter (daughter died)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: 1: Regional University, QLD  2: Large City Council, QLD  3: Large City Council, QLD  4: Large City Council, QLD
Appendix E: Focus group short survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Juggling Work and Family Focus Group discussions. Please take a moment to complete the following information.

Information about you:

1. What is your gender?  
   - Female [ ]  
   - Male [ ]

2. What is your occupation?  

3. How many children do you have?  

4. What are their ages?  
   - [ ]  
   - [ ]  
   - [ ]  
   - [ ]  
   - [ ]

5. How old are you?  
   - 20-24 [ ]  
   - 25-29 [ ]  
   - 30-34 [ ]  
   - 35-39 [ ]  
   - 40-45 [ ]  
   - 46-50 [ ]  
   - 51-55 [ ]  
   - 56-60 [ ]  
   - 60-64 [ ]  
   - 64+ [ ]

In the LAST WEEK, how much time did you spend doing the following activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I don't do this activity</th>
<th>1-15 hours</th>
<th>16-24 hours</th>
<th>25-34 hours</th>
<th>35-40 hours</th>
<th>41-48 hours</th>
<th>49 or more hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Paid work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Home duties (own/family home)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Work without pay (e.g. family business)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Providing care (e.g. for someone who is disabled, elderly, sick)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Unpaid voluntary work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Studying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>Travelling by car</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Active leisure (e.g. walking, exercise, sport)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Passive leisure (e.g. listening to music, reading, relaxing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information about your partner:

6. What is his/her gender?  
   - Female [ ]  
   - Male [ ]

7. What is his/her occupation?  

8. How old is your partner?  
   - 20-24 [ ]  
   - 25-29 [ ]  
   - 30-34 [ ]  
   - 35-39 [ ]  
   - 40-45 [ ]  
   - 46-50 [ ]  
   - 51-55 [ ]  
   - 56-60 [ ]  
   - 60-64 [ ]  
   - 64+ [ ]

Thank you for your time.
Appendix F: Focus group consent form

Juggling Work and Family

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.

I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained.

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I consent to participate in a focus group discussion about my experiences of juggling work and family and to complete an anonymous demographics survey.

I understand that my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers.

I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

Print name: ________________________________
Signature: ________________________________  Date: ________________________________

If you have any concerns about this project, and would prefer to discuss these with an independent person, you should feel free to contact the University of Newcastle's Human Research Ethics Office, Ms Sue O'Connor, on 02 49216333 or write to her at Research Branch, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308.
Appendix G: Focus group discussion topics

Work Life Tensions
Focus Group Discussion Topics

Prior to audio taping
• Researchers introduce themselves & project (what/why/how used) & discussion (no right or wrong answers, interested in all experiences) & thank participants & offer refreshments
• Reiterate that participation is voluntary & you may cease taking part at any stage, don't have to answer questions, note need to report illegal acts if mentioned
• Request that people not discuss the content of the focus group with people outside the group for confidentiality reasons
• Ask for permission for the discussion to be tape-recorded
• Any questions?
• If you wish to participate please read and sign the consent form and complete the written survey

Tape recorder switched on [Participants informed]
• Participants asked to briefly say a little about themselves and what motivated you to take part in the group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Pressure</th>
<th>How do you use your time, do you feel pressure and effect does this have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you happy with the amount of time you allocate to different parts of your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you ever feel time pressured?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If so, when or in what situations do you tend to feel time pressured?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does this time pressure affect your well-being? The well-being of your family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you feel that you cope better when you are under pressure?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control</th>
<th>If you could reorganise your life is some ideal way, what would it be?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you ever feel that you are not in control of your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When/in what situation are you most likely to feel that way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When do you feel most in control of your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When do you feel most relaxed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What strategies do you use to reduce stress? E.g. exercise, music, yoga, alcohol, socialising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Management strategies

What strategies do you use for managing family and work? From child care to the household?

- How do you provide care for/supervise your children when they are not at school/preschool?
- How does the family manage when you are sick or have to go away?
- How does the family manage when your partner is sick or has to go away?
- Do you always have someone you can call on for help with family responsibilities when you or your partner is sick?
- How do you cope with unexpected demands, such as you or your partner needing to work overtime?
- What do you do if you need to leave work unexpectedly, e.g. the school rings you at work to tell you your child is sick?
- If necessary, how do you communicate with your partner/children when something unexpected happens?
- How effective are these communication channels?
- Do you/your partner have a 'routine' for managing the household?
- Do you have any particular strategies that help you manage?
- What equipment could you NOT manage without? E.g. car, microwave, mobile phone.

### Other caring responsibilities

Are you ever called on to provide care for anyone outside your immediate family? How do you manage these extra demands?

- How do you cope with unexpected demands, for example: overtime, sick children, and the care of elderly relatives?

### Workplace issues

What strategies does your employer use to promote work/life balance among their employees?

- How effective are these?

### Changes

If you could re-organise your life in some ideal way, what would you do?

- Would you like to work fewer hours? Why/why not?
- Would you like to work more hours? Why/why not?
- What role might government play in promoting work-life balance?

### Children's activities

There has been some press lately which suggests that children are spending more time in structured activities (like soccer, netball, music lessons etc.) and less time playing freely, can you comment on this with specific regard to your own family?

- How are children’s leisure activities managed within the family?
- Do the activities of the children lead to extra time pressure, or are these activities a time management strategy?
- Does children’s leisure come at the expense of parent or family leisure?

### Closing questions

- Women will be asked if there is anything they would like to add/any questions?

### Tape recorder switched off [participants informed]

- Complete the written survey if not already done so
Appendix H: Work-life Tensions project consent form

**CONSENT FORM**

We agree to participate in the project, “Work-life tensions: time pressure, leisure and well-being among dual earner parents”. We understand that this research is part of the Women’s Health Australia project, and we have read and understood the Information for Participants Statement which was sent to us.

We understand that completing and returning the time diary survey is voluntary.

We understand that we will also be interviewed separately by one of the researchers.

We understand that the interview will be audio-taped, and the tape will be transcribed (copied) to make a paper version of the discussion. The tape will be erased once the transcription is completed.

We realise that we can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give reasons for withdrawing. We have had all our questions relating to the project answered satisfactorily.

We understand that all information will be confidential, subject to legal requirements, and only anonymous summary will be reported.

Name_____________________________________________

Signed____________________________________________

Name_____________________________________________

Signed____________________________________________
Date ____________________________

If you have any concerns about this project, and would prefer to discuss these with an independent person, you should feel free to contact the University of Newcastle’s Human Research Ethics Office, Ms Sue O’Connor, on 02 49216333 or write to her at Research Branch, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308.
Appendix I: Work-life Tensions project pilot interview guide

WORK-LIFE TENSIONS

DRAFT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

NB Each interview schedule should be personalised on the basis of palm pilot data if available.

1 **Introduction**
   - Introduce self
   - Thank the participant for taking part in the project
   - Indicate that the interview will take about 40 minutes
   - Reiterate confidentiality of information with reference to consent letter

2 **Management of time**
   - **Negotiation**
     - Who does what in your household?
     - Do you and your partner have a ‘routine’ for managing the household?
     - Who designed this routine?
     - Do you feel that you and your partner work equally as a team, or does one do more than the other?

   - **Strategies**
     - Has anything unexpected happened in the last couple of weeks that has really made it difficult to manage your work and family commitments?
     - (if yes) What happened?
     - How did you manage?
     - Do you have any particular strategies that generally help you manage your work and family commitments?
     - What household equipment could you NOT manage without? E.g. car, microwave, mobile phone?
     - (If not already mentioned) Do you have any support outside the household that you can draw on to manage household activities? If so, who and what do they do?

3 **Workplace issues**
   - What programs/initiatives does your employer use to promote work/life balance among their employees? (Provide examples if necessary)
   - Have you use any of these programs? If so, what and when?
   - What more could your employer do to help you balance work and family responsibilities?

4 **Links to well-being**
   - Does time pressure impact on your well-being?
   - How do you think it affects you?
   - Do you have any favourite strategies to reduce stress? (Provide examples if necessary: e.g. exercise, yoga, alcohol, socialising)

5 **Future changes**
   - If you could re-organise your life in some ideal way, what would you do?
   - What role might government play in promoting work/life balance?
6 Generations
Considering the challenges you face juggling time in terms of work, family and leisure, is your experience similar to or different from your mother’s/ father’s experience when she/he had young children?

7 Kids’ activities and community
Do you children participate in any activities outside of school hours? (If no school age children, ask about activities for pre-schoolers) (If yes) How does their involvement in these activities affect you?

8 Closure
Thank the participant. Inform them of expected outcomes (papers/conferences)
INTRODUCTION

• Interviewer: Introduce self
• Thank participant for taking part in the project
• Indicate that the interview will take about 45 minutes
• Reiterate confidentiality of information with reference to consent letter
• Link interview to RTS and short survey. Thank you for completing the shorts survey when you returned your palm pilot. The beeper study and survey have given us a bit of a feel for how you spend your time over a week and how you feel about the different things you do.

Q1. One of the aims of this interview is to explore how families manage their daily routines from getting up to going to bed. With this aim in mind –

a) Can you describe what happened in your household yesterday/Friday/today?

b) Is that pretty typical of your family routine?

   If yes, go to Q1c.
   If no, how is it different?

   (Probe, particularly if response only describes the individual’s routine. E.g. would you like to add anything else about the household routine? For example, what parts do other family members play in this routine?)

c) Are weekdays different from Saturdays/Sundays?

   If yes, how are they different? (Prompt for non-standard ‘weekend’, if need arises).

Q2. We are interested in how children’s activities outside of the home fit into this routine. Is there anything else that your children do that you haven’t already mentioned?

   If no, go to Q2a
   If yes, what do they do? How do you fit your children’s activities into your routine?

a) Can you tell me little about your experience of having your children involved in these activities? (Probe: Are you interacting with other parents etc.)
b) Do you feel that there are any benefits in these activities for you?  
(Possible probe: other than the benefit of seeing your child enjoy themselves)

Is there anything that you have had to give up to make time to do this?

Q3. We are also interested to know what happens in families when there are unexpected breaks in their routines, for example when someone in the family is sick, or when a partner is away on business etc. What do you and your partner do when your routines are unexpectedly changed?

Q4. You have told us about your family routine, are there any parts of your routine that you would like to change?  
If yes, what are they? How would you like to change these things?  
If no, Can you explain why your routine works so well?

Q5. We are interested in how households deal with their busy schedules, and the different ways they manage their household routine. Are there any strategies that you use to make things run more smoothly at home? (Possible probes: planning and scheduling tasks/roles; use of labour saving device; use of cleaner/domestic help; child care; use of family and friends etc. Other probes: Who does the planning? How are these plans communicated to the other members of the household?)

Q6. If we move away from the home to workplaces  
(NB If the short survey indicates that the participant is not working at the time of the interview determine when they last worked and have them answer the questions in relation to their most recent work experience.)

a) Do you have flexibility or assistance in your employment to help you juggle demands associated with home and work?  
If no, go to Q6d  
If yes, go to Q6b

b) What does your employer do (if anything) do to promote work/life balance among the employees? (Provide examples, if possible)

c) Have you used any of these programs?  
If no, go to Q6d.  
If yes, what have you used? When and why did you use them?

d) What more could your employer do to help you balance work and family responsibilities?

Q7. There is a lot of discussion about work and home pressures and stress.

a) Does time pressure impact on your well-being?
If no, go to Q7b
If yes, Can you give me some examples of how time pressure affects your well-being?

b) Given work and family demands, are you able to find enough time to do the things you would like to do?
If no, what makes it difficult to find time?
If yes, how do you manage to find time?

c) Do you have any deliberate strategies to reduce stress? (Prompt with examples e.g. exercise, music, yoga, alcohol, socialising if need be).

Q8. If you could change your life in some way in relation to work and home what would you do? (Probe: if participant indicates that at this stage things couldn’t be changed then ask if they can see a time when they would anticipate changing aspects of their life then what would they change?)

Q9. We are interested in comparing the lifestyles of your parent's generation with your generation. Considering your experience of juggling time in terms of work, family and leisure, in what way/s is your experience similar to or different from your mother’s/father’s experience when she/he had young children? (Do you think your mother/father was happy with their role?)

CLOSURE
Appendix K: Work-life Tension/Children’s Leisure study participant profiles, Youngs

Table K.1: Work-life Tension/Children’s leisure study participant profiles, Youngs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDAlias</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Chd at home</th>
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<th>Chd Organised leisure Activity</th>
<th>Chd hrs paid work/week</th>
<th>ABS Occupation</th>
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<td>1</td>
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Table K.1: Work-life Tension/Children’s leisure study participant profiles, Youngs cont.

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### Table K.1: Work-life Tension/Children’s leisure study participant profiles, Youngs cont.

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Key:
- M: Male
  1: Managers and Administrators
- F: Female
  2: Professionals
- U: Urban
  3: Associate Professionals
- R: Rural
  4: Tradespersons and related workers
  5: Advanced clerical/service work
  6: Intermediate clerical/sales, service work
  7: Intermediate production/transport workers
  8: Elementary clerical/sales, service work
  9: Labourers and related workers

*ABS Occupation Codes:*
Appendix L: Work-life Tensions project interview schedule - ‘Mids’

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WORK LIFE TENSIONS PROJECT

Mids

INTRODUCTION

• Interviewer: Introduce self
• Thank participant for taking part in the project
• Indicate that the interview will take about 45 minutes
• Reiterate confidentiality of information with reference to consent letter
• Link interview to RTS and short survey. Thank you for completing the short survey when you returned your palm pilot. The beeper study and survey have given us a bit of a feel for how you spend your time over a week and how you feel about the different things you do.

One of the aims of this interview is to explore how families manage their daily routines from getting up to going to bed.

Q1. With this aim in mind –
   a) Could we begin by asking you who presently lives in your household?
   b) Can you describe what happened in your household yesterday/Friday/today?
   c) Is that pretty typical of your family routine?
      If yes, go to Q1c.
      If no, how is it different?

   d) Are weekdays different from Saturdays/Sundays?
      If yes, how are they different? (Prompt for non-standard ‘weekend’, if need arises).

   c) Are weekdays different from Saturdays/Sundays?
      If yes, how are they different? (Prompt for non-standard ‘weekend’, if need arises).

Q2. We are also interested to know what happens in families when there are unexpected breaks in their routines, for example when someone in your immediate or extended family is sick. What do you and your partner do when your routines are unexpectedly changed? (Possible probes: Are there things that sometimes interrupt your daily routine? What are they?)

Q3. We are interested in how caring responsibilities for your extended family may affect your routine.
a) Do you have any extra caring responsibilities that you haven’t mentioned? (Probe: for example by providing childcare for other people’s children, or caring for someone who is elderly or ill)?

b) We are also interested to know if you participate in any volunteer or community type work. Do you do any of this kind of work or activity? (Probe: for example, meals on wheels, involvement in a local sporting club or charity).

Q4. You have told us about your family routine, are there any parts of your routine that you would like to change?
   If yes, what are they? How would you like to change these things?
   If no, Can you explain why your routine works so well?

Q5. We are interested in how households deal with their busy schedules, and the different ways they manage their household routine. Are there any strategies that you use to make things run more smoothly at home? (Possible probes: planning and scheduling tasks/roles; use of labour saving device; use of cleaner/domestic help; assisting children/relatives with child care. Other probes: Who does the planning? How are these plans communicated to the other members of the household?)

Q6. If we move away from the home to workplaces
   a) Do you have flexibility or assistance in your employment to help you juggle demands associated with home and work?

   If no, go to Q6d
   If yes, go to Q6b

   b) What does your employer do (OR what do you) (if anything) do to promote work/life balance among the employees? (Provide examples, if possible)

   c) Have you used any of these programs? (Skip if an employer)

   If no, go to Q6d.
   If yes, what have you used? When and why did you use them?

   d) What more could your employer/you do to help you/your employees balance work and family responsibilities?

Q7. There is a lot of discussion about work and home pressures and stress.
   a) Does time pressure affect you?

   If no, probe for reasons/strategies
If yes, Can you give me some examples of how time pressure affects your Well-being?

b) Given work and family demands, are you able to find enough time to do the things you would like to do?

If no, what makes it difficult to find time?
If yes, how do you manage to find time?

c) If you feel stressed, what do you do? (Prompt with examples e.g. exercise, music, yoga, alcohol, socialising if need be).

Q8. If you could change your life in some way in relation to work and home what would you do? (Probe: if participant indicates that at this stage things couldn’t be changed then ask if they can see a time when they would anticipate changing aspects of their life then what would they change?)

Q9. Thinking back to when your child/ren were in primary school, we are interested in whether or not your children participated in structured activities outside of school hours. Were there any activities that your children participated in?

If no, why didn’t they participate in structured activities outside of school? (Go to Q9)
If yes (Go to Q9a)

a) What did they do?

b) What influenced your child to participate? (Probe: school team put into local competition, church team, etc.).

c) How did you fit those activities into your routine?

d) When your children were participating in these activities, were both you and your partner in paid work?

e) Can you tell me a little about your experience of having your children involved in these activities?

f) Did you feel that there was any benefit in those activities for you? Has there been any benefit since?

g) Was there anything that you had to give up to make the time to do this?

Q10. We are interested in comparing the lifestyles of your parent’s generation with your generation.
a) Considering your experience of juggling time in terms of work, family and leisure, in what way/s is your experience similar to or different from your mother’s/father’s experience when she/he had young children?

b) Did you participate in leisure activities when you were a child? What did you do?

c) What influenced you to participate?

d) What do you think the experience of young parents today is like?

CLOSURE
Appendix M: Work-life Tension/Children’s Leisure study participant profiles, Mids

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<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>206527M_22</td>
<td>Lance</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25-34 hours</td>
<td>Finance Broker</td>
<td>Part Time Paid Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>206730F_140</td>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41-48 hours</td>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>206730M_9</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35-40 hours</td>
<td>Tafe Teacher</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207343F_24</td>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16-24 hours</td>
<td>Community Social Worker</td>
<td>Part Time Paid Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207343M_24</td>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35-40 hours</td>
<td>Sales Manager Car Yard</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207528M_35</td>
<td>Geoff</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>49 or more hours</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Part Time Paid Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207577F_39</td>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25-34 hours</td>
<td>Pharmacy Assistant</td>
<td>Part Time Paid Work</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>207669F_3</td>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35-40 hours</td>
<td>Health Service Manager</td>
<td>Full Time Paid</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Nbr of chd at home</td>
<td>Nbr of Children at time of interview</td>
<td>Age of Children</td>
<td>Nbr hrs in paid work/ week</td>
<td>ABS Occupation</td>
<td>Stated Occupation</td>
<td>Employment status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207720F-21</td>
<td>Deanna</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29, 27, 23</td>
<td>41-48 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>General Practitioner</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207720M_132</td>
<td>Troy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30, 28, 23</td>
<td>49 or more hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>General Medical Practitioner</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207802F_1</td>
<td>Shiralee</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26, 23</td>
<td>41-48 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207802M_5</td>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26, 23</td>
<td>35-40 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>School Teacher</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208341F_15</td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26, 25, 22</td>
<td>41-48 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Guidance Counsellor</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208341M_11</td>
<td>Malcolm</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26, 25, 22</td>
<td>41-48 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209438F_6</td>
<td>Abigail</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35, 32</td>
<td>41-48 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cookery Teacher</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209438M_31</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35, 32</td>
<td>49 or more hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primary Producer/ Earth Mover</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210050F_31</td>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30, 27, 23</td>
<td>25-34 hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Farmer/Home Duties</td>
<td>Part Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210020M_31</td>
<td>Sebastian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30, 28, 23</td>
<td>41-48 hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Farmer Intensive Livestock</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210514F_8</td>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34, 31, 28, 21</td>
<td>1-15 hours</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>Part Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210609F_33</td>
<td>Bronwyn</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29, 26</td>
<td>25-34 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Registered Nurse</td>
<td>Part Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document ID</td>
<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Nbr of chd at home</td>
<td>Nbr of Children</td>
<td>Age of Children (at time of interview)</td>
<td>Nbr of hrs in paid work / week</td>
<td>ABS Occupation</td>
<td>Stated Occupation</td>
<td>Employment status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210609M_11</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28, 25</td>
<td>I don’t do this activity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211033F_24</td>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27, 24</td>
<td>25-34 hours</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211033M_38+4</td>
<td>Harvey</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28, 24</td>
<td>49 or more hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Real Estate Valuer</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211583F_33</td>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28, 22</td>
<td>35-40 hours</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Administration Officer High School</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211583M_23</td>
<td>Harrison</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28, 22</td>
<td>49 or more hours</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Plant Operator</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212036F_20</td>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23, 18</td>
<td>41-48 hours</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Catering Manager</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212484F_18</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27, 24</td>
<td>1-15 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Part Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212484M_15</td>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27, 24</td>
<td>49 or more hours</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Stock Agent/ Aucti1er/ Farmer</td>
<td>Full Time Paid Work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:

ABS Occupation Codes:

M: Male
1: Managers and Administrators
F: Female
2: Professionals
U: Urban
3: Associate Professionals
R: Rural
4: Tradespersons and related workers
5: Advanced clerical/service work
6: Intermediate clerical/sales, service work
7: Intermediate production/transport workers
8: Elementary clerical/sales, service work
9: Labourers and related workers
Appendix N: Work-life Tensions short survey for men

Short survey for men participating in the Work/Life Tensions Study

1. What is your occupation?

2. Do you have more than one paid job?  Yes  No

3. How many children do you have?  

4. What are their ages?  

5. How many children live with you and your partner?  

6. Do the children live with you all the time?  Yes  No  → Go to Q7

   If no, how often do they stay with you? ........................................

7. In the LAST WEEK, how much time in total did you spend doing the following things?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>I don't do this activity</th>
<th>1-15 hours</th>
<th>16-24 hours</th>
<th>25-34 hours</th>
<th>35-40 hours</th>
<th>41-48 hours</th>
<th>49 or more hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a Paid work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Home duties (own/family home)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Work without pay (e.g. family business)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d Providing care (e.g. for someone who is disabled, elderly, sick)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e Unpaid voluntary work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f Studying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j Travelling by car</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h Active leisure (e.g. walking, exercise, sport)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i Passive leisure (e.g. listening to music, reading, relaxing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE TURN OVER
The following questions require a YES or NO response

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Do you plan to slow down in the coming year?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Do you consider yourself a workaholic?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>When you need more time, do you tend to cut back on sleep?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>At the end of the day, do you often feel that you have not accomplished what you set out to do?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Do you worry that you don’t spend enough time with your family and friends</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Do you feel that you are constantly under stress trying to accomplish more than you can handle?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>Do you feel trapped in a daily routine</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Do you feel that you just don’t have time for fun anymore?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Do you feel under stress when you don’t have enough time?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>Would you like to spend more time alone?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you. Please return this survey to us in the package with the palm pilot.
Appendix O: Work-life Tensions short survey for women

Short survey for men participating in the Work/Life Tensions Study

1. What is your occupation?
2. Do you have more than one paid job?  Yes  No
3. How many children do you have?
4. What are their ages?
5. How many children live with you and your partner?
6. Do the children live with you all the time?  Yes  No  → Go to Q7
   If no, how often do they stay with you? .................................
7. In the LAST WEEK, how much time in total did you spend doing the following things?

   I don’t do this activity  1-15 hours  16-24 hours  25-34 hours  35-40 hours  41-48 hours  49 or more hours

   a. Paid work
   b. Home duties (own/family home)
   c. Work without pay (e.g. family business)
   d. Providing care (e.g. for someone who is disabled, elderly, sick)
   e. Unpaid voluntary work
   f. Studying
   j. Travelling by car
   h. Active leisure (e.g. walking, exercise, sport)
   i. Passive leisure (e.g. listening to music, reading, relaxing)

PLEASE TURN OVER
The following questions require a YES or NO response
(Mark one on each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Do you plan to slow down in the coming year?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Do you consider yourself a workaholic?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>When you need more time, do you tend to cut back on sleep?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>At the end of the day, do you often feel that you have not accomplished what you set out to do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Do you worry that you don’t spend enough time with your family and friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Do you feel that you are constantly under stress trying to accomplish more than you can handle?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>Do you feel trapped in a daily routine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Do you feel that you just don’t have time for fun anymore?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Do you feel under stress when you don’t have enough time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>Would you like to spend more time alone?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you. Please return this survey to us in the package with the palm pilot.
Appendix P: Coding structure from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews.

Table P1: Coding structure – Semi-structured interviews

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Top level node*</th>
<th>Secondary level node*</th>
<th>Third level node*</th>
<th>Lower level nodes*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Data (response to short survey questions)</td>
<td>Demographic data</td>
<td>Gender, occupation, locality (urban/rural).</td>
<td>Numerous (see Appendices N and O for a copies of the survey).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Children data’</td>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>Ages, living in the family home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Numerous as relevant (see Appendices J and L for copies of the schedules)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Activity types, organised leisure, free play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental role</td>
<td>Mothers, fathers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>Free play</td>
<td>Location, when</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organised/structured leisure</td>
<td>Location, when</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences on organised leisure</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Transport, digital technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Locality</td>
<td>Urban, rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education/religious beliefs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends, peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Mothers, fathers, gatekeeping, autonomy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X, Generation Y</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Activity types, organised leisure, free play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental role</td>
<td>Mothers, fathers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>Free play</td>
<td>Location, when</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organised/structured leisure</td>
<td>Location, when</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influences on organised leisure</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Transport, digital technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Locality</td>
<td>Urban, rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education/religious beliefs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends, peers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Mothers, fathers, importance of physical activity</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Activity types, organised leisure, free play.</td>
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<td>Mothers, fathers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>Free play</td>
<td>Location, when</td>
<td>Location, when</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organised/structured leisure</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences on organised leisure</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Transport, digital technology</td>
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<td>Locality</td>
<td>Urban, rural</td>
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<td>Education/religious beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends, peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Mothers, fathers, importance of physical activity, good parenting, support crew</td>
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<td>Risk</td>
<td>Future Risk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consequences of Risk</td>
<td>SUPER-vision</td>
<td>Risk and Space to play</td>
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<td>Global risk – local fear</td>
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*Nodes both deductive and inductive*
Appendix Q: Organised leisure activity participation, Baby Boomers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of individuals who had participated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football (incl. Rugby, soccer and AFL)</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Swimming</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scouts (Incl. Guides and Brownies)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Athletics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debating</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Class</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Skating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pony Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Running</td>
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<td>Scuba Diving</td>
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Appendix R: Organised leisure activity participation, Generations X and Y

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of Families who had participated</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Football (Incl. Soccer, Rugby League, Grid Iron)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music (incl. piano, saxophone, clarinet)</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scouts and Guides (incl. Cubs and Brownies)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Arts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callisthenics and Physical Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Groups (incl. PCYC, GFS, Air league)</td>
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<td>Drama</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Athletics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art/painting</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Baseball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motorbike racing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roller skating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debating</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horse riding</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Skating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Languages (Japanese and Mandarin)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Saving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pottery</td>
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<td>Shooting</td>
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<td>Squash</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Water skiing</td>
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Appendix S: Organised leisure activity participation, Generation Z

**Table S.1: Organised leisure activity participation, Generation Z**

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mothers Groups/Playgroups</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football (incl. soccer, touch football, rugby)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music (incl. piano, choir, singing)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kids Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marshall Arts</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Scouts/Guides (incl. Cubs)</td>
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<td>Skipping Team</td>
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<td>Sports</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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Appendix T: Ages of Generation Z children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children</th>
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<th>2 – 4 years</th>
<th>5-9 years</th>
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<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>101</td>
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